

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10 a.m. on January 2 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 2. In his address, the President referred to King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; King Abdullah II of Jordan;

President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; and President-elect Barack Obama. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Meeting With First Vice President of Sudan and President of Southern Sudan Salva Kiir Mayardit *January 5, 2009*

President Bush. I'm proud to be meeting again with the Vice President of Sudan. He's a friend of mine. He is a strong leader who is dealing with a very difficult situation.

We talked about two important subjects. One is the north-south agreement in Sudan. It's a vital agreement, and it's going to be very important for the United States to pay attention to the implementation of this agreement. And the Vice President brought me up to date on what has been accomplished and what still remains to be accomplished.

And I thank you for, one, your clear briefing, but also your leadership on this important issue.

And then the Vice President and I discussed Darfur. And he has taken the lead in helping the rebels come together so that there would be a more unified voice in negotiating a—hopefully, negotiating a peace with the Bashir Government.

I informed the Vice President that I have provided a waiver to the State Department so they can begin to move 240 containers worth of heavy equipment into Darfur and that the Defense Department will be flying Rwanda equipment into Darfur to help facilitate the peacekeeping missions there.

So I want to thank you very much for coming back. It's good to be with you. He asked me whether or not I was going to

still care about Sudan—after all, the north-south agreement was negotiated under my watch—and my answer is, absolutely, Mr. Vice President.

Finally, I've been—Secretary Rice was just here, and prior to Vice President's arrival we did talk about Gaza. I've been closely monitoring the situation in Gaza. I understand Israel's desire to protect itself and that the situation now taking place in Gaza was caused by Hamas. Instead of caring about the people of Gaza, Hamas decided to use Gaza to launch rockets to kill innocent Israelis. And Israel has obviously decided to protect herself and her people.

The United States is concerned about the humanitarian crisis. We care about the people of Gaza and, therefore, have provided millions of dollars of fresh aid to the United Nations to help.

And finally, all of us, of course, would like to see violence stop, but not at expense of an agreement that does not prevent the crisis from happening again. I know people are saying, let's have that cease-fire, and those are noble ambitions. But any cease-fire must have the conditions in it so that Hamas does not use Gaza as a place from which to launch rockets.

There is many hopeful signs in the Middle East. Democracy is taking hold in parts of the world, in the Middle East, but the Hamas reminds us that there are people

who are willing to kill innocent people to stop the advance of free societies. And the challenge for those of us who long for peace, Mr. Vice President, is to recognize the realities of the world, recognize we're in the midst of an ideological conflict, and work with the agents of peace.

I am still hopeful that some day there will be a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace. I believe the Palestinian Authority under President Abbas has got the capacity and the foresight and the vision necessary to see that become a reality. In the meantime, all of us are going to have to deal with Hamas, those who threaten peace, those who want to deny the existence of a peaceful Palestinian state.

And so I welcome you, Mr. Vice President. Thank you for coming.

I told the Vice President his hat made me feel very much at home. [Laughter]

Vice President Kiir. Well, Your Excellency, thank you very much once again, and we are happy to be in the White House today. And I discussed with the—His Excellency the President the issues that he has raised, but mostly we came here to thank him and his administration for the commitment they have shown to the people of Sudan to bring peace and continue to monitor that peace, which ended the 21-year war. And that peace will remain in his records, that he was the only one who was able to continue monitoring the peace, negotiating it until it was signed.

This peace is now in existence. And we came to thank him and the whole administration and to wish him the best of his luck in his private missions that he's now going to take up after the assignment in the White House.

We have also told His Excellency the President that the people of Southern Sudan, the people of the marginalized areas in the whole Sudan, will never forget him for all that he has done to them. And the people in Darfur, in particular, will still be looking forward to seeing to it that peace is brought to Darfur. It is a joint mission that we have taken upon ourselves, together with them, that we have to bring peace to Darfur the way we have brought peace to Southern Sudan.

We have also talked issues of the LRA, that is the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda, which has now shifted to Congo and Southern Sudan, and how to handle it. This is a terrorist organization that does not have any respect of human life. And we'll have to deal with it so that they have to accept the regional changes that are happening and to be brought to—under control.

So this is in brief that I came to the White House, to pass to His Excellency the President of the United States of America, and to keep Sudan very close to his heart. Even if he becomes a private citizen in this country, he will still have a role to play. And we came to pass him also our Christmas and New Year's greetings since we have not met during the Christmas.

Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan; and President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks at a Military Appreciation Parade in Arlington, Virginia January 6, 2009

Thank you very much. At ease.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for the kind introduction, and thank you for being an outstanding Secretary of Defense. For a while, we expected this event to be a joint retirement party. It didn't turn out that way, did it? *[Laughter]* I am pleased that President-elect Obama has asked you to stay on, and I am confident that you'll continue to be a strong leader as the Secretary of Defense.

And, Admiral Mullen, thank you for your strong advice, your clear thinking, and your years of service to our country.

I want to thank you for honoring Laura, who's been a fabulous First Lady. The military gave her the Distinguished Service Award; a lot of friends from Texas think she deserved the Purple Heart. *[Laughter]* I wish I'd have thought of the roses.

Mr. Vice President, I am proud to have served with you for 8 years. The military has had no stauncher defender in my administration than Vice President Dick Cheney.

I thank members of the Cabinet, members of the administration, and former members of the Cabinet, especially the former Secretary of Defense, who did an outstanding job, Secretary Don Rumsfeld.

I thank the current members of the Joint Chiefs and their families, as well as the former members of the Joint Chiefs and their families, for joining us today. I want to thank those who wear the uniform, distinguished guests.

As my time in office winds down, the days bring a series of lasts. I made my last overseas trip on Air Force One. I have delivered my final college commencement as President. And after much consideration, I pardoned my last Thanksgiving turkey. *[Laughter]* These have all been wonderful experiences. But nothing compares to the honor of standing before you today and

addressing America's Armed Forces as your Commander in Chief.

Over the past 8 years, I have seen the valor of the American military time and time again. I saw your valor on September the 11th, 2001, in servicemembers rushing into smoke-filled corridors to save their colleagues at the Pentagon and in planes patrolling the skies above New York City and Washington. I saw your valor in the days after the attack, when Americans crowded into recruiting centers across our country, raised their hands to serve, and pledged to defend our people and our freedom.

I saw your valor in the forces who deployed to Afghanistan. Within weeks of September the 11th, you closed down the terrorist training camps, and you drove the Taliban from power. I saw your valor in the fearless troops who stormed across the Iraqi desert and destroyed a regime that threatened America. I saw your valor in battle-tested warriors who signed up for a second or third or fourth tour and made the surge in Iraq one of the great successes in America's military history.

The valor of America's Armed Forces have made our Nation safer. Because you've taken the fight to the terrorists abroad, we have not had to face them here at home. And the world has seen something that almost no one thought possible: More than 7 years after September the 11th, there has not been another attack on American soil.

The decisions I made as your Commander in Chief have not always been popular. But the cause you have served has always been just and right. The missions you have carried out have always been necessary. And the work you have done has every bit—has been every bit as courageous and idealistic as that of any generation that came before you.