

Statement on the Observance of Hanukkah *December 11, 2009*

Michelle and I send our warmest wishes to all who are celebrating Hanukkah around the world. The Hanukkah story of the Maccabees and the miracles they witnessed reminds us that faith and perseverance are powerful forces that can sustain us in difficult times and help us overcome even the greatest odds.

Hanukkah is not only a time to celebrate the faith and customs of the Jewish people, but for

people of all faiths to celebrate the common aspirations we share. As families, friends, and neighbors gather together to kindle the lights, may Hanukkah's lessons inspire us all to give thanks for the blessings we enjoy, to find light in times of darkness, and to work together for a brighter, more hopeful tomorrow.

Memorandum on Eleventh Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation *December 11, 2009*

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Eleventh Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation

Under section 1008(b) of title 37, United States Code, every 4 years the President is required to complete a review of the compensation system for the uniformed service members of the Department of Defense, the Coast Guard, and the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Public Health Service. You will be my Executive Agent for this review, consulting me as required.

It is not the powerful weapons that make our Nation the strongest in the world. It is the spirit and skill of our men and women in uniform. The current military compensation system has allowed us to recruit and retain the highest caliber men and women in our Nation's history, and that system needs to be regularly validated for sufficiency and responsiveness.

In these times of unprecedented expectations and demands, our attention must be on the well being of our personnel in uniform. The defense of the homeland and ongoing overseas operations require us to examine and determine whether compensation levels are sufficient to sustain current and future efforts

to recruit and retain the right skill set and experience level.

I would like your review to focus on the following areas:

1. the compensation for service performed in a combat zone, combat operation, or hostile fire area, or while exposed to a hostile fire event;
2. the Reserve and National Guard's compensation and benefits for consistency with their current and planned utilization;
3. the compensation benefits available to wounded warriors, caregivers, and survivors of those fallen service members; and
4. the pay incentives for critical career fields such as mental health professionals, linguists/translators, remotely piloted vehicle operators, and special operations personnel.

As the Executive Agent for the Eleventh Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation, you shall ensure that representatives of other relevant executive branch agencies, such as the Secretaries of Homeland Security, Commerce, and Health and Human Services, participate in this review, as appropriate. The review should be completed within 1 year of its initiation, with an update submitted to the President after 6 months, and a preview of the