

broadcast on December 10. In the address, the President referred to Richard A. Cordray, Director-designate, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The transcript was

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Remarks at “Christmas in Washington” *December 11, 2011*

Good evening, everybody. I just want to start by thanking all the folks who have joined us at the National Building Museum. Let’s give it up for our host, who also happens to be the host of the best late night show on TBS, Conan O’Brien. [*Laughter*] And I want to thank all the spectacular artists and choirs and glee clubs who’ve made this such a spectacular evening. Please give them a big round of applause.

I want to congratulate 30 years of “Christmas in Washington.” It’s always an extraordinary honor to be a part of this event because it benefits such a special place, the Children’s National Medical Center. For so many children and their parents, the work that they do to save lives and improve care is nothing short of a miracle. And that’s fitting, because this is the season to celebrate miracles.

This is the season to celebrate the story of how, more than 2,000 ago, a child was born to two faithful travelers who could find rest only in a stable, among cattle and sheep. He was no ordinary child. He was the manifestation of

God’s love. And every year we celebrate His birth because the story of Jesus Christ changed the world. For me and for millions of Americans, His story has filled our hearts and inspired our lives. It moves us to love one another, to help and serve those less fortunate, to forgive, to draw close to our families, to be grateful for all that has been given to us, to keep faith, and to hold on to an enduring hope in humanity.

Service to others, compassion to all, treating others as we wish ourselves to be treated, those values aren’t just at the center of Christianity, those are values that are shared by all faiths. So tonight let us all rededicate ourselves to each other. And in that spirit, from my family to yours, happy holidays. Merry Christmas.

God bless you all, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:31 p.m. at the National Building Museum.

The President’s News Conference With Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq *December 12, 2011*

President Obama. Please have a seat. Good afternoon, everyone.

When I took office, nearly 150,000 American troops were deployed in Iraq, and I pledged to end this war responsibly. Today, only several thousand troops remain there, and more are coming home every day.

This is a season of homecomings, and military families across America are being reunited for the holidays. In the coming days, the last American soldiers will cross the border out of Iraq with honor and with their heads held high.

After nearly 9 years, our war in Iraq ends this month.

Today I’m proud to welcome Prime Minister Maliki, the elected leader of a sovereign, self-reliant, and democratic Iraq. We’re here to mark the end of this war, to honor the sacrifices of all those who made this day possible, and to turn the page, begin a new chapter in the history between our countries, a normal relationship between sovereign nations, an equal partnership based on mutual interests and mutual respect.