

So, on behalf of the Obama family, I want to wish everybody a very happy Thanksgiving. Tomorrow, as we gather with our own friends and family, we'll count ourselves lucky that there's more to be thankful for than we can ever say and more to be hopeful for than we can ever imagine.

And now, before these turkeys get away: With the power vested in me, I want to grant Popcorn a full reprieve. Come on. [Laughter] I want to—Popcorn, you have a full reprieve

from cranberry sauce and stuffing. We wish you well. And we're going to give Caramel a break as well.

All right? So—[laughter]. Congratulations, everybody. All right. Happy Thanksgiving, everybody. See you, Popcorn. Give them a big round of applause. All right, get out of the rain. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. on the North Portico at the White House.

Statement on the Observance of Hanukkah

November 27, 2013

Michelle and I send warm wishes to all those celebrating Hanukkah.

For the first time since the late 1800s—and for the last time until some 70,000 years from now—the first day of Hanukkah falls on Thanksgiving. It's an event so rare some have even coined it "Thanksgivukkah." As we gather with loved ones around the turkey, the menorah, or both, we celebrate some fortunate timing and give thanks for miracles both great and small.

Like the Pilgrims, the Maccabees at the center of the Hanukkah story made tremendous sacrifices so they could practice their religion in peace. In the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, they reclaimed their historic home-

land. But the true miracle of Hanukkah was what came after those victories almost 2,200 years ago: The Jewish Temple was cleansed and consecrated, and the oil that was sufficient for only 1 day lasted for 8. As the first Hanukkah candle is lit, we are reminded that our task is not only to secure the blessing of freedom, but to make the most of that blessing once it is secure.

In that spirit, Michelle and I look forward to joining members of the Jewish community in America, in the State of Israel, and around the world as we work together to build a future that is bright and full of hope. From my family to yours, *Chag sameach*.

The President's Weekly Address

November 28, 2013

Hi, everybody. On behalf of all the Obamas, Michelle, Malia, Sasha, Bo, and the newest member of our family, Sunny, I want to wish you a happy and healthy Thanksgiving. We'll be spending today just like many of you, sitting down with family and friends to eat some good food, tell some stories, and watch a little football, and most importantly, count our blessings.

And as Americans, we have so much to be thankful for. We give thanks for the men and women who set sail for this land nearly four centuries ago, risking everything for the

chance at a better life, and the people who were already here, our Native American brothers and sisters, for their generosity during that first Thanksgiving. We give thanks for the generations who followed, people of all races and religions, who arrived here from every country on Earth and worked to build something better for themselves and for us.

We give thanks for all our men and women in uniform and for their families, who are surely missing them very much today. We're grateful for their sacrifice too.

We give thanks for the freedoms they defend: the freedom to think what we want and say what we think; to worship according to our own beliefs; to choose our leaders and, yes, criticize them without punishment. People around the world are fighting and even dying for their chance at these freedoms. We stand with them in that struggle, and we give thanks for being free.

And we give thanks to everyone who's doing their part to make the United States a better, more compassionate nation, who spend their Thanksgiving volunteering at a soup kitchen or joining a service project or bringing food and cheer to a lonely neighbor. That big-hearted generosity is a central part of our American character. We believe in lending a hand to folks who need it. We believe in pitching in to solve problems even if they aren't our problems. And that's not a 1-day-a-year belief, it's part of the fabric of our Nation.

And we remember that many Americans need that helping hand right now: Americans who've lost their jobs and can't get a new one

through no fault of their own, Americans who have been trapped in poverty and just need that helping hand to climb out, citizens whose prayers and hopes move us to act.

We're a people who are greater together than we are on our own. And that's what today is about. That's what every day should be about. No matter what our differences, we're all part of one American family. We're each other's keepers. We are one Nation under God. That core tenet of our American experience has guided us from the earliest days of our founding, and it will guide us to a future that's even brighter than today.

Thank you, God bless you, and from my family to yours, happy Thanksgiving.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:20 p.m. on November 27 in the Blue Room at the White House for broadcast on November 28. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 27, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 28.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Implementation Plan for the Whole-of-Government Vision Prescribed in the 2010 National Security Strategy *November 29, 2013*

Dear _____:

In my National Security Strategy of 2010, I addressed how the United States would strengthen its global leadership position; end the war in Iraq; disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qa'ida; and achieve economic recovery at home and abroad. The Strategy recognized that we faced a world in transition; that we needed to reposition the United States to shape that transition effectively to meet our interests, and that, to be effective, a whole-of-government approach was necessary. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2012, section 1072, reinforced the importance of whole-of-government integration in this effort. In accordance with section 1072, I provided an implementation plan in September 2012 detailing

our work to date to advance the whole-of-government effort.

I am writing to inform you of my intent to release a new National Security Strategy in early 2014. The new Strategy will update the vision I provided in 2010 and describe my Administration's national security priorities for the remainder of my term. Accordingly, we will submit a broader update on the whole-of-government implementation plan in the spring to reflect this new Strategy.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Barbara A. Mikulski, chairman, and Richard C. Shelby, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Carl M. Levin, chairman, and