

study his words and his writings. The day he was released from prison gave me a sense of what human beings can do when they're guided by their hopes and not by their fears. And like so many around the globe, I cannot fully imagine my own life without the example that Nelson Mandela set, and so long as I live, I will do what I can to learn from him.

To Graça Machel and his family, Michelle and I extend our deepest sympathy and gratitude for sharing this extraordinary man with us. His life's work meant long days away from those who loved him most. And I only hope that the time spent with him these last few weeks brought peace and comfort to his family.

To the people of South Africa, we draw strength from the example of renewal and reconciliation and resilience that you made real. A free South Africa at peace with itself, that's an

example to the world, and that's Madiba's legacy to the nation that he loved.

We will not likely see the likes of Nelson Mandela again. So it falls to us, as best we can, to forward the example that he set: to make decisions guided not by hate, but by love; to never discount the difference that one person can make; to strive for a future that is worthy of his sacrifice.

For now, let us pause and give thanks for the fact that Nelson Mandela lived: a man who took history in his hands and bent the arc of the moral universe towards justice. May God bless his memory and keep him in peace.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:25 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Graça Machel, wife of former President Mandela.

## Remarks at a Hanukkah Reception

December 5, 2013

*The President.* Hello, everybody! Welcome to the White House. Now, normally, we just have one Hanukkah reception, but this year, we are hosting two, because we have so many friends to celebrate with, we had to do it twice. And I'll be welcoming a whole other group this evening. Don't tell them, though, but you're my favorite group. [Laughter] It is our own little Hanukkah miracle. The party that was supposed to last only 1 hour will go on for 8. [Laughter] You got that one? [Laughter]

Now, this is the fifth time I've celebrated Hanukkah as President. But this is my first "Thanikkah." Did I say that right?

*Audience member.* Thanksgivukkah.

*The President.* This intersection of two wonderful holidays has inspired a whole lot of people across America; we are delighted to welcome a few of them here tonight.

We've got 10-year-old Asher Weintraub from New York City—where's Asher? Asher came up with what we believe is the world's first-ever menorah shaped like a turkey. It is called the "menurkey." [Laughter] Where is the menurkey? I had it just a second ago.

*The First Lady.* Wait. You just had it. Where is the menurkey?

*The President.* We've got to bring in the menurkey out here. I'll continue speaking. You've got to see this. Thank you, Asher, for your spirit and your creativity.

We've got Dana Gitell. Where's Dana, who actually coined the term "Thanksgivukkah." Her sister Deborah—oh, here's the menurkey.

*Audience member.* Team Thanksgivukkah is here!

*The President.* There we go. [Laughter] So I'm going to keep this in a special place.

So Dana, along with her sister Deborah, expect this term to catch on around the country. Where are they?

*Hebrew SeniorLife Marketing Specialist Dana Reichman Gitell.* Right here.

*The President.* There they are. Let's see them. Hey, guys. How are you? They've had a lot of fun with their project. But there is a serious side to it, because they've said they always express their gratitude to America, a place where no matter who you are, you can always celebrate your faith. And that same spirit is re-

flected in the menorah that we're about to light.

It was designed by Manfred Anson, who was born in Germany in 1922. And as a child, he lived through the horrors of Kristallnacht and later lost a brother to the Holocaust. But Manfred escaped, and like the Maccabees at the center of the Hanukkah story, he fought against tyranny, serving in the Australian army during World War II. And like the Maccabees, after the war was over, he sought a place where he could live his life and practice his religion free from fear. So for Manfred and millions like him, that place was ultimately America.

And Manfred passed away last year, but during his life, he designed this special menorah, with a model of the Statue of Liberty at the base of each candle. I don't know if you've noticed that. In a few moments, all nine Lady Liberties will be shining: a reminder that our country endures as a beacon of hope and of freedom wherever you come from, whatever your faith.

And that beacon stays bright because of families like the ones that will join me in lighting the menorah this evening: the Schmitters. Now, dad, Jake, could not be here because he's deployed in Afghanistan. But we are joined by his wonderful wife Drew, his daughters Lainey and Kylie—go ahead and wave, guys. [Laughter] So, Drew, Lainey, Kylie, I want you to know how proud we are of not only your dad, but also of you. And we're so grateful for the sacrifices that you make on behalf of our country every single day.

And tonight we give thanks to all the men and women in uniform and for their families. They make tremendous sacrifices on our behalf, on behalf of our freedom and our security: not only of us, but our allies and friends around the world, including our friends in the State of Israel. And the commitment and the courage of our men and women in uniform and their families is itself a miracle for which we give thanks.

As the Festival of Lights draws to a close, let's take one last chance to think about all the miracles we've been lucky enough to experience in our own lives. There are small mira-

cles, like the invention of the menorah. [Laughter] And then there are big miracles, like the chance to be a part of this great country.

The first day of Hanukkah and Thanksgiving won't overlap again for more than 70,000 years. So it's safe to say that this was a once-in-a-lifetime event—[laughter]—unless there's a—really a scientific breakthrough that we don't know about. But while we never may see again another Thanksgiving, I know that if we can show the same resilience as Manfred Anson and the same resourcefulness as young Asher, as well as Dana and Deborah, and the same strength as military families like the Schmitters, we will be blessed with many more miracles for years to come.

So thank you, everybody. Happy Hanukkah. And now I want to welcome Rabbi Amanda Lurer, a lieutenant in our Navy, to say a blessing.

*Rabbi Amanda Lurer.* Hanukkah formally ends tonight as the Sun goes down this evening. But it will always be appropriate for us as we gather to remind ourselves and the world of the meaning of this holiday. So in that spirit, in this wonderful gathering, we now kindle the menorah and recite two blessings. And as we kindle the lights, we'll say—the first one is the *she-asa nissim* blessing, thanking God for the miraculous capability to bring light to the darkest corners of the world and for leaders who are dedicated to strengthening religious freedoms in our days as in the day of the Maccabees.

The second blessing is *shehecheyanu*, that simple yet powerful prayer of thanksgiving, for the blessing of life, the gift of light and the privilege to celebrate Hanukkah together. Please join me.

[At this point, a Hebrew prayer was sung. A second prayer was then recited.]

*The President.* All right.

[The menorah was lit.]

*The President.* Well, thank you all again for being here. We hope you have a wonderful

celebration. And we can't stay to party because I've got to go back to work. [Laughter] But I do want to make sure that we get a chance to shake hands with all of you briefly as we go by. And again, we just want to thank the Schmitters and make sure to tell dad we're proud of him too.

*Military spouse Drew Schmitter.* Okay.

## Remarks at a Hanukkah Reception December 5, 2013

*The President.* Good evening, everybody. Welcome to the White House, and happy Hanukkah. I should say that normally we just have one Hanukkah reception, but this year, we're hosting two. We have so many friends to celebrate with, we had to do it twice. I welcomed a whole other group this afternoon. But I want you—don't tell them, this is actually my favorite group right here. [Laughter] It's our own little Hanukkah miracle: The party was only last—supposed to last for 1 hour, and it's lasted for 8. [Laughter]

I want to welcome so many friends and leaders from throughout the Jewish community. We are honored to be joined by one-third of our Supreme Court: Justice Ginsburg; Justice Kagan, who is here somewhere—there she is; and Justice Breyer is here. We've got some outstanding Members of Congress, members of my administration with us, including our new Director of Jewish Outreach, Matt Nosanchuk. Where's Matt? Matt's out here somewhere.

I also want to welcome representatives from the State of Israel who are joining us. I—some of you recall, I had just an extraordinary, magical visit to Israel earlier this year and was proud to reaffirm the alliance between our two great democracies. I also had the opportunity to go to an expo where I saw the best of Israeli technology. And there's been such a burst of innovation and creativity that's taking place, including, by the way, I saw a robot that served me *matzah*. [Laughter] We were thinking about having that robot here to serve *latkes*, but we couldn't get him—[laughter]—so maybe next year.

*The President.* Okay. Thank you. Enjoy, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:31 p.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Deborah Gitell, vice president of client strategy, Awestruck Marketing Group.

Obviously, on a note of seriousness, our—tonight our thoughts and prayers are with the Mandela family in South Africa. They're grieving the loss of a man, a moral giant who embodied the dignity and the courage and the hope and sought to bring about justice not only in South Africa, but, I think, to inspire millions around the world. And he did that: the idea that every single human being ought to be free and that oppression can end and justice can prevail.

*Supreme Court Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg.* Yes.

*The President.* That's what—[applause]. That was a Supreme Court Justice who said, "Yes." [Laughter] So I—that's what Nelson Mandela taught us, and it's that same spirit that brings us here tonight.

And over the last 8 days, Jews around the world have gathered with friends and family to light the menorah and retell the story that has been kept alive for more than 2,000 years. And it's a story of miracles, of a light that burned for 8 days when it should have only lasted for 1 and a people who surmounted overwhelming odds to reclaim their historic homeland so they could live their lives in peace and practice their religion in peace.

It's a story that has been repeated countless times throughout Jewish history. And as we light the candles tonight, we're reminded that we're still writing new chapters in that story today. In 1922, Abraham and Hayyah Ettinger donated this menorah to their congregation in a small town that's now the Czech Republic. And tragically, the Ettingers—and their prayer hall—were lost in the Holocaust.