

work. Our men and women in uniform and our military families don't just work to keep us safe, they're also strengthening our country here at home. They're volunteering at schools, congregations, our communities. With our combat mission coming to a close in Afghanistan, it means more of our extraordinary military members are going to be home for the holidays, back where they belong. And that is the most important blessing of all.

But what's also great is that we're now seeing our incredible military—some who may be leaving the military—able to provide that same dedication, that same sense of service to organizations throughout the country, sometimes in a volunteer capacity, sometimes in a professional capacity. And we are very proud of that. Lieutenant General Osman is just a great example of the ongoing spirit of duty and service that is instilled in our Armed Forces. So we are so grateful to all of you.

Statement on the Death of Judy Baar Topinka December 10, 2014

Michelle and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Illinois State Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka. Judy was an institution in Illinois politics. Her public service spanned more than 30 years, including her tenure in the State legislature and as chair of the Illinois Republican Party. Judy was a fierce advocate for her constituents, which I got to see firsthand when she was

With that, I want to wish everybody a merry Christmas, a happy New Year, and let's get sorting. I am positive that girls, zero to 2, that's perfect for the "Call of Duty" video game. [Laughter] Isn't that right?

The First Lady. The what video game?

The President. See, she didn't even get the joke. [Laughter]

The First Lady. I wasn't listening.

The President. She wasn't listening to me. [Laughter] Thank you, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:42 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to actor J. William Ferrell in his role as Buddy the Elf in the movie "Elf"; and Lt. Gen. Henry P. Osman, USMC (Ret.), in his capacity as president and chief executive officer of Toys for Tots. The First Lady referred to Lt. Gen. Richard P. Mills, USMC, commander, Marine Forces Reserve; Lt. Col. David A. Johnson, USMC, Second Civil Affairs Group; and First Sgt. Ocie L. Lowery, USMC.

Remarks at a Meeting of the President's Export Council and an Exchange With Reporters December 11, 2014

[*The President joined the meeting in progress.*]

The President. I'm so sorry I'm late, people. Usually, I've been on—I'm a pretty timely guy. [Laughter] But it seems like there's quite a few things on my agenda today. [Laughter] But I think we're going to bring in the pool. And I'm just going to make some quick remarks at the

State treasurer, the first woman to hold that office. She was blunt, pragmatic, unfailingly cheerful and energetic, and always willing to put politics aside to find commonsense solutions that made a difference for the people of Illinois. She will be greatly missed. Michelle and I extend our deepest sympathies to Judy's family, friends, and constituents today.

top, and then everybody can fill me in on the great work that the Council's been doing. Tell me when you're ready, everybody. All good?

White House aide. We're all set.

The President. Well, good morning, everybody. I just want to offer a few thoughts before you return to the meeting. Obviously, we've seen some significant economic progress here