

So we've got a lot more work to do, just because it's not in the headlines, and that's what this meeting is about. I want to thank everybody here who's been doing a great job on it.

All right. Thank you very much, everybody.

The President's Health

Q. How's your throat? How is the reflux?

The President. You know, actually, I am doing fine. That was a classic example of, if it weren't for the press pool, nobody would know about it. [Laughter]

Statement on the Situation in South Sudan December 12, 2014

Last December, when a political conflict erupted into violence in South Sudan, the hope and optimism the world felt with the founding of the new nation in 2011 was overtaken by images of bloodshed and grief. Instead of seeing the promise of their struggle for self-determination realized, the people of South Sudan have suffered countless, unimaginable tragedies. The magnitude of this crisis is felt in both the devastation that violence has left in towns and villages and the scars—visible and invisible—on the South Sudanese people.

Today I appeal to the leaders of South Sudan to pursue peace as a way to honor those who have died. It is in your hands to end the cycle of violence, to set forth on a course of re-

Q. We did a good job, huh?

The President. There's got to be something better to cover than the President's sore throat.

Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:58 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 83; and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

form and reconciliation, and to hold to account those responsible for atrocities. Leadership that recalls the promise of South Sudan is what the country now needs to end this senseless conflict.

To the people of South Sudan, who have suffered for far too long, I urge you to renew the spirit of hope, unity, and fortitude that enabled you almost 4 years ago to come together and vote for a brighter future. For the sake of future generations, I urge you to seek peaceful reconciliation rather than violent retribution. The United States will remain a friend to those who seek peace and progress and will stand with the people of South Sudan.

The President's Weekly Address December 13, 2014

Hi, everybody. It's the holidays, a season to give thanks for our many blessings: the love of family, the joy of good friends, the bonds of community, the freedom we cherish as Americans, the peace and justice we seek in the world.

As we go about our days, as we gather with loved ones and friends, it's important to remember: Our way of life—the freedom, prosperity and security that we enjoy as Americans—is not a gift that is simply handed to us.

It has to be earned, by every generation. And no one sacrifices more to preserve our blessings than our extraordinary men and women in uniform.

That's why, on Monday, I'll be visiting our troops at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey, to salute them for their service and thank them for their sacrifices. Since our Nation was attacked on 9/11, these men and women, like so many others in uniform, have met every mission we've asked of them. They

deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq. In more than a decade of war, this 9/11 generation has worked with the Afghan people to help them reclaim their communities and prevent terrorist attacks against our own country.

Now, many of our troops are returning from Afghanistan, and on Monday, I'll be proud to help welcome them home. That's because, this month, our combat mission in Afghanistan will be over. Our war in Afghanistan is coming to a responsible end.

Of course, the end of our combat mission in Afghanistan doesn't mean the end of challenges to our security. We'll continue to work with Afghans to make sure their country is stable and secure and is never again used to launch attacks against America. The troops I'll visit on Monday have been part of our mission to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL in Iraq and Syria. They've been supporting our efforts in West Africa to fight the Ebola epidemic and save lives. Because in time of crisis and challenge, the world turns to America for leadership. And when the world calls on America, we call on the brave men and women of our armed forces to do what no one else can.

Remarks at "Christmas in Washington" *December 14, 2014*

Thank you! Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat. Merry Christmas, everybody. Give it up for Santa's biggest, baddest elf: our host, The Rock. Dwayne is tough as nails on the outside, but as you heard earlier, he is a big softie on the inside. Even played me once on "Saturday Night Live." [*Laughter*] You can see the resemblance. I have a little more hair. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank all the incredible performers for dazzling us with their talents tonight. Give them a big round of applause. And we want to thank all the people behind the scenes who've helped make this wonderful event possible every single year.

For 33 years, "Christmas in Washington" has benefited a remarkable institution, Children's National Medical Center. That's where dedicated medical professionals provide world-class care to our most precious resource—our

So this holiday season, as we give thanks for the blessings in our own lives, let's also give thanks to our men and women in uniform who make those blessings possible. Even as some are coming home for the holidays, many more will be far from their families, who sacrifice along with them.

There are so many ways we can express our gratitude to our troops, their families and our veterans. Everyone can do something. To find out what you can do, just go to joiningforces.gov. As a nation, as Americans, let's always keep striving to serve them as well as they have always served us.

Thank you, have a great weekend, and God bless our troops and their families.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:40 p.m. on December 12 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on December 13. In the address, the President referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 12, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 13.

children—every single day of the year. Of course, this holiday is all about the birth of a child more than 2,000 years ago. A young soon-to-be mother and her husband of modest means traveled to Bethlehem and sought shelter for the night, and they found it in a manger. And in the lowliest of surroundings, a Savior was born who would change the world.

Jesus Christ lived a life of peace, of love and kindness and forgiveness. He ministered to the poor and to the sick, to the stranger and the outcast on society's margins. His life of service teaches us that our individual salvation is wrapped up in the salvation of others. And two millennia later, it lifts the hearts of billions around the world, Christians and non-Christians alike.

In the hustle and bustle of Christmas season, may we all do our best to follow his exam-