

The President's Weekly Address December 25, 2014

The President. Merry Christmas, everybody! Now, we're not going to take too much of your time, because today is about family and being together with the ones you love. And luckily for me, that means I get a little help on the weekly address as well.

The First Lady. The holidays at the White House are such a wonderful time of year. We fill the halls with decorations, Christmas trees, and carolers, and this year, we invited more than 65,000 people to join us. Our theme was "A Children's Winter Wonderland," and Americans, young and old, had a chance to come together and celebrate the season.

The President. And today our family will join millions across the country in celebrating the birth of Jesus, the birth not just of a baby in a manger, but the message that has changed the world: to reach out to the sick, the hungry, the troubled, and above all else, to love one another as we would be loved ourselves.

The First Lady. And we hope that this holiday season will be a chance for us to live out that message: to bridge our differences and lift up our family, friends, and neighbors and to reconnect with the values that bind us together. And as a country, that also means celebrating and honoring those who have served and sacrificed for all of us: our troops, veterans, and their families.

The President. In just a few days, our combat mission in Afghanistan will be over. Our longest war will come to a responsible end. And that gives us an opportunity to step back and reflect upon all that these families have given us. We're able to gather with family and friends because our troops are willing to hug theirs goodbye and step forward to serve. After a long day, we can come home because they're willing to leave their families and deploy. We can celebrate the holidays because they're willing to miss their own.

The First Lady. And so, as our troops continue to transition back home—back to our businesses, our schools, our congregations, and our communities—it's up to all of us to serve them as well as they've served us. And you can visit joiningforces.gov to find out how you can honor and support the troops, veterans, and military families in your communities. That's something we can do not only during the holiday season, but all year round.

The President. So merry Christmas, everybody. May God bless you all. And we wish you and your family a happy and healthy 2015.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:15 p.m. on December 19 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast on December 25. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 24.

Statement on the Observance of Kwanzaa December 26, 2014

Michelle and I extend our warmest wishes to those celebrating Kwanzaa this holiday season. Today begins a celebration highlighting the rich African American heritage and culture through the seven principles of Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. During this season, families come together to reflect on blessings of the past year and look forward to the promises in the year ahead. As we remain committed to

building a country that provides opportunity for all, this time of year reminds us that there is much to be thankful for.

As families around the world unite to light the kinara today, our family extends our prayers and best wishes during this holiday season.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.