

NOTE: The statement referred to Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter; and Chairman of

the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC.

Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree December 3, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody. Well, happy holidays!

Audience members. You too! Happy holidays!

The President. You know my crew: Malia, Sasha, Michelle, Grandma. Happy holidays to Reese and to everyone here tonight and everyone watching at home. Now, let's begin the process of lighting the tree. We've got a countdown going on. We're going to start at five. Here we go: five, four, three, two, one. Merry Christmas, everybody!

[At this point, the President exited the stage as the event continued. He later returned and made additional remarks as follows.]

The President. Merry Christmas, everybody! Thank you, Betty, for that introduction, for your extraordinary service as one of our park rangers, and for all of your—and your great-grandmother's—contributions to this country. Please give Betty a big round of applause. I want tips from Betty on how I can look that good at 94.

I also want to thank Betty's boss, Jonathan Jarvis, and for everybody from the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation for everything that they do to protect and care for America's great outdoors and for helping us "find our park" this year and every year. And thank you, Reese Witherspoon, and each of tonight's outstanding performers.

This is, of course, the most wonderful time of the year. But we would be remiss not to take a moment to remember our fellow Americans whose hearts are heavy tonight, who grieve for loved ones, especially in San Bernardino, California. Their loss is our loss too, for we're all one American family. We look out for each other in good times and in bad. And they should know that all of us care about them this holiday season. They're in our thoughts,

they're in our prayers, and we send them our love.

Now, this is the 93d time Americans have gathered by the White House to light the National Christmas Tree. And as always, this tree is not alone. All across America, in living rooms, and offices, churches, and town squares, families and neighbors are gathering to decorate trees of their own and get into the holiday spirit. It's a chance to come together and to focus on what really matters: the simple gifts of family and friends; the wonder and hope in a child's eye; and of course, the spirit of giving and compassion that can help all of us find new meaning in the world around us.

That's the message of the child whose birth families like mine celebrate on Christmas, a prince born in a stable who taught us that we should love our neighbors as ourselves; and that we are our brothers' keeper and our sisters' keepers; that we should feed the hungry, visit the sick, welcome the stranger. These are the lessons of Jesus Christ. But they're also the bedrock values of all faiths, values to be cherished and embraced not only during the holidays, but to be practiced in our daily lives.

So, during this holiday season, let's come together as brothers and sisters around the humanity that we share. Let's reach out to those who can use a hand. Let's summon the spirit of togetherness that's always helped to kindle America's shining example to the world. And let's keep in our prayers those Americans who protect that ideal, especially those stationed far from home during the holidays. Our men and women in uniform and their families sacrifice so much for us. And it's because of them that we can celebrate freely, that we can worship as we please, that we can come together on a night like this strong and united and free.

So, on behalf of Michelle and Malia and Sasha and Grandma and Bo and Sunny, happy holidays to all of you. May God bless you all,

and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:06 p.m. on the Ellipse at the White House. In his remarks, he

referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson; actor Reese Witherspoon; and Betty Soskin, park ranger, Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park in Richmond, CA.

Statement on Congressional Passage of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act *December 4, 2015*

This morning we learned that our businesses have added 13.7 million jobs over 69 months, extending the longest streak on record. Last night, Democrats and Republicans came together to pass a transportation bill that will help us build on America's progress by growing our economy and creating more good jobs for our middle class. This bill is not perfect, but it is a commonsense compromise and an important first step in the right direction. I look forward to signing this bill right away so that we can put Americans to work rebuilding our crumbling roads, bridges, and transit systems, reauthorize the Export-Import Bank that helps our companies compete around the world, and give local and State governments and employers the certainty they need to invest and hire for the long term.

As we applaud the kind of bipartisan compromise that was reached last night, we should also recognize that we still have work to do. Congress should pass a bill like the GROW AMERICA Act I've proposed in the past, one that supports even more jobs and invests even more in our roads and highways than the bill passed last night so we can meet our country's infrastructure needs. Congress should pass a complete budget and avoid a Government shutdown. And Congress should approve the Trans-Pacific Partnership to open up new markets and support new jobs. If we take these kinds of commonsense steps, we can continue building an economy where every middle class family has the chance to get ahead.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 22.

The President's Weekly Address *December 5, 2015*

Hi, everybody. This weekend, our hearts are with the people of San Bernardino, another American community shattered by unspeakable violence. We salute the first responders—the police, the SWAT teams, the EMTs—who responded so quickly, with such courage, and saved lives. We pray for the injured as they fight to recover from their wounds.

Most of all, we stand with 14 families whose hearts are broken. We're learning more about their loved ones—the men and women, the beautiful lives—that were lost. They were doing what so many of us do this time of year: enjoying the holidays, celebrating with each other, rejoicing in the bonds of friendship and community that bind us together as Ameri-

cans. Their deaths are an absolute tragedy, not just for San Bernardino, but for our country.

We're also learning more about the killers. And we're working to get a full picture of their motives: why they committed these revolting acts. It's important to let the investigators do their job. And we need to know all the facts. And at my direction, Federal law enforcement is helping in every way that they can. We're going to get to the bottom of this.

It is entirely possible that these two attackers were radicalized to commit this act of terror. And if so, it would underscore a threat we've been focused on for years: the danger of people succumbing to violent extremist ideologies. We know that ISIL and other terrorist