

workers and parents, all of us taking care of each other; because of our incredible men and women in uniform, serving to protect us all; because when we're united as Americans, there's nothing that we cannot do.

That's why it's has been a good year. And it's why I'm confident we'll keep achieving big things in the new year. So happy holidays, everybody.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:25 p.m. on December 17 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on December 19. In the address,

the President referred to David M. Letterman, former host, CBS's "Late Show With David Letterman." He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; H.R. 2029, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, which was approved December 18 and assigned Public Law No. 114–113; and S. 1177, the Every Student Succeeds Act, which was approved December 10 and assigned Public Law No. 114–95. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 18, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 19.

Statement on the Persecution of Christians

December 23, 2015

During this season of Advent, Christians in the United States and around the world are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. At this time, those of us fortunate enough to live in countries that honor the birthright of all people to practice their faith freely give thanks for that blessing. Michelle and I are also ever-mindful that many of our fellow Christians do not enjoy that right and hold especially close to our hearts and minds those who have been driven from their ancient homelands by unspeakable violence and persecution.

In some areas of the Middle East where church bells have rung for centuries on Christmas Day, this year they will be silent; this silence bears tragic witness to the brutal atrocities

committed against these communities by ISIL.

We join with people around the world in praying for God's protection for persecuted Christians and those of other faiths, as well as for those brave men and women engaged in our military, diplomatic, and humanitarian efforts to alleviate their suffering and restore stability, security, and hope to their nations. As the old Christmas carol reminds us:

The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men.

NOTE: The statement referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

The President's Weekly Address

December 25, 2015

The President. Merry Christmas, everybody! This is one of our favorite times of year in the Obama household, filled with family and friends, warmth and good cheer. That's even true when I spend all night chasing Bo and Sunny away from the cookies we leave for Santa.

It's also my favorite weekly address of the year, because I'm joined by a special holiday guest star: Mrs. Obama.

The First Lady. Merry Christmas, everyone. Here at the White House, we've spent the past month helping everyone get into the holiday spirit.