

Our theme this year is “A Timeless Tradition,” and the decorations in each room reflect some of our country’s most cherished pastimes, from saluting our troops and their families to helping children dream big dreams for their future. And we’ve invited thousands of families here to the White House to enjoy the festivities, because there’s no holiday tradition more timeless than opening our doors to others.

The President. Today, like millions of Americans and Christians around the world, our family celebrates the birth of Jesus and the values He lived in his own life: treating one another with love and compassion; caring for those on society’s margins—the sick and the hungry, the poor and the persecuted, the stranger in need of shelter or simply an act of kindness. That’s the spirit that binds us together, not just as Christians, but as Americans of all faiths. It’s what the holidays are about: coming together as one American family to celebrate our blessings and the values we hold dear.

During this season, we also honor all those who defend those values in our country’s uniform. Every day, the brave men and women of

our military serve to keep us safe, and so do their families.

The First Lady. So, as we sing carols and open presents, as we win snowball fights—

The President. Or lose snowball fights—

The First Lady. —let’s also take time to pay tribute to those who’ve given our country so much. Go to joiningforces.gov to see how you can serve the troops, veterans, and military families in your community. And together, we can show them just how grateful we are for their sacrifice. That’s a tradition that we all can embrace, today and every day.

The President. So, on behalf of Malia, Sasha, Bo, Sunny, Grandma, and everyone here at the White House, merry Christmas. May God bless our troops and their families, and may God bless you all with peace and joy in the year ahead.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:30 p.m. on December 17 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on December 25. In the address, the President referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 24, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 25.

Remarks at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe, Hawaii December 25, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody! Merry Christmas! *Mele Kalikimaka!* Happy New Year! Happy Hanukkah! We just want to—hope you guys are having a great holiday. And it is wonderful to see all of you.

This is one of our favorite things to do every single year, because not only are we in Hawaii for Christmas—

Audience members. Yes!

The President. —but we’re also able to say thank you on behalf of the American people. So many families here are serving tirelessly. And it’s not just those in uniform who serve, it’s also the spouses, the kids. There are times where you’re missing birthdays, missing soccer games, making sacrifices.

As we know, when you’re deployed overseas, it’s tough. And even though we’ve been able to reduce the number of folks who are deployed in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, there are still folks over there every single day. And it’s still dangerous, as we saw this past week; we had some outstanding, brave men and women who were killed.

And so we never take for granted what all of you do for the American people. You help keep us free. You help keep us strong. And whatever service you’re in, whatever branch, we are extraordinarily grateful for everything that you do every single day. And we hope you guys had a wonderful Christmas.

For those of you who are with your families, that is a true blessing. For those of you who are still a little bit far away from home, we hope you had a chance to give them our best and let them know that we love them as well. Michelle and I are looking forward to taking pictures with all of you. And we see a couple of new babies this time. [Laughter] We always get our baby fix and—[laughter]—when we take these photos.

But the main thing I just want to say is keep up the extraordinary work. To Colonel Killeen and the rest of the commanding officers here, thank you for doing such an extraordinary job. And thank you for welcoming us as well. The only problem I've got when I'm here is having to work out with marines in the gym. [Laughter] Because I generally feel like your Commander in Chief is in pretty good shape, and

then I get next to some guy curling a hundred pounds, and it makes me feel small. [Laughter] But that's okay. It gives me some inspiration. I'm going to work harder so I can keep up with you next year, all right?

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. Merry Christmas. Happy New Year.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:32 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Adrianna M. Vorderbruggen, T. Sgt. Joseph G. Lemm, S. Sgt. Louis M. Bonacasa, S. Sgt. Michael A. Cinco, S. Sgt. Chester J. McBride, and S. Sgt. Peter W. Taub, U.S. Air Force personnel who were killed in a terrorist attack near Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, on December 21; and Col. Sean C. Killeen, USMC, commanding officer, Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

Statement on the Observance of Kwanzaa *December 26, 2015*

Michelle and I extend our warmest wishes to families across the country celebrating Kwanzaa this holiday season. Today begins a weeklong celebration of African American heritage and culture through family and community festivities. Kwanzaa's seven principles—unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith—are also shared values that bind us as Americans. And in the spirit

of the season, we reflect on the blessings of the past year and commit to building a brighter future for all our children. As families, friends, and neighbors come together today to light the kinara, our family sends our best wishes for a happy and healthy new year.

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