

## Remarks at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii December 25, 2016

*The President.* Hello, everybody! Merry Christmas!

*Audience members.* Merry Christmas!

*The President.* Aloha! *Mele Kalikimaka!*

*Audience members.* Aloha!

*The President.* Thank you so much. Well, I just want to, first of all, thank Colonel Killeen and General Cavanaugh and Sergeant Major Hall and all of you for the unbelievable service that you have rendered our country. This is one of our favorite things to do, because it's one of those circumstances where we get a chance to not just say thank you to our incredible men and women in uniform, but oftentimes, we also get a chance to see some families.

And as Michelle and Jill Biden have worked so diligently to tell the rest of the country, not only do our troops serve, but their families serve alongside them.

[*At this point, the First Lady applauded and cheered.*]

See—[*applause*—]—that's what she just said.

And yesterday, during Christmas, something that I've been doing during Christmas in—

*The First Lady.* Today is Christmas.

*The President.* Or yesterday, during Christmas Eve, thank you, but it was Christmas—

*The First Lady.* He's on vacation. [*Laughter*]

*The President.* No, no, no, hold on. There's a reason for that slight error, because my time was off. Yesterday I called—as I do every Christmas—some of our folks that are stationed overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan and some in some very remote spots; some of them who, as we speak, are carrying out missions to defeat ISIL, carrying out missions to protect us from all manner of threat.

And just to remind them that, as tough as it is to be deployed, the people here in America, back home, understand that every single day that you're serving, you're fighting for our free-

dom and fighting to keep us safe and fighting to maintain our way of life. It's impossible for us to fully repay what you've done and the sacrifices you make. But at least, it's important to hear from us that what you do matters and that we know about it and that we're grateful and that we'll stay grateful even when many of you end up being out of uniform and are veterans and that we make sure that we're serving you as well you served us.

So I just want all of you to know that it has been the privilege of my life to serve as your Commander in Chief. I know Michelle feels the same way when it comes to being able to stand alongside our military families and our veterans. And although this will be my last time addressing you as President, I want you to know that, as a citizen, my gratitude will remain and our commitment to standing by you every step of the way, that won't stop.

So thank you so much for everything that you've done. I hope you guys have had a wonderful Christmas. Young people, I hope Santa was okay. [*Laughter*] And we look forward to seeing you for many years to come, because I understand that I still have a little bit of rank as ex-President. [*Laughter*] So I still get to use the gym on base—[*laughter*]—and, of course, the golf course. [*Laughter*]

So thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. We'll see you taking pictures. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:28 p.m. in the mess hall. In his remarks, he referred to Col. Sean C. Killeen, USMC, commanding officer, and Sgt. Maj. Gregory L. Hall, USMC, sergeant major, Marine Corps Base Hawaii; Brig. Gen. Brian W. Cavanaugh, USMC, deputy commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific; and Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

## Statement on the Observance of Kwanzaa

December 26, 2016

In this holiday season, Michelle and I send our best wishes to those celebrating Kwanzaa. For families across the country, today marks the beginning of a joyous time to reflect on the rich African American culture and to remember the principles of unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith—

principles that reflect our most cherished values as Americans.

As we reflect upon this year, we look forward to the blessings and aspirations that await us in the year to come, and we wish those families that will gather together and light the kinara blessings for a happy and healthy new year.

## Remarks With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii

December 27, 2016

*Prime Minister Abe.* President Obama, Commander Harris, ladies and gentlemen, and all American citizens: I stand here at Pearl Harbor as the Prime Minister of Japan.

If we listen closely, we can make out the sound of restless waves breaking and then retreating again. The calm inlet of brilliant blue is radiant with the gentle sparkle of the warm sun. Behind me, a striking white form atop the azure is the USS Arizona Memorial.

Together with President Obama, I paid a visit to that memorial, the resting place for many souls. It was a place which brought utter silence to me. Inscribed there are the names of the servicemen who lost their lives. Sailors and marines hailing from California and New York, Michigan and Texas, and various other places, serving to uphold their noble duty of protecting the homeland they loved, lost their lives amidst searing flames that day when aerial bombing tore the USS *Arizona* in two.

Even 75 years later, the USS *Arizona*, now at rest atop the seabed, is the final resting place for a tremendous number of sailors and Marines. Listening again, as I focus my senses, alongside the song of the breeze and the rumble of the rolling waves, I can almost discern the voices of those crewmen: voices of lively conversations, upbeat and at ease on that day, on a Sunday morning; voices of young servicemen talking to each other about their futures and dreams; voices calling out the names of

loved ones in their very final moments; voices praying for the happiness of children still unborn. Each and every one of those servicemen had a mother and a father anxious about his safety. Many had wives and girlfriends they loved, and many must have had children they would have loved watch grow up. All of that was brought to an end. When I contemplate that solemn reality, I am rendered entirely speechless.

“Rest in peace, precious souls of the fallen.” With that overwhelming sentiment, I cast flowers, on behalf of Japanese people, upon the waters where those sailors and marines sleep.

President Obama, the people of the United States of America, and the people around the world: As the Prime Minister of Japan, I offer my sincere and everlasting condolences to the souls of those who lost their lives here, as well as to the spirits of all the brave men and women whose lives were taken by a war that commenced in this very place and also to the souls of the countless innocent people who became the victims of the war.

We must never repeat the horrors of war again. This is the solemn vow we, the people of Japan, have taken. And since the war, we have created a free and democratic country that values the rule of law and has resolutely upheld our vow never again to wage war. We, the people of Japan, will continue to uphold this unwavering principle while harboring quiet pride