

working together. Because that's always been our story: the story of ordinary people coming together in the hard, slow, sometimes frustrating, but always vital, work of self-government.

It has been the privilege of my life to serve as your President. And as I prepare to take on the even more important role of citizen, know that I will be there with you every step of the way to ensure that this country forever strives to live up to the incredible promise of our founding: that all of us are created equal and all of us deserve every chance to live out our dreams.

Message on the President's Farewell Address to the Nation *January 2, 2017*

In 1796, as George Washington set the precedent for a peaceful, democratic transfer of power, he also set a precedent by penning a farewell address to the American people. And over the 220 years since, many American presidents have followed his lead.

On Tuesday, January 10, I'll go home to Chicago to say my grateful farewell to you, even if you can't be there in person.

I'm just beginning to write my remarks. But I'm thinking about them as a chance to say thank you for this amazing journey, to celebrate the ways you've changed this country for the better these past eight years, and to offer some thoughts on where we all go from here.

Remarks During a Meeting With Department of Defense Leadership *January 4, 2017*

Well, happy New Year, everybody. Let me begin by thanking Ash Carter, our Secretary of Defense; General Joe Dunford, Vice Chair Paul Selva, and all of our commanders here.

The purpose of this meeting, something I do on a regular basis, is to allow me to hear directly from those who are charged with the most solemn responsibility of maintaining the finest fighting force that the world has ever known and keeping the American people safe. It is in these meetings that we have been able to set broad

From the Obama family to yours, have a happy and blessed 2017.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:30 p.m. on December 16 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on December 31. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 30, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 31. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Since 2009, we've faced our fair share of challenges, and come through them stronger. That's because we have never let go of a belief that has guided us ever since our founding—our conviction that, together, we can change this country for the better.

So I hope you'll join me one last time.

Because, for me, it's always been about you.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as an e-mail message from the President distributed to the White House e-mail list and posted on the White House blog.

strategy, identify areas where we have to improve, address the health of the force. And I can say to the American people that they are extraordinarily lucky and I am extraordinarily lucky to be served by such extraordinary patriots.

This will be my last meeting with them. And so part of my goal here is just to say thank you to them and let them know how much I appreciate the counsel, the advice, the leadership that they have consistently shown throughout my time in office.

But in addition to saying thank you, I will get their views on the fact that we still have a lot of active threats around the world and we still have men and women in harm's way around the world who are busy protecting our homeland and our vital interests and our allies. And we've got to make sure that during this transition period that there is a seamless passing of the baton, that there's continuity, and that any issues that still remain—and obviously, we still have major fights against ISIS in Mosul and in Syria; Afghanistan is still active—that in all of these areas we are doing everything we can to make sure that the next President will benefit from the same kinds of outstanding advice and service that these people around the table have provided me.

So it has been, as I've said repeatedly, one of the greatest honors and privileges of being President is serving as Commander in Chief to such outstanding people. And I couldn't have done it without all of you. And I know that my

optimism about America going forward is in part because we have such an amazing military, not only one that knows how to fight, but also knows how to uphold the values of rule of law and professionalism and integrity and recognizes our constitutional structure and maintains strict adherence and respect for civilian authority and democratic practices in determining how we use the awesome force of the American military.

So I just want to say thank you to all of you. And with that, we've got to do some work. All right?

Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:31 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President-elect Donald J. Trump. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, also known as ISIS.

Remarks at an Armed Forces Full Honor Review Farewell Ceremony at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Virginia January 4, 2017

Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you. Please be seated.

Well, good afternoon. It turns out, these are easier when you're talking about somebody else. [Laughter] At moments like this, I think of all the times that I've stood before our men and women in uniform, commissioning our newest officers, presiding over promotions, presenting the Commander in Chief's Trophy to the best football team in the military. I will let you argue over that one. [Laughter] I have never taken sides.

Secretary Carter, I could not be more grateful for your gracious words, but more importantly, for your outstanding leadership across, as you noted, more than three decades and nearly all of my Presidency. You have always given me, Ash, your best strategic counsel. You've made sure that we were investing in innovation for the long term and a strong force for the future. As a physicist, Ash is also one of

the few people who actually understands how our defense systems work. And I know that our troops and their families are immensely grateful for the compassion that you and Stephanie have shown them over the years. So to you and your family, on behalf of all of us, thank you for your outstanding service.

General Dunford, we've relied on you as Commandant of the Marine Corps, as our commander in Afghanistan, and now, as our Nation's highest ranking military officer. I thank you and General Selva and the entire Joint Chiefs for the unvarnished military advice that you've always provided to me, for your dedication, for your professionalism, for you integrity. Because of you, because of this team, our Armed Forces are more integrated and better prepared across domains: a truly Joint Force. Which is why, as a White Sox fan, I can overlook the fact that you love the Red Sox. [Laughter] Moreover, on a personal note,