

he's gone before you know he was there. [Laughter] Santa, I can assure you, it's a lot easier on a flying sled than it is on Air Force One. [Laughter]

I want to thank Peter Nostrand, the chairman of the Christmas Pageant of Peace, and John Betchkal, the president. I want to thank very much Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton and her staff for helping put this fine event on. I want to thank all the members of my Cabinet who are here. I appreciate Fran Mainella, who's the Director of the National Park Service. I want to thank all the National Park Service employees who work so hard on behalf of the American people.

I want to thank Father Kleinweber for his gracious offering of prayer. I appreciate the musicians—fantastic job tonight. Thank you all for coming. I want to thank the members of the board of the Christmas Pageant of Peace. I want to welcome all the children from the Boys and Girls Clubs from this region for being here.

Also with us this evening are military personnel, including some who have recently returned from duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. I know your families are glad to have you back. They're proud of your service, and so is our country. On behalf of all Americans, welcome home, and job well done.

We also honor all of our fellow Americans serving far away from home during the holidays. Separation from loved ones is especially difficult this time of year. Our people in uniform can know that their families miss them and love them, that millions are praying for them, and that America is grateful for the men and women who serve and defend our country.

The story of Christmas is familiar to us all, and it still holds a sense of wonder and surprise. When the good news came first to a young woman from Nazareth, her response was understandable. She asked, "How can this be?" The news would bring difficulty to her family and suspicion upon herself. Yet, Mary gave her reply, "Be it unto me according to Thy word." The wait for a new king had been long, and the manner of his arrival was not as many had expected. The king's first cries were heard by shepherds and cattle. He was raised by a carpenter's son.

Yet this one humble life lifted the sights of humanity forever. And in His words we hear a voice like no other. Across the generations, the poor have heard words of hope, the proud have heard words of challenge, and the weak and the dying have heard words of assurance. And mankind has been given a message first delivered by angels on a shepherd's field: "Fear not."

As we near Christmas in a time of war, these words bring comfort. We don't know all of God's ways, yet the Christmas story promises that God's purpose is justice and His plan is peace. At times this belief is tested. During the Civil War, Longfellow wrote a poem that later became a part of a Christmas carol, "Hate is strong and mocks the song of peace on Earth, good will to men."

That poem also reminds us that hate is not the final word: "Then pealed the bells more loud and deep, 'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep, the wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on Earth, good will to men.'"

And now as an expression of our own hope for peace in this Christmas season, we light the national tree. Maggie Stuempfle and Andre Joyner are with us here. They're members of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Laura and I would like to ask Maggie and Andre to come up, and we'll turn on the lights. But I ask you all to join us in a national count down, starting with five, four, three, two, one.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:55 p.m. on the Ellipse during the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace. In his remarks, he referred to Father Dennis Kleinweber, pastor, St. Philomena Catholic Church, East Cleveland, OH.

### **Statement on Signing the Proclamation To Provide for the Termination of Action Taken With Regard to Imports of Certain Steel Products**

*December 4, 2003*

Today, I signed a proclamation ending the temporary steel safeguard measures I put in place in March 2002. Prior to that time, steel prices were at 20-year lows, and the U.S. International Trade Commission found that a surge in imports to the U.S. market was

causing serious injury to our domestic steel industry. I took action to give the industry a chance to adjust to the surge in foreign imports and to give relief to the workers and communities that depend on steel for their jobs and livelihoods. These safeguard measures have now achieved their purpose, and as a result of changed economic circumstances it is time to lift them.

The U.S. steel industry wisely used the 21 months of breathing space we provided to consolidate and restructure. The industry made progress increasing productivity, lowering production costs, and making America more competitive with foreign steel producers. Steel producers and workers have negotiated new groundbreaking labor agreements that allow greater flexibility and increase job stability. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation has guaranteed the pensions of eligible steelworkers and retirees and relieved the high pension costs that burdened some companies. My jobs-and-growth plan has also created more favorable economic conditions for the industry, and the improving economy will help further stimulate demand.

To keep the positive momentum going, we will continue our steel import licensing and monitoring program so that my administration can quickly respond to future import surges that could unfairly damage the industry. We will continue negotiations with our trading partners through the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development to establish new and stronger disciplines on subsidies that governments grant to their steel producers. We will continue to pursue economic policies that create the conditions for steel producers, steel consumers—who rely on steel to produce goods ranging from refrigerators to auto parts—and other U.S. manufacturers to succeed.

I strongly believe that America's workers can compete with anyone in the world as long as we have a fair and level playing field. Free trade opens foreign markets to American products and creates jobs for American workers, and an integral part of our commitment to free trade is our commitment to enforcing our trade laws. I am pleased the steel industry seized the opportunity we provided to regain its competitiveness and assist steel-

workers and their communities. As a result, U.S. steel companies are now once again well-positioned to compete both at home and globally.

**Proclamation 7741—To Provide for the Termination of Action Taken With Regard to Imports of Certain Steel Products**

*December 4, 2003*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

1. Proclamation 7529 of March 5, 2002, implemented actions (safeguard measures) of a type described in section 203(a)(3)(A) and (B) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2253(a)(3)(A) and (B)) (the "Trade Act"), with respect to imports of certain flat steel (consisting of slabs, plate, hot-rolled steel, cold-rolled steel, and coated steel), hot-rolled bar, cold-finished bar, rebar, certain welded tubular products, carbon and alloy fittings, stainless steel bar, stainless steel rod, tin mill products, and stainless steel wire, as defined in paragraph 7 of Proclamation 7529 (collectively, "certain steel products").

2. In Proclamation 7529 and Proclamation 7576 of July 3, 2002, I authorized the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to further consider any request for exclusion of a particular product and upon finding that a particular product should be excluded, to modify the provisions of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTS) created by the Annex to Proclamation 7529 to exclude such particular product from the pertinent safeguard measure established in Proclamation 7529. Pursuant to that authorization, the USTR published four notices of exclusions of products from the safeguard measures in the *Federal Register* at 67 *Fed. Reg.* 16484 (April 5, 2002), 67 *Fed. Reg.* 46221 (July 12, 2002), 67 *Fed. Reg.* 56182 (August 30, 2002), and 68 *Fed. Reg.* 15494 (March 31, 2003). The USTR also published notice in the *Federal Register* of technical corrections to that Annex.