

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

The President's Weekly Address

December 22, 2012

The President. Hi, everybody. This weekend, as you gather with family and friends, Michelle and I wanted to wish you a merry Christmas and a happy holidays.

The First Lady. We both love this time of year. And there's nothing quite like celebrating the holidays at the White House. It's an incredible experience and one that we try to share with as many folks as possible.

This month, more than 90,000 people will come through the White House to see the holiday decorations. And our theme for this year's holiday season was "Joy to All," a reminder to appreciate the many joys of the holidays: the joy of giving, the joy of service, and of course, the joy of homecomings.

The President. That's right. This weekend, parents are picking up their kids from college and making room for all the laundry they bring with them. Children are counting down the hours until the grandparents arrive. And uncles, aunts, and cousins are making their way to join the family and share in the holiday spirit.

The First Lady. That's what makes this season so special, getting to spend time with the people we love most.

The President. And this year, that's especially true for some of our military families. You see, the war in Iraq is over, the transition in Afghanistan is underway, and after a decade of war, our heroes are coming home. All across America, military families are reuniting.

So this week, let's give thanks for our veterans and their families. And let's say a prayer for all our troops, especially those in Afghanistan, who are spending this holiday season overseas, risking their lives to defend the freedoms that we hold so dear.

The First Lady. And remember, when our men and women in uniform answer the call to serve, their families serve right along with them. All across the country, military spouses have been raising their families all alone during those long deployments. And let's not forget about our military kids, moving from base to base and school to school every few years and stepping up to help out at home when mom or dad is away.

Our military families sacrifice so much on our behalf, and Barack and I believe that we should serve them as well as they serve this country. That's why Dr. Jill Biden and I started Joining Forces, an effort to rally all Americans to honor and support our veterans and military families. Just go to joiningforces.gov to find out how you can show your gratitude for their service.

The President. Because that's what this season is all about. For my family and millions of Americans, it's a time to celebrate the birth of Christ, to reflect on His life and learn from His example. Every year, we commit to love one another, to give of ourselves, to be our brother's keeper, to be our sister's keeper. But those ideas are not just part of our faith, they're part of all faiths. And they unite us as Americans.

The First Lady. In this country, we take care of each other. And in this season of giving, it's inspiring to see so many people all across America taking the time to help those most in need.

The President. That's part of what makes us such a compassionate nation. And this year, I know many of you are extending that kindness to the families who are still picking up the pieces from Hurricane Sandy and extending your prayers to the people of Newtown, Connecticut.

The First Lady. So thank you for all that you've done this year on behalf of your fellow Americans.

The President. And on behalf of my favorite Americans—Michelle, Malia, Sasha, and Bo—merry Christmas, everybody.

The First Lady. Happy holidays.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:35 p.m. on December 14 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on December 22. In the address, the President referred to Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 21, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 22.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha".

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Connecticut : Shootings at in Newtown; Holidays and special observances : Christmas; Iraq : U.S. and coalition forces, withdrawal; Natural disasters : Hurricane Sandy.

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