

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017

Remarks in a Videoconference Call With United States Servicemembers From Palm Beach, Florida

November 23, 2017

Hello, everybody, and happy Thanksgiving. You're very, very special people to me and to everybody in this country, that I can tell you. And I've got five deployed units bravely representing each branch of our Armed Forces. And we're going on live right now, and surrounding me is a lot of press. Better me than you, believe me, fellas. Better me than you.

It's an honor to speak with you all and to give God thanks for the blessings of freedom and for the heroes who really have this tremendous courage that you do to defend us and to defend freedom. So we want to thank you all very much. Very, very special people. Like, it doesn't get more special.

Representing the Army, we have the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 82d Airborne who are conducting operations in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel. Colonel Toby and—where is Toby? Raise your hand, Toby. Where's Toby? Thank you, Toby. I hear so many good things about you, Toby. That's good news.

But, Toby Magsig, happy Thanksgiving to all of you. And I have to say, just directly to the folks in Afghanistan, everybody is talking about the progress you've made in the last few months since I opened it open. We opened it up. We said go ahead; we're going to fight to win. We're not fighting anymore to just walk around. We're fighting to win. And you people are really—you've turned it around over the last 3 to 4 months like nobody has seen. And they are talking about it. So thank you very much—brave, incredible fighters.

Direct Support Team Golf of the Marine Corps Special Operations is also on the line. These great marines are operating in Iraq in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. Major Jonathan Rigline is the commanding officer. Semper Fi. Semper Fi.

I have a great marine who's the Chief of Staff—as you know, John Kelly—who's doing an incredible job, just like any marine would. And, Major, to you and to all the marines doing this great work in delivering defeat after defeat to ISIS—what you're doing with ISIS is, again, being talked about. We're being talked about again as an Armed Forces. We're really winning. We know how to win, but we have to let you win. They weren't letting you win before; they were letting you play even. We're letting you win.

I also want to say hello to Captain Dave Stoner and all of the sailors aboard the *USS Monterey*, sailing in support of both the 6th and 5th fleets. The *Monterey's* primary missions include ballistic missile defense, anti-air warfare, anti-surface warfare, and anti-submarine warfare. Thank you to everyone aboard the *USS Monterey* for your dedication. Thank you very much.

We're also joined by the 74th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron from Incirlik Air Base. Lieutenant Colonel Craig Morash, your squadron has done a tremendous job, tremendous, and we appreciate it. The fight against ISIS, it's coming our way, coming our way. Big, big difference. A lot of things have happened. They say we've made more progress against ISIS than they did in years of the previous administration, and that's because I'm letting you do your job.

You're performing more than 1,000 missions over the skies of Iraq and Syria in the last 4 months. We're very, very proud of you. And believe me, everybody in this country is watching, and they're seeing, and they're seeing positive reports for a change, instead of the neutral and negative reports. It's all positive.

To the coasties aboard the cutter *Wrangell*, welcome and happy Thanksgiving. Lieutenant Ryan Hudson, you and the entire crew aboard the *Wrangell* are doing incredible work in the Arabian Gulf, performing theater security, defense operations, and maritime infrastructure protection. Thank you very much for your service. Very important area.

For each of you, I know it's hard to be away from home at this time of the year. We're doing well at home. The economy is doing really great. When you come back, you're going to see with the jobs and the companies coming back into our country and the stock market just hit a record high. Unemployment is the lowest it's been in 17 years. So you're fighting for something real; you're fighting for something good.

A lot of things have happened with our country over the last very short period of time, and they're really good—they're really good. I especially like saying that companies are starting to come back. Now we're working on tax cuts. Big fat beautiful tax cuts. And hopefully, we'll get that, and then you're going to really see things happen.

So as we give thanks for this holiday, I know I speak on behalf of all Americans when I say that we totally support you. In fact, we love you, we really do. We love you. And this is a Thanksgiving that you won't forget. You're in a very different part of the world than you were used to, but, boy, are you doing a job there. And thank God for you. Thank God for you.

We also want to give thanks to our loved ones, our amazing military families. I know they miss you, and they miss you so deeply and so badly. They're every bit as important as everyone else you work with because they put up with so much. They put up with the time away and all of those things that they have to endure. And they endure it because they love our country and because they love you. And believe me, I know so much about military families. They respect and appreciate what you're doing for this country, and they respect and appreciate what you're doing for them as a family. So your families love you, and they miss you.

And again, I'm going to now—I'm surrounded by reporters and press, and I'm going to ask them to leave, and we're going to have very confidential, personal conversations. We're set up for that. You know, it's really wonderful what technology can do. So I'll ask the press to get out, and I'll say, "You're fired."

And by the way, media, happy Thanksgiving, I must say. Have a good Thanksgiving in Palm Beach, Florida. Thank you all for being here. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 a.m. at the Mar-a-Lago Club. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : U.S. servicemembers, videoconference call from Palm Beach, FL.

Locations: Palm Beach, FL.

Names: Hudson, Ryan; Kelly, John F.; Magsig, Tobin A.; Morash, Craig; Rigline, Jonathan; Stoner, Dave.

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S : Servicemembers :: Meetings with President; Armed Forces, U.S. : Military families; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Economy, national : Improvement; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Florida : President's visits; Holidays and special observances : Thanksgiving; Iraq : Security cooperation with U.S.; Syria : U.S. and coalition airstrikes; Taxation : Tax relief; Terrorism : Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: Chief of Staff.

DCPD Number: DCPD201700867.