to return power to the democratically elected government. Now, under President Aristide, Haiti is free, democratic, and more secure. Its people have a chance to rebuild their nation. Our hemisphere is more democratic and more stable, and that's good for America.

When Iraq again threatened the stability of the Persian Gulf, I ordered our troops, ships, and planes to the region to stop a would-be aggressor in his tracks. In this vital part of the world, too, we have protected the peace.

I know all Americans share my pride in the brave men and women of our Armed Forces who are standing watch for freedom and security today and in this holiday season in Haiti and the Persian Gulf and, indeed, all around the world. I wish all our troops could come home for the holidays, but those who aren't are doing important work for our Nation. And as you gather in your homes this week, I hope you'll join me in a prayer for their well-being and the health and happiness of their families.

All around the world, our efforts to build peace have contributed to progress in solving what once seemed to be unsolvable problems. In South Africa, the long night of apartheid has given way to a new day of freedom. In Ireland, after centuries of struggle, a lasting settlement between Catholics and Protestants is finally within reach. And in the Holy Land, so close to the hearts of many of us at this time of year, Israelis and Arabs are turning the page on the past and embracing a future of peace.

Of course, there are still too many people, from Bosnia to the refugee camps outside Rwanda, who are plagued by violence and cruelty and hatred. And we must continue our efforts to help them find peace. But we should remember how many people around the world are moving toward freedom and how fortunate we are here in America to have been able to help them to move toward freedom. To them, America is a beacon of hope. They admire our values and our strength. They see in us a nation that has been graced by peace and prosperity. They look to us for leadership and for eternal renewed energy and progress.

For Hillary and for myself, I want to wish you and your loved ones a safe and happy holiday.

God bless you all, and God bless America.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:40 p.m. on December 22 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 24.

Christmas Greeting to the Nation

December 24, 1994

The President. On this special day, we send our best wishes to you and your family, and especially to the families of our service men and women who are so many miles away from home this Christmas, doing America's work overseas, keeping the peace in the Persian Gulf, and bringing freedom and democracy to Haiti. We salute them as they make the world a safer place for all of us, for our children and for future generations.

Hillary Clinton. And we thank all of you who are giving your time today serving others, the police and fire and medical staffs on duty and all the mothers and fathers, friends and volunteers who are caring for loved ones and neighbors nearby. Thank you all for spreading good will and for showing what the true spirit of Christmas is all about.

The President. As 1994 comes to a close, we wish everyone the joy and peace of this blessed season and good health and happiness throughout the coming year. Enjoy the holiday.

Hillary Clinton. And have a Merry Christmas.

The President. And a Happy New Year.

NOTE: The greeting was videotaped at 1:30 p.m. on December 16 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on December 24. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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