

Dec. 26 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

Message on the Observance of Kwanzaa
December 20, 2001

I am pleased to send warm greetings to all who are celebrating Kwanzaa.

Established in 1966, Kwanzaa represents an African-American and Pan-African holiday celebrating family, community, and culture. The seven-day observance, beginning December 26 and ending January 1, serves as a special time to recognize and reaffirm the Nguzo Saba, or Seven Principles, of African culture. These are unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.

Kwanzaa provides an opportunity for people of African heritage, regardless of their religious background or faith, to come together and to show reverence for their Creator and creation, to commemorate the

past, to recommit to high ideals, and to celebrate the good in life. These life-affirming traditions take on particular resonance this year, as the United States and the world face new challenges to peace. As individuals, families, and communities take part in this celebration of unity and of enduring values, I extend best wishes to people throughout the globe for a wonderful and memorable Kwanzaa.

Best wishes on this special occasion.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 26. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks Welcoming General Tommy R. Franks and an Exchange With
Reporters in Crawford, Texas
December 28, 2001

The President. Good morning. As you can see, I've invited a guest to come to the ranch. Tommy Franks is no stranger to Texas. After all, he was raised in Midland, Texas. And I'm looking forward to taking him over to the house here in a minute to say hello to Laura. Both of them went to Midland Lee High School, at about the same time.

But Tommy has just come back from the Afghan theater. He gave me a full briefing on what he saw and what he heard. We just got off of a teleconference with the national security team, to discuss his trip and to discuss what's taking place in Afghanistan.

I want to thank you for coming, Tommy. I am real proud of the military, and I'm proud of the commander. Tommy has done

everything we've asked. He is fulfilling the mission with patience and discipline and success. He's a down-to-earth, no-nonsense guy, precisely the kind of man we need to lead a complex mission such as this.

You know, a couple of months ago, a lot of people said that this administration and our military really weren't sure what we were doing. But I had confidence all along, and the reason why I did—confidence in the success of what we set out to do—was because I had a chance to be briefed by Tommy Franks on the strategy and on the plan and on how we were going to use our United States military. And he hasn't let us down. The country needs to be proud of the military, and one reason that I'm so pleased to welcome Tommy

is to be able to say that out loud in Tommy's presence.

So I'm going to have Tommy say a few words, and then we'll be glad to answer a couple of questions.

General Franks. Thank you, Mr. President. As the President said, my wife and I recently have had an opportunity to be with a bunch of great young people, soldiers and sailors, airmen, marines, in the frontline states around Afghanistan and in Afghanistan and Kandahar and at Camp Rhino and up in Kabul. We had a chance to meet with these young people who are doing the work for the Nation.

We also had a chance to attend the installation ceremony in Afghanistan, where we saw Mr. Karzai and members of that team form an interim government in Afghanistan, where for the first time in decades, more than 26 million people will have an opportunity to have their way represented in that government.

And the combination of seeing these great young people and seeing this momentous event just filled me with a desire to be able to brief the President on what's going on over there in the theater, on what our people are doing, how they feel about what they're doing.

And so, Mr. President, thanks very much for having me out here in Crawford.

The President. You bet.

Scott [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press].

Videotape of Usama bin Laden/War on Terrorism

Q. Mr. President, what's your reaction to the new bin Laden tape this week? And do you fear he's now eluded the manhunt? Also, are you concerned that if military tribunals require a unanimous verdict for the death penalty, some terrorists could avoid execution?

The President. Let me start with the first of your three questions, which was what? I've already forgotten.

Q. What's your reaction to the bin Laden tape? Are you afraid he's eluded the manhunt?

The President. Oh, the tape, yes. I didn't watch it all. I saw snippets of it on TV. You know, it's—who knows when it was made. Secondly, he is not escaping us. This is a guy who, 3 months ago, was in control of a country. Now he's maybe in control of a cave. He's on the run.

Listen, a while ago I said to the American people, our objective is more than bin Laden, but one of the things for certain is we're going to get him running and keep him running and bring him to justice. And that's what's happening. He's on the run, if he's running at all.

So we don't know whether he's in a cave with the door shut or a cave with the door open; we just don't know. There's all kinds of reports and all kinds of speculation, but one thing we know is that he's not in charge of Afghanistan anymore. He's not in charge of the—he's not the parasite that invaded the host, the Taliban. We know that for certain. And we also know that we're on the hunt, and he knows that we're on the hunt. And I like our position better than his.

In terms of whether or not the tribunals will be able to render the justice necessary, that—I spoke to the Secretary of Defense today about the story in the newspaper. Evidently, somebody in our Government wanted to show off to his family or her family in between Christmas and New Year's by leaking information in the press that he or she thought would be helpful to the Government. The truth of the matter is, the Secretary of Defense hadn't even seen the report that was on the front page of America's newspapers. So my answer to your question, Scott, is I know that the leaked report is preliminary, that they're still in discussions about how best to bring justice.

But one thing is for certain, that whatever the procedures are for the military tribunals, our system will be more fair than

the system of bin Laden and the Taliban. That is for certain. The prisoners that we capture will be given a heck of a lot better chance in court than those citizens of ours who were in the World Trade Center or in the Pentagon were given by Mr. bin Laden.

David [David Gregory, NBC News]. Good to see you, lad.

Q. Good to see you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. Can you say with confidence now that Usama bin Laden is no longer in a position to mastermind another terrorist attack against the United States or our allies? And related to that, you talked about 2002 being a year of war. What can you say to prepare the American people for what that vision is, what they need to be prepared for, as compared to what they've seen in Afghanistan?

The President. Well, I hope 2002 is a year of peace. But I am also realistic, and I know full well that bin Laden and his cronies would like to harm America again; bin Laden and his cronies would like to harm our allies. How do I know that? I receive intelligence reports on a daily basis that indicates that that's his desires. And therefore, the United States must be vigilant, must make sure we continue to focus on our homeland security measures, must disrupt, must use our intelligence-gathering network to prevent the enemy from attacking. And so, while I hope 2002 is a year of peace, I'm realistic.

As to whether or not bin Laden is in control of some network, who knows? The thing we're certain about is that he's on the run, that he's hiding in caves, if hiding at all. And the other thing I'm certain about is we will bring him to justice. I don't know whether it's going to be tomorrow, but Tommy will tell you that I haven't said, "Tommy, get him tomorrow." I said, "Just get him," and we will. We will bring him to justice.

We don't know, David, whether or not he's given any orders to any of his soldiers,

but we take nothing for granted. And so our country still remains on alert, and we're actively looking for anybody who would harm America.

The shoe bomber was a case in point, where the country has been on alert. A stewardess on an American Airlines flight—or a flight attendant on an American Airlines flight was vigilant, saw something amiss, and responded. It's an indication that the culture of America has shifted to one of alertness. And I'm grateful for the flight attendant's response, as I'm sure the passengers on that airplane. But we've got to be aware that there are still enemies to the country. And our Government is responding accordingly.

Situation in South Asia

Q. Mr. President, do you think that India and Pakistan are sliding toward war?

The President. One of the things that we discussed today in the national security conference, and I discussed yesterday with members of my national security team, was the India and Pakistan issue. Colin Powell has spoke to both sides today, urging restraint, urging calm. I was pleased to—I'm pleased to note that President Musharraf has announced the arrest of 50 extreme terrorists—extremists or terrorists. And I hope India takes note of that, that the President is responding forcefully and actively to bring those who would harm others to justice.

The war on terror is not just an American war on terrorists; it's a civilized government war on terror that we're talking about here. But my Government and my administration is working actively to bring some calm in the region, to hopefully convince both sides to stop the escalation of force. And as I say, I'm pleased that President Musharraf is responding to the Indian requests to round up those who would do harm to others and incarcerate them, which he did.

Argentina

Q. Are you making any calls yourself, sir?

The President. Not yet. I will if need be. As a matter of fact, I have been making calls recently to leaders in our own hemisphere. I spoke to the Presidents of Mexico and Uruguay, Chile and Brazil about the Argentinean situation. I made it clear to those Governments that we want to work with them, to work together to make sure that the Argentineans understand that we will support a plan that sustains economic growth—we're willing to offer technical assistance through the IMF—that our Government is aware of what's taking place and that we're fully engaged in the issue.

Impact of September 11 on the President

Q. Mr. President, some say that the events of 2001 have changed you, while others say that you're the same person you always were.

The President. Yes.

Q. Who's right? Or is it fair to say there's some truth in both arguments?

The President. Talk to my wife. [*Laughter*] I don't know. I don't spend a lot of time looking in the mirror, except when I comb my hair. And—listen, I'll give you a hint. I liked coming to the ranch before September the 11th; I like coming to the ranch after September the 11th.

Enron Corporation

Q. [*Inaudible*—the war for a moment. Have you had any contact with Ken Lay or other Enron officials in the last 6 weeks—

The President. No.

Q. —and do you think that there is something the Government should do to help Enron—

The President. I have had no contact with Enron officials in the last 6 weeks. Do I think the Government ought to help what now?

Q. Help Enron or do something to help prevent some of these employees from losing their life savings.

The President. Well, I think the life savings issue is something we need to look into. I think it's very important to understand what took place. The Government will be looking into this. I mean, the SEC will be looking into matters; Congress appears to be looking into matters. There will be a lot of Government inquiry into Enron and what took place there.

I'm deeply concerned about the citizens of Houston who worked for Enron who lost life savings. It's very troubling to read the stories about those who locked up Enron stock—had their Enron stock locked up in their 401(k) plans and then saw their savings dissipate. I think it's very important for us to fully understand the why's of Enron. And there will be plenty of investigations.

Recess Appointments

Q. Sir, will you make recess appointments—

The President. Thinking about it. I don't know yet. I'm right now focused on the military operations in Afghanistan and giving Tommy a tour of my ranch. But I, at the appropriate time, will take a good, hard look at recess appointments.

I'm disappointed that a lot of my appointments were stalled in the United States Senate, weren't given a hearing. This Scalia man got out of committee, but never given a vote on the floor of the Senate. He's a good fellow; he ought to be approved. But I'll take a good, hard look at all the options available to me.

Operation Enduring Freedom

Q. Mr. President, is there a timetable in your mind for withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan? Or as long as bin Laden is still on the run, do you imagine them being there indefinitely?

The President. I imagine us being there for quite a long period of time. But my

timetable is going to be set by Tommy Franks. Tommy is in charge of the military operations; he's in charge of the military. I'll let Tommy speak for himself, but I will tell you this: We won't be making political decisions about what to do with our military.

I gave Tommy a mission; it was a well-defined mission. And Tommy is in charge of getting that mission done, and when Tommy says, "Mission complete, Mr. President," that's when we start moving troops out. But until he says that, I am—I will make the case to the American people that we're doing the right thing.

Q. What's your definition of the mission being complete in Afghanistan, sir?

The President. In Afghanistan? Well, Taliban gone, the country secure, the country stable, that Al Qaida cells rounded up, Taliban fighters brought to justice. The over 6,000 troops, prisoners being held—prisoners of war being held by our allies interrogated, finger-printing—I mean, there's a lot to do. And the American people just must understand when I said that we need to be patient, that I meant it. And we're going to be there for a while. And I don't know the exact moment when we leave, David, but it's not until this mission is complete.

The world must know that this administration will not blink in the face of danger, and will not tire when it comes to completing the missions that we said we would do. The world will learn that when the United States is harmed, we will follow through. The world will see that when we put a coalition together that says, "Join us," I mean it. And when I ask others to participate, I mean it. And in order to lead the coalition, we must show that we will complete the mission. And part of that mission is, as Tommy will tell you, is to make sure that Afghanistan is a stable country.

And he's got a lot to say on that if you want him to talk about it. Okay, bring the man to the mike.

Q. General Franks, could you talk about how you took evasive action when you were fired upon the other day? There was a report yesterday that your helicopter was fired upon.

Q. You should get right to that, sir, after you do the first question. [*Laughter*]

General Franks. Let me take that—let me take your question first. As we look around, today we have more than 50 nations involved in this coalition effort and around Afghanistan, providing support and so forth. We have 26 nations represented at our headquarters down in Tampa, Florida. We have 16 nations represented on the ground or in the air or at sea around Afghanistan.

And it's interesting that over the past 10 days, the numbers I've just described have grown, rather than shrinking. I think the view is that Afghanistan is a part of a global effort against terrorism, that we'll stay in Afghanistan as long as it takes to do what the President has said. We will do away with the Taliban, and that has been done. We now have a legitimate interim government in Kabul.

We will destroy the Al Qaida terrorist network inside Afghanistan. We will take care of the screening and the work that needs to be done with all these detainees—finger-printing, DNA work, photography, screening, interrogation. We'll determine which ones need to be brought out and need to be handled in some form of legal process.

How long will that take? I think the President said it immediately after the 11th of September, and I think many of us have said it about every day since then: It will take as long as it takes.

Interesting to me, the fact that these young people standing at Kandahar Airport a few nights ago, in the middle of the night, watching the USO show, showed me absolutely no desire to leave their mission at all. And so, I think it's best for all of us to recognize that we will not be hurried;

we will not be pressed into doing something that does not represent our national objectives; and we will take as long as it takes.

And a very short answer to the business of the helicopter—I have been told since I took that helicopter ride that someone took a shot at the helicopter. I didn't see it when it happened, and I believe it may have happened, but then again, this is Afghanistan, and we have pockets of Taliban still in that country. And that's one of the reasons that we're going to stay there until we have mopped all that up.

Q. Mr. President—

The President. Yes. It's your big day, Scott, two questions.

Q. A one-part question this time, I promise.

The President. Four questions, excuse me. [Laughter]

Usama bin Laden

Q. Would you prefer to see bin Laden captured and questioned about the attacks and possible future attacks?

The President. You know, dead or alive is fine with me.

Argentina

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned Argentina, and you talked about you support more technical assistance from the IMF for them. Would you support more money for Argentina from the IMF, or has the well kind of run dry there?

The President. Well, it depends upon what Argentina decides to do. The key for Argentina is to get her fiscal house in order, get monetary policy in order, and to develop a plan that will show sustained economic vitality and economic growth. But it's up to Argentina on how to develop the plan. As you know, there's been an interim government in place; there will be elections in a couple of months. And the point we've made to the Argentinean Government, as well as to our friends in the region, is that we will be willing to help them develop

the plan, if they ask for technical advice. It will all be done through the IMF.

But the first order of business is for the Argentineans to develop a plan to show us how they're going to get their house in order. They've got a lot of work to do, but—and all of us that are concerned about Argentina are willing to work together to get the job done. There was near unanimity on my phone calls to the other leaders in the region that—of the course of action that I just laid out.

Military Tribunals/John Walker Lindh

Q. Have you decided that anybody should be subjected to a military tribunal?

The President. Well, Americans shouldn't, as you know. I mean, I excluded any Americans.

Q. Of the prisoners, have you decided that anyone—

The President. Oh, have I made any decisions yet? Not at all; not yet, Dave. We're still—I still want to make sure that the—I still want to see what the Secretary of Defense recommends as to how to proceed. He has—as I said, he hasn't seen the now-famous document that some American decided to leak.

I don't know why people do that. I guess either to make you feel good and/or to make themselves feel good. But nevertheless, it was not very helpful. And as the Secretary of Defense said, he hasn't even seen the document yet. But they're working through, and we're working through, as you know, all the other types of cases that have come forward. I mean, as Tommy said, there's a lot of people to be questioned, and there's also a lot of decisions to be made as to how to run these folks through our system. And we're just not quite there yet. We've got time.

Q. What about Walker?

The President. Well, same situation. We've got time. And Walker is well-berthed on a U.S. warship. It's a heck of a lot more comfortable on that ship than he was in the basement of that prison. When he

decided—when he was captured, Walker made a terrible decision, and our system is such that he'll have proper justice. But he's working with the enemy, and we'll see how the courts deal with that.

Airline Treatment of Secret Service Agent

Q. Sir, were you upset that that Secret Service agent was kept off that plane? Because you have been saying this—

The President. Yes, I was. I talked to the man this morning. I told him how proud I was that he was by my side. He's here on the ranch, and he's guarding me. And of course, I was. We'll let the facts—they're going to get the facts out. There's an inquiry going on as to specifically what took place. But if he was treated that way because of his ethnicity, that will make me madder than heck.

Usama bin Laden

Q. There are increasing news reports that bin Laden escaped to Pakistan—

The President. Oh, yeah? Well, sorry to interrupt your question, but if you'd asked me the question yesterday, you would have said there's increasing news reports that he's dead, and the day before, that he's hiding in a cave. In other words, there's increasing speculation about bin Laden. But what one shouldn't speculate on is if he's alive, he's on the run. And you don't need to worry about whether or not we're going to get him, because we are. And it's just a matter of time. I mean, I've read reports where he dyed his hair red. That's not going to stop us from finding him.

Q. But what assurances have you gotten from President Musharraf that if that is the case, that he'll find him and turn him—

The President. Well, I appreciate that. President Musharraf has been very helpful. Tommy has visited with him; I visited with him; the Secretary of Defense has visited with him. And he said he will help in all matters. And we believe he'll help with Mr. bin Laden, too, if in fact he happens to

be in Pakistan. Who knows where he is? But one thing is for certain: He's on the losing side of a rout. And the other thing for certain is we're not going to stop until we get him and all those murderers that are associated with him.

And who knows how many we've gotten to date, because we're gathering evidence. We don't know whether some of those people are in those caves. And Tommy did a fine job of shutting them down. They may still be locked up in there. And as you know, we're sending troops up in that region to take a look at some of the caves to find out what's in there. And we're going to have to dig some of them out.

But as time will go on, we will know more and more about how successful we've been. The point is, is that we are going to be there for a while. I'm patient. The commander on the ground is executing the plan, and the American people are in strong support of what's taking place.

Listen, thank you all for being here today. It's great to see you. Welcome back to Prairie Chapel Ranch, and maybe we'll get you back out here before the New Year's. If not, Happy New Year. Thank you.

President's Visit to Crawford

Q. What are you doing for New Year's?

The President. Probably going to bed early. [Laughter]

Q. What are you doing with your days here?

The President. Well, I'm up—I was up this morning at 5 a.m., spent a little quality time with the First Lady. And I just finished my book, "Theodore Rex," by Edmund Morris, which is a fabulous book on Teddy Roosevelt. I recommend people reading it. I am going to—I would have gotten up and run 3 or 4 miles this morning, which I'll probably do that this afternoon. I'm going to take Tommy around to show him parts of the ranch. But if Tommy weren't here, I'd be working down there, a little chainsaw work, clearing some brush, burning some brush.

We're making great progress in one of our—one of the bottom areas that was heretofore relatively inaccessible. One of these days I'll take you down there. It's a beautiful place. It's a bodark grove—bodark tree is a native tree, real hard wood that grows these giant green, kind of apple-looking things. But I'll spend time doing that.

And then this afternoon—it gets dark here about 5:30 p.m., and so I'll probably watch a little University of Texas football tonight.

Q. What about the tree you planted yesterday?

The President. Tree plant, very good. My senior staff gave me a beautiful oak, 10-inch oak. And we planted her right outside the house. I haven't written my thank-you note yet, so I'll give them a verbal "Thanks for the tree." It is a beauty. And we planted about—I think we planted so far about 35 trees, live oaks and cedar elms here. And it's going to be a beautiful sight for when these trees—when they take off.

Did a little fishing yesterday, by the way. Not very successful. The water is cold; the fish are at the bottom. They're not biting very much. But just the fact that I was able to fish was a nice treat.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:58 a.m. outside the old residence at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; President Vicente Fox of Mexico; President Jorge Batlle of Uruguay; President Ricardo Lagos of Chile; President Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil; Kenneth L. Lay, chairman and chief executive officer, Enron Corp.; Eugene Scalia, nominee to be Solicitor for the Department of Labor; and Secret Service Agent Walied Shater. Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, commander in chief, U.S. Central Command, referred to his wife, Cathy; and Hamid Karzai, Chairman, interim Grand Council of Afghanistan.

Statement on Signing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 December 28, 2001

I have today signed into law S. 1438, the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002." The Act authorizes the funding necessary to defend the United States and its interests around the globe. In particular, it provides the resources needed to continue the war against global terrorism, accelerate programs for defense against biological or chemical attacks, pursue an effective missile defense, properly support members of the Armed Forces and their families, and begin to transform our Armed Forces to meet the military requirements of the 21st century.

The Act provides important improvements in the quality of life for the members

of our Armed Forces, who have dedicated their lives to the defense of their fellow citizens. It provides for a substantial and well-deserved increase in basic pay, improved educational opportunities as an incentive to reenlist, and more resources to improve military housing. The legislation also addresses important needs of military families, such as improved job training and education opportunities for military spouses and access for home-schooled children of military families to facilities and programs of Department of Defense dependent schools.

The Act will assist greatly in the rebuilding and reshaping of the Armed Forces to