

For nearly 80 years, in times of calm and in times of challenge, Americans have gathered for this ceremony. The simple story we remember during this season speaks to every generation. It is the story of a quiet birth in a little town on the margins of an indifferent empire, yet that single event set the direction of history and still changes millions of lives. For over two millennia, Christmas has carried the message that God is with us, and because He's with us, we can always live in hope.

In this season, we celebrate with our families—and deeply miss family members no longer with us. Thousands of families in our Nation are still grieving over the terrible losses that came to them last year on September the 11th. We pray for their comfort. We pray for the comfort for everyone who has lost a life this year.

Our entire Nation is also thinking at this time of year of the men and women in the military, many of whom will spend this Christmas at posts far from home. They stand between Americans and grave danger. They serve in the cause of peace and free-

dom. They wear the uniform proudly, and we are proud of them.

Laura and I wish every American family the blessings of this season, happy holidays, and a merry Christmas. And now we have the honor of lighting the National Christmas Tree. And joining us we've got two new friends, Samara Banks and Ben Schneller, to help us light this tree.

Now, if everybody—you all step up here. [*Laughter*] Get ready. Please join us in the countdown: Five, four, three, two, one.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:57 p.m. on the Ellipse during the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace. In his remarks, he referred to actress Barbara Eden, hostess, and Peter F. Nostrand, chairman, Christmas Pageant of Peace; entertainer Roy Clark, who played Santa Claus; and Samara Banks and Ben Schneller, children who assisted the President in lighting the National Christmas Tree. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Resignations of Treasury Secretary Paul H. O'Neill and National Economic Council Director Larry Lindsey

December 6, 2002

My economic team has worked with me to craft and implement an economic agenda that helped to lead the Nation out of recession and back into a period of growth. I appreciate Paul O'Neill's and Larry

Lindsey's important contributions to making this happen. Both are highly talented and dedicated, and they have served my administration and our Nation well. I thank them for their excellent service.

The President's Radio Address

December 7, 2002

Good morning. This weekend is the deadline for the Iraqi regime to fully disclose to the U.N. Security Council all of

its weapons of mass destruction. Disarming that regime is a central commitment of the war on terror. We must and we will prevent

terrorist groups and outlaw regimes from threatening the American people with catastrophic harm.

Saddam Hussein has been under a duty to disarm for more than a decade, yet he has consistently and systematically violated that obligation and undermined U.N. inspections. And he only admitted to a massive biological weapons program after being confronted with the evidence.

Now the U.N. Security Council and the United States have told Saddam Hussein: The game is over. Saddam Hussein will fully disarm himself of weapons of mass destruction, and if he does not, America will lead a coalition to disarm him.

As the new inspections process proceeds, the United States will be making only one judgment: Has Saddam Hussein changed his behavior of the last 11 years and decided to cooperate willingly and comply completely, or has he not?

Inspections will work only if Iraq complies fully and in good faith. Inspectors do not have the duty or the ability to uncover terrible weapons hidden in a vast country. The responsibility of inspectors is simply to confirm evidence of voluntary and total disarmament. Saddam Hussein has the responsibility to provide that evidence, as directed and in full.

The world expects more than Iraq's cooperation with inspectors. The world expects and requires Iraq's complete, willing, and prompt disarmament. It is not enough for Iraq to merely open doors for inspectors. Compliance means bringing all requested information and evidence out into full view to show that Iraq has abandoned the deceptions of the last decade. Any act of delay or defiance will prove that Saddam

Hussein has not adopted the path of compliance and has rejected the path of peace.

Thus far we are not seeing the fundamental shift in practice and attitude that the world is demanding. Iraq's letters to the U.N. regarding inspections show that their attitude is grudging and conditional. And in recent days, Iraq has fired on American and British pilots enforcing the U.N.'s no-fly zone.

Iraq is now required by the United Nations to provide a full and accurate declaration of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. We will judge the declaration's honesty and completeness only after we have thoroughly examined it, and that will take some time. The declaration must be credible and accurate and complete, or the Iraqi dictator will have demonstrated to the world once again that he has chosen not to change his behavior.

Americans seek peace in the world. War is the last option for confronting threats, yet the temporary peace of denial and looking away from danger would only be a prelude to a broader war and greater horror. America will confront gathering dangers early. By showing our resolve today, we are building a future of peace.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10 a.m. on December 6 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 6 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.