

the holidays. At Christmastime, we celebrate good tidings first announced 2,000 years ago and still a source of great joy in our world. Laura and I are always happy to join in the Pageant of Peace, and we thank you all for coming this evening.

I thank our special guests. I want to thank Santa for such good weather. [*Laughter*] I appreciate Peter, the chairman of the Pageant of Peace, and his wife, Nancy. I want to thank John Betchkal, the president of the Christmas Pageant of Peace. I want to thank the members of the board of the Christmas Pageant of Peace for your hard work in putting on this joyous festival. I want to thank Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton. I want to thank other members of my Cabinet who are here tonight. I appreciate the Members of Congress who are here.

I want to thank Fran Mainella, who is the Director of the Parks Service, and all the National Parks Service employees. I thank Dr. Schuller and all the entertainers. Thanks so very much for being here tonight.

The season of Advent is always the season of hope. We think of the patient hope of men and women across the centuries who listened to the words of the prophets and lived in joyful expectation. We think of the hope of Mary, who welcomed God's plan with great faith. We think of the hope of the wise men who set out on a long journey guided only by a slender promise traced in the stars. We are reminded of the hope that the grandest purposes of the Almighty can be found in the humblest places. And we embrace the hope that all the love and gifts that come to us in this life are the signs and symbols of even a greater love and gift that came on a holy night. The old carol speaks of a "thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn." And every year at this time we feel the thrill of hope as we wait on Christmas Day.

This Christmas, as loved ones come together, some in our military are separated from family by the call of duty a long way from home. We have service men and women celebrating the holidays at bases from Europe to East Asia and on many fronts in the war on terror. Especially for those deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq, the work is dangerous and the mission is urgent. Amer-

ican service men and women are bringing freedom to many and peace to future generations. Their sacrifices defend us all, and all Americans are grateful to them and to our military families.

Across our country, citizens are supporting our people in uniform with their prayers and many acts of kindness. Often the effort is led by children. In Chantilly, Virginia, Brownie Troop 5179, who are here tonight, by the way, collected donations of candy and sunscreen, bug spray, and handmade cards to send to our soldiers overseas. They gathered more than 200 pounds of gifts and made sure the packages arrived on time for the holidays. I'm sure those thoughtful gifts were gladly received.

And I thank the Brownies for reminding the good people of our military how much they mean to America. And to show our appreciation to the Brownies of Chantilly, Virginia, and all those who volunteer in our blessed land, we have two representatives of the Troop to help Laura and me light our national Christmas tree.

And so, if Nichole and Clara will come forward, we will turn on the lights. Are you ready? Now will you join me in the countdown? Five, four, three, two, one.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:56 p.m. on the Ellipse during the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace. In his remarks, he referred to John Betchkal, president, Christmas Pageant of Peace; Peter Nostrand, chairman, Christmas Pageant of Peace, and his wife, Nancy; Dr. Robert H. Schuller, minister, Reformed Church in America; and Nichole Mastracchio and Clara Pitts, members, Brownie Troop 5179, Chantilly, VA.

Proclamation 7851—National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month, 2004

December 2, 2004

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

As a Nation, we have made great strides in reducing the deadly cost of impaired driving, but driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs still shatters too many lives and

robs too many people of their potential. During National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month, we continue our work to end impaired driving and urge all Americans to be responsible and safe drivers this holiday season and throughout the year.

My Administration is committed to saving lives and preventing injuries resulting from alcohol- and drug-impaired driving. The NHTSA sponsors public education programs such as the “You Drink & Drive. You Lose.” campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of drunk and drugged driving, and works with State and local law enforcement agencies as they conduct sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols. In addition, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign has invested millions of dollars to educate Americans about the threat posed by illegal drugs and drugged driving. We are also increasing resources for State enforcement and education programs. My Administration awarded \$80.6 million in grants this year to States that have lowered the legal threshold for impaired driving to .08 blood alcohol concentration (BAC). As of this year, all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have adopted this legal definition of impaired driving.

Individuals across our country can help prevent drunk and drugged driving by encouraging responsible actions, identifying sober designated drivers, and educating young people about safe, substance-free driving behavior. Working together, all Americans can make our roads safer and save lives by preventing drunk and drugged driving.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 2004 as National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 3, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 6.

Remarks on the Nomination of Bernard B. Kerik To Be Secretary of Homeland Security

December 3, 2004

The President. Good morning. I’m proud to announce my nomination of Commissioner Bernard Kerik as the Secretary of Homeland Security.

Bernie Kerik is one of the most accomplished and effective leaders of law enforcement in America. In his career, he has served as an enlisted military police officer in Korea, a jail warden in New Jersey, a beat cop in Manhattan, New York City corrections commissioner, and as New York’s 40th police commissioner, an office once held by Teddy Roosevelt. In every position, he has demonstrated a deep commitment to justice, a heart for the innocent, and a record of great success.

I’m grateful he’s agreed to bring his lifetime of security experience and skill to one of the most important positions in the Federal Government. Bernie is a dedicated, innovative reformer who insists on getting results. As the head of New York City jails, he cut inmate violence by more than 90 percent. As Mayor Rudy Giuliani’s police commissioner, he had great success in reducing crime in New York City. His broad, practical, hands-on experience makes Bernie superbly qualified to lead the Department of Homeland Security.

When confirmed by the Senate, Bernie Kerik will build on the historic accomplishments of Secretary Tom Ridge. As the Department’s first leader, Tom oversaw the large reorganization—the largest reorganization of the Government in nearly a half-century. He met urgent challenges with patience and purpose, and because of his service, our country is safer.

Tom also carried out his duties with skill and honesty and decency. He’s been my friend for more than 20 years. He is one of the great public servants of our generation. Tom Ridge has our Nation’s gratitude; he’s