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I know it's hard when you have a loved one, somebody you love a lot, not going to be around for the Christmas season. And one way we hope to help you through the moment is to invite you here to the White House for what's going to be a pretty special moment.

So I want to say thank you. When you talk to your mom or dad or e-mail your mom or dad, you make sure you tell them that President and Mrs. Bush are sure proud of their contributions to our country.

And so with that, I'm going to do my second job, which is to bring to the podium here my wife, First Lady Laura Bush.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the U.S.-Palestinian Public-Private Partnership

December 3, 2007

It's been my honor and the honor of key members of my administration to welcome Minister Abu Daqqa here. She's the Minister of Youth for the Palestinians. I also want to welcome friends, business leaders, community activists who are committed to a public-private partnership to help the Palestinian Government provide hope, particularly for the young—she's the Minister of Youth.

And so Walter Isaacson and the other leaders here have outlined a strategy to us as to how we can make sure our USAID money and our OPIC money can be leveraged with private participation to help the Palestinians develop a civil society that is a key part of making sure that the vision of two states living side by side in peace becomes a reality.

And so Madam Minister, you're seeing the best of America. You're seeing private citizens who care deeply about peace come together with a Government that is dedicated to a two-state solution to develop a strategy to help you succeed.

And one of the things that interests me a lot is the fact that we are going to help the Palestinians develop youth centers, places where young Palestinians can come and learn new technical skills or language skills or have mentoring programs, all aimed at saying, there is a hopeful future; a future where you don't have to adhere to violence; a future where radicalism is not in your sights; a future where peace is possible.

And so we're proud you're here in America. We want to thank you for your commitment to living side by side with Israel in peace. You have a friend here in the United States to help you achieve this objective.

And I want to thank my fellow citizens for being so spirited that you're willing to take time out of your busy lives to help this young democracy get up on its feet and eventually lead the peace that we all are so hopeful for.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Walter Isaacson, president and chief executive officer, Aspen Institute.

Message on the Observance of Hanukkah 2007

December 3, 2007

I send greetings to all those celebrating Hanukkah, the festival of lights.

Hanukkah commemorates a victory for freedom and the courage and faith that made it possible. More than 2,000 years ago, the land of ancient Israel was conquered, its sacred Temple was desecrated, and the Jewish people were forbidden to practice their faith. A patriot named Judah Maccabee and his followers rose up against their oppressors to take back Jerusalem. When the Maccabees returned to reclaim and purify their Holy Temple, the oil used for dedication should have lasted only one day but burned for eight. Every year since then, Jews have celebrated this victory of light over darkness and given thanks for the presence of a just and loving God.

As Jewish Americans prepare to light the Hanukkah candles, we are reminded of the many blessings in our lives. The candles' glow has the power to lift our souls, put hope in our hearts, and make our Nation a more compassionate and peaceful place. We pray that those who still live in the darkness of