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The menorah we light tonight has special meaning. It once belonged to Chayim Pearl, who was the great-grandfather of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. While reporting in Pakistan in 2002, Daniel was kidnaped and murdered by terrorists. His only crime was being a Jewish American, something Daniel Pearl would never deny. In his final moments, Daniel told his captors about a street in Israel named for his great-grandfather. He looked into their camera, and he said, "My father is Jewish; my mother is Jewish; and I'm Jewish." These words have become a source of inspiration for Americans of all faiths. They show the courage of a man who refused to bow before terror and the strength of a spirit that could not be broken.

Daniel's memory remains close to our hearts. Those who knew him best remember a gifted writer who loved the violin and made friends wherever he went. We're honored that Daniel's parents, Ruth and Judea, have joined us today. We thank them for their work on behalf of the Daniel Pearl Foundation. The foundation helps bring people from different cultures together through journalism and music. It's a fitting tribute to Daniel's lifelong pursuit of truth and tolerance. By honoring Daniel, we are given the opportunity to bring forth hope from the darkness of tragedy, and that is a miracle worth celebrating during the Festival of Lights.

Laura and I wish people of Jewish faith around the world a happy Hanukkah. May God bless you all.

Tonight we will hear a wonderful performance by the Zamir Chorale. But first, I ask Ruth and Judea to light the Pearl family menorah and lead the blessings.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:27 p.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey.

Remarks Following a Discussion on Teen Drug Use Statistics

December 11, 2007

Thank you. Please be seated. Welcome to the White House. Director Walters and Dr. Volkow, thank you for joining me. We've got the Ambassador *de Mexico y tambien Colombia*—thanks for coming. I appreciate you all being here. Where are the—*Embajador, bienvenidos—los dos.* Thank you all for coming. I appreciate the students from Brown Academy for joining us. I want to thank officials in my administration for being here. I welcome our honored guests.

I am pleased to be here with the men and women who have enlisted, have signed up, in our country's fight against illegal drugs. You battle an unrelenting evil that ruins families, endangers neighborhoods, and stalks our children. You're part of a mission that will shape our Nation's future. You're fulfilling the highest calling of citizenship; you're giving your fellow Americans the chance for a better life. And I thank you for your good and noble work.

I've just come from a roundtable—or was it a square table—but either way, it was a table—[*laughter*]—where I met with community activists and youth leaders, people who've heard a call to answer our Nation's need to be engaged in a fierce battle against drug abuse—those who encourage it and those who profit from it. The drug trade has enriched our society's enemies. It has funded acts of terror. It feeds an addiction that causes some Americans to turn to crime.

When I took office, our country was facing a troubling rate of drug use among young people. A new generation was in danger of being swept up in a cycle of addiction, crime, and hopelessness. This was a looming crisis, and I felt it required an aggressive response.

And so in 2002, I committed our Nation to an ambitious goal to cut drug use amongst young people by 25 percent over a 5-year period. John Walters agreed with that goal. He's been in charge of leading an effort to achieve that goal. We took a tough and balanced approach. We would cut the supply of drugs coming to our country through aggressive action by law enforcement personnel and international partners. We would fight the demand for drugs here at home through prevention and treatment. In other words, our strategy was balance. On the one hand, we'll interdict and prevent and disrupt the drug supply networks, and on the other hand, we'll work to convince people they shouldn't use drugs in the first place. And those that

have, there's prevention—or there's recovery programs for you.

This strategy has had promising results. This morning I was briefed on the latest "Monitoring the Future" study, which tracks drug use amongst America's youth. It reports that since 2001, the overall use of illicit drugs by young people has dropped by 24 percent. Marijuana use fell by 25 percent, steroid use by a third, and the use of ecstasy by 54 percent. The most encouraging statistic relates to the use of methamphetamine, which has plummeted by an impressive 64 percent since 2001.

One exception to this trend is a rise in the abuse of certain prescription painkillers. This is troubling, and we're going to continue to confront the challenge. Yet the overall direction is hopeful. Because Americans took action, today, there are an estimated 860,000 fewer children using drugs than 6 years ago. Because Americans took action, because grassroots activists stood up and said, "We've had enough," because law enforcement worked hard, communities are safer, families are stronger, and more children have the hope of a healthy and happy life.

This is a remarkable achievement, and it is a tribute to the work of a lot of really good people. I'd like to remind people, government can rally; government can fund; but the true work is done at the grassroots level. We've got representatives from our law enforcement organizations who are with us today. They've risked their lives to cut the supply of drugs to our streets. Over the past 6 years, they have seized record amounts of cocaine coming into the United States. I see that Admiral Allen is here from the United States Coast Guard. They've got people out there on those cutters in the high seas doing incredibly important work. Admiral, you thank those troops for all they're doing.

We've worked with our allies to stop their drugs coming in from Colombia. And Madam Ambassador, you need to thank your strong President for leading the fight against drugs in Colombia.

We're working with the President of Mexico, Mr. Ambassador, and we're helping that man take the lead. He made some tough decisions and courageous decisions. He's led an unprecedented assault against drug organizations in Mexico, and we want to continue to work together. We got to have a strategy on both sides of the border to deal with a common problem. So I want to thank you both for being here. Pass word on to your bosses that I admire their courage and appreciate their hard work.

I appreciate the fact that our drug enforcement focused on meth, and therefore, we have a dramatic drop. You might remember, a while ago, that methamphetamine seemed to be a—just running so rampant that people were worried that we could never get our—get a handle on it. And yet there's been a dramatic drop. A lot of it has to do with the fact that our law enforcement officers, in both urban and rural settings, are on the frontline of disrupting the suppliers.

They appreciate the fact that we're dismantling drug trafficking operations. We're seizing supplies, and we're putting the peddlers of poisons where they belong, and that is behind bars. Appreciate your outstanding service. For all those who wear the uniform of law enforcement, our Nation owes you a great debt of gratitude.

At home, countless Americans have worked to reduce the demand of illegal drugs. It's one thing to affect supply, but when you reduce demand, it affects the capacity of people to supply. In other words, if we have people—fewer people using, there's not going to be a need to supply as much. On the frontlines of this efforts are parents, are teachers, are counselors who are sending our kids a clear message: Drug use is not fun; it is not glamorous; it is harmful. And I want to thank those who are making that a clear message. Drugs destroys lives.

This addiction is hard to break. It's a hard thing to break a drug addiction. Yet many Americans are breaking it. With us today are some young people who have fought to win this difficult struggle. And we met with them, and I want to talk about two of them. I asked their permission, and they said, "That's fine, Mr. President. You can—you go ahead and lay our stories out." And the reason I want to do so is because I want others to hear the stories of two youngsters who made an incredibly tough decision to save their life.

First is Sara Johnson. She started using drugs when she was 12 years old. As her addiction grew, she would steal drugs from medicine cabinets without even knowing what the drugs were. She pawned things to get money so she could go out on the streets to buy drugs. And she hit bottom, and she was scared. Yet she summoned up the courage to get treatment. And she didn't like the treatment at first. She told me that after about 6 months, she decided she wanted to leave without permission. [*Laughter*] Then she reassessed her life. She made a personal choice and went back into treatment. And she is in recovery, and she's working for a better life. I said: "What do you want to be, now that you've made this incredibly important step in your life at a young age? Do you have a goal?" She said, "Plastic surgeon." Then she looked at me, and I thought for a minute she said, "Well, you could use a little work, Mr. President." [*Laughter*] But Sara, thank you for your courage. I'm proud you're here. You might just stand up and let the people take a look at you. Thank you.

Hear the story of Justin Calderon. He was raised by a mom who had a serious drug addiction. Drugs crowd out love and responsibility. If you love drugs more than you love your child, serious problems can arise, and this is a man who knows it firsthand. He spent his childhood on the streets, seeking drugs and committing crimes to support his habit. One night, he was alone in a jail cell, and after years of addiction and struggle, he told himself, he said, "You are better than this." And so he's in a recovery program. He's been off drugs for a year. He plans to go back to school. And what he wants to do is to give back to society by helping other young people fight drug addiction. *Bienvenidos*; welcome.

Two joyous souls who are inspiring others—I told them, I said, you just don't know whose lives you've touched, but you have touched the President's life. But there's somebody paying attention to you. And so thanks for leading.

So today we celebrate progress against substance abuse. We also know that this work is not finished. There's still a lot more work to be done. Thousands of children still live in homes torn apart by drugs. Thousands more are still considering whether to try drugs for the first time. It's up to all Americans to be involved in this important struggle against drug addiction. It's up to all of us to urge our fellow citizens to make the right choice and to help those who make the wrong choice understand the consequences and that there is a more hopeful future.

In this effort, we need more help from role models that our kids look up to. It's really important for professional sports associations to continue to crack down on drug abuse by athletes. And it's important that more people in Hollywood stand up and send a right message to our children.

All Americans have a responsibility to encourage people to turn away from the losing spiral of addiction and to make good choices in life. But the great thing about our country and the reason I'm so optimistic is there are thousands and thousands of people willing to take the lead in their own communities, people who have seen a problem and said, "We're going to do something about it." Like this good woman right here from eastern Kentucky. She said, "We live in rural America, and we got a significant prescription drug problem that's affecting every family in that area." And so instead of wringing her hands, she said, "I think I'm going to do something about it," and has led the charge. We can help, but it's her initiative, along with thousands of others who have stepped up and said, "We're going to save lives one soul at a time." Why? Because they love America, and they love their neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

This mission of dealing with drug abuse is worthy of a great people and a great nation. It's a worthy mission. It is a struggle that requires us to confront torment with patience, weakness with understanding, and evil with resolve, hope, and love.

I want to thank you all for being a part of this great effort. I thank John and all those in the grassroots for accomplishing an important goal. I urge you to continue staying in this battle. I say to our young folks: Make the right choice in life, and you can realize your dreams here in the United States of America.

Thank you for being here. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Nora D. Volkow, Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse; Ambassador to the U.S. Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana and President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico; Ambassador to the U.S. Carolina Barco Isakson and President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia; and Karen Engle, executive director, Operation UNITE.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Giorgio Napolitano of Italy

December 11, 2007

President Bush. Mr. President, it's my honor to welcome you to the Oval Office. We just had a very substantive meeting. And it will be my honor to feed you a lunch. I doubt it is going to be—the food will be as good as the food I had when I visited your beautiful country.

Bilateral relations with the United States and Italy are very good. We have a lot of interchange between our countries, with business as well as travel. And there are millions of Italian Americans who will be pleased, Mr. President, to know we've got good relations.

Secondly, we just had a really around-the-world trip as we discussed problem areas and our mutual desire to work together to help solve those problems.

We discussed Afghanistan, Lebanon, Kosovo. I briefed the President on the recent Annapolis conference that we hosted to help get the peace process started between the Palestinians and Israelis. We had a very compatible relation—discussion because by and large, we're in agreement on how to advance the solutions to these issues.

And finally, I'm—have expressed and will continue to dialog with the President about my deep concern about Iran. Iran is dangerous. Iran—we believe Iran had a secret military weapons program. And Iran must explain to the world why they had a program. Iran has an obligation to explain to the IAEA why they hid this program from them. Iran is dangerous, and they'll be even more dangerous if they learn how to enrich uranium.

And so I look forward to working with the President to explain our strategy and figure out ways we can work together to prevent this from happening for the sake of world peace.

So I'm sure proud to have you here, Mr. President; and welcome.

President Napolitano. Thank you very much, Mr. President. It has been a great pleasure for me to accept your invitation. You kindly addressed me 6 months ago when you were in Rome, and we had already then very positive talks.

And in the past few months, there have been important and rather positive developments in the international situation. First of all, I wanted to express to President Bush my deep appreciation for the responsibility he wanted to take to foster negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian authorities in view of a peace treaty.

Italy is present in several areas of crisis. In this moment, it is an Italian general who is taking the command of the Kabul region in Afghanistan. In Iraq, we give our contribution to the stabilization of the country, participating in NATO training activities. And as a matter of fact, there has been an undeniable improvement in the security conditions in Iraq in the past few months.

In fact, generally speaking, we share the same concerns, and we express a common commitment. And speaking particularly of Kosovo, we could verify how close are our positions on the way to deal with the independence of Kosovo, taking into account the difficult overall situation in the region.

We want to discuss constructively our positions on all questions and all threats. We just want to give our contribution and our idea how to face successfully all threats, including the relative threat of nuclear weaponization of Iran.

I just want to add a word about Europe, because in the past few months, there has been something important. Europe was able—European Union was able to overcome a stalemate, a very dangerous institutional stalemate. The constitutional treaty has been put aside, but a new treaty has been outlined unanimously, and the day after tomorrow it will be signed in Lisbon. And on the basis of this new treaty, which has to be ratified by the signed—I am sure it will be ratified