

Secondly, I am glad you're here because I wanted to thank your moms and dads for serving the United States of America. We love being with our military families, because it gives us a chance to express the sincere and deep appreciation of all Americans for the sacrifices that families make. So I want to thank you for standing by your moms and dads and telling them you're proud of them and telling them you love them.

Thirdly, I'm going to ask you to do us a favor, and that is, when you email mom or dad, just tell them you came by the White House—[laughter]—and the President and Laura, the First Lady, sent a special holiday greeting. So you'll be the messenger. So your job is to say, we respect your mom and dad, we admire your mom and dad, and we pray for your mom and dad. So would you do that for us?

**Children.** Yes.

**The President.** And fourthly, I'm glad to be here because I get to introduce my wife. [Laughter] It's a pretty neat thing, isn't it?

**Children.** Yes.

**The President.** Now, Laura tells me you've already seen Santa—

**Children.** Yes.

**The President.** —had a few cookies—

**Children.** Yes.

**The President.** Yes? I'm surprised there's not more wiggling going on. [Laughter] At any rate, please welcome my dear wife, First Lady Laura Bush.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:01 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 Briefings at the National Counterterrorism Center in McLean, Virginia

December 8, 2008

I have just spent a fascinating morning here at the NCTC. The NCTC is a place where our Government gathers threat assess—or threats and intelligence to better protect the American people.

I want to thank both Mikes for taking a strong lead in doing our most important job,

which is to motivate people to protect this country, and that's what takes place here.

There's a lot of hard-working Americans who—this—by the way, this center is up 24/7. And any time a piece of data comes in that portends any kind of threat, it's analyzed and, if need be, acted upon.

So, most Americans don't know this facility exists. It came to be after the September the 11th attacks, when we all came around and asked the question: How better can we protect the country?

And so I've come by to thank the—all the people who work here, and—because they deserve our thanks. They deserve a Government that understands that the biggest danger we face is from a terrorist attack, and that the best way to defend the country is to stay on the offense and keep the pressure on them constantly and, at the same time, spread freedom as the great alternative to the ideology of those—of the killers.

This is a challenge that's going to face this country for a while. But it's a challenge that can be better met because of facilities like the NCTC and the fact that we've given the professionals the tools, such as listening to the terrorist phone calls, to better protect America.

And so I want to thank you all for your leadership. Appreciate you having me. And again, I thank all the good folks who work here for their dedication.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:23 p.m. at the National Counterterrorism Center. In his remarks, he referred to Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell; and Michael Leiter, Acting Director, National Counterterrorism Center.

### Message on the Observance of Eid al-Adha

December 8, 2008

I send greetings to Muslims around the world celebrating Eid al-Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice.

Eid al-Adha commemorates Abraham's devotion to God, and it reminds us of God's mercy and provision for his people. Abraham's deep faith was tested when God asked

him to sacrifice his son. Although Abraham was set to faithfully obey, God provided an alternate sacrifice that spared his son. During this holiday, Muslims around the world honor Abraham's trust in God and celebrate God's love through acts of charity and joyous feasts with family, friends, and others in their community.

Our Nation is blessed by vibrant Muslim communities. On this holiday, all Americans celebrate our religious liberty, and we remember that religious freedom belongs not to any one nation but to the world.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a blessed holiday.

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

**Proclamation 8328—Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week, 2008**

*December 8, 2008*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

The United States was founded on the principle that government must respect people's rights to speak freely, worship as they choose, and pursue their dreams in liberty. As we remember the enduring importance of our Constitution's Bill of Rights, our thoughts turn to those who have yet to secure these precious liberties. During Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week, Americans celebrate the rights bestowed upon all by our Creator and reaffirm our deep commitment to helping those whose desire for liberty and justice is still dismissed and denied.

In a free society, every person is treated with dignity and can rise as high as their talents and hard work will take them. Yet in countries like Belarus, Burma, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Syria, and Zimbabwe, fervent pleas for freedom are silenced by tyranny and oppression. So long as there are people who fight for liberty, the United

States will stand with them and speak out for those who have no other voice.

Freedom is the eternal birthright of all mankind, and during Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week, we renew our commitment to lead the cause of human rights and pray for the day when the light of liberty will shine on all of humanity.

**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 10, 2008, as Human Rights Day; December 15, 2008, as Bill of Rights Day; and the week beginning December 10, 2008, as Human Rights Week. I call upon the people of the United States to mark these observances with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:15 a.m., December 11, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 9, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on December 12.

**Remarks at the United States Military Academy at West Point in West Point, New York**

*December 9, 2008*

Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you, General, for your warm welcome. Thank you for inviting me here to West Point. I now know why you're so happy I'm here—[laughter]—all classes were canceled.

I had the honor of sitting next to the General and Judy during the game over the weekend. I am disappointed I could not bring the Commander in Chief's Trophy with me. However, you just get the Commander in Chief.

This is my last visit to a military academy as President, so I thought I would exercise