

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