

Week Ending Friday, November 30, 2007

The President's Radio Address

November 24, 2007

Good morning. This week, our Nation celebrated Thanksgiving. American families and friends gathered together to express gratitude for all that we have been given. We give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy. We give thanks for the loved ones who enrich our lives. And we give thanks for the many gifts that come from this prosperous land. Thanksgiving is a time when we acknowledge that all of these things, and life itself, come not from the hand of man, but from Almighty God.

Earlier this week, I visited Berkeley Plantation in Virginia. The story of this historic setting goes back nearly four centuries to another day of thanks. In 1619, a band of 38 settlers departed Bristol, England, for Berkeley. At the end of their long voyage, the men reviewed their orders from home. The orders said, quote, "The day of our ship's arrival . . . shall be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God." In response, the men fell to their knees in prayer. And with this humble act of faith, the settlers celebrated their first Thanksgiving in the New World.

Berkeley's settlers remind us that giving thanks has been an American tradition from the beginning. At this time of year, we also remember the Pilgrims at Plymouth who gave thanks after their first harvest in New England. We remember George Washington, who led his men in Thanksgiving during the American Revolution. We remember Abraham Lincoln, who revived the Thanksgiving tradition in the midst of a terrible civil war.

Throughout our history, Americans have always taken time to give thanks for all those whose sacrifices protect and strengthen our Nation. We continue that tradition today, and we give thanks for a new generation of patriots who are defending our liberty around the

world. We are grateful to all our men and women in uniform who are spending this holiday weekend far from their families. We keep them in our thoughts and prayers. And we especially remember those who have given their lives in our Nation's defense.

One of these brave Americans was Lieutenant Michael Murphy. In June 2005, this officer gave his life in defense of his fellow Navy SEALs. Michael was conducting surveillance on a mountain ridge in Afghanistan, when his four-man SEAL team was surrounded by a much larger enemy force. Their only escape was down the side of the mountain. The SEALs launched a valiant counter-attack while cascading from cliff to cliff. But as the enemy closed in, Michael recognized that the survival of his men depended on calling back to base for reinforcements.

With complete disregard for his own life, Michael Murphy moved into a clearing where he could get a signal. As he made the call, Michael fell under heavy fire. Though severely wounded, he said thank you before signing off and returned to the fight. His heroism cost him his life and earned him our Nation's highest decoration for valor, the Medal of Honor. This weekend, we give thanks for the blessings of young Americans like Lieutenant Michael Murphy, who risk their own lives to keep us safe.

We're also blessed by the many other Americans who serve a cause larger than themselves. Each day, our Nation's police and firefighters and emergency responders and faith-based and community volunteers dedicate their time to serving others. While we were enjoying our Thanksgiving turkeys, tens of thousands of these men and women were on the job, keeping their fellow citizens safe and bringing hope and compassion to our brothers and sisters in need. And their sacrifice reminds us that the true strength of our Nation is the goodness and decency of our people.

Since America's first Thanksgiving, we have changed in many ways. Our population has grown. Our people have prospered. And we have become a great beacon of hope and freedom for millions around the world. Despite these changes, the source of all our blessings remains the same. We are grateful to the Author of Life who blessed our Nation's first days, who strengthened America in times of trial and war, and who watches over us today.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2 p.m. on November 20 at Camp David, MD, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Annapolis Conference

November 25, 2007

I am pleased to welcome Prime Minister Olmert, President Abbas, and representatives of more than 40 countries to the United States for the November 27 Annapolis conference. The broad attendance at this conference by regional states and other key international participants demonstrates the international resolve to seize this important opportunity to advance freedom and peace in the Middle East.

This conference will signal international support for the Israelis' and Palestinians' intention to commence negotiations on the establishment of a Palestinian state and the realization of peace between these two peoples.

It will also provide an opportunity for the Israelis, the Palestinians, and their neighbors to recommit to implementing the roadmap, with the U.S. monitoring their progress by the parties' agreement.

Finally, the conference will review Palestinian plans to build the institutions of a democratic state and their preparations for next month's donors' conference in Paris.

I remain personally committed to implementing my vision of two democratic states,

Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

The Israelis and Palestinians have waited a long time for this vision to be realized, and I call upon all those gathering in Annapolis this week to redouble their efforts to turn dreams of peace into reality. I look forward to my discussions with Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas this week, as well as to addressing the conference along with them on Tuesday.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; and President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel

November 26, 2007

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. It's an honor to have you back in the Oval Office. Thanks for coming to the Annapolis conference. I'm looking forward to continuing our serious dialog with you and the President of the Palestinian Authority to see whether or not peace is possible. I'm optimistic. I know you're optimistic, and I want to thank you for your courage and your friendship. I'm proud you—I'm proud of you.

Prime Minister Olmert. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I'm delighted to come with my colleagues to—another time to the Oval Office. This time it's different because we are going to have lots of participants in what I hope will launch a serious process of negotiations between us and the Palestinians. This will be a bilateral process, but the international support is very important for us.

And I thank you for the efforts that you, President, made in order to make it possible, and the Secretary of State, together with us, in order to come to this point where from we and the Palestinians will sit together in Jerusalem and work out something that will be very good to create a great hope for our peoples.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you all.