

The United States is concerned about the humanitarian crisis. We care about the people of Gaza and, therefore, have provided millions of dollars of fresh aid to the United Nations to help.

And finally, all of us, of course, would like to see violence stop, but not at expense of an agreement that does not prevent the crisis from happening again. I know people are saying, let's have that cease-fire, and those are noble ambitions. But any cease-fire must have the conditions in it so that Hamas does not use Gaza as a place from which to launch rockets.

There are many hopeful signs in the Middle East. Democracy is taking hold in parts of the world, in the Middle East, but the Hamas reminds us that there are people who are willing to kill innocent people to stop the advance of free societies. And the challenge for those of us who long for peace, Mr. Vice President, is to recognize the realities of the world, recognize we're in the midst of an ideological conflict, and work with the agents of peace.

I am still hopeful that some day there will be a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace. I believe the Palestinian Authority under President Abbas has got the capacity and the foresight and the vision necessary to see that become a reality. In the meantime, all of us are going to have to deal with Hamas, those who threaten peace, those who want to deny the existence of a peaceful Palestinian state.

And so I welcome you, Mr. Vice President. Thank you for coming.

I told the Vice President his hat made me feel very much at home. [*Laughter*]

Vice President Kiir. Well, Your Excellency, thank you very much once again, and we are happy to be in the White House today. And I discussed with the—His Excellency the President the issues that he has raised, but mostly we came here to thank him and his administration for the commitment they have shown to the people of Sudan to bring peace and continue to monitor that peace, which ended the 21-year war. And that peace will remain in his records, that he was the only one who was able to continue monitoring the peace, negotiating it until it was signed.

This peace is now in existence. And we came to thank him and the whole administration and to wish him the best of his luck in his private missions that he's now going to take up after the assignment in the White House.

We have also told His Excellency the President that the people of southern Sudan, the people of the marginalized areas in the whole Sudan, will never forget him for all that he has done to them. And the people in Darfur, in particular, will still be looking forward to seeing to it that peace is brought to Darfur. It is a joint mission that we have taken upon ourselves, together with them, that we have to bring peace to Darfur the way we have brought peace to southern Sudan.

We have also talked issues of the LRA, that is the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda, which has now shifted to Congo and southern Sudan, and how to handle it. This is a terrorist organization that does not have any respect of human life. And we'll have to deal with it so that they have to accept the regional changes that are happening and to be brought to—under control.

So this is in brief that I came to the White House, to pass to His Excellency the President of the United States of America, and to keep Sudan very close to his heart. Even if he becomes a private citizen in this country, he will still have a role to play. And we came to pass him also our Christmas and New Year's greetings since we have not met during the Christmas.

Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan; and President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks at a Military Appreciation Parade in Arlington, Virginia

January 6, 2009

Thank you very much. At ease.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for the kind introduction, and thank you for being an outstanding Secretary of Defense. For a while, we expected this event to be a joint retirement party. It didn't turn out that way, did it? [*Laughter*] I am pleased that President-elect Obama has asked you to stay on, and I am confident that you'll continue to be a strong leader as the Secretary of Defense.

And, Admiral Mullen, thank you for your strong advice, your clear thinking, and your years of service to our country.

I want to thank you for honoring Laura, who's been a fabulous First Lady. The military gave her the Distinguished Service Award; a lot of friends from Texas think she deserved the Purple Heart. [*Laughter*] I wish I'd have thought of the roses.

Mr. Vice President, I am proud to have served with you for 8 years. The military has had no stauncher defender in my administration than Vice President Dick Cheney.

I thank members of the Cabinet, members of the administration, and former members of the Cabinet, especially the former Secretary of Defense, who did an outstanding job, Secretary Don Rumsfeld.

I thank the current members of the Joint Chiefs and their families, as well as the former members of the Joint Chiefs and their families, for joining us today. I want to thank those who wear the uniform, distinguished guests.

As my time in office winds down, the days bring a series of lasts. I made my last overseas trip on Air Force One. I have delivered my final college commencement as President. And after much consideration, I pardoned my last Thanksgiving turkey. [*Laughter*] These have all been wonderful experiences. But nothing compares to the honor of standing before you today and addressing America's Armed Forces as your Commander in Chief.

Over the past 8 years, I have seen the valor of the American military time and time again. I saw your valor on September the 11th, 2001, in service members rushing into smoke-filled corridors to save their colleagues at the Pentagon and in planes patrolling the skies above New York City and Washington. I saw your valor in the days after the attack, when Americans crowded into re-

cruiting centers across our country, raised their hands to serve, and pledged to defend our people and our freedom.

I saw your valor in the forces who deployed to Afghanistan. Within weeks of September the 11th, you closed down the terrorist training camps, and you drove the Taliban from power. I saw your valor in the fearless troops who stormed across the Iraqi desert and destroyed a regime that threatened America. I saw your valor in battle-tested warriors who signed up for a second or third or fourth tour and made the surge in Iraq one of the great successes in America's military history.

The valor of America's Armed Forces have made our Nation safer. Because you've taken the fight to the terrorists abroad, we have not had to face them here at home. And the world has seen something that almost no one thought possible: More than 7 years after September the 11th, there has not been another attack on American soil.

The decisions I made as your Commander in Chief have not always been popular. But the cause you have served has always been just and right. The missions you have carried out have always been necessary. And the work you have done has every bit—has been every bit as courageous and idealistic as that of any generation that came before you.

In the years since the war on terror began, America's Armed Forces have led the largest military liberation since World War II. Because of your actions, more than 50 million Afghans and Iraqis have seen the chains of despotism broken and are living in the liberty that the Creator intended. The new wave of freedom in the Middle East has made America more secure at home, because it is undermining the culture of tyranny that fosters radicalism.

There will become a day when your grandchildren will ask, "What did you do during your time in uniform?" And you'll be able to say, "We made the military stronger. We made the world freer. And we made America more secure."

You'll be able to tell them the story of the first decade in the 21st century, their early days of a generational struggle against terror and extremism. It is a story of a global coalition led by the United States that is dedicated

to eliminating the forces of oppression and fear. It is the story of the Iraqi people proudly holding up ink-stained fingers to show that the threat of violence could not break their commitment to liberty. It is the story of young girls going to school in Afghanistan after years when educating a woman could be punished with beatings or imprisonment. It is the story about the character in men and women who volunteered to leave the comforts of home to defend freedom and keep our Nation safe.

On behalf of the American people, I thank you for making that sacrifice. I know you have not shouldered the burdens of military life alone. You've had the support of strong and loving families to sustain you. And this morning, I want all of you and your families to hear your Commander in Chief loud and clear: We appreciate you; we love you; and we honor your service.

We also honor our wounded warriors and those who never returned home from the field of battle. In their sacrifices, we see one of the extraordinary legacies of our Armed Forces: the willingness to give everything to secure safety at home and liberty abroad.

As the Admiral pointed out, we saw that selfless spirit in people like Petty Officer Michael Monsoor, a Navy SEAL who served in Iraq. In the fall of 2006, on a rooftop in Iraq, Mike threw himself onto a grenade in order to save the lives of his teammates. As Admiral Mullen mentioned, I had the honor of presenting Michael Monsoor's parents his posthumous Medal of Honor in the White House. On that day, I saw the deep sadness that is familiar to anyone who has lost a loved one in the line of duty. But I also saw the pride that comes with such noble sacrifice and the recognition that our freedom and our security only endure because of the acts of bravery like Michael Monsoor's.

That kind of courage, character, and devotion defines our Armed Forces. So this morning, I cannot accept your kind tribute unless I'm allowed to return the favor. To the men and women of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and all those who serve in the Department of Defense: You have the respect of a grateful nation that you have kept safe. You have the admiration of millions around the world who

would have never tasted freedom without you. You have the undying love and respect of a man who has been proud to call himself your Commander in Chief.

Two weeks from today, Laura and I will take our final trip back to Texas, or as you Texans understand, back to the promised land. We have the honor of doing it onboard a 747 piloted by the United States Air Force; Colonel Mark Tillman will be the lead pilot. This brings a fitting symmetry: The military brought me to Washington 8 years ago, and on January the 20th, the military is taking me home.

We will take with us many fond memories that we will cherish for the rest of our lives. We will always remember that you answered the call to serve when your Nation needed you most. We will always remember that you did your duty with honor and dignity. And we will always remember the debt of gratitude that each of us who lives in freedom owes to each of you who has protected it.

May God bless you. And may God always bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:21 a.m. at Fort Myer. In his remarks, he referred to George and Sally Monsoor, parents of posthumous Medal of Honor recipient PO 2d Class Michael A. Monsoor, USN. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Adm. Michael G. Mullen, USN, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

Remarks on Signing Proclamations To Establish the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, and the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument

January 6, 2009

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you for coming, and happy New Year. Laura and I thank all of our distinguished guests, starting with members of my Cabinet: Secretary Kempthorne, Secretary Gutierrez, Administrator Johnson. Admiral, thank you for coming today; we're proud you're here. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here; other members of the administration who have joined