

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DECEMBER 17, 1974

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT

AT

THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT OF PEACE

THE ELLIPSE

5:55 P.M. EST

Thank you very, very much Secretary Rogers Morton, Mayor Washington, Mr. Hoffman, my fellow Michiganders from the University of Michigan Chorus, my fellow Americans:

Obviously I am very delighted to participate in this celebration tonight, to light and to share with you the Nation's Christmas tree.

As a former National Park Service Ranger a good many years ago I have been and am concerned with conservation. I am pleased to know, of course, that this tree has a heritage from Colorado but was transplanted here from the great State of Pennsylvania. But this tree will be the National Community Christmas Tree, and will be so for many years to come.

As a President vitally concerned with the saving of energy, I also want you to know that the electricity consumed, as the Secretary of Interior has said, is a considerable reduction of what has been used in years past. That is the way it should be, and that is the way that it must be.

The glow of Christmas, however, should come from a power source which we will never run short of, our abiding faith and our love of God.

The true spirit of the season can best be seen in our faces. The children here tonight, like millions of children around the world, reflect the wonder and the excitement of anticipation. Those of us who are older look forward to the warmth of reunions with families and with friends.

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Traditions, treasured memories, shared hopes, these are the ties that bind families together, and nations together. The tree before us is a part of our national tradition and, as such, it has seen both triumphs and tragedies.

Christmas and the New Year have always been a time to reflect on the past and then look ahead to the future. I firmly believe that 1975 will be a brighter year for all Americans, but it must also be a brighter year for the world around us, the entire globe, if we as a nation are to prosper.

So I would like to share with you my personal list of Christmas wishes. At the top of my list are peace, economic well-being for all, and a caring climate that will permit everyone to achieve the fullest potential of their human gifts. And I wish this nation a strong future out of a very proud past. And I wish everyone of us the realization of love and belonging.

Billions of words over the years have been written, have been sung, have been spoken about the true meaning of Christmas. None have ever said it more eloquently than: "On earth, peace -- good will toward men." That is my final Christmas wish for all of us.

Thank you very kindly.

END

(AT 5:58 P.M. EST)