

JCS Chairman's Thanksgiving Day Message

Nov 24, 2008

WASHINGTON — In his 2008 Thanksgiving Day message, Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted the wartime similarities between today and the proclamation of the national holiday 140 years ago.

Here is the text of Mullen's message:

Citing the many blessings bestowed upon the United States, these timeless words were delivered by Abraham Lincoln in his 1863 proclamation establishing Thanksgiving Day as a national holiday:

“It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and voice by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise ...”

It is humbling indeed to recall that in the thick of the Civil War – rife with conflict, dark with turmoil, and bloody with loss – American families at home and abroad were encouraged to reflect upon the bounty, opportunities, and liberties of their Nation. And give thanks they did.

This year, as we once again set apart and observe a day of thanks, nearly 280,000 service men and women are currently deployed across the globe, fighting our Nation's wars and defending our way of life. Let us remember those who are serving abroad and unable to celebrate with their loved ones.

Let us also honor their families, especially those of the fallen, who endure yet another gathering with an empty chair at the table, and one less hand to hold. We should present our thanks to them – and for them – with words, deeds, and open arms.

On behalf of my family, and those of the Joint Chiefs, I offer my heartfelt gratitude to you and your families for your service and sacrifice. Together, you help us rise above the

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challenges of our day, and make thanksgiving and praise possible once more for the whole American people.