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Rudy Doesn't Plan to Go Out Quietly

By Jessica Kowal
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Showing no sign of ending his tenure meekly, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani yesterday hinted at last-minute surprises for his final two weeks at City Hall and declared that the American man who fought for the Taliban should face the death penalty.

"When you commit treason against the United States of America . . . I believe the death penalty is the appropriate remedy to consider," Giuliani said.

Following his eighth annual reading of "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" to children at Metropolitan Hospital Center in East Harlem, Giuliani offered reporters his typically frank views about the city's social service safety net, New Year's Eve security, and his plans for the final 14 days.

Det. Louis Hernandez, president of the Police Department's Hispanic Society, which invited Giuliani to the hospital event, made a more formal farewell.

"We want to thank you, sir, for the work that you've done for the citizens of New York City," Hernandez said. "We appreciate everything you've done for us. We're going to sorely miss you."

Asked about the next two weeks, Giuliani said he'll be Christmas shopping, packing, negotiating a final budget deal with City Council Speaker Peter Vallone, and helping Mayor-elect Michael Bloomberg.

Giuliani, who has reveled in shocking the city with new ideas or pronouncements, also suggested more to come.

"There are some last-minute things as the mayor that I have to try to get done," he said, refusing to elaborate on the unfinished business.

Bloomberg will take office Jan. 1, and has hinted he might take the oath of office in Times Square minutes after the traditional New Year's Eve crystal-ball drop.

Giuliani said New Year's Eve security would be as tight as it was for the millennium celebration on Dec. 31, 1999, possibly with a few security changes he did not name.

The mayor also gave yet another airing of his views about the city's troubled families. Asked about a plan, reported yesterday by the New York Times, to give $1,500 to longtime homeless families that find housing, the mayor said he would approve only if "you're going to help people to help themselves."

Giuliani opines on Walker, last-minute business

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