

and because He is with us we can always live in hope. The world we live in is very different from the world of ancient Bethlehem. Our need for that hope is still unchanged. In all the challenges and dangers of our day, we still seek the promise of peace on Earth.

Thank you for listening, and Merry Christmas.

Radio Remarks to the People of Iran December 21, 2002

I'm pleased to send warm greetings to the people of Iran and to welcome you to the new Radio Farda broadcast.

For many years, the United States has helped bring news and cultural broadcasts for a few hours every day to the Iranian people via Radio Freedom. Yet the Iranian people tell us that more broadcasting is needed, because the unelected few who control the Iranian Government continue to place severe restrictions on access to uncensored information. So we are now making our broadcast available to more Iranians by airing news and music and cultural programs nearly 24 hours a day, and we are pleased to continue Voice of America and VOA TV services to Iran.

The people of Iran want to build a freer, more prosperous country for their children and live in a country that is a full partner in the international community. Iranians also deserve a free press to express themselves to help build an open, democratic, and free society.

My thoughts and prayers are with the Iranian people, particularly the families of

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:05 p.m. on December 20 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 21. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 20 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

the many Iranians who are in prison today for daring to express their hopes and dreams for a better future. We continue to stand with the people of Iran in your quest for freedom, prosperity, honest and effective government, judicial due process, and the rule of law. And we continue to call on the Government of Iran to respect the will of its people and be accountable to them.

As I have said before, if Iran respects its international obligations and embraces freedom and tolerance, it will have no better friend than the United States of America.

Best wishes for a bright future filled with knowledge and information and freedom.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at 1:15 p.m. on December 20 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 21 in Iran on Radio Farda. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 20.