

the security—in this case, the security of the people. Tony Blair understands that Saddam Hussein is a risk. Tony Blair sees that, you know, a weakened United Nations is not good for world peace. And he is a courageous leader, and I'm proud to call him friend.

Another courageous leader is coming to the ranch this weekend, Jose Maria Aznar. I'm looking forward to having a good meeting with him. These are men of vision. They see the task at hand. And I'm proud to call them allies. We'll work together for the sake of peace.

Listen, thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jane Donaldson, wife of Chairman Donaldson; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Chairman Donaldson. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Secretary General Lord Robertson of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization February 19, 2003

President Bush. Today we'll have a statement. I'm going to make a statement. George will make a statement. No questions.

George, welcome. I'm honored to have you here. You represent our Nation's most important Alliance, NATO. Today, this Alliance is providing equipment to Turkey to help protect our Turkish ally from a potential attack from Iraq.

I want to thank you for your leadership. You've done a fantastic job of keeping this Alliance together, moving it forward by not only addressing the current threats that we face but preparing NATO to address threats into the future. And I congratulate on a great leadership and welcome you back to the Oval Office.

Lord Robertson. Thanks, Mr. President. On the 12th of September, NATO passed a declaration of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. We came to the aid of an Ally, the United States, under threat, under attack.

And today we've sent AWACS aircraft and Patriot missiles and chem, bio, and defensive equipment to Turkey, another Ally,

in trouble, under threat, asking for help. That's what the Alliance of free nations is all about.

Sometimes we—you know, we can take a bit of time to do it. It reminded me of Winston Churchill, whose bust is over there, who once famously said of the United States of America, "The United States can always be counted on to do the right thing, after it's exhausted every other alternative." [*Laughter*]

Well, you can say exactly the same thing about NATO, but when we get there, we're strong, and we stand for the values that unite a great Alliance.

President Bush. Well, thank you, sir.

Lord Robertson. You're welcome.

President Bush. I appreciate you. Thanks. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:29 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Decision on
Planning for the Defense of Turkey
February 19, 2003

I welcome today's decision by NATO's Defense Planning Committee to approve the deployment of AWACS aircraft, Patriot missiles, and biological and chemical defense equipment to Turkey. This is an important demonstration of the solidarity of NATO Allies in view of a potential threat to an Alliance member. It follows the decision taken on Sunday by the same committee to request military planning for such deployments.

Today's decision is a direct response to the request by Turkey for consultations under Article 4 of the Washington Treaty as well as the commitment by all NATO

Heads of State and Government, stated at Prague on November 21, 2002, "to take effective action to assist and support the efforts of the U.N. to ensure the full and immediate compliance by Iraq, without conditions or restrictions, with UNSCR 1441."

I am grateful for the resolute leadership of NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson in bringing the Alliance discussions to a successful conclusion. I also appreciate the efforts of all the members of the Defense Planning Committee to fulfill their responsibilities as Alliance members in exceptionally difficult circumstances.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus
February 19, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with section 620C(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, I am providing a report prepared by my Administration on progress toward a negotiated solution of the Cyprus question covering the period December 1, 2002, through January 31, 2003. The previous submission covered events from October 1, 2002, through November 30, 2002.

My Administration was particularly active during this reporting period in supporting U.N. Secretary-General Annan's efforts to foster a comprehensive Cyprus settlement on the basis of the plan he has proposed. Although such a settlement did not emerge at the European Union's Summit in Copenhagen in December, intense diplomatic activity has continued. Secretary Powell, Under Secretary Marc Grossman, Special Cyprus Coordinator Thomas Weston, and

Ambassador to Cyprus Michael Klosson are encouraging all relevant parties to maintain a spirit of compromise and a commitment to reaching an agreement by February 28, 2003. I will do the same as part of our continuing commitment to the U.N. effort to find a just and lasting settlement for Cyprus.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard G. Lugar, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 20.