

The President. Secretary Rumsfeld will be briefing today.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:17 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A reporter referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on the Budget Resolution *March 21, 2003*

As we engage in action to ensure freedom and security, it is imperative that we stay focused on important domestic priorities, including creating jobs and strengthening economic growth at home. With passage of the budget resolution, the House has spoken clearly that future economic

growth and job creation requires passing the bold plan that I proposed. I commend the House for its timely action and look forward to working with Congress to ensure that we fund our priorities, enact policies to spur growth, and restrain spending.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Commencement of Military Operations Against Iraq *March 21, 2003*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On March 18, 2003, I made available to you, consistent with section 3(b) of the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (Public Law 107-243), my determination that further diplomatic and other peaceful means alone will neither adequately protect the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq, nor lead to enforcement of all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq.

I have reluctantly concluded, along with other coalition leaders, that only the use of armed force will accomplish these objectives and restore international peace and security in the area. I have also determined that the use of armed force against Iraq is consistent with the United States and other countries continuing to take the necessary actions against international terrorists

and terrorist organizations, including those nations, organizations, or persons who planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001. United States objectives also support a transition to democracy in Iraq, as contemplated by the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-338).

Consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148), I now inform you that pursuant to my authority as Commander in Chief and consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1) and the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (Public Law 107-243), I directed U.S. Armed Forces, operating with other coalition forces, to commence combat operations on March 19, 2003, against Iraq.

These military operations have been carefully planned to accomplish our goals