

Christmas Message to the Members of the Armed Forces *December 24, 2003*

Laura and I send greetings to the men and women of our military. Many of you are far from home during the holidays. We know you miss the people you love, especially this time of year. Your family and friends and fellow citizens miss you too—and our whole country is proud of you.

All who serve in our military are protecting the American people in a time of challenge and danger. You are confronting terrorists abroad so that we don't have to face them in our own country, and so that people around the world can live in peace. By spreading freedom and democracy, you are making our future more secure.

As your Commander in Chief, I am proud of every one of you. Some of your comrades have been wounded, and we pray for their recovery. Some have given their

lives. This Nation will never forget their service and sacrifice, and in this holiday season we pray that God will comfort the families they left behind.

The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to humanity. Americans are blessed to have men and women like you protecting us, and defending the cause of freedom across the world. May God bless you, and may He watch over our country.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This message was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 25 and follows the text as printed in the December 24 edition of *USA Today*. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Statement on the Earthquake in Iran *December 26, 2003*

Laura and I heard this morning of the earthquake centered in the city of Bam, Iran. We are greatly saddened by the loss of life, injuries, and widespread damage to this ancient city. I extend my condolences

to all those touched by this tragedy. The thoughts of all Americans are with the victims and their families at this time, and we stand ready to help the people of Iran.

The President's Radio Address *December 27, 2003*

Good morning. In this week of Christmas, Laura and I send good wishes to the families of America. We hope this season has brought happy reunions, celebration, and new memories to cherish as we approach the new year.

Christmas centers on the birth of a child and on the message of hope and peace. We hear that message in many ways at Christmas, and it never loses the power to lift our hearts. The holidays can also deepen our sense of gratitude for life and for all the family and friends who fill our