

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

lives. In this great and prosperous land, we remember how much we have been given and how much we have to share.

We think of those among us who spend the holidays in sadness or solitude. We think of those facing illness or the loss of a loved one or the hardships of poverty or unemployment. And across our country, caring citizens are reaching out to those in need by volunteering their time. By serving a cause greater than themselves, Americans spread hope in our country, and they make our Nation better, one life at a time.

At Christmas, we also think of the men and women of our Armed Forces who are defending freedom around the world. These brave Americans are fighting terrorists in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere so that we do not meet these killers on our own streets. We are grateful for the courage and commitment of our troops, and we are safer because of their skill and sacrifice. Separation from loved ones is always difficult, especially at this time of year. All our men and women serving abroad can know that their families miss them, millions

are praying for them, and their Nation is proud of them.

All who serve others are living out the spirit of the Christmas season. The story of Christmas is familiar to us all, yet it still brings inspiration and comfort and love to people everywhere. The voice first heard 20 centuries ago in Bethlehem stirs churches and communities to open homeless shelters and food pantries and job training centers to help those in need.

This Christmas season comes at a time of great challenge for our country. Yet the story of this holiday reminds us of an eternal promise, that God's purpose is justice and His plan is peace.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:40 a.m. on December 22 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 26 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a
Subsidy Budget Request for World Airways, Inc.
December 30, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Consistent with provisions of Public Law 107-42, the Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act, 2001, I hereby notify the Congress of a \$30 million Federal credit instrument for World Airways, Inc.

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH