

Message on the Observance of Easter 2004 *April 9, 2004*

The Lord is risen indeed...

LUKE 24:34

I send greetings to Christians around the world as they gather to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus' life and teachings continue to speak to every generation, and Christians believe his miraculous Resurrection provides hope for the future and offers us the promise of new life.

Through His ministry and sacrifice, Jesus demonstrated God's unconditional love for us. He taught us the importance of helping others and loving our neighbors. His selfless devotion and mercy provide a remarkable example for all of us.

As families and friends gather to enjoy this Easter season, we celebrate God's gift of freedom and His love that conquers death. For those who observe Easter, our faith brings confidence that good will overcome evil and that joy is everlasting. Today, we give thanks for God's many blessings and pray for His peace in the affairs of men.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a happy Easter.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this message. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

The President's Radio Address *April 10, 2004*

Good morning. This week in Iraq, our coalition forces have faced challenges and taken the fight to the enemy, and our offensive will continue in the weeks ahead.

As the June 30th date for Iraqi sovereignty draws near, a small faction is attempting to derail Iraqi democracy and seize power. In some cities, Saddam supporters and terrorists have struck against coalition forces. In other areas, attacks were incited by a radical named Muqtada Al Sadr, who is wanted for the murder of a respected Shiite cleric. Al Sadr has called for violence against coalition troops, and his band of thugs have terrorized Iraqi police and ordinary citizens.

Coalition forces are conducting a multicity offensive. In Fallujah, marines of Operation Vigilant Resolve are taking control of the city, block by block. Further south, troops of Operation Resolute Sword

have taken the initiative from Al Sadr's militia. Our coalition's quick reaction forces are finding and engaging the enemy. Prisoners are being taken, and intelligence is being gathered. Our decisive actions will continue until these enemies of democracy are dealt with.

Some have suggested that we should respond to the recent attacks by delaying Iraqi sovereignty. This is precisely what our enemies want. They want to dictate the course of events in Iraq and to prevent the Iraqi people from having a true voice in their future. They want America and our coalition to falter in our commitments before a watching world. In these ambitions, the enemies of freedom will fail. Iraqi sovereignty will arrive on June 30th.

In March, the Iraqi Governing Council signed a document that protects the rights of the Iraqi people, offers the timetable

for elections, and paves the way for a permanent constitution. At this moment, United Nations Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi is conducting intensive consultations with a wide range of Iraqis on the structure of the interim government that will assume control on July the first. We welcome this U.N. engagement.

The transition to sovereignty will mark the beginning of a new Government and the end of the coalition's administrative duties, but the coalition's commitment to Iraq will continue. We will establish a new American Embassy to protect our Nation's interests. We will continue helping the Iraqi people reconstruct their economy, undermined by decades of dictatorship and corruption. And our coalition forces will remain committed to the security of Iraq.

Iraq's elections for a permanent Government are scheduled to be held near the end of 2005, and the elected Government can count on coalition assistance. We will stand with the Iraqi people as long as necessary to ensure that their young democracy is stable and secure and successful.

As we have done before, America is fighting on the side of liberty, liberty in Iraq and liberty in the Middle East. This objective serves the interests of that region, of the United States, and of all freedom-loving countries. As the greater Middle East increasingly becomes a place where freedom flourishes, the lives of millions in

that region will be bettered, and the American people and the entire world will be more secure.

From the first days of the war on terror, I said our Nation would face periods of struggle and testing. As the June 30th transition approaches, we will continue to see a test of wills between the enemies of freedom and its defenders. We will win this test of wills and overcome every challenge, because the cause of freedom and security is worth our struggle.

This weekend, many of the men and women who serve that cause in uniform will celebrate Easter and Passover far from home. In this season that celebrates hope and freedom, our Nation remembers in prayer the good and the brave people of our military. They are the best of America, and America is firmly behind them.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:50 a.m. on April 9 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 9 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters at Fort Hood, Texas *April 11, 2004*

Easter

The President. Happy Easter to everybody. It's our honor to have celebrated this holy day with family members whose loved one is in Iraq. Fort Hood has made a mighty contribution to freedom in Iraq and to security for the country. I value my time

with the family members and those who sacrifice on behalf of the country.

Today I ask for God's blessings for our troops overseas. May He protect them, and may He continue to bless our country.

I'll answer a couple of questions. Scott [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press].