

## The President's Radio Address *January 1, 2005*

Good morning. On this first day of a new year, we join the world in feeling enormous sadness over a great human tragedy. Last Sunday, an earthquake and violent tsunamis struck the nations that surround the Indian Ocean. The carnage is of a scale that defies comprehension, with over 100,000 deaths reported. I have signed a proclamation calling for our Nation's flag to be flown at half-staff this coming week. As the people of this devastated region struggle to recover, we offer our love and compassion and our assurance that America will be there to help.

Earlier this week, I spoke with the leaders of India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Indonesia. I offered them the condolences of our Nation, and I praised their steadfast leadership. The task they face is difficult. Their relief resources are stretched nearly to the limit. Communications, roads, and medical facilities have been badly damaged. Disease has become a very real threat.

Americans are a compassionate people, and we are already hard at work helping those nations meet these challenges. The United States has pledged \$350 million in relief assistance, with \$15 million already in the hands of relief organizations in the affected countries. To help coordinate this massive relief effort, disaster response officials are on the ground and have established a support center in Thailand that is manned and operational. More than 20 patrol and cargo aircraft have been made available to assess the disaster and deliver relief supplies. Many of those aircraft are already on the scene. We have dispatched the aircraft carrier *Abraham Lincoln*, the maritime prepositioning squadron from Guam, and an amphibious ship carrying a

Marine Expeditionary Unit. They will soon be in position to support relief efforts, to include the generation of clean water.

Tomorrow I will send a delegation to the area to meet with regional leaders and international organizations to assess what additional aid can be provided by the United States. The delegation will be led by Secretary of State Colin Powell and Governor Jeb Bush, who has extensive experience in the State of Florida with relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts following natural disasters. Secretary Powell has already spoken with many of his counterparts in the region and with officials from the United Nations and other governments that are helping with the response. Together, we are leading an international coalition to help with immediate humanitarian relief, rehabilitation, and long-term construction efforts. India, Japan, and Australia have already pledged to help us coordinate these relief efforts, and I'm confident many more nations will join this core group in short order.

Here at home, Americans are translating the blessings of our own country into generosity to others. From charitable organizations to private individuals to companies, our fellow citizens, on their own initiative, are raising millions of dollars for relief efforts. These Americans, donor and fundraiser alike, represent the best of our country and offer an example to the world. Any American who desires to donate to these efforts can easily do so online, by accessing the USA Freedom Corps web site at [www.usafreedomcorps.gov](http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov).

In this season when we gather with loved ones and count our many blessings, we hold the victims of this terrible tragedy in

our hearts and prayers. And let us be mindful that even in this modern age, our world still requires compassion, tolerance, and generosity from each of us.

Laura and I send our condolences to all whose hearts are filled with grief this New Year's Day. And to our fellow Americans, we wish you peace and happiness in the coming year.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:20 a.m. on December 31, 2004, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 1, 2005. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 31, 2004, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address. The proclamation of January 1 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Statement on the Death of Representative Robert T. Matsui *January 2, 2005*

Laura and I are saddened by the passing of Bob Matsui. Bob Matsui was a dedicated public servant and a good and decent man who served with distinction and integrity in the U.S. House of Representatives for more than 25 years. In the Congress, he was a leader of his party admired by colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Through long-time service on the House Ways and Means Committee, he helped pass important legislation on issues ranging from trade to small business to child welfare to mass

transit. He was always devoted to California and his native Sacramento, where he served on the city council and as vice mayor in the 1970s. A third-generation Japanese American, Bob was interned along with his family during World War II. Four decades later, he played a leading role in Congress in securing passage of the landmark Japanese American Redress Act. Laura and I send our prayers and condolences to Doris, their son Brian, and the entire Matsui family.

## Remarks on Mobilizing Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunamis Disaster Relief *January 3, 2005*

I thank you all for coming. I'm honored to be standing here with two former Presidents, President Bush 41, President Clinton 42. We have come together to express our country's sympathy for the victims of a great tragedy. We're here to ask our fellow citizens to join in a broad humanitarian relief effort.

Eight days ago, the most powerful earthquake in 40 years shook the island of Su-

matra. The earthquake caused violent tsunamis in the Indian Ocean, which left an arc of destruction from Thailand to the Horn of Africa. The devastation in the region defies comprehension. More than 150,000 lives are estimated to be lost, including 90,000 in Indonesia alone. As many as 5 million people are thought to be homeless or without food or shelter. Thousands more are missing, and millions are vulnerable to disease.