

born after—before 1950. People born after 1950, you better be asking your elected representatives, “If we’ve got a problem, what do you intend to do about it?” I find people are really tired of partisan bickering: “We can’t accept this idea because it’s a Republican idea.” “We can’t accept this idea because it’s a Democrat idea.” People just don’t want that when it comes to the Social Security debate. People want there to be good will and a good-faith effort by people of both political parties to sit down at the table, and say, “The people are worried about it. There’s a lot of grandparents in America worried about their grandchildren. We have run for office for a reason.”

One of the reasons I have put this idea or this issue on the table, because I understand the job of the President is to confront problems, and not just pass them on to another President or another Congress. Now is the time.

And I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come by. Sam, thank you for your good work on this issue. Thank you for your interest on this issue. I want to thank the younger folks who are here for paying attention to an issue which I

promise you is going to affect your life. It’s either going to affect it in an incredibly positive way, or about 20 years from now, you’re going to be saying to yourself, “I wonder how come the Congress didn’t listen to old George W. Bush. [Laughter] How come they didn’t get together and fix this for generations to come?”

God bless. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:58 p.m. at the Lake Nona YMCA Family Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Mayor Richard T. Crotty of Orange County, FL; James W. Ferber, president and chief executive officer, Central Florida YMCA; Sam Beard, founder and president, Economic Security 2000; President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; former Representative Timothy J. Penny, senior fellow and co-director, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute Policy Forum; Robert C. Pozen, chairman, MFS Investment Management; and former Senator Bob Dole. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of former First Lady Barbara Bush.

The President’s Radio Address *March 19, 2005*

Good morning. On this day 2 years ago, we launched Operation Iraqi Freedom to disarm a brutal regime, free its people, and defend the world from a grave danger.

Before coalition forces arrived, Iraq was ruled by a dictatorship that murdered its own citizens, threatened its neighbors, and defied the world. We knew of Saddam Hussein’s record of aggression and support for terror. We knew of his long history of pursuing, even using, weapons of mass destruction, and we know that September the 11th requires our country to think dif-

ferently. We must and we will confront threats to America before they fully materialize.

Now, because we acted, Iraq’s Government is no longer a threat to the world or its own people. Today, the Iraqi people are taking charge of their own destiny. In January, over 8 million Iraqis defied the car bombers and assassins to vote in free elections. This week, Iraq’s Transitional National Assembly convened for the first time. These elected leaders broadly represent Iraq’s people and include more than 85

women. They will now draft a new constitution for a free and democratic Iraq. In October, that document will be presented to the Iraqi people in a national referendum. Another election is planned for December to choose a permanent constitutional government.

Free governments reflect the culture of the citizens they serve, and that is happening in Iraq. Today, Iraqis can take pride in building a government that answers to its people and honors their country's unique heritage. Millions of Americans saw that pride in an Iraqi woman named Safia Taleb al-Suhail, who sat in the gallery during the State of the Union Address. Eleven years ago, Saddam Hussein's thugs murdered her father. Today, Safia's nation is free, and Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell. Safia expressed the gratitude of the Iraqi nation when she embraced the mom of Marine Corps Sergeant Byron Norwood, who was killed in the assault on Fallujah.

To all the brave members of our Armed Forces who have taken part in this historic mission and to your families, I express the heartfelt thanks of the American people. I know that nothing can end the pain of the families who have lost loved ones in this struggle, but they can know that their sacrifice has added to America's security and the freedom of the world.

Iraq's progress toward political freedom has opened a new phase of our work there. We are focusing on our efforts on training the Iraqi security forces. As they become more self-reliant and take on greater security responsibilities, America and its coalition partners will increasingly assume a sup-

porting role. In the end, Iraqis must be able to defend their own country. And we will help that proud, new nation secure its liberty, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

Today, we're seeing hopeful signs across the broader Middle East. The victory of freedom in Iraq is strengthening a new ally in the war on terror and inspiring democratic reformers from Beirut to Tehran. Today, women can vote in Afghanistan. Palestinians are breaking the old patterns of violence, and hundreds of thousands of Lebanese are rising up to demand their sovereignty and democratic rights. These are landmark events in the history of freedom. Only the fire of liberty can purge the ideologies of murder by offering hope to those who yearn to live free.

The experience of recent years has taught us an important lesson: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. Because of our actions, freedom is taking root in Iraq, and the American people are more secure.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:52 p.m. on March 18 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 19 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Janet Norwood, mother of Sgt. Byron Norwood, USMC. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to Senior Citizens in Tucson, Arizona *March 21, 2005*

[*The President's remarks are joined in progress.*]

The President. —now it's our turn to sacrifice for future generations, and we are. This world is becoming more peaceful, and