

The President's Radio Address

April 5, 2003

Good morning. American and coalition forces are steadily advancing against the regime of Saddam Hussein. With each new village they liberate, our forces are learning more about the atrocities of that regime and the deep fear the dictator has instilled in the Iraqi people. Yet no crime of this dying regime will divert us from our mission. We will not stop until Iraq is free.

This week, coalition forces have been clearing southern cities and towns of Saddam's death squads and enforcers. Our special forces and Army paratroopers, working with Kurdish militia, have opened a northern front against the enemy. In the town of An Najaf, members of our 101st Airborne Division have been welcomed as liberators. At An Nasiriyah, marines continue to eliminate the enemy while other Army and Marine units have closed in on Baghdad. From the skies above, coalition aircraft and cruise missiles are removing hundreds of military targets from the map.

As the vise tightens on the Iraqi regime, some of our enemies have chosen to fill their final days with acts of cowardice and murder. In combat, Saddam's thugs shield themselves with women and children. They have killed Iraqi citizens who welcome coalition troops, and they have forced other Iraqis into battle by threatening to torture or kill their families. They have executed prisoners of war, waged attacks under the white flag of truce, and concealed combat forces in civilian neighborhoods, schools, hospitals, and mosques. In this war, the Iraqi regime is terrorizing its own citizens, doing everything possible to maximize Iraqi civilian casualties and then to exploit the deaths they have caused for propaganda. These are war criminals, and they'll be treated as war criminals.

In stark contrast, the citizens of Iraq are coming to know what kind of people we have sent to liberate them. American forces and our allies are treating innocent civilians with kindness and showing proper respect to the soldiers who surrender. The people of the United States are proud of the honorable

conduct of our military. And I am proud to lead such brave and decent Americans.

In recent days, we have also brought food and water and medicine to the Iraqi people. We're delivering emergency rations to the hungry. Right now, cargo ships are bound for Iraq, carrying wheat from Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas—enough to feed 4.5 million Iraqis for 1 month. Additional food, supplied by the World Food Program, is moving by truck convoy across the Turkish border into northern Iraq.

We are bringing aid to the long-suffering people of Iraq, and we are bringing something more. We are bringing hope. One Iraqi, when the coalition troops arrived, described the emotions of his village. "They were waiting for you," he said, "and all the people believe that America and Britain have come to liberate them, not to conquer."

Village by village, city by city, liberation is coming. The people of Iraq have my pledge: Our fighting forces will press on until their oppressors are gone and their whole country is free.

By our actions in this war, we serve a great and just cause. Free nations will not sit and wait, leaving enemies free to plot another September the 11th—this time perhaps with chemical, biological, or nuclear terror. We'll remove weapons of mass destruction from the hands of mass murderers. And by defending our own security, we are ridding the people of Iraq from one of the cruelest regimes on Earth. The United States and our allies pledged to act if the dictator did not disarm. The regime in Iraq is now learning that we keep our word.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1 p.m. on April 4 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 5. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 4 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

**The President's News Conference
With Prime Minister Tony Blair of
the United Kingdom in Hillsborough,
Northern Ireland**

April 8, 2003

Prime Minister Blair. Good morning, everyone. First of all, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to President Bush to Northern Ireland. America has long been a friend of Northern Ireland and a friend to us in this important period for the peace process. So it's both significant and welcome that the President is here in person to give once more his support and to join with me and, later today, with the Irish Taoiseach in urging the parties to take the final steps towards a lasting peace here in Northern Ireland.

It's also perhaps fitting that here in Northern Ireland a good part of our discussion focused on the Middle East. It's not so many years ago that it would have been said that the peace process here was in far worse shape than the process out in the Middle East. Yet, here we are, for all the difficulties in Northern Ireland, able to point back to real improvements in the security and the standard of living of people here and to point forward to turning progress into lasting change, lasting security, and lasting peace, which is what people want to see here. And we've made that progress because of patience and perseverance and because friends like those in the United States of America have helped us get there.

So to those who can sometimes say that the process in the Middle East is hopeless, I say we can look at Northern Ireland and take some hope from that.

I want to thank the President also for the impetus he has given to the two-state solution in the Middle East that he outlined last June, a secure Israel and a viable Palestinian state, and for his decision that the roadmap be published, which as you know, depends upon the foundation of Abu Mazen's cabinet.

Of course, our discussions have naturally continued to focus upon Iraq, upon the continuing military campaign, where, once again, our forces have performed superbly. And I want to pay tribute to the U.S., UK, and other coalition forces. In all parts of the

country, our power is strengthening; the regime is weakening; the Iraqi people are turning towards us.

I'd like to pay tribute to the professionalism and the compassion that they continue to show and to express my condolences to the families of those that have lost their lives in this conflict, most recently, the three brave soldiers who lost their lives fighting to liberate Basra. I think anyone who has seen the joy on the faces of people in Basra as they realize that the regime that they detest is finally collapsing knows very well that this was, indeed, a war of liberation and not of conquest.

On weapons of mass destruction, we know that the regime has them. We know that as the regime collapses, we will be led to them. We pledged to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, and we will keep that commitment.

On Saddam, his grip on power has been prized away. He has ruled by fear. But as the knowledge sinks in that we will get the job done, the people realize there's not going to be a repeat of 1991; there's not going to be a repeat of the past. The power of Saddam is ending.

And our enemy in this conflict has always been Saddam and his regime, not the Iraqi people. We are the friends of the Iraqi people. So much of our discussion today has focused on how we continue to get vital supplies of food, water, and medicines to them and how we help the process of transition to the day when Iraq is governed by the Iraqi people for the Iraqi people.

As we said, our forces will not stay in Iraq a day longer than is necessary. We will take on the legal and moral obligations that will fall to us as the forces on the ground to stabilize the country, to keep basic services going, to protect civilian life. Then we will help Iraq move as swiftly as possible to an Interim Authority run by Iraqis. And that, in turn, is designed to pave the way for a truly representative government which respects human rights and the rule of law, which spends Iraq's wealth not on palaces and weapons of mass destruction but on the well-being, prosperity of the people of Iraq.

And this new Iraq that will emerge is not to be run either by us or, indeed, by the U.N.