

Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe who was instrumental in establishing numerous educational, social, and rehabilitative institutions. The Rebbe believed that education is critical in cultivating the moral character of students. He lived what he said: "A single good deed on your part could transform the world."

Today in the United States, there is a growing momentum of acts of kindness. Across our country, millions of Americans are helping to reinforce a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility, and are applying the compassion of America to our biggest problems and deepest wounds. To build on these successes, we must instill these values in our next generation of leaders. Amidst a world of challenges, we can equip our children to carry our Nation into a future of promise and possibility for all.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 13, 2003, as Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A. I call upon all Americans to invest in our Nation's future by helping our children understand the importance of character and provide them the knowledge and values necessary to succeed.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., April 14, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 11, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 15.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the North Atlantic Treaty Protocols on the Accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia

April 10, 2003

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. These protocols were opened for signature at Brussels on March 26, 2003, and signed that day on behalf of the United States and the other parties to the North Atlantic Treaty. I request the advice and consent of the Senate to the ratification of these documents. I also transmit for the information of the Senate a report submitted to me by the Secretary of State regarding this matter.

The end of communism and the consolidation of freedom and democracy in Central and Eastern Europe have been among the great developments of human history. NATO played a vital role in defending freedom and promoting this peaceful change for over 50 years. I am pleased that, with the advice and consent of the Senate, these new democracies can soon join us as members of this great Alliance.

As the threats to the Alliance have changed, NATO itself has adapted to face them. At the Prague Summit in November 2002, I joined the leaders of NATO not only in inviting these nations to join us as members, but also in calling for a transformation of NATO's military capabilities and structures to meet the threats of the 21st century. NATO is proceeding with that agenda. Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia are already making real contributions to the common security of the NATO Allies, including the United States, and I am firmly convinced that their full membership in NATO will strengthen our Alliance further.

I ask the Senate to join me in advancing the cause of freedom and strengthening NATO by providing its prompt advice and consent to these Protocols of Accession. My Administration stands ready to assist you as best we can in your deliberations.

George W. Bush

The White House,
April 10, 2003.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 11.

**Remarks Following a Visit With
Troops Wounded in Operation Iraqi
Freedom and an Exchange With
Reporters in Bethesda, Maryland
April 11, 2003**

The President. Laura and I just had an extraordinary experience here at Bethesda and at—initially at Walter Reed, to thank our troops who've been overseas in Iraq for their dedication and courage and their service to the country. Because of troops like them, because of coalition troops, we've had an historic week.

I don't think I'll ever forget—I'm sure a lot of other people will never forget—the statue of Saddam Hussein falling in Baghdad, and then seeing the jubilation on the faces of ordinary Iraqis as they realized that the grip of fear that had them by the throat had been released—the first signs of freedom.

I came today to thank the troops and their families and their loved ones for their sacrifice. I also want to thank the staffs of these hospitals, the leadership, the doctors and the nurses, the people who care for those who have been hurt, for their extraordinary service to their fellow Americans.

Ours is an amazing country where a young soldier can be wounded on the battlefield and 4 days later be receiving the best health care possible. This country is dedicated to our military. We try to provide the very best we can. And here at Bethesda, at Walter Reed, our troops get the very best there is.

So Laura and I were here not only to thank our soldiers, but also to thank those in the medical profession who dedicate their lives to healing the hurt and to helping the fami-

lies. And that's exactly what's happening for our soldiers here in these two fine facilities.

I'll be glad to answer a couple of questions. Yes.

POWs and MIAs/Saddam Hussein

Q. Mr. President, what progress are we making in determining the whereabouts and well-being of American POWs and MIAs in Iraq? And the same goes for Saddam Hussein. And which do you see as the greater priority right now?

The President. The priority of this campaign is to rid the Iraqi people of any vestiges of Saddam Hussein and his regime so we can not only free the people but clear that country of weapons of mass destruction. I don't know the whereabouts of Saddam Hussein. I don't know if he's dead or alive. I do know he's no longer in power.

In terms of POWs, we will use every resource we have to find any POWs that are alive. And we pray that they are alive, because if they are, we'll find them.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Victory Declaration/Media Coverage

Q. Why shouldn't we say that the war is over except for pockets of resistance, sir? And do you feel any certain sense of vindication after all those people questioned the war plan?

The President. I don't take anything personally. I committed our troops because I believe that Saddam Hussein and his regime posed a threat to the American people, posed a threat to anybody who loves freedom. We will achieve that objective. And at the same time, we will free the Iraqi people. And that's an important objective as well. We believe in freedom. We believe freedom is universal. We believe freedom is a gift from the Almighty God for every person, regardless of their race or their religion.

This war will end when our commanders in the field tell me that the objective has been achieved. And Tommy Franks put together a great strategy. Wonderful thing about free speech and a lot of TV stations is you get a lot of opinions. Some of them were right, and some of them were really wrong. But that's okay. That's what we—that's what we believe. We believe in free speech, believe people ought to be able to express their opinion.