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Week Ending Friday, April 25, 2003

The President's Radio Address

April 19, 2003

Good morning. This weekend, families across America will come together to celebrate Easter and continue the observance of Passover. This holy season reminds us of the value of freedom and the power of a love stronger than death.

This year, Easter and Passover have special meaning for the families of our men and women in uniform who feel so intensely the absence of their loved ones during these days. More than 250,000 American troops are serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom to protect our security and to free an oppressed people. Their families await their safe return, and our grateful Nation remembers them in prayer.

Our whole Nation has also shared in the happiness of learning that seven American prisoners of war were rescued in northern Iraq earlier this week and are now safe. Thanks to the courage of our marines and the help of Iraqis, their families have even more reason to celebrate this weekend.

After hearing the good news, the parents of rescued helicopter pilot Ronald Young, Jr., of Georgia thanked people from across America and as far away as Australia and Japan for their cards and flowers and prayers. Kaye Young, Ronald's mother, said, "You can't believe the blessings that have come out of this. Even as sad as we were, as upset as we were to think that he was being held, there have been so many blessings." Mrs. Young continued, "All over this country, people cared so much about us and about our son."

As a nation, we continue to pray for all who serve in our military and those who remain in harm's way. We also pray for those who have lost people they love in this war. I have met with some of these grieving families, and I have seen their sorrow and their strength.

Corporal Henry Brown, a 22-year-old soldier from Natchez, Mississippi, was lost in battle earlier this month. After the news arrived, his best friend, Frank Woods, Jr., said this about Henry: "He believed God was working through him, and he was part of the plan. I guess part of the plan now is God calling his soldier home."

America mourns those who have been called home, and we pray that their families will find God's comfort and God's grace. His purposes are not always clear to us, yet this season brings a promise that good can come out of evil, that hope can arise from despair, and that all our grief will someday turn to joy, a joy that can never be taken away.

Laura and I wish you all a happy Easter and a blessed Passover. Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:05 a.m. on April 16 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 18 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. 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 20, 2003

The President. We just had a great church service. Like thousands of our fellow citizens, we celebrated Easter. We celebrated with our family, but we also celebrated with members of the 4th Infantry Division military families. The 4th Infantry Division is in Iraq.

We also were with two of—brave Americans, two warrant officers, chopper pilots who were captured in Iraq and recently returned to their families. They were celebrating Easter with their loved ones, moms,