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The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Message on the Observance of New Year's Day, 2004

December 31, 2003

The past year has been a time of accomplishment and progress. Working together, our citizens have made America a safer, more prosperous, and better country. In the New Year, we will build on these successes, embracing the challenges and opportunities ahead.

We have seen our brave men and women in uniform defend America and liberate the oppressed. We pray for their safety, and we are grateful for their service and the support of their families.

In the past year, millions of people have answered the call to serve their neighbors in need. Americans from every walk of life are building a culture of compassion by devoting their time and talents to help others. In the New Year, I ask all Americans to answer the call to bring hope to those who are less fortunate.

I encourage every American to give thanks to God for His many blessings and to reaffirm our commitment to peace and freedom around the world. Laura joins me in wishing all Americans a Happy New Year. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks on New Year's Day and an Exchange With Reporters in Falfurrias, Texas

January 1, 2004

The President. Wish everybody a happy New Year. It's a good way to start the new year, outdoors—in my case, with my dad. And it's—I know this part of Texas real well. It's a spectacular part of our State. And we were just on a ranch with—owned by a lady who knows it's important to protect the environment by taking care of the land. And as a result of her taking care of the land, worrying about bird habitats, we happened to see a lot of birds today. But most importantly, I was with my dad. It's a great way to start 2004.

I'm looking forward to 2004. We'll continue to stay focused on our economy, so people can find work, and stay focused on working to keep the peace and—by spreading freedom and by holding people to account who are willing to harm innocent people around the world. But it's a—I think 2004 is going to be a great year.

And in the spirit of great years, I'll answer a few questions.

President's Hunting Trip

Q. How was the hunt?

The President. It was good fun. You know, when you hunt quail, you get a lot of exercise. As you know, I like exercise. And so my dad and I and Ms. Negley, whose ranch we were on, walked a lot of territory, watched the dogs work, and knocked down some birds.

Q. How many?

The President. I think I shot five. The limit in Texas, I believe, is 15. I'm not that good a shot, but it was a lot of fun.

Iraqi Debt Relief

Q. Did you talk to Mr. Baker?

The President. Pardon me?

Q. Did you talk to Secretary Baker?

The President. I did talk to Secretary Baker. He came by for lunch. First, I thanked him for spending as much time as he did on the road for our country. As you know, he went to Europe first and then recently went to the Far East. He reported on his visits with Prime Minister Koizumi and President Hu Jintao. And he was very positive about his meetings. He's going to come back up and brief Condi and me in a little bit of time.

Yes, ma'am.