

placed Iraqi troops and equipment in civilian areas, attempting to use innocent men, women, and children as shields for his own military, a final atrocity against his people. I want Americans and all the world to know that coalition forces will make every effort to spare innocent civilians from harm.

A campaign on the harsh terrain of a nation as large as California could be longer and more difficult than some predict. And helping Iraqis achieve a united, stable, and free country will require our sustained commitment. We come to Iraq with respect for its citizens, for their great civilization, and for the religious faiths they practice. We have no ambition in Iraq except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people.

I know that the families of our military are praying that all those who serve will return safely and soon. Millions of Americans are praying with you for the safety of your loved ones and for the protection of the innocent. For your sacrifice, you have the gratitude and respect of the American people. And you can know that our forces will be coming home as soon as their work is done.

Our Nation enters this conflict reluctantly. Yet our purpose is sure. The people

of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder. We will meet that threat now with our Army, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard, and Marines, so that we do not have to meet it later with armies of firefighters and police and doctors on the streets of our cities.

Now that conflict has come, the only way to limit its duration is to apply decisive force. And I assure you, this will not be a campaign of half measures, and we will accept no outcome but victory.

My fellow citizens, the dangers to our country and the world will be overcome. We will pass through this time of peril and carry on the work of peace. We will defend our freedom. We will bring freedom to others, and we will prevail.

May God bless our country and all who defend her.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:16 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting *March 20, 2003*

I called my Cabinet together to review our strategies to make the world more peaceful, to make our country more secure, to make the lives of our citizens as healthy and as prosperous as possible.

We heard from Secretary Rumsfeld, who briefed us on the early stages of the war. There's no question we've sent the finest of our citizens into harm's way. They perform with great skill and great bravery. We thank them. We thank their loved ones. We appreciate their sacrifice.

We heard from Secretary Powell, who briefed us on the ever-growing coalition of the willing, nations who support our deep desire for peace and freedom. Over 40 nations now support our efforts. We are grateful for their determination. We appreciate their vision, and we welcome their support.

As well, we discussed the need to make sure we have plans in place to encourage economic vitality and growth. We will continue to push for a Medicare system that

is compassionate for our seniors. We care deeply about the fact that some children in our society can't read. We want the best of education for every citizen in America.

This Cabinet is confident about the future of our country. We're confident we

can achieve our objectives. I'm grateful for their service to their country.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:53 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

## Message on the Observance of Nowruz *March 20, 2003*

I send greetings to Iranian Americans observing Nowruz.

During Nowruz, people of Iranian descent celebrate the arrival of spring, a season of rebirth. This joyous occasion provides an opportunity for Persians to cherish their rich heritage and enjoy the company of family and friends in anticipation of happiness and blessings in the year ahead.

This year's observance comes during a challenging time for our Nation and the world. As the international community works to face great challenges and embrace important opportunities, America remains

committed to peace, justice, and opportunity for all people. Throughout this time of renewal, we remain dedicated to bringing hope and freedom to troubled regions around the world.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a joyous celebration to you, your families, and your relatives and friends in Iran.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

## Message to the Congress Reporting on Confiscation and Vesting of Certain Iraqi Property *March 20, 2003*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Pursuant to section 204(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(b) (IEEPA), and section 301 of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1631, I hereby report that I have taken additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12722 of August 2, 1990, by exercising my statutory authority to confiscate and vest certain property of the Government of Iraq and its agencies, instrumentalities, or controlled entities.

Consistent with section 203(a)(1)(C) of IEEPA, 50 U.S.C. 1702(a)(1)(C), as added by section 106 of the USA PATRIOT ACT, Public Law 107-56, I have ordered that certain blocked funds held in the United States in accounts in the name of the Government of Iraq, the Central Bank of Iraq, Rafidain Bank, Rasheed Bank, or the State Organization for Marketing Oil are hereby confiscated and vested in the Department of the Treasury. I have made exceptions for any such funds that are subject to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations