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unified sound, a beautiful sound. And that's the country that is now emerging in Iraq, a country that will work together and recognize everybody's rights. We're making good progress in Iraq. There's more to do, obviously, but the fact that the Iraqi Symphony is here and entertaining Americans is a sign of that progress.

And we thank you all for coming. We wish you Godspeed.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:01 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mohammed Amin Ezzat, conductor, Iraqi National Symphony; and Rend Rahim Francke, head of Iraq's Interest Section in the U.S. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of Paul Simon
December 10, 2003

Laura and I were saddened to learn of the death of former Senator Paul Simon. Paul Simon contributed significantly to America as an Army special agent, newspaper publisher, Member of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, and author and teacher. He will be missed by the many people in Illinois and throughout the country whose lives he touched and improved. Laura and I send our condolences to his family and many friends.

Statement on the Death of Bob Bartley
December 10, 2003

Bob Bartley was a giant of journalism. His extraordinary contributions to America as an author, editor, and columnist helped shape our times. I was pleased to award him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our highest civil honor, in recognition of his enormous impact on the intellectual and political life of our Nation. Laura joins me in sending condolences to Edith and his daughters, family, colleagues, and friends.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters
December 11, 2003

The President. I want to thank the members of my Cabinet for coming for what will be the last Cabinet meeting of the year 2003. I've just heard from each Cabinet member about the accomplishments in the year 2003. This has been an historic year. America is safer. America is more prosperous. America is a better place because of the actions this administration has taken.

In order to secure America, we liberated the people of Iraq from a brutal tyrant, and now we're in the process of rebuilding that country, along with others, and we're making good progress.