

## The President's Radio Address August 9, 2003

Good morning. Friday of this week was the 100th day since the end of major combat operations in Iraq. For America and our coalition partners, these have been 100 days of steady progress and decisive action against the last holdouts of the former regime. And for the people of Iraq, this has been a period like none other in the country's history, a time of change and rising hopes after decades of tyranny.

Every day, we are working to make Iraq more secure. Coalition forces remain on the offensive against the Ba'ath Party loyalists and foreign terrorists who are trying to prevent order and stability. More and more Iraqis are coming forward with specific information as to the whereabouts of these violent thugs, enabling us to carry out raids to round them up and seize stockpiles of weapons.

We are working with Iraqis to establish a new Iraqi army and a new civil defense corps. In the city of Baghdad, 6,000 Iraqi police are patrolling the streets and protecting citizens. More than 20,000 more police are on duty in other towns and cities across Iraq.

Every day, Iraq is making progress in rebuilding its economy. In Baghdad, the banks have opened, and other banks will open across the country in the coming months. This fall, new banknotes will be issued, replacing the old ones bearing the former dictator's image. And Iraq's energy industry is once again serving the interests of the Iraqi people. More than a million barrels of crude oil and over 2 million gallons of gasoline are being produced daily.

Every day, Iraq draws closer to the free and functioning society its people were long denied. We're recovering hundreds of millions of dollars from the old regime and are using those funds to pay civil servants. Teachers, health care workers, police, and others performing essential services are also

receiving salaries from our coalition. In fact, teacher pay is four times higher than under the old regime.

Life is returning to normal for the Iraqi people. Hospitals and universities have opened, and in many places, water and other utility services are reaching pre-war levels. Across Iraq, nearly all schoolchildren have completed their exams. And for the first time in many years, a free press is at work in Iraq. Across that country today, more than 150 newspapers are publishing regularly.

Most important of all, the Iraqi people are taking daily steps toward democratic government. The Iraqi Governing Council, whose 25 members represent all of that diverse country, is meeting regularly, naming ministers, and drawing up a budget for the country. Soon, representatives of the people will begin drafting a new constitution, and free elections will follow.

At the local level, all major Iraqi cities and most towns have municipal councils. Freedom is taking hold in that country as people gain confidence that the former regime is never coming back.

One hundred days is not enough time to undo the terrible legacy of Saddam Hussein. There is difficult and dangerous work ahead that requires time and patience. Yet all Americans can be proud of what our military and provisional authorities have achieved in Iraq.

Our country and the nations of the Middle East are now safer. We're keeping our word to the Iraqi people by helping them to make their country an example of democracy and prosperity throughout the region. This long-term undertaking is vital to peace in that region and to the security of the United States. Our coalition and the people of Iraq have made remarkable progress in a short time, and we will complete the great work we have begun.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:45 a.m. on August 8 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 9. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 8

but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks on the Healthy Forests Initiative in Summerhaven, Arizona August 11, 2003

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks a lot. Good morning. Thanks for welcoming me to this beautiful part of the world that has been scarred by nature. Senator McCain and I drove up the hill and he was saying, "You know, this part of Arizona is a lot prettier than anywhere in Texas." [Laughter] I didn't believe it at first—[laughter]—but it is beautiful. And all of us are sorry that fire has devastated life in the countryside here.

I want to thank the people for Summerhaven for allowing us to come up to visit your beautiful part of the world. You know, any time a community has been devastated like Summerhaven has been devastated, you could determine the character of the people. And the character of the people of Summerhaven and this part of Arizona have been tested, and you've met the test, and our Nation admires your courage and strength.

Too many communities like this have known too many hardships that fire causes. We've got a problem in the country, a problem which has built up over decades, and a problem we better fix before more people go through the griefs the people of Summerhaven have gone through, or the people that were affected by the Rodeo fires in northern Arizona.

See, our job as policy people and Members of Congress—have got to fix problems when we see them. They don't ignore problems. They don't hope the problems go

away. We come up with commonsense solutions to the problems that affect the daily lives of our citizens, and that's what we're here to talk about today.

One of the people I've tasked with coming up with solutions to the problems we face is Secretary Ann Veneman. She's done a fabulous job on behalf of the people of the United States. She is a commonsense purpose—person. She asks the practical questions about how do we solve problems in America. She's also done a fine job of running the Forest Service. And I appreciate Dale Bosworth being here. He's the Chief of the Forest Service. And thank you for coming, Chief. I appreciate your commonsense policy. And I want to thank all the Forest Service employees, not only here in this part of Arizona but all across the country, for your dedication and service. Thank you, sir.

I appreciate Big Dan being with us. He is a firefighter's firefighter. The Senator and I and Madam Secretary had a chance to hear him talk about the courage and valor of the firefighters in this part of the State of Arizona as well as the others he commands. He and his partner, Larry, who I met last year, are just solid commanders. They're guys who set the course, set the strategy, and encourage the people to get after it.

And Dan, I want to thank you for your service to our country as well. I'm honored that you've given us a tour. I appreciate