

Mar. 19 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2004

on terror is our fight. All of us are called to share the blessings of liberty and to be strong and steady in freedom's defense. It will surely be said of our times that we lived with great challenges. Let it also be said of our times that we understood our great duties and met them in full.

May God bless our efforts.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:02 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Javier Ruperez, Spain's Ambassador to the U.S.; A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks After Visiting Wounded Soldiers and Their Families at Walter Reed Army Medical Center *March 19, 2004*

It is such an honor to come to a hospital like Walter Reed, for a couple of reasons. One is to meet the wounded who have made a decision to sacrifice for this Nation's security and for freedom in the world. It is an honor to meet their parents or their wives, their children—brave souls who support their loved one with all their heart.

It's an honor to be with the doctors and nurses of this fantastic facility who are doing unbelievable work in helping bring these people back on their feet, back into their communities.

One of the most important things for a Commander in Chief is to be able to say to a loved one, "If your son or daughter or husband or wife gets injured, you'll get the best possible care as quickly as possible." Every time I come to Walter Reed, it confirms that which I know, which is,

we're providing the very best—the best care, the best compassion. We're moving these soldiers from the battlefield to hospitals as quickly as we can so they can begin their rehab.

And it's fantastic to go upstairs. The spirit is strong. The attitudes are terrific. Several soldiers told me today—badly injured soldiers—they want to get well quickly and get back on their duty stations in Iraq, want to serve our Nation.

It is so refreshing and great to be here. I want to thank you, General, for your hospitality.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:05 p.m. outside the main entrance. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Kevin Kiley, USA, commanding general, North Atlantic Regional Medical Command and Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

The President's Radio Address *March 20, 2004*

Good morning. One year ago this week, ground forces of a strong coalition entered Iraq to liberate that country from the rule

of a tyrant. For the Iraqi people, it was the beginning of their deliverance. For the world, it was the moment when years of

demands and pledges turned to decisive action.

The liberation of Iraq was good for the Iraqi people. It was good for America and good for the world. The fall of the Iraqi dictator has removed a source of violence, aggression, and instability from the Middle East. The worst regime in the region was given way to what will soon be among the best. The demands of the United Nations were enforced, not ignored with impunity. Years of illicit weapons development by the dictator have come to an end. The Iraqi people are now receiving aid instead of suffering under sanctions. And men and women across the Middle East, looking to Iraq, are getting a glimpse of what life in a free country can be like.

Helping Iraq emerge as a free nation is a global responsibility, and the nations of the world are meeting their responsibilities. Troops from Britain and Poland and Japan are securing important areas of the country. Special Forces from El Salvador, Macedonia, and other nations are helping to find and defeat Ba'athist and terrorist killers. In all, more than 50 nations are helping the Iraqi people emerge from decades of tyranny and realize a democratic future.

There are still violent thugs and murderers in Iraq, and our coalition is dealing with them. Not long ago, we intercepted a planning document being sent to leaders of Al Qaida by a terrorist named Zarqawi. Along with the usual threats, he had a complaint: "Our enemy," said Zarqawi, "is growing stronger, and his intelligence data are increasing day by day. This is suffocation!" Zarqawi is getting the idea. The resolve of our coalition is firm. We will never turn over Iraq to terrorists who intend our own destruction. We will not fail the Iraqi people, who have placed their trust in us. Whatever it takes, we will fight and work to assure the success of freedom in Iraq.

The terrorists hate and target a free Iraq. They also hate and target every country

that stands for democracy and tolerance and freedom in the world. The murders in Madrid have revealed, once again, the agenda and the nature of the terrorist enemy. They kill the innocent—they kill children and their mothers on a commuter train—without conscience or mercy. They cause suffering and grief and rejoice in it.

The war on terror is not a figure of speech. It is the inescapable calling of our generation. The terrorists are offended not merely by our policies. They are offended by our existence as free nations. No concession will appease their malice. No accommodation will satisfy their endless demands. No course of therapy will cure them of their hatred. There can be no separate peace with the terrorist enemy. Whatever it takes, we will seek and find and destroy the terrorists.

Earlier this week, I traveled to Fort Campbell in Kentucky, where I met with Green Berets and Special Force soldiers and members of the 101st Airborne, the "Screaming Eagles." These men and women are defending their fellow citizens against ruthless enemies. They have liberated millions from oppression and added to the momentum of freedom across the world. Like all of their brothers and sisters in uniform, they are making America safer and more secure. Because of their service and sacrifice, I know that justice and freedom will prevail over terror and tyranny.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:36 a.m. on March 19 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 20. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 19 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Orlando, Florida
March 20, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. It turns out the crowd is always a little bigger when Laura comes along. America loves her almost as much as I love her. I think she deserves 4 more years as the First Lady.

No, it's great to be back in the great State of Florida again. There's a big election coming up, and I thought I'd come down for a little spring training. It's always a good chance to be with Brother. [*Laughter*] He's a great Governor of this great State. Like me, he married well. [*Laughter*] I appreciate Colu being here as well. I used to say that Jeb was the coolest Governor in the country. That's until Arnold got elected.

Speaking about great leaders, I made a really good choice when I asked Dick Cheney to be my runningmate. He and I are grateful for the many strong supporters we have here in Florida. We're going to be spending some quality time in this State. We're here to earn the vote, and we need your help. I know you're here because you do want to help. One of the most important things you can do is encourage your neighbors to vote. We want a lot of people voting in this country. We want people from all walks of life doing their duty in this country, and that is to show up to the polls. And by the way, when you get them headed to the polls, you might suggest what's good for the country, and that is Bush-Cheney for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. And by the way, we set up a web site, so that you can get on to figure out how to volunteer. We need your help. That's what I'm here to ask for. It's not very complicated. It's georgewbush.com. That's an easy one for me to remember. [*Laughter*] With your

help, we're going to make Florida a part of a great nationwide victory this November.

I'm so thankful for you all coming. I'm proud of the fact that two Members of the United States Congress is with us, Ric Keller and Tom Feeney.

Lieutenant Governor Toni Jennings is here. I appreciate the Governor Jennings. Tom Gallagher is a statewide official. I'm proud my friend is here, Tom Gallagher. I want to thank all the statehouse members, all the local officials. The high sheriff is with us today. And thank all the law enforcement people that are with us today.

I want to thank my friend Roberto Candelario for leading the invocation. Roberto, thank you for coming. Thank you, Lisa Faulkner, for leading this great crowd in the national anthem. I got here a little late; I didn't get to hear my friend Billy Ray Cyrus. Thank you, Billy Ray. The Katinas are with us as well. I'm proud they're here. I'm proud to have their support. My friend Lynn Swann is with us. He's welcome to come to Florida. We're a little nervous about inviting him down to Dallas. [*Laughter*] You know what I mean—a lot of Cowboy fans there. I appreciate so very much Footy for being here. Footy, thank you for emceeding this event.

The chairman of Bush-Cheney, Marc Racicot, the former Governor of Montana, is with us today. Marc, thank you for coming. My friend Al Hoffman, who has worked so hard in this State, is with us. Carole Jean Jordan, the chairman of the Florida Republican Party, is with us.

But most importantly, you're with us. I appreciate you coming. I know many of you are getting on buses and vans today for a voter registration drive. Thanks for doing that. The effort is going to help us. It will help our entire ticket. We have a strong slate of candidates. We're coming