

Message on the Observance of New Year's Day, 2006

December 30, 2005

The New Year is a time of hope as we reflect on the past and prepare for the future.

The great strength of our Nation lies in the hearts and souls of the American people. This past year, Americans responded with an outpouring of compassion to help the people of the Gulf Coast region recover from one of the most devastating natural disasters in our Nation's history. We remember the victims of the past year's hurricanes and give thanks for the millions of people who opened their hearts, homes, and communities to those in need.

In the past year, we continued our work to spread freedom and peace. In 2005, Iraqis three times exercised their right to vote in free elections, and the Afghan people conducted successful parliamentary elections. In the coming year, America will continue to stand beside these young democracies and lay the foundation of peace for our children and grandchildren.

We appreciate the brave men and women in uniform who protect our country and advance freedom around the world. We are grateful to their families for their support and sacrifice, and we pray for all those who have lost loved ones in freedom's cause. Our Nation will always remember the heroes who have given their lives to protect us all.

As we celebrate the New Year, we give thanks to God for His blessings and ask for His guidance. We look with hope to the year ahead and the many new opportunities the future will bring.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a happy New Year. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

The President's Radio Address

December 31, 2005

Good morning. Two thousand five has been a year of strong progress toward a freer, more peaceful world and a more prosperous America. This year we watched the Iraqi people defy the terrorists and suicide bombers and hold three successful elections, voting to choose the only constitutional, democratic government in the Arab world. We also saw the people of Afghanistan elect a democratic Parliament in a nation that only a few years ago was ruled by the Taliban.

These are amazing achievements in the history of liberty. As freedom and democracy take hold in a troubled region, we

are making the American people safer here at home and laying the foundation of peace for future generations.

The United States has a vital interest in the success of a free Iraq, so in the year ahead, we will continue to pursue the comprehensive strategy for victory that I have discussed with you in recent weeks. This strategy has security, political, and economic elements. First, our coalition is staying on the offense, finding and clearing the enemy out of Iraqi cities, towns, and villages, transferring more control to Iraqi units, and building up the Iraqi security forces so they can increasingly lead the