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Week Ending Friday, June 20, 2003

The President's Radio Address

June 14, 2003

Good morning. June 14th is Flag Day, which commemorates the date in 1777 when the Continental Congress officially made the Stars and Stripes the symbol of America. The Founders declared that the 13 stars gracing the original flag represented "a new constellation," just as America represented a new hope and a new light for mankind.

Over the past 226 years, our flag has been a symbol of freedom wherever it flies. It inspires hope in people suffering under tyranny or terror. It welcomes immigrants from every land searching for a better life, and it rallies our Nation in times of conflict and crisis.

Whenever the flag is raised, Americans are reminded of our unity in the great cause of liberty and justice for all. Our Nation's flag is hung proudly in homes and schools, honored in parades and stadiums, flown on the field of battle, and folded at the graves of heroes.

When Francis Scott Key saw the Stars and Stripes flying over Fort McHenry in 1814, he knew that liberty would persevere. That same faith was affirmed by marines who planted the flag at Iwo Jima and by the heroes of 9/11 who raised and saluted the flag at Ground Zero.

By showing respect for our flag, we show reverence for the ideals that guide our Nation. And we show appreciation for the men and women who have served and sacrificed in defense of those ideals, from the early patriots of the Continental Congress to the members of our military defending freedom around the world today.

This weekend, in communities across the Nation, Americans will have the opportunity to honor the flag and to thank the men and women who serve our country in uniform. As they continue to fight the war on terror in lands far from home, our troops rely on the support of their fellow citizens. I urge all Americans to participate in Flag Day celebrations honoring American Armed Forces and recognizing our veterans.

Our Nation is strengthened every time a citizen steps forward to serve a cause greater than self-interest. And each of us can serve and strengthen America by reaching out to neighbors in need. There are so many ways to improve the lives of fellow Americans, by answering the call to feed the hungry or caring for the elderly or teaching a child to read or joining with neighbors to support the police, fire fighters, and medics who respond to emergencies. Every action you take will strengthen the bonds of community that unite all Americans and extend the promise of American life to another citizen.

Between now and the Fourth of July, Americans will reflect often on the foundations of our freedom. Our country's founding generation established liberty and justice on this continent more than two centuries ago, and every generation is expected to protect and defend those ideals. Our duty as Americans is to serve our country, to defend the cause of liberty, and to extend the realm of freedom across the Earth. Our generation can proudly say that we are answering that call.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:05 a.m. on June 12 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 13 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Exchange With Reporters in Kennebunkport, Maine

June 15, 2003

Situation in the Middle East

The President. Good morning.