AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

These Americans, donor and fundraiser alike, represent the best of our country and offer an example to the world. Any American who desires to donate to these efforts can easily do so online, by accessing the USA Freedom Corps' web site at www.usafreedomcorps.gov.

In this season when we gather with loved ones and count our many blessings, we hold the victims of this terrible tragedy in our hearts and prayers. And let us be mindful that even in this modern age, our world still requires compassion, tolerance, and generosity from each of us.

Laura and I send our condolences to all whose hearts are filled with grief this New Year's Day. And to our fellow Americans, we wish you peace and happiness in the coming year.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:20 a.m. on December 31, 2004, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 1, 2005. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 31, 2004, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Proclamation 7859—Honoring the Memory of the Victims of the Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunamis

January 1, 2005

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As a mark of respect for the victims of the Indian Ocean Earthquake and the resulting Tsunamis, I hereby order, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff at the White House and on all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions from Monday, January 3, 2005, until sunset, Friday, January 7, 2005. I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff for the same period at all United States embassies, legations, consular offices, and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:14 a.m., January 4, 2005]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on January 5.

Statement on the Death of Representative Robert T. Matsui

January 2, 2005

Laura and I are saddened by the passing of Bob Matsui. Bob Matsui was a dedicated public servant and a good and decent man who served with distinction and integrity in the U.S. House of Representatives for more than 25 years. In the Congress, he was a leader of his party admired by colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Through long-time service on the House Ways and Means Committee, he helped pass important legislation on issues ranging from trade to small business to child welfare to mass transit. He was always devoted to California and his native Sacramento, where he served on the city council and as vice mayor in the 1970s. A third-generation Japanese American, Bob was interned along with his family during World War II. Four decades later, he played a leading role in Congress in securing passage of the landmark Japanese American Redress Act. Laura and I send our prayers and condolences to Doris, their son Brian, and the entire Matsui family.

Remarks on Mobilizing Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunamis Disaster Relief

January 3, 2005

I thank you all for coming. I'm honored to be standing here with two former Presidents, President Bush 41, President Clinton 42. We have come together to express our country's sympathy for the victims of a great tragedy. We're here to ask our fellow citizens to join in a broad humanitarian relief effort.

Eight days ago, the most powerful earthquake in 40 years shook the island of Sumatra. The earthquake caused violent tsunamis in the Indian Ocean, which left an arc of destruction from Thailand to the Horn of Africa. The devastation in the region defies comprehension. More than 150,000 lives are estimated to be lost, including 90,000 in Indonesia alone. As many as 5 million people are thought to be homeless or without food or shelter. Thousands more are missing, and millions are vulnerable to disease.

Across the United States this week, our flags will fly at half-staff to honor the victims of this disaster. We mourn especially the tens of thousands of children who are lost. We think of the tens of thousands more who will grow up without their parents or their brothers or their sisters. We hold in our prayers all the people whose fate is still unknown.

The United States Government is in close contact with the governments of the affected countries, and America is playing a leading role in the relief and recovery efforts. Our Nation has committed military assets and made an initial commitment of $350 million for disaster relief. We're working with the United Nations and with governments around the world to coordinate the comprehensive international response. American military assets in the region are now aiding recovery efforts. Patrol and cargo aircraft have been surveying damage and delivering supplies for several days. Air Force C–130s are flying aid missions 24 hours a day.

We are grateful for the hard work of the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. The *Abraham Lincoln* carrier group is in place near Indonesia and transporting relief supplies by helicopter. Other naval and Marine assets will arrive shortly to generate clean water and provide further logistical help.

I have sent a delegation headed by Secretary of State Powell and Governor Bush of Florida to the Indian Ocean region. There they will meet with fellow leaders and international organizations to assess relief efforts in place as well as the needs that remain. Secretary Powell and Governor Bush will report their findings directly to me, so we can ensure that our Government provides the most effective assistance possible.

We're showing the compassion of our Nation in the swift response. But the greatest source of America's generosity is not our Government; it's the good heart of the American people. In the weeks since the tsunami struck, private citizens have contributed millions of dollars for disaster relief and reconstruction. Organizations like the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, the Salvation Army, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children, CARE, UNICEF, and America Cares responded rapidly after the tsunamis hit. They have reported an outpouring of generosity from around the world.

To draw even greater amounts of private donations, I have asked two of America's most distinguished private citizens to head a nationwide charitable fundraising effort. Both men, both Presidents, know the great decency of our people. They bring tremendous leadership experience to this role, and they bring good hearts. I am grateful to the former Presidents, Clinton and Bush, for taking on this important responsibility and for serving our country once again.

In the coming days, President Clinton and Bush will ask Americans to donate directly to reliable charities already providing help to tsunami victims. Many of these organizations have dispatched experts to the disaster area, and they have an indepth understanding of the resources required to meet the needs on the ground. In this situation, cash donations are most useful, and I've asked the former Presidents to solicit contributions both large and small.

Over the past week, we have seen some of the innovative ways Americans are helping people in need. A coffee roaster in California is handing out bags of coffee for a $10 donation to the Red Cross. In Virginia Beach, the