

Week Ending Friday, April 8, 2005

The President's Radio Address

April 2, 2005

Good morning. Before I begin today, I would like to say a word about Pope John Paul II. His Holiness is a faithful servant of God and a champion of human dignity and freedom. He is an inspiration to us all. Laura and I join millions of Americans and so many around the world who are praying for the Holy Father.

This week, the members of the independent Commission looking into America's intelligence capabilities presented their report. I asked these men and women to give an unvarnished look at our intelligence about weapons of mass destruction, and they have delivered. I appreciate their hard work. Their recommendations are thoughtful and extremely significant, and their central conclusion is one that I share: America's intelligence community needs fundamental change to enable us to successfully confront the threats of the 21st century.

My administration has already taken steps consistent with the Commission's recommendations. In February, I nominated John Negroponte to be our first Director of National Intelligence. This post was created to help ensure that our intelligence community works as a single, unified enterprise. When Members of Congress return to Washington, I urge them to move quickly on his confirmation because he will have a key role in the continued reform and restructuring of our intelligence capabilities.

This week, I also directed Homeland Security Adviser Fran Townsend to oversee the interagency review of the Commission's findings and ensure that concrete action is taken.

The Commission's report delivers a sharp critique of the way intelligence has been collected and analyzed against some of the most difficult intelligence targets, like Iraq. To win the war on terror, we will correct what needs to be fixed and build on what the Commis-

sion calls "solid intelligence successes." These include the uncovering of Libya's nuclear and missile programs, which led Libya's leader to renounce weapons of mass destruction. In Pakistan, our intelligence helped expose and shut down the world's most dangerous nuclear proliferation network. We need to learn from the successes we've had and apply the lessons elsewhere.

We also acknowledge the hard work and sacrifices of the men and women in our intelligence community. These talented people are on the frontlines in the war on terror. Their work is critical. We must prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass murder that they would use against our people.

The work our intelligence community is doing is also extremely difficult. Every day, dangerous regimes are working to conceal their programs and their possible relationships with terrorists. And the work our intelligence men and women do is, by nature, secret. The American people never hear about many of America's intelligence successes, but I'm aware of them. I'm proud of our efforts of our intelligence workers to defend our country, and the American people should be as well.

The President and his national security team must have intelligence that is timely and accurate. In its report, the Commission points out that America needs to know much more about the weapons programs and intentions of our most dangerous adversaries. The members of the Commission have given useful and important guidance that will help transform our intelligence capabilities for the needs of a dangerous new century, and we will continue to give our intelligence professionals the tools they need and the structure they deserve so they can succeed in their essential work.

It is not possible to guarantee perfect security in our vast free Nation, but at a time when we're at war and our margin for error

is getting smaller, the consequences of underestimating a threat could be tens of thousands of innocent lives. I can assure you that the men and women in our intelligence community are working around the clock and doing everything they can to keep us safe, and my administration will continue to make intelligence reforms that will allow them to identify threats before they fully emerge so we can take action to protect the American people.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:34 a.m. on April 1 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 2. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 1 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya. He also referred to the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks on the Death of Pope John Paul II

April 2, 2005

Laura and I join people across the Earth in mourning the passing of Pope John Paul II. The Catholic Church has lost its shepherd. The world has lost a champion of human freedom, and a good and faithful servant of God has been called home.

Pope John Paul II left the throne of Saint Peter in the same way he ascended to it, as a witness to the dignity of human life. In his native Poland, that witness launched a democratic revolution that swept Eastern Europe and changed the course of history. Throughout the West, John Paul's witness reminded us of our obligation to build a culture of life in which the strong protect the weak. And during the Pope's final years, his witness was made even more powerful by his daily courage in the face of illness and great suffering.

All Popes belong to the world, but Americans had special reason to love the man from Krakow. In his visits to our country, the Pope spoke of our "providential" Constitution, the self-evident truths about human dignity in

our Declaration, and the "blessings of liberty" that follow from them. "It is these truths," he said, "that have led people all over the world to look to America with hope and respect."

Pope John Paul II was, himself, an inspiration to millions of Americans and to so many more throughout the world. We will always remember the humble, wise, and fearless priest who became one of history's great moral leaders. We're grateful to God for sending such a man, a son of Poland, who became the Bishop of Rome and a hero for the ages.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:02 p.m. in the Cross Hall at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Proclamation 7881—Honoring the Memory of Pope John Paul II

April 2, 2005

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As a mark of respect for His Holiness Pope John Paul II, 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 until sunset on the day of his interment. 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 second day of April, 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