

Week Ending Friday, April 29, 2005

The President's Radio Address

April 23, 2005

Good morning. My most solemn responsibility as Commander in Chief is to protect the American people. At this moment, our courageous men and women in uniform are serving in distant lands, risking their lives to ensure our security. We must give them all the resources they need to protect us from the threats of determined enemies and to prevail in the war on terror.

I applaud the House and Senate for their strong support of my supplemental funding request for our troops serving on the frontlines. This funding will help provide the weapons, ammunition, spare parts, and equipment that our troops need to do their job. I urge Congress to come together to resolve their remaining differences and send me a bill quickly.

As our service men and women make our Nation more secure, they're also helping to transform other nations that until recently knew only tyranny and despair. In Afghanistan, millions went to the polls after we helped liberate that country from the Taliban. In Iraq, the sacrifices made by our Armed Forces are helping Iraqis build a Government that answers to the people instead of the other way around.

As Iraqis assume increasing responsibility for the stability of their country, Iraqi security forces are becoming more self-reliant and taking on greater responsibilities. Today, more than 150,000 Iraqi security forces have been trained and equipped, and for the first time, the Iraqi army, police, and security forces outnumber U.S. forces in Iraq. Like free people everywhere, Iraqis want to be defended and led by their own countrymen. We will help them achieve this objective, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

As we fight the war on terror and spread freedom abroad, we continue to pursue pro-

growth economic policies at home. Sustaining America's prosperity requires restraining the spending appetite of the Federal Government. That's why the 2006 budget I submitted to Congress holds the growth of discretionary spending to 2.1 percent, below the projected rate of inflation.

Spending discipline requires difficult choices. Every Government program was created with good intentions, but not all are matching good intentions with good results. My 2006 budget eliminates or substantially reduces more than 150 Federal programs that are not succeeding, that are duplicating existing efforts, or that are not fulfilling an essential priority. The principle is simple: Taxpayer dollars must be spent wisely or not spent at all.

Spending wisely means reducing wasteful spending that can threaten the viability of essential programs like Medicaid. We must end overpayment for prescription drugs by states and the Federal Government. We will work with States to ensure that Federal Medicaid dollars are spent properly and go to help those in need. And we must close loopholes that allow people who can afford to pay for their health care to shift the costs to Medicaid and drain resources needed to provide health care for the poorest Americans.

The savings in my budget are critical in helping us to keep our economy growing and creating jobs. Now Members of Congress need to come together and send me a budget that funds our priorities, ensures that taxes stay low, and keeps us on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:52 a.m. on April 22 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 22 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on Armenian Remembrance Day

April 24, 2005

On Armenian Remembrance Day, we remember the forced exile and mass killings of as many as 1.5 million Armenians during the last days of the Ottoman Empire. This terrible event is what many Armenian people have come to call the “Great Calamity.” I join my fellow Americans and Armenian people around the world in expressing my deepest condolences for this horrible loss of life.

Today, as we commemorate the 90th anniversary of this human tragedy and reflect on the suffering of the Armenian people, we also look toward a promising future for an independent Armenian state. The United States is grateful for Armenia’s contributions to the war on terror and to efforts to build a democratic and peaceful Iraq. We remain committed to supporting the historic reforms Armenia has pursued for over a decade. We call on the Government of Armenia to advance democratic freedoms that will further advance the aspirations of the Armenian people. We remain committed to a lasting and peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We also seek a deeper partnership with Armenia that includes security cooperation and is rooted in the shared values of democratic and market economic freedoms.

I applaud individuals in Armenia and Turkey who have sought to examine the historical events of the early 20th century with honesty and sensitivity. The recent analysis by the International Center for Transitional Justice did not provide the final word, yet marked a significant step toward reconciliation and restoration of the spirit of tolerance and cultural richness that has connected the people of the Caucasus and Anatolia for centuries. We look to a future of freedom, peace, and prosperity in Armenia and Turkey and hope that Prime Minister Erdogan’s recent proposal for a joint Turkish-Armenian commission can help advance these processes.

Millions of Americans proudly trace their ancestry to Armenia. Their faith, traditions, and patriotism enrich the cultural, political, and economic life of the United States. I ap-

preciate all individuals who work to promote peace, tolerance, and reconciliation.

On this solemn day of remembrance, I send my best wishes and expressions of solidarity to Armenian people around the world.

Exchange With Reporters in Crawford, Texas

April 25, 2005

President’s Meeting With Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia

Q. What do you expect to get out of this meeting, sir?

The President. Do you like the footpath?

Q. Let’s talk about the meeting.

The President. This is an important relationship—personal relationship with the Crown Prince is important. I look forward to talking with him about a variety of subjects. I’m glad you’re here. Thank you for coming. I hope you’re enjoying this day.

Oil Prices/Energy Legislation

Q. How much progress can you make on oil prices?

The President. I’ll be glad to answer those questions at a later time.

Q. Later today?

The President. No. No, of course I’ll talk about energy. And the Crown Prince understands that it’s very important for there to be a—make sure that the price is reasonable. A high oil price will damage markets, and he knows that. I look forward to talking to him about that. But as well as—you know, we’ll talk about his country’s capacity. It’s an important subject.

One thing is for certain: I need to sign an energy bill. I appreciate the House passing the energy bill, and now it’s time for the Senate to pass the energy bill. The bill is a long time in coming. The Vice President and I suggested they pass a bill in 2001, and nothing happened. Now is the time for something to happen. I’m looking forward to getting back to Washington and continue to talk about energy.

Q. Sir, do you think gas prices can be any lower than it is today?

The President. That depends on the supply and demand. One thing is for certain: