

Week Ending Friday, January 4, 2002

The President's Radio Address

December 29, 2001

Good morning. Two thousand and one has been a year that Americans will always remember. We suffered great loss, and we found a new unity. We were attacked, and we responded swiftly. We have seen the strength of America in countless acts of kindness, compassion, and courage.

This year ends with progress on the battlefield and accomplishment at home. The men and women of our military have successfully fought a new kind of war. They applied new tactics and new technology to rout a new kind of enemy. The lessons we learn in Afghanistan will guide our military to the future and make our country stronger and more secure.

On the homefront, we're strengthening our defenses against terrorist attack while upholding our constitutional liberties. Our airways are more secure, and we are standing on alert.

And here in Washington, we have built a record of achievement. We've set out clear priorities of tax relief and education reform, and we achieved them.

Strengthening a troubled economy was one of my first priorities, so we passed the biggest tax reduction in a generation. And on January 1st, the next round of tax relief takes effect. As of January 1st, the marginal tax rate for moderate-income taxpayers falls to 10 percent. Tax credits to encourage businesses to provide daycare will expand, and the adoption tax credit will increase to \$10,000.

Yet, we cannot stop here. I was disappointed by the failure of the Senate to act on my proposals to help laid-off workers and to stimulate job creation. I outlined these proposals in October, more than 800,000 lost jobs ago. My ideas passed the House of Representatives, and, according to the Council of Economic Advisers, they could save 300,000 endangered jobs, but the Senate

would not schedule them for a vote. I hope that we can resolve in the new year to put politics aside and get the job done for the American people.

Education was another top priority, and we passed the boldest reform of the Federal education program in nearly four decades. We raised standards, put a new emphasis on reading, protected local control, and made sure that our schools teach all of our children. These are real achievements, and we must do more.

We must have quick action on other issues that passed the House of Representatives but languished in the Senate. I'm counting on the Senate to take up my proposals to assure America's energy independence, to stimulate our economy and create jobs, to adopt a solid Patients' Bill of Rights, to mobilize faith-based institutions for a new era of effective compassion, and to enhance our ability to negotiate favorable trade agreements for the United States.

We have work to do to strengthen Social Security and put Medicare on sound footing for the future. Above all, this coming year will require our sustained commitment to the war against terrorism. We cannot know how long this struggle will last. But it can end only one way: in victory for America and the cause of freedom.

We look back on 2001 with sadness and with pride. We must look forward with determination and with resolve.

Thank you so much for listening, and Happy New Year to you all.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:30 a.m. on December 28 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 28 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this address.

Remarks on New Year's Eve and an Exchange With Reporters in Crawford, Texas

December 31, 2001

The President. First of all, I wish everybody a Happy New Year; 2002 is going to be a great year for America. And we will continue to pursue our mission in fighting terror. We'll work hard to make sure our economy rebounds. But most of all, the Nation will continue to embrace the culture of compassion, which really, really flourished right after September the 11th.

I'm looking forward to an early evening tonight. I guess at the age of 55, it's expected that—or it's okay for a guy to go to bed at about 9 p.m., maybe 10 p.m. So I don't plan anything glamorous for New Year's Eve.

I've got to tell you, there's nothing more relaxing than being in Crawford, Texas. I'm spending as much time outdoors as I can. I spent—after my briefing this morning with National Security Council, I was able to spend about 3 hours in the canyons, cleaning underbrush. And I feel refreshed and fortunate that we've got such a beautiful piece of land to live on.

I'll be glad to answer a few questions; then I'm going to go have a cheeseburger.

Usama bin Laden and Mullah Omar

Q. Any information on the whereabouts of bin Laden or Omar? Is there a new pursuit underway now?

The President. No. Yes, I mean, the same pursuit: We're going to get him, and it's just a matter of when. You know, you hear all kinds of reports and all kinds of rumors. You've got people saying he's in a cave, people saying he's dead, people saying he's in Pakistan. And all I know is that he's running, and any time you get a person running, it means you're going to get him pretty soon.

And same with Mullah Omar. It's just a matter of time, and I'm patient, and so is our military. There is no artificial timelines or, you know, deadlines. The definition of success is making sure the Taliban is out of existence, helping rebuild Afghanistan, and disrupting this international terrorist network. And we're doing a damn good job of it, too.

Situation in South Asia

Q. Sir, are tensions easing in India and Pakistan, now that Pakistan has arrested the leader of a militant group? And just one more.

The President. Sure.

Q. Would you urge President—or Prime Minister Vajpayee to meet with President Musharraf next week?

The President. Well, a couple of days ago I had a good talk with both Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf. I urged President Musharraf to do everything he could to crack down on the terrorist network that had bombed the Indian Parliament or raided the Indian Parliament. In my conversation with the Prime Minister, I said I can understand how he feels. If someone attacked the U.S. Capitol, I'd feel angry, too. I urged—however, I urged—I explained to the Indian Prime Minister that while I understood his anger, I was hoping that they were not headed for war. I said, "Give us all a chance to work with President Musharraf to bring the terrorists to justice."

And today, as you know, he apprehended the head of what they call LET. That's after he had apprehended the head of JEM. So he's cracking down hard, and I appreciate his efforts. Terror is terror, and the fact that the Pakistani President is after terrorists is a good sign.

Argentina

Q. Mr. President, with the middle class now rioting in Argentina, are you concerned that that country's economic crisis is developing into a real political crisis? And has the time come for the U.S. to do something more substantial—

The President. Well, I talked to President—interim President Saa, and no longer President Saa—and I'm, you know, obviously, I'm worried about it. Argentina is a very important part of our hemisphere. I've heard that they're thinking about expediting elections, and that will be good. And as soon as they can get—I'm confident the country will stay together until they get elections.

And once they elect a President, we'll work with him. But the future President has got to deal with the economic crisis at hand. And