

Week Ending Friday, June 4, 2004

The President's Radio Address

May 29, 2004

Good morning. Monday is Memorial Day, and all across America this weekend, people are remembering those who fought for freedom and who gave their lives in service to their country.

Here in the Nation's Capital, Saturday has a special significance as we dedicate the World War II Memorial in the presence of thousands of veterans of that conflict. When it mattered most, an entire generation of Americans stepped forward to fight evil and show the finest qualities of our Nation and of humanity.

The World War II Memorial will stand forever as a tribute to the generation that fought that war and to the more than 400,000 Americans who gave their lives. Because of their sacrifice, tyrants fell; fascism and nazism were vanquished; and freedom prevailed.

Today, freedom faces new enemies, and a new generation of Americans has stepped forward to defeat them. Since the hour this Nation was attacked on September the 11th, 2001, we have seen the character of the men and women who wear our country's uniform. In places like Kabul and Kandahar, Mosul and Baghdad, we have seen their decency and brave spirit. And because of their fierce courage, America is safer, and two terror regimes are gone forever, and more than 50 million souls now live in freedom.

Our mission continues, and we will see it through to victory. We have a strategy to defeat our terrorist enemy and a plan to help establish lasting freedom in Iraq. The stakes are high, and they are clear. The enemy seeks to establish a new haven for terror and violence at the heart of the Middle East. They seek to force free nations to retreat into isolation and fear, yet we will persevere and defeat this enemy and hold this hard-won ground for the realm of liberty.

Those who have fought the battles of the war on terror and served the cause of freedom can be proud of all they have achieved. And these veterans of battle will carry with them for all their days the memory of the ones who did not live to be called veterans. Each man or woman we have laid to rest had hopes for the future and left a place that can never be filled. Each was the most important person in someone's life. For their families there is terrible sorrow, and we pray for their comfort. For the Nation there is a feeling of loss, and we remember each name.

Through our history, America has gone to war reluctantly because we have known the costs of war. And in every generation, it is the best among us who are called to pay that price. Those who have paid those costs have given us every moment we live in freedom, and every living American is in their debt. We can never repay what they gave for this country, but on this holiday, we acknowledge the debt by showing our respect and gratitude.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:45 p.m. on May 28 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 28 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at the Dedication of the National World War II Memorial

May 29, 2004

Thank you all very much. I'm honored to join with President Clinton, President Bush, Senator Dole, and other distinguished guests on this day of remembrance and celebration. And General Kelley, here in the company of the generation that won the war, I proudly