

justice to the enemy and honor to our country. Because of their bravery, over 50 million people in Iraq and Afghanistan are now free. At home, Americans have restored the vigor of our economy and answered the call to serve neighbors in need.

In the year ahead, we will persevere in the ongoing war on terror to make our Nation safer and stronger. We will continue to confront disease, hunger, and poverty at home and abroad. We will build on our economic progress and strengthen Social Security for the next generation so that all our citizens can realize the promise of America. And we will continue to improve our public schools and uphold our deepest values of faith, family, and service.

We are grateful to the men and women of our Armed Forces who serve and sacrifice to defend our liberty. These heroes and their families have the thanks and respect of our entire Nation. We pray for their safety and for peace and understanding throughout the world.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a Happy New Year. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

The President's Radio Address

January 1, 2005

Good morning. On this first day of a new year, we join the world in feeling enormous sadness over a great human tragedy. Last Sunday, an earthquake and violent tsunamis struck the nations that surround the Indian Ocean. The carnage is of a scale that defies comprehension, with over 100,000 deaths reported. I have signed a proclamation calling for our Nation's flag to be flown at half-staff this coming week. As the people of this devastated region struggle to recover, we offer our love and compassion and our assurance that America will be there to help.

Earlier this week, I spoke with the leaders of India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Indonesia. I offered them the condolences of our Nation, and I praised their steadfast leadership.

The task they face is difficult. Their relief resources are stretched nearly to the limit. Communications, roads, and medical facilities have been badly damaged. Disease has become a very real threat.

Americans are a compassionate people, and we are already hard at work helping those nations meet these challenges. The United States has pledged \$350 million in relief assistance, with \$15 million already in the hands of relief organizations in the affected countries. To help coordinate this massive relief effort, disaster response officials are on the ground and have established a support center in Thailand that is manned and operational. More than 20 patrol and cargo aircraft have been made available to assess the disaster and deliver relief supplies. Many of those aircraft are already on the scene. We have dispatched the aircraft carrier *Abraham Lincoln*, the maritime prepositioning squadron from Guam, and an amphibious ship carrying a Marine Expeditionary Unit. They will soon be in position to support relief efforts, to include the generation of clean water.

Tomorrow I will send a delegation to the area to meet with regional leaders and international organizations to assess what additional aid can be provided by the United States. The delegation will be led by Secretary of State Colin Powell and Governor Jeb Bush, who has extensive experience in the State of Florida with relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts following natural disasters. Secretary Powell has already spoken with many of his counterparts in the region and with officials from the United Nations and other governments that are helping with the response. Together, we are leading an international coalition to help with immediate humanitarian relief, rehabilitation, and long-term construction efforts. India, Japan, and Australia have already pledged to help us coordinate these relief efforts, and I'm confident many more nations will join this core group in short order.

Here at home, Americans are translating the blessings of our own country into generosity to others. From charitable organizations to private individuals to companies, our fellow citizens, on their own initiative, are raising millions of dollars for relief efforts.

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.