

Mar. 20 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

Remarks to Central Intelligence Agency Employees in Langley, Virginia  
March 20, 2001

Thank you, all. I learned that move from my mother. *[Laughter]*

Thank you very much, George. I appreciate your kind introduction. I also want to thank you for agreeing to continue to serve as the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. You've done really good work here. The people that work here appreciate it, and I appreciate it, as well.

I also wanted to visit early in my administration to tell you all how much I value your work. The CIA and all the members of our intelligence community make a vital contribution to our Nation's security. I know this firsthand; I'm your customer. *[Laughter]* I see your product every morning at 8 o'clock sharp, and it's always first-rate.

I appreciate the work that goes into the briefing. I realize that the information inside it contains—represents the work of thousands of dedicated and daring men and women, at home and abroad. It is truly an honor to be among you and to be in this building.

I've flown into an airport once called George Bush. *[Laughter]* But I've never been in a Center like this. *[Laughter]* Seeing that sign on the way in, as you can imagine, made me feel really proud. But I was also struck by the contrast between today's world and the world as it looked 25 years ago, when my dad was the DCI.

To say that a lot has changed is an understatement. Back then, America faced an overarching threat, and everything we did, from strategy to resource allocation, was oriented to defending against that threat. Today, that single threat has been replaced by new and different threats, sometimes hard to define and defend against, threats such as terrorism, information warfare, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. Back then, freedom was in peril. Today, freedom is taking

root in more and more lands around the world.

In retrospect, the world of 1976 looks staid and static compared to the revolutions of change that characterize our times. But what hasn't changed, what isn't different is the fact that sound intelligence is still critically important to America's national security. The challenges are new, but we still need your work to help us meet them. The opportunities are new, but we need your help to take advantage of them. But perhaps most of all, in a world where change, itself, seems to be the only constant, we need your help to anticipate change and to shape it in a way that favors freedom.

Yours is a mission of service and sacrifice in a world of great uncertainty and risk. America's commitments and responsibilities span the world and every time zone. Every day you help us meet those responsibilities with your quiet excellence. And nothing speaks louder to your legacy of service and sacrifice than the 77 stars on the wall behind me.

The American people aren't told much about your labors. In fact, you might be the only Federal agency where not making the newspapers or network news qualifies as good news. *[Laughter]* This is by necessity. But you need to know your President knows about your fine contributions to our Nation's security. And you also need to know that Americans are proud of you and the vital work that each of you does for your country. The operations officers, the analysts, the scientists, the technical experts, the intelligence officers who work for other agencies—each of you is important to the cause of freedom. And for that I say, God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:25 p.m. in the original headquarters building lobby at the George Bush Center for Intelligence.