

Cosgrove, chairman and chief executive officer, The Cleveland Clinic; and Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio.

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Condoleezza Rice as Secretary of State

January 28, 2005

Thank you all for coming. Laura and I are honored to be here. Over the past 4 years, America has benefited from the wise counsel of Dr. Condoleezza Rice and our family has been enriched by our friendship with this remarkable person. We love her. I don't know if you're supposed to say that about the Secretary of State. *[Laughter]*

Condi—appointment and confirmation of Secretary of State marks a remarkable transition in what is already a career of outstanding service and accomplishment.

Today also marks an opportunity to honor another career defined by service and accomplishment. Throughout a lifetime spent in public service, Colin Powell has asked nothing in return. For over four decades, millions at home and abroad have benefited from his bravery, his dignity, and his integrity. He's left our Nation a better place than it was when he began his career in public service as a second lieutenant in the United States Army. His magnificent wife, Alma, I am certain is pleased that a grateful nation is giving back her husband—*[laughter]*—and all of us admire and appreciate the service of Colin Powell.

I appreciate the fact that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg administered the oath. It was neighborly of her to do that. *[Laughter]* I want to thank Congresswoman Jane Harman from California for joining us, as well as Juanita Millender-McDonald from California. We're honored you both are here. Thanks for taking time to honor your fellow Californian, Condi Rice.

I see sitting between you two is a fine American in Andrew Young. Welcome,

Andy. Thank you for coming. I shouldn't start going around the room heralding all the—*[laughter]*—accomplished souls who are here. I do want to thank members of the diplomatic corps for coming. I appreciate Your Excellencies taking time to honor Condi. I want to thank the distinguished guests and members—folks who work at the State Department for joining us as well. It's a good thing to come and honor your new boss—*[laughter]*—good diplomacy—*[laughter]*.

Colin Powell leaves big shoes to fill at the State Department, but Condi Rice is the right person to fill them. As National Security Adviser, she has led during a time when events not of our choosing have forced America to the leading edge of history. Condi has an abiding belief in the power of democracy to secure justice and liberty and the inclusion of men and women of all races and religions in the courses that free nations chart for themselves.

A few days from now, these convictions will be confirmed by the Iraqi people when they cast their ballots in Iraq's first free elections in generations. Sunday's election is the first step in a process that will allow Iraqis to write and pass a constitution that enshrines self-government and the rule of law. This history is changing the world, because the advent of democracy in Iraq will serve as a powerful example to reformers throughout the entire Middle East. On Sunday, the Iraqi people will be joining millions in other parts of the world who now decide their future through free votes.

In Afghanistan, the people have voted in the first free Presidential elections in that nation's 5,000-year history. The people of Ukraine have made clear their own desire for democracy. The Palestinians have just elected a new President who has repudiated violence. Freedom is on the march, and the world is better for it.

Widespread hatred and radicalism cannot survive the advent of freedom and self-government. Our Nation will be more secure, the world will be more peaceful as freedom advances. Condi Rice understands that. And the terrorists understand that as well, and that is why they are now attacking Iraqi civilians in an effort to sabotage elections. We applaud the courage of ordinary Iraqis for their refusal to surrender their future to these killers.

No nation can build a safer and better world alone. The men and women of the State Department are doing a fine job of working with other nations to build on the momentum of freedom. I know our Nation will be really well served when the good folks at the State Department join with Condi Rice to face the many challenges

and opportunities that lie ahead. In the coming months and years, we must stop the proliferation of dangerous weapons and materials. We must safeguard and expand the freedom of international marketplace and free trade. We must advance justice and fundamental human rights. We must fight HIV/AIDS and other diseases and reduce poverty.

Each task will require good relations with nations around the world, and each will require a Secretary who will lead by character and conviction and wisdom. To meet these times and tasks, America has its best in Dr. Condoleezza Rice, now Secretary Condoleezza Rice, our 66th Secretary of State.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:58 a.m. at the U.S. Department of State. In his remarks, he referred to former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young; and President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary Rice.

Remarks to the "Congress of Tomorrow" Luncheon in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia January 28, 2005

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated.

Deborah, thanks for the kind introduction. I'm kind of warming up for the State of the Union—[laughter]—some verbal jumping jacks. Thanks for letting me come by. I'm going to have a few remarks, then I'll answer questions for a while.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your friendship. This country has had no better Speaker than Denny Hastert.

Appreciate Senator Ted Stevens—thank you for your tenure and your leadership

as well. I'm glad you're here. I thank my friend from the great State of Texas Tom DeLay for his leadership. I appreciate you, Mr. Leader. Mitch McConnell, the Senate majority whip—Senator McConnell, thank you, sir, appreciate you. Congressman Blunt, the House whip. Thank you, Congressman, glad you're here, appreciate you. How is your son doing?

Representative Roy Blunt. He's doing great.

The President. Good, huh?

Representative Blunt. He's taking a page out of your book.