

## The President's Radio Address

*July 1, 2006*

Good morning. Laura and I wish all Americans a safe and happy Fourth of July weekend. I'm looking forward to spending Independence Day with members of our Armed Forces and their families at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. These brave men and women risk their lives to defend the ideals of our founding generation, and I will have the honor of thanking many of them personally for their service in freedom's cause.

In 1776, John Adams predicted to his wife, Abigail, that America's Independence Day would be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. He wrote that "this anniversary should be commemorated with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, bells, bonfires, and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward, forever more."

Since then, generations of Americans have done just that. Each year, we look forward to the family gatherings and the grand celebrations that take place across the Nation on the Fourth of July. And amid the music and barbeques and fireworks, we give thanks for our freedom, and we honor the bravery and sacrifices of all those who have made that freedom possible.

On Independence Day, we recall the courage and high ideals of our Nation's Founders, who waged a desperate fight to overcome tyranny and live in freedom. Recent years have brought a renewed interest in the lives and achievements of our Founders, and we have learned once again that they possessed extraordinary talents as well as ordinary human failings, which only makes their accomplishments all the more remarkable.

For the brave men and women of our founding generation, victory was far from certain. They were certain only of the cause they served, the belief that freedom is the gift of God and the right of all mankind. The strength of their convictions made possible the birth of the free Nation in which we are blessed to live.

On the Fourth of July, we also honor the sacrifices made by each American generation to secure the promises of the Declaration of Independence. For more than two centuries, from the camps of Valley Forge to the mountains of Afghanistan, Americans have served and sacrificed for the principles of our founding.

Today, a new generation of American patriots is defending our freedom against determined and ruthless enemies. At this hour, the men and women of our Armed Forces are facing danger in distant places, carrying out their missions with all the skill and honor we expect of them. And their families are enduring long separations from their loved ones with great courage and dignity. Our troops and our military families deserve all our support and gratitude, and on this Fourth of July weekend, I ask every American to find a way to thank those who defend our freedom. To find out about efforts in your community, please visit the web site [americasupportsyou.mil](http://americasupportsyou.mil).

As we celebrate the Fourth, we also remember that the promises of liberty contained in our Declaration apply to all people. Because Americans believe that freedom is an unalienable right, we value the freedom of every person in every nation. And because we are committed to the God-given worth of every life, we strive to promote respect for human dignity. Today, all

who live in tyranny and all who yearn for freedom can know that America stands with them.

As citizens of this good Nation, we should be proud of our heritage, grateful for our liberty, and confident in our future. Two hundred and thirty years after America declared its independence, the spirit of '76 lives on. And our Nation remains proud to carry freedom's torch. We still place our trust in the protections of divine providence. We still pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor to freedom's

defense. And we still believe in the promise of freedom for all.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:45 a.m. on June 30 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 30 but embargoed for release until broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks at an Independence Day Celebration at Fort Bragg, North Carolina July 4, 2006

Thank you all. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's a pleasure to be back here at Fort Bragg, home of our Airborne and Special Forces.

I flew down on Air Force One, and our pilot, Colonel Tillman, he said, "I can open the hatch and drop you out by parachute." [Laughter] I said he had the wrong President Bush. [Laughter] Old 41, I call him—who happens to be my dad—has jumped five times with the Golden Knights of Fort Bragg. Mother appreciates you helping him down safely. [Laughter] He's the only sky-diving President, and that's a distinction I think he's going to keep. [Laughter]

Ever since I left the White House this morning, I've been looking forward to coming here and saying, Hooah!

*Audience members.* Hooah!

*The President.* It's a pleasure to get out of Washington, to spend some time in the real "center of the universe." It's good to be with the men and women of the 8th [18th]\* Airborne Corps and the quiet professionals of the Army Special Operations Command.

I can't think of a better way to spend the Fourth of July than with the "All-Americans" of the 82d Airborne. You're Airborne all the way, and I'm proud to be here with you. We also welcome the men and women of Pope Air Force base, who put the "air" in Airborne. I'm privileged to be in the presence of so many courageous military families who have borne the hardships of war with dignity and devotion. By supporting a loved one in uniform, you are serving our country, and America is grateful for your service and your sacrifice.

Today we mark the 230th anniversary of American independence. And on this day, when we give thanks for our freedom, we also give thanks for the men and women who make our freedom possible. Each of you have stepped forward to serve, knowing the risks and dangers that accompany freedom's defense.

I've come to thank you for your valor and to thank you for your patriotism. I've come to share with you and with the American people how your dedication and your sacrifice are helping us win the war on terror. You are serving our country at a

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\* White House correction.