

In America's ideal of freedom, the public interest depends on private character, on integrity and tolerance toward others and the rule of conscience in our own lives. Self-government relies, in the end, on the governing of the self. That edifice of character is built in families, supported by communities with standards, and sustained in our national life by the truths of Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, the words of the Koran, and the varied faiths of our people. Americans move forward in every generation by reaffirming all that is good and true that came before, ideals of justice and conduct that are the same yesterday, today, and forever.

In America's ideal of freedom, the exercise of rights is ennobled by service and mercy and a heart for the weak. Liberty for all does not mean independence from one another. Our Nation relies on men and women who look after a neighbor and surround the lost with love. Americans, at our best, value the life we see in one another and must always remember that even the unwanted have worth. And our country must abandon all the habits of racism, because we cannot carry the message of freedom and the baggage of bigotry at the same time.

From the perspective of a single day, including this day of dedication, the issues and questions before our country are many. From the viewpoint of centuries, the questions that come to us are narrowed and few: Did our generation advance the cause of freedom? And did our character bring credit to that cause?

These questions that judge us also unite us, because Americans of every party and background, Americans by choice and by birth are bound to one another in the cause of freedom. We have known divisions, which must be healed to move forward in great purposes, and I will strive in good faith to heal them. Yet those divisions do not define America. We felt the unity and fellowship of our Nation when freedom came under attack, and our response came like a single hand over a single heart. And we can feel that same unity and pride whenever America acts for good and the victims of disaster are given hope and the unjust encounter justice and the captives are set free.

We go forward with complete confidence in the eventual triumph of freedom, not because history runs on the wheels of inevitability—it is human choices that move events; not because we consider ourselves a chosen nation—God moves and chooses as He wills. We have confidence because freedom is the permanent hope of mankind, the hunger in dark places, the longing of the soul. When our Founders declared a new order of the ages, when soldiers died in wave upon wave for a union based on liberty, when citizens marched in peaceful outrage under the banner “Freedom Now,” they were acting on an ancient hope that is meant to be fulfilled. History has an ebb and flow of justice, but history also has a visible direction, set by liberty and the Author of Liberty.

When the Declaration of Independence was first read in public and the Liberty Bell was sounded in celebration, a witness said, “It rang as if it meant something.” In our time, it means something still. America, in this young century, proclaims liberty throughout all the world and to all the inhabitants thereof. Renewed in our strength, tested but not weary, we are ready for the greatest achievements in the history of freedom.

May God bless you, and may He watch over the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:59 a.m. at the West Front of the Capitol. Prior to his remarks, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist administered the oath of office. The address was broadcast live on radio and television. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at the Inaugural Luncheon *January 20, 2005*

Mr. Speaker, thank you, sir. Senator Trent Lott, thanks for being such a great organizer. This part of this day has gone incredibly well, and I appreciate your hard work. Senator Dodd, Senator Frist, other distinguished Members of the Congress, and some who aren't quite so distinguished—[laughter]—it's an honor to be here.

I really want to thank you for your hospitality. Laura and I are grateful for your gifts and grateful for your wonderful hospitality.

What a day, and what a special lunch. We really appreciate you having us.

I appreciate the Justices of the Supreme Court being here. I want you to know how touched I was that Chief Justice came to administer the oath. That was an incredibly moving part of the ceremony.

I want to thank the members of my Cabinet who are here. I appreciate General Myers, who is here. And I want to thank all my friends from Texas who have come. I'm surprised that some were able to penetrate the security. [Laughter] But I appreciate you coming.

I'm really proud of Dick Cheney, my Vice President. He is a fabulous man, a man of sound judgment and great character, and I'm honored to serve with you, Dick.

I want to thank President Carter and Mrs. Carter for coming and President Clinton and Senator Clinton for joining us today. It means a lot that both former Presidents were here. I thank you very much for the—for your presence.

I'm also really happy that another former President is with us; that would be my dad. Thanks for coming—and Mother. [Laughter] I appreciate Barbara and Jenna. I love them dearly. I thank them for joining the campaign trail. It was the—like the camping trip I promised to take them on and never did. [Laughter]

I want to thank my brothers and sisters. They have meant a lot to me. Their unconditional love is an important part of keeping perspective here in the Nation's Capital.

I am impressed by this Inaugural ceremony. It is a magnificent event. I think any President who has ever been through one is able to step back and say, "What an impressive moment, not in my life but in the life of the country." It reminds us that we serve a cause larger than ourselves. We have one country, one Constitution, and one future that binds us.

As leaders, we have a common duty to achieve results for the people, regardless of our political parties. There's important work to be done, and I look forward to working with Members of both Houses and both parties to achieve that job.

We have a solemn duty to protect our people and to win the war on terror, and we

will. We have other vital duties, and we will strive to achieve results on behalf of the people. I'm eager for the work. I'm looking forward to it, and I hope you are as well. I'm looking forward to putting my heart and soul into this job for 4 more years. Together, we can make this great Nation of ours a safer place and a freer place and a better place for all our fellow citizens.

May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our great land.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:19 p.m. in Statuary Hall at the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Richard B. Myers, USAF, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. Prior to the President's remarks, Senator Trent Lott, chairman, Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, introduced the President and presented him and Vice President Dick Cheney with engraved crystal hurricane lamps and official photos of the Inaugural swearing-in ceremony, and Representative J. Dennis Hastert, committee member, presented them with flags flown over the U.S. Capitol.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

January 15

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

January 17

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

January 18

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government to discuss the upcoming elections in Iraq. He then had an intelligence briefing and met with the Homeland Security Council.

Later in the morning, the President participated in separate interviews with the FOX News and Cable News Network television