

in the Palestinian Territories. Elections will not always turn out the way we hope, yet democracy consists of more than a single trip to the ballot box. Democracy requires meaningful opposition parties, a vibrant civil society, a government that enforces the law and responds to the needs of its people. Elections can accelerate the creation of such institutions. In a democracy, people will not vote for a life of perpetual violence. To stay in power, elected officials must listen to their people and pursue their desires for peace; or, in democracies, the voters will replace them through free elections.

Finally, there's the contention that ending tyranny is unrealistic. Well, some argue that extending democracy around the world is simply too difficult to achieve. That's nothing new. We've heard that criticism before, throughout history. At every stage of the cold war, there were those who argued that the Berlin Wall was permanent and that people behind the Iron Curtain would never overcome their oppressors. History has sent a different message.

The lesson is that freedom will always have its skeptics, but that's not the whole story. There are also people like you and the loved ones you represent: men and women with courage to risk everything for your ideals. In his first address as President, Vaclav Havel proclaimed, "People, your Government has returned to you!" He was echoing the first speech of Tomas Masaryk who was, in turn, quoting the 17th-century Czech teacher Comenius. His message was

that freedom is timeless. It does not belong to one government or one generation. Freedom is the dream and the right of every person in every nation in every age.

The United States of America believes deeply in that message. It was the inspiration for our founding when we declared that "all men are created equal." It was the conviction that led us to help liberate this continent and stand with the captive nations through their long struggle. It is the truth that guides our Nation to oppose radicals and extremists and terror and tyranny in the world today. And it is the reason I have such great confidence in the men and women in this room.

I leave Prague with a certainty that the cause of freedom is not tired and that its future is in the best of hands. With unbreakable faith in the power of liberty, you will inspire your people, you will lead your nations, and you will change the world.

Thanks for having me, and may God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:07 p.m. in the Large Hall at Czernin Palace. In his remarks, he referred to President Toomas Ilves of Estonia; Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg and former President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic; former Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar of Spain; Natan Sharansky, former Soviet dissident and author; former President Lech Walesa of Poland; and former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom.

Statement on the Death of William C. France, Jr.

June 5, 2007

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Bill France, Jr. Bill was a legend in the world of NASCAR whose passion and vision for stock car racing led the sport to the national prominence it enjoys today.

Bill brought racing's excitement to millions of new fans through his steadfast and innovative leadership. Bill also helped ensure that the NASCAR community found many ways to support the men and women

of the U.S. Armed Forces. Our thoughts and prayers are with the France family.

Statement on the Death of Senator Craig L. Thomas

June 5, 2007

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Wyoming Senator Craig Thomas. During nearly 23 years of public service as a Senator, Congressman, and State legislator, Senator Thomas was a tireless and effective advocate for the people of his beloved home State. He was a man of character and integrity, known for his devotion

to the values he shared with the people of Wyoming. He leaves a lasting legacy as a guardian of Wyoming's lands and resources and our country's national parks. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Senator Thomas's wife Susan, his family, and friends.

Interview With Members of the White House Press Pool in Heiligendamm, Germany

June 6, 2007

The President. Let me start off by talking about my speech yesterday. The purpose of the speech is to remind our allies and those who are wondering as to whether or not the United States is firmly committed to democracy that we are. I strongly believe that we are in a war with a group of ideologues and that we can eventually win this war by promoting an alternative ideology.

And so the speech yesterday was to speak clearly to people around the world that the United States is committed to this freedom agenda, that there is a realistic reason why we promote freedom, that it's for our own security. There's a moral imperative to promote freedom, and that is to recognize that there are people who live in societies that are still repressive and that free nations have an obligation to work to secure their liberty. I made it very clear that democracy takes time, that it takes different forms in different places, but nevertheless, there are

underlying principles which are essential to free societies.

I pointed out that freedom has made great progress over 20 years. The reason I did that was, one, to express my optimism about the future. But, two, make it clear that things—the freedom agenda just doesn't bloom overnight; it takes hard work. But I also made it clear, it's necessary work. And then, as you know, I went around the world and talked about different spots around the world.

And I think it's very important for the G-8—nations in the G-8 to recognize the power of liberty to transform societies. And so I'll be talking, of course, about that here. I think it's important for nations that are free to recognize they have an obligation to help others. I was moved by the people I met. It was just very heartwarming to meet with heroic souls that do have the capacity, with proper support, of changing their societies and, therefore, changing the world.