

America for the better, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

I want to thank you all for setting such a fantastic example. Thank you for your service.

And my call to you all is that as you enjoy the great freedoms of America and as you enjoy yourself at this Inauguration, I hope you take away the lesson of helping somebody in need. And when you do, it will not only make our country a better place; it will lift up your own spirit.

Thanks for coming. Enjoy yourself. May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:54 p.m. at the District of Columbia National Guard Armory. In his remarks, he referred to professional football player Jason Sehorn and his wife, actress Angie Harmon; actor Stephen Baldwin; and television personality Nancy O'Dell.

Remarks at the “Celebration of Freedom” Concert

January 19, 2005

Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for being out here in the cold. You know, I was realizing there is—you know, no night is too cold to celebrate freedom.

Mr. Vice President, thank you for your kind introduction. I thank you and Lynne for your fine service to the American people. Our Nation has never had a finer Vice President. Sorry, Dad. [*Laughter*] Our Nation has never had a finer First Lady than Laura. Sorry, Mother. [*Laughter*]

I'm really proud that much of my family is with me tonight and will be there tomorrow. I'm really so happy my dad and mom are with us.

Appreciate the members of the Cabinet who are here, Members of Congress, members of the Armed Forces. How about the Apollo astronauts? I can't thank them enough for coming. And I love our entertainers who are here. I want to thank our host, Ryan Seacrest. Thanks for so much, Ryan. You're doing a fine job. I appreciate you being here.

I want to thank all the other entertainers who have come tonight. It means so much to Laura and me, and I hope it means a lot

to you, that they have taken time out of their busy schedules to entertain you and to kick off this Inauguration.

I really thank you all for coming. Many of you have traveled a long way. What you're doing is you're taking a part in a great tradition of hope and renewal in our Nation's Capital, and we are really glad you are here.

An Inauguration is a time of unity for our country. With the campaign behind us, Americans lift up our sights to the years ahead and to the great goals we will achieve for our country. I am eager and ready for the work ahead, and I know that this office carries a duty to the entire Nation. After all, we are one America, and every day that I am your President, I will serve all Americans.

In these 4 years, we have moved forward as a people. We have faced challenges. We have faced them together. And we've taken up serious tasks at home as well as abroad. We have grown in appreciation for our freedom, and we have grown in appreciation for the men and women who defend it.

At this very hour, more than a million of our fellow citizens are standing watch for America. We are grateful to them all, and we are grateful to their families. We pray for our troops; we pray for their families. And on this night, as we celebrate the blessing of liberty, America honors the spirit of service that keeps our Nation strong and free.

Tomorrow I will take an oath and deliver an Inaugural Address. You'll be pleased to hear I'm not going to deliver it twice. But I will speak about freedom. This is the cause that unites our country and gives hope to the world and will lead us to a future of peace. We have a calling from beyond the stars to stand for freedom, and America will always be faithful to that cause.

Thank you for coming. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our great Nation. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:57 p.m. on the Ellipse. In his remarks, he referred to radio and television personality Ryan Seacrest.

Inaugural Address

January 20, 2005

Vice President Cheney, Mr. Chief Justice, President Carter, President Bush, President Clinton, Members of the United States Congress, reverend clergy, distinguished guests, fellow citizens:

On this day, prescribed by law and marked by ceremony, we celebrate the durable wisdom of our Constitution and recall the deep commitments that unite our country. I am grateful for the honor of this hour, mindful of the consequential times in which we live, and determined to fulfill the oath that I have sworn and you have witnessed.

At this second gathering, our duties are defined not by the words I use but by the history we have seen together. For a half a century, America defended our own freedom by standing watch on distant borders. After the shipwreck of communism came years of relative quiet, years of repose, years of sabbatical, and then there came a day of fire.

We have seen our vulnerability, and we have seen its deepest source. For as long as whole regions of the world simmer in resentment and tyranny, prone to ideologies that feed hatred and excuse murder, violence will gather and multiply in destructive power and cross the most defended borders and raise a mortal threat. There is only one force of history that can break the reign of hatred and resentment and expose the pretensions of tyrants and reward the hopes of the decent and tolerant, and that is the force of human freedom.

We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.

America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one. From the day of our founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this Earth has rights and dignity and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of heaven and Earth. Across the generations, we have proclaimed the imperative of self-government, because no one is fit to be a master and no one deserves to be a slave. Advancing these

ideals is the mission that created our Nation. It is the honorable achievement of our fathers. Now, it is the urgent requirement of our Nation's security and the calling of our time.

So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world. This is not primarily the task of arms, though we will defend ourselves and our friends by force of arms when necessary. Freedom, by its nature, must be chosen and defended by citizens and sustained by the rule of law and the protection of minorities. And when the soul of a nation finally speaks, the institutions that arise may reflect customs and traditions very different from our own. America will not impose our own style of government on the unwilling. Our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom, and make their own way.

The great objective of ending tyranny is the concentrated work of generations. The difficulty of the task is no excuse for avoiding it. America's influence is not unlimited, but fortunately for the oppressed, America's influence is considerable and we will use it confidently in freedom's cause.

My most solemn duty is to protect this Nation and its people from further attacks and emerging threats. Some have unwisely chosen to test America's resolve and have found it firm. We will persistently clarify the choice before every ruler and every nation, the moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom, which is eternally right.

America will not pretend that jailed dissidents prefer their chains or that women welcome humiliation and servitude or that any human being aspires to live at the mercy of bullies. We will encourage reform in other governments by making clear that success in our relations will require the decent treatment of their own people. America's belief in human dignity will guide our policies. Yet rights must be more than the grudging concessions of dictators. They are secured by free dissent and the participation of the governed. In the long run, there is no justice