

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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EXCERPTS FROM THE PRESIDENT'S FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE
NATION

As Prepared for Delivery

Tonight, President Bush will deliver his farewell address to the Nation from the East Room of the White House. The President will express his gratitude to the American people, including the men and women of our Armed Forces. He will reflect upon the tough decisions and accomplishments of the past eight years, as well as the challenges ahead.

Following are excerpts from the President's address, as prepared for delivery:

On the transfer of power:

Five days from now, the world will witness the vitality of American democracy. In a tradition dating back to our founding, the presidency will pass to a successor chosen by you, the American people. Standing on the steps of the Capitol will be a man whose story reflects the enduring promise of our land. This is a moment of hope and pride for our whole Nation. And I join all Americans in offering best wishes to President-elect Obama, his wife Michelle, and their two beautiful girls.

On gratitude:

Tonight I am filled with gratitude. I thank the American people for the trust you have given me. I thank you for the prayers that have lifted my spirits. And I thank you for the countless acts of courage, generosity, and grace that I have witnessed these past eight years.

On the response to 9/11:

This evening, my thoughts return to the first night I addressed you from this house - September 11, 2001. That morning, terrorists took nearly 3,000 lives in the worst attack on America since Pearl Harbor.

As the years passed, most Americans were able to return to life much as it had been before 9/11. But I never did. Every morning, I received a briefing on the threats to our Nation. And I vowed to do everything in my power to keep us safe.

Over the past seven years, a new Department of Homeland Security has been created. The military, the intelligence community, and the FBI have been transformed. Our Nation is equipped with new tools to monitor the terrorists' movements, freeze their finances, and break up their plots. And with strong allies at our side, we have taken the fight to the terrorists and those who support them.

There is legitimate debate about many of these decisions. But there can be little debate about the results. America has gone more than seven years without another terrorist attack on our soil. This is a tribute to those who toil day and night to keep us safe - law enforcement officers, intelligence analysts, homeland security and diplomatic personnel, and the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

On protecting America through the advance of liberty around the world:

When people live in freedom, they do not willingly choose leaders who pursue campaigns of terror. When people have hope in the future, they will not cede their lives to violence and extremism. So around the world, America is promoting human liberty, human rights, and human dignity. We are standing with dissidents and young democracies, providing AIDS medicine to bring dying patients back to life, and sparing mothers and babies from malaria. And this great republic born alone in liberty is leading the world toward a new age when freedom belongs to all nations.

On the Administration's accomplishments here at home:

For eight years, we have also strived to expand opportunity and hope here at home. Across our country, students are rising to meet higher standards in public schools. A new Medicare prescription drug benefit is bringing peace of mind to seniors and the disabled. Every taxpayer pays lower income taxes. The addicted and suffering are finding new hope through faith-based programs. Vulnerable human life is better protected. Funding for our veterans has nearly doubled. America's air, water, and lands are measurably cleaner. And the Federal bench includes wise new members like Justice Sam Alito and Chief Justice John Roberts.

On principled decision-making:

Like all who have held this office before me, I have experienced setbacks. There are things I would do differently if given the chance. Yet I have always acted with the best interests of our country in mind. I have followed my conscience and done what I thought was right. You may not agree with some tough decisions I have made. But I hope you can agree that I was willing to make the tough decisions.

On future challenges facing America:

The decades ahead will bring more hard choices for our country, and there are some guiding principles that should shape our course.

While our Nation is safer than it was seven years ago, the gravest threat to our people remains another terrorist attack. Our enemies are patient, and determined to strike again. America did nothing to seek or deserve this conflict. But we have been given solemn responsibilities, and we must meet them. We must resist complacency. We must keep our resolve. And we must never let down our guard.

At the same time, we must continue to engage the world with confidence and clear purpose. In the face of threats from abroad, it can be tempting to seek comfort by turning inward. But we must reject isolationism and its companion, protectionism. Retreating behind our borders would only invite danger. In the 21st century, security and prosperity at home depend on the expansion of liberty

abroad. If America does not lead the cause of freedom, that cause will not be led.

As we address these challenges - and others we cannot foresee tonight - America must maintain our moral clarity. I have often spoken to you about good and evil. This has made some uncomfortable. But good and evil are present in this world, and between the two there can be no compromise.

On the promise of America:

Even in the toughest times, we lift our eyes to the broad horizon ahead.

I have confidence in the promise of America because I know the character of our people. This is a Nation that inspires immigrants to risk everything for the dream of freedom. This is a Nation where citizens show calm in times of danger and compassion in the face of suffering.

These virtues give me an unshakable faith in America. We have faced danger and trial, and there is more ahead. But with the courage of our people and confidence in our ideals, this great Nation will never tire ... never falter ... and never fail.

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