



## Liberty Day 2004

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It has been two years since the Secretary of Defense formally recognized March 16, the birthday of our fourth President and "Father of our Constitution," James Madison, as "Liberty Day" (see [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2002/b03192002\\_bt133-02.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2002/b03192002_bt133-02.html)). The intervening liberation of the peoples of both Afghanistan and Iraq serves as a reminder to all that the inalienable rights and liberties we sometimes take for granted are not enjoyed by many around the world.

Last week, the Iraqi Governing Counsel approved an interim Iraqi Constitution (see [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2004/n03082004\\_200403082.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2004/n03082004_200403082.html)). This is a significant step forward for a newly liberated people. All soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, as well as civilian officers and employees of the Department of Defense, should be proud of the historic sacrifices we have made, and continue to make, in this noble effort.

We reflect this day upon the inalienable rights and liberties enumerated in our own Declaration of Independence and Constitution. As did Secretary Rumsfeld in honor of "Liberty Day" two years ago, I would also encourage all to examine the words of these founding documents, "which together form the basis for our freedom and prosperity."

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