



In His Own Words:

President Bush: "Over The Past Eight Years, I Have Been Inspired By The Character And Courage Of Our Nation"

Over The Last Several Weeks, President George W. Bush Has Discussed His Presidency In Several Speeches And Interviews. The Following Is A Selection Of Quotes From These Events.

"I'm asked a lot about my time as President. Some days have been happy, some days not so happy – every day joyous. It's been a tremendous privilege. I have traveled across our nation, and to 74 countries around the world. I have slept in Buckingham Palace; I have feasted in the desert of Abu Dhabi; I've watched the sunrise in Jerusalem. I have spoken to campaign rallies in packed stadiums, and to hundreds of thousands in Romania's Revolution Square. I've taken Marine One into America's biggest cities, and visited many of our smallest towns. Through it all, nothing has inspired me more than the character of the American people – the acts of courage and service that sustain our free society, and make this the greatest nation on Earth."

– President George W. Bush, 12/12/08

On Leadership:

President George W. Bush: A "President must have a firm set of principles from which he will not deviate." "And I believe in the universality of freedom, and I believe freedom is universal because of an almighty God. And I believe that it's not just freedom from tyranny that the United States must become involved in, I believe it's freedom from disease, freedom from hunger, freedom from deprivation." (President George W. Bush, Remarks At The Saddleback Civil Forum On Global Health, The Newseum, Washington, D.C., 12/1/08)

- **"Liberty is given to every man, woman and child on the face of the earth."** "I believe, like Lincoln, there is an Almighty – and a gift of that Almighty to every man is freedom. He has taught Presidents that you must act on your principles and make tough decisions, regardless of the political consequences." (Remarks By The President At Unveiling Of The Union League Of Philadelphia's Portrait Of The President, Lincoln Hall, Union League of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 12/6/08)
- **"There will be times when people tell you a different way is more accepted or popular."** "Remember that popularity is as fleeting as the Texas wind. Character and conscience are as sturdy as the oaks on this campus. If you go home at night, look in the mirror and be satisfied that you have done what is right, you will pass the only test that matters." (Remarks By The President In Commencement Address, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, 12/12/08)

President Bush: "Part of the presidency is the willingness to say, no matter how tough the issue may look, if it requires solution, go after it. And we did." "[T]he job of the President is to tackle these problems. And finally, the job of the President is looking over the horizon. ... [T]he institution of the presidency, is more important than the individual. And that really makes our country great – Presidents will come and go with their strengths and weaknesses, but the ship of state sails on because of the institution being greater than the person." (Remarks By The President To The American Enterprise Institute, Renaissance Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C., 12/18/08)

- "[W]e brought a results-oriented government, and we insisted that people focus on results, not process, and on a variety of reforms." "I hope they feel that this is a guy that came, didn't sell his soul for politics, had to make some tough decisions, and did so in a principled way." (Transcript: Charlie Gibson Interviews President Bush, ABC News, 12/1/08)

On The Economy:

President Bush: "No question that ... the current economic situation is very difficult and it obscures the fact that during my time in office we had 52 uninterrupted months of job creation, which was a record." "The current economic crisis began before my presidency. All of us who have held office during – from the genesis of the crisis until today bear responsibility." (Transcript Of Interview With President Bush, *The Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 1/9/09)

- "On the other hand, given the stark nature of the financial situation and the dangers inherent with it, I have moved and moved very aggressively." "The financial crisis was unexpected, although in my attempts to regulate Fannie and Freddie I did anticipate problems with government entities using implicit government guarantees to write all kinds of financial products without a lot of constraint, and therefore called for regulation – and was thwarted in my attempts to regulate by the special interests who are very much involved with protecting the status of Fannie and Freddie."
- "What scared me is not doing anything, which would have caused there to be a huge financial meltdown and the conceivable scenario that we'd have been in a depression greater than the Great Depression." (Transcript: Charlie Gibson Interviews President Bush, ABC News, 12/1/08)
- "I'm looking forward to the true history of this financial crisis being written." "No question part of the crisis came about because of excesses in lending in the housing market. My administration early on expressed concern about implicit government guarantees and the mortgage industry in Fannie and Freddie, and that we were concerned about excesses in lending and concerned about Freddie and Fannie having too much capacity to lend because of this implicit guarantee. And so we called for a regulator." (Remarks By The President To The American Enterprise Institute, Renaissance Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C., 12/18/08)

President Bush: "[M]y advice for all elected officials after this crisis passes is to remember that markets and free enterprise is what made the country great, and that these measures were temporary measures." "They're not an excuse for the government to be running automobile companies, if that's the decision I make, or for the government to be always involved in mortgages; that there is a proper role for government, which is oversight; and that the role of government really is to create an environment in which risk-takers feel comfortable taking risk, and where capital moves as freely as possible. That's why I am a big believer in free trade, for example. Trade opens markets; trade gives – and fair trade, I might add – and trade gives people an opportunity to risk and have their products sold in environments other than the domestic environment."

On National Security:

President Bush: "Over the past eight years, I have seen the valor of the American military time and time again." "The valor of America's Armed Forces [has] made our nation safer. Because you've taken the fight to the terrorists abroad, we have not had to face them here at home. And the world has seen something that almost no one thought possible: More than seven years after September the 11th, there has not been another attack on American soil." (President George W. Bush, Remarks At Military Appreciation Parade, Fort Meyer, Arlington, Virginia, 1/6/09)

President Bush: "Like the struggle against communism during the Cold War, the struggle against terror will be a generational conflict – one that will continue long beyond my presidency." "As my administration leaves office next month, we will leave behind the institutions and tools our country needs to prevail in the long struggle ahead." (President George W. Bush, Remarks On National Security, Homeland Security And The Freedom Agenda, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 12/17/08)

- "We'll leave behind a vastly upgraded network of homeland defenses."
- "We'll leave behind a revamped intelligence community that has new tools for staying one step ahead of our enemies."
- "We will leave behind new technologies and resources for our military to keep the pressure on the enemy."
- "We will leave behind a strong coalition of more than 90 nations – composing almost half the world – who have committed to combating terror, and sharing intelligence, and keeping our citizens safe."
- "We will leave behind new programs to help change the conditions of suffering and hopelessness that give rise to extremism and terror."
- "And finally, we leave behind an unprecedented commitment to extending the reach of liberty and democracy."

President Bush: "[T]he Middle East is a much better place without Saddam Hussein in power and the sacrifices by both the Iraqi people and the coalition forces to achieve where we are today." "I believe a Middle East with Saddam Hussein in power today would be different, much different than the one today. I think you'd see a man with a lot of oil wealth willing to use terrorist connections to try to compete, for example, with Hezbollah. There could conceivably be a nuclear arms race taking place, while even though Saddam Hussein did not have nuclear weapons, it is certain, at least to the experts, that he still had the capacity to make nuclear weapons. And there would be nothing more destabilizing for the Middle East than to see Iran trying to develop a nuclear weapon and Iraq trying to develop a nuclear weapon." (Interview Of The President By Nadia Bilbassy-Charters Of MBC TV, The White House, 12/5/08)

- **"America now has a strong friend and a partner in the fight against extremism in the heart of the Middle East, and that is historic."** "Thanks to you, 25 million Iraqis are free. Thanks to you, Iraq is no longer sponsoring terror – it is fighting terror. It's making American people safer as a result. ... Terrorists who once held safe havens across the country are being driven out of their strongholds. The political process that was once stalled is moving forward. Iraqi citizens once afraid to leave their homes are going back to school, and shopping in markets, and leading a more normal life. And American troops are returning home because of success." (Remarks By The President To The Troops, Al Faw Palace – Camp Victory, Baghdad, Iraq, 12/14/08)

On Domestic Accomplishments:

President Bush: "I campaigned on education reform and we passed No Child Left Behind Act." "I campaigned on Medicare reform and we reformed Medicare with a prescription drug benefit, as well as programs that encourage market forces within Medicare. I campaigned on free trade and passed free trade agreements. I campaigned on cutting taxes. We cut taxes. I campaigned on reforming Social Security and we didn't – although I campaigned twice on the issue and was very specific on how to deal with the unfunded liabilities inherent in Social Security." (Transcript Of Interview With President Bush, *The Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 1/9/09)

- **"I campaigned on immigration reform and was unable to achieve comprehensive immigration reform."** "I campaigned on restoring strength in the military, and we did that. We'll let history be the judge, but ... I have a great sense of accomplishment and I am going home with my head held high."

President Bush: "9/11 unified the country, and that was a moment where Washington decided to work together." "I think one of the big disappointments of the presidency has been the fact that the tone in Washington got worse, not better. Having said that, there were some moments of strong bipartisanship. I mean, No Child Left Behind Act, for example, or eventually funding our troops. I know the war ... created bitter divisions. ... I mean, there were moments of bipartisanship. But the tone was rough. ... I tried hard not to call people names and bring the office down during my presidency." (Transcript: Charlie Gibson Interviews President Bush, ABC News, 12/1/08)

President Bush: "Since 2001, teenage use has declined by 25 percent. That means 900,000 fewer teens on drugs." "Lives are changing. People's lives are being saved. ... There will be more work done after I'm out of here, but we have laid the foundation for a successful effort against drug use, drug supply, and helping those who have been addicted." (President George W. Bush, Meeting On Drug Use Reduction, The White House, 12/11/08)

President Bush: "No Child Left Behind is working for all kinds of students in all kinds of schools in every part of the country." "The most important result of the No Child Left Behind is this: Fewer students are falling behind; more students are achieving high standards. We have what's called the Nation's Report Card. For those who wonder whether or not we should strengthen No Child Left Behind, I want you to hear this: 4th graders earned the highest reading and math scores in the history of the test. Minority and disadvantaged students made some of the largest gains, with African Americans and Hispanics posting all-time highs in several categories." (President George W. Bush, Remarks On No Child Left Behind, General Philip Kearny School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1/8/09)

On Foreign Policy Accomplishments:

President Bush: "All I ask is that people analyze our alliances around the world..." "I will tell you, people want to come to America. I will tell you, America is respected. Our values are cherished – because they're not our values; they're universal values." (Jay Nordlinger, Op-Ed, "POTUS Speaks," *National Review*, 12/10/08)

- **"One, it is hard for any president to say that he and his country have had strong relations with Japan, Korea, and China at the same time..."** "Two, we have changed our relationship with India from one of suspicion to one of partnership, while being able to keep influence in Pakistan. Three, I articulated a two-state solution, at the same time vowing to defend Israel and keeping strong relations with Saudi Arabia and Jordan and Egypt and the U.A.E."
- **In Latin America, "we have relations with two key countries that are very strong: one, Mexico; and two, Brazil."** "The relationship between the United States and Brazil has been one of suspicion at times. Today, it is one of dealing with common interests."
- **"You know, popularity comes and goes. It just does. It comes and goes for an individual or a nation. But principles are enduring."** "You can get short-term popularity in the Middle East if you want, by blaming all problems on Israel. That'll make you popular. You can be popular in certain salons of Europe if you say, 'Okay, we'll join the International Criminal Court.' I could have been popular if I'd said, 'Oh, Kyoto is the way to deal with the environmental problem.' That would have made me liked. It would have made me wrong, however. And, ultimately, you earn people's respect by articulating a set of principles and standing by them."

President Bush: "[W]hen we got started [with The President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief] there were 50,000 people getting antiretrovirals in all sub-Saharan Africa." "[T]oday we're able to announce that we're over 2 million in less than five years. ... One of the results ... was the 10 million people who have been affected." "Over 2 million for antiretrovirals, but 10 million have been affected – 4 million of those are orphans. ... [T]here's a lot of people whose lives are being touched by the program." (President George W. Bush, Remarks At The Saddleback Civil Forum On Global Health, The Newseum, Washington, D.C., 12/1/08)

- **"I insisted upon measurable goals because I felt that lives needed to be saved."** "And if you don't have measurable goals, lives might not be saved. ... This is an administration that tried to get people to ask the question, are we actually doing something?"

President Bush: "I would hope [the people in the Middle East] would remember me as George W. Bush, as a man who respects their religion, respects human rights and human dignity, and prays for peace." "I'm confident history will say, oh, Bush could have done it better here, or, Bush could have done it better there. But I think from the strategic point of view, I'm confident that the idea of moving liberty in the region, a two-state solution to help the Israeli-Palestinian issue, the liberation of Iraq, and the follow-up with – to help the Iraqis realize their sovereignty – a strong push-back against Iran – I believe when people objectively analyze this administration, they'll say, well, I see now what he was trying to do." (Interview Of The President By Nadia Bilbassy-Charters Of MBC TV, The White House, 12/5/08)

On The Transition:

President Bush: "[I]n these two centuries of history, we're also reminded that this office – and the enduring ideals it represents – are greater than any person." "Being the temporary custodian of the office has been a privilege of a lifetime. Over the past eight years, I have been inspired by the character and courage of our nation – especially the men and women of our Armed Forces. I have been moved by the compassion of our citizens – from those who mentor a child to those who save lives around the world. Most of all, I've been uplifted by the many Americans who have sent their prayers." (President George W. Bush, Remarks At Unveiling Of Portraits, National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C., 1/19/08)

President Bush: "[O]ne of the things we vowed is to work with the President-elect and his team to have a smooth transition." "This is a very unique period in American history where a new President is coming in where we are fighting a two-front war against terrorists and, at the same time, dealing with a very difficult economic situation. And the more we can work together, the better off our country will be." (Transcript: Charlie Gibson Interviews President Bush, ABC News, 12/1/08)

- **"I'd like to live life without the limelight for a while."** "I think it's going to be real important for me to get off the stage. We got a new man coming on the stage; I wish him all the very best."
- **On Inauguration Day "we will have packed up, and we will have said goodbye to the folks that we have lived with for eight years. And it will be emotional in that sense."** "But I anticipate with great interest watching an historic moment, the swearing in of the 44th president, who happens to be an African American male. And that's a big deal for America. And I will have a front row seat." (Interview Of The President By Steve Scully, C-SPAN, 12/18/08)