

Now, Mr. Speaker, since it is January 22, and since we have made a great transition in this country, I feel as if it is also appropriate for me tonight to say some words in tribute to one George Walker Bush who had the courage, the commitment and the compassion in his soul to stand up for these little babies who couldn't stand up for themselves. A few days ago, George Bush made his last Presidential speech. When he had finished, he graciously wished the Nation and the next President success. He said good night. And then he asked for God to bless America and all Americans. And he walked down the steps from the podium in the hall in the White House as President of the United States of America for the very last time.

And President Bush may be gone from us now, but there will always be so many of us who deeply honor him, as I try to here this moment, for the man he is and the President he has been to America.

As with many great Presidents, it will take a broader and more developed perspective of history for most to truly comprehend the purpose and impact of the Bush administration. Mr. Speaker, I believe history, if it's unbiased, will be very kind to George Bush, not only because of his achievements, but because of the obstacles that he overcame.

In his Presidency, George Bush faced the catastrophic disaster of September 11, the deadliest terrorist attack or any other enemy attack against America in her entire history. He faced the calamity of Hurricane Katrina, one of the five deadliest storms to ever strike American soil. And then President Bush faced a worldwide financial crisis demonstrated by the largest 1-day drop in the Dow Jones in the history of the Nation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, any sane mind knows President Bush did not cause any of those disasters to happen. And any honest mind knows that his response to those disasters was due to trying to do what he truly thought was the right thing for the country instead of what was right for him politically.

There are, indeed, so many tangible threads to the noble legacy of President George W. Bush. President Bush, first of all, gave gallant and unwavering leadership to America, to our military forces and freedoms's march in the world. The men and women in our Armed Forces were honored to call President Bush their Commander in Chief. He implemented the largest reorganization of our national security apparatus in the history of our country. And for 7 years, the deadly 9/11-scale terrorist attacks against our country that all the experts said would follow September 11 were prevented.

The American people may never fully know the number of attacks on America that were thwarted because of the intelligence gleaned under the leadership of President George W. Bush. We may never know how many lives have been spared because, in those uncertain and fearful days following 9/11, President George W. Bush had the courage to defend us all from the virus of jihadist terrorism, whose proponents believe it is the will of God for America to be wiped from the face of the Earth.

Mr. Bush proactively protected America by taking the fight to the terrorists. He dismantled their networks and toppled two dangerous regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq. Their collective population of 50 million now live in a freedom that they have never known before. How can any of us forget the blue-tipped fingers on the hands held high in celebration by millions of Iraqis who had voted for the very first time in their lives in a nation that has not known freedom since before it was called Babylon, Mr. Speaker? I truly believe one of the great legacies of President Bush will be the kindled light of liberty in the eyes of those who once recognized that their future could only be an ever darkening, hopeless oppression. And now they are free.

Throughout his war on terrorism, and our war on terrorism, President Bush often had to walk like a knowing lion, like a knowing lion, Mr. Speaker, through the chattering of hyenas and endure the incessant insults and thoughtless criticisms of those whose vision only reached to the selfish partisan advance of the moment. But if those critics do not devour themselves in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, some day they may face the bared teeth of an enemy that will make us all wish the lion still walked among us.

But because President Bush did not capitulate to the voices of surrender and appeasement to terrorists, some of which came from this very Chamber, Mr. Speaker, today victory in Iraq has come, and a beachhead of freedom in the Middle East has been gained. And if that beachhead is maintained and protected in the days ahead, it may serve to inspire liberty in other nations in the Middle East and turn the whole of human history in freedom's direction, that because George Bush was once President of the United States of America.

President Bush was willing to fight, not because he hated what was in front of him, but because he loved what was behind him. He loved America. He loved freedom. And he loved the innocent.

Mr. Speaker, he was indeed a man of deep, abiding conviction and compassion. He launched the PEPFAR initiative, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and treating malaria victims which has brought lifesaving treatment and care to more than 10 million people worldwide, mostly mothers and their babies, who would otherwise never have had it. Mr. Speaker, I personally saw his tears when he looked at the pictures of children born in Third World countries with their faces severely deformed. I saw his tears again when he stood in the White House and watched John Roberts be sworn in as Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court because he knew, Mr. Speaker, that the Constitution and its protections of the basic human rights of life, liberty and property for all of God's children would be safe in the hands of Chief Justice John Roberts.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the noble and faithful legacy of George Bush will be borne for generations to come by the judicial fidelity of John Roberts and Sam Alito to the plain and timeless meaning of the United States Constitution. Posterity will never be able to thank him enough.

President Bush also advocated fearlessly for human rights and for religious freedom for the literally one-third of the world's population that lives under oppression and human rights abuses. He doubled funding for veterans and worked to protect free trade and enacted the largest tax relief in an entire generation. He supported numerous successful democratic revolutions in countries such as Lebanon, Ukraine and Georgia, all in the belief that the surest hope for peace and the protection of human dignity is still through liberty inherent to every person.

And Mr. Speaker, even though, as we talked about earlier, unborn children could never vote for George Bush, he stood unequivocally for their right to be born and to one day walk in the warm sunlight of freedom in America like the rest of us.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are many reasons I will remember President George W. Bush. I will remember him for his courage.

I will remember him for his patriotism, for his love of freedom, for his thankful heart and his commitment to human dignity and protecting, once again, those innocents that could not protect themselves.

I will remember him because he vowed to keep us safe, and he did. I will remember him because he saw the greatness in America. And the greatness of America always lived in his own heart.

I will remember him because he recognized that indeed there is a good and evil in this world.

I will remember him because he rejected the liberal intelligentsia's posture that there was moral equivalence between murdering innocents to advance an ideology and liberating the innocent to advance freedom.

I will remember him because he had both courage and conscience. And moreover, he had the courage to follow his conscious.

I will remember him because he brought honor and dignity to the White House. I will remember him as a man who loved and honored his Savior, his wife Laura, his daughters Jenna and Barbara, his mother and father and brothers, his entire family. He loved his family with all of his heart, Mr. Speaker. And I will remember him for loving and holding the entire human family as his very own.

But the most touching thing I will forever remember him for, Mr. Speaker, was his tender and compassionate heart toward those whose only plea was mercy. It is something that God remembers about him, too, Mr. Speaker.

Like George Bush, Winston Churchill was used of God to protect the world from falling under the sway of a hateful ideology for what might have been generations. In the election that followed, the voters turned Churchill out of office. And when the press

asked him, now what do you think, Mr. Churchill? He spoke words that I hope can speak to the heart of President Bush.

Mr. Churchill said, the only guide to a man in this life is his conscience; the only shield to his memory is the rectitude and sincerity of his own actions. And it is very imprudent to walk through this life without that shield, because we are all so often mocked by the failure of our hopes and the upsetting of our calculations; but with this shield, no matter how the fates may play, we march always in the ranks of honor.

And Mr. Speaker, like Winston Churchill, in the hearts of so many of us, George Bush will always march in the ranks of honor.

Now there are so many things I wish I could say directly to this President as he honorably steps away from public life and embraces the next great task God has for him on this Earth. Mr. Speaker, if I could just talk to him face to face, I think I would just say something like this, I would say, Mr. President, I encourage you to remember that popularity has been and will always be history's pocket change. It is courage, it is courage and love for humanity that are history's true currency, and these will always be the transcending hallmarks of your Presidency.

Mr. Speaker, I would say, thank you, Mr. President, for protecting the citizens of the United States from the dangers of jihadist terrorism. I would say, thank you, Mr. President, for protecting my two little babies, Joshi and Gracie. Thank you that they will live in a brighter, more hopeful future because you were once President of the United States. And then, Mr. Speaker, I would simply say to him, Mr. President, don't worry too much about America. You left us strong in so many ways, in the ways that really count. And I hope you will remember the words quoted by one of the wisest and most loving and noble Presidents as he spoke of America in the last line of his own inaugural address. He said, an angel still rides in a whirlwind and directs this storm.

God keep you forever, sir.

That is what I would say to him, Mr. Speaker.