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Speech Drafts: Third Inaugural Address, January 20, 1941

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Third Inaugural Address, January 20, 1941

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

JANUARY 20, 1941

On each national day of Inauguration since 1789, the people have renewed their sense of dedication to the United States.

In Washington's day the task of the people was to create and weld together a nation.

In Lincoln's day the task of the people was to preserve that nation from disruption from within.

In this day the task of the people is to save that nation and its institutions from disruption from without.

To us there has come a time, in the midst of swift happenings, to pause for a moment and take stock -- to recall what our place in history has been, and to rediscover what we are and what we may be. If we do not, we risk the real peril of inaction.

Lives of nations are determined not by the count of years, but by the lifetime of the human spirit. The life of a man is three-score years and ten: a little more, a little less. The life of a nation is the fullness of the measure of its will to live.

There are men who doubt this. There are men who believe that democracy, as a form of government and a frame of life, is limited or measured by a kind of mystical and artificial fate[—] that, for some unexplained reason, tyranny and slavery have become the surging wave of the future -- and that freedom is an ebbing tide.

But we Americans know that this is not true.

Eight years ago, when the life of this Republic seemed frozen by a fatalistic terror, we proved that this is not true. We were in the midst of shock -- but we acted. We acted quickly, boldly, decisively.

These later years have been living years -- fruitful years for the people of this democracy. For they have brought to us greater security and, I hope, a better understanding that life's ideals are to be measured in other than material things.

Most vital to our present and our future is this experience of a democracy which successfully survived crisis at home; put away many evil things; built new structures on enduring lines; and, through it all, maintained the fact of its democracy.

For action has been taken within the three-way framework of the Constitution of the United States. The coordinate branches of the government continue freely to function. The Bill of Rights remains inviolate. The freedom of elections is wholly maintained. Prophets of the downfall of American democracy have seen their dire predictions come to naught.

Democracy is not dying.

We know it because we have seen it revive --
and grow.

We know it cannot die -- because it is built
on the unhampered initiative of individual men and
women joined together in a common enterprise -- an
enterprise undertaken and carried through by the free
expression of a free majority.

We know it because democracy alone, of all
forms of government, enlists the full force of men's
enlightened will.

We know it because democracy alone has
constructed an unlimited civilization capable of
infinite progress in the improvement of human life.

We know it because, if we look below the
surface, we sense it still spreading on every continent --
for it is the most humane, the most advanced, and in
the end the most unconquerable of all forms of human
society.

A nation, like a person, has a body -- a body that must be fed and clothed and housed, invigorated and rested, in a manner that measures up to the objectives of our time.

A nation, like a person, has a mind -- a mind that must be kept informed and alert, that must know itself, that understands the hopes and the needs of its neighbors -- all the other nations that live within the narrowing circle of the world.

And a nation, like a person, has something deeper, something more permanent, something larger than the sum of all its parts. It is that something which matters most to its future -- which calls forth the most sacred guarding of its present.

It is a thing for which we find it difficult -- even impossible -- to hit upon a single simple word.

And yet we all understand what it is -- the spirit -- the faith of America. It is the product of centuries. It was born in the multitudes of those who came from many lands -- some of high degree, but mostly plain people -- who sought here, early and late, to find freedom more freely.

The democratic aspiration is no mere recent phase in human history. It is human history. It permeated the ancient life of early peoples. It blazed anew in the middle ages. It was written in Magna Carta.

In the Americas its impact has been irresistible. America has been the New World in all tongues, to all peoples, not because this continent was a new-found land, but because all those who came here believed they could create upon this continent a new life -- a life that should be new in freedom.

Its vitality was written into our own Mayflower Compact, into the Declaration of Independence, into the Constitution of the United States, into the Gettysburg Address.

Those who first came here to carry out the longings of their spirit, and the millions who followed, and the stock that sprang from them -- all have moved forward constantly and consistently toward an ideal which in itself has gained stature and clarity with each generation.

The hopes of the Republic cannot forever tolerate either undeserved poverty or self-serving wealth.

We know that we still have far to go; that we must more greatly build the security and the opportunity and the knowledge of every citizen, in the measure justified by the resources and the capacity of the land.

But it is not enough to achieve these purposes alone. It is not enough to clothe and feed the body of this nation, and instruct and inform its mind. For there is also the spirit. And of the three, the greatest is the spirit.

Without the body and the mind, as all men know, the nation could not live.

But if the spirit of America were killed, even though the nation's body and mind, constricted in an alien world, lived on, the America we know would have perished.

That spirit -- that faith -- speaks to us in our daily lives in ways often unnoticed, because they seem so obvious. It speaks to us here in the Capital of the nation. It speaks to us through the processes of governing in the sovereignties of forty-eight States.

It speaks to us in our counties, in our cities, in our towns, and in our villages. It speaks to us from the other nations of the Hemisphere, and from those across the seas -- the enslaved, as well as the free. Sometimes we fail to hear or heed these voices of freedom because to us the privilege of our freedom is such an old, old story.

The destiny of America was proclaimed in words of prophecy spoken by our first President in his first Inaugural in 1789 -- words almost directed, it would seem, to this year of 1941: "The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered deeply, finally, staked on the experiment intrusted to the hands of the American people".

If we lose that sacred fire -- if we let it be smothered with doubt and fear -- then we shall reject the destiny which Washington strove so valiantly and so triumphantly to establish. The preservation of the spirit and faith of the nation does, and will, furnish the highest justification for every sacrifice that we may make in the cause of national defense.

In the face of great perils never before encountered, our strong purpose is to protect and to perpetuate the integrity of democracy.

For this we muster the spirit of America, and the faith of America.

We do not retreat. We are not content to stand still. As Americans, we go forward, in the service of our country, by the will of God.

FIRST DRAFT

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

JANUARY 20, 1941

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Eight years ago a danger hung over our land; we were in the midst of it; we knew its shock and its actual immediate bearing upon our daily lives as individuals and as a nation. We sensed its causes, and we were in agreement that quick action, unwonted action, bold action, was not merely desirable but urgently requisite.

These eight years have been long years, crowded with new things. They have been fruitful years for the people of our land, for they have brought to us a more marked security and, I dare to say, a better understanding of life's ideal than we had had in times before.

Most vital to our present and our future stands out the picture of a democracy which has conquered a crisis at home; put away many evil doings, built new structures on enduring lines, and at the same time has preserved the fact of its democracy. For action has been taken within the

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Framework of the Constitution of the United States. The coordinate branches of our government give every evidence of continuing to function. The Bill of Rights remains inviolate; the freedom of elections is wholly maintained; and the dire prophets of the downfall of America have seen their evil predictions come to naught.

A nation has a soul.

Like a person a nation has a body too -- a body that must be fed and clothed and housed and given the means of locomotion that fit our day.

Like a person a nation has a mind -- a mind too that must fit our day in its relation to those minds of other nations which are so near to us now in the whole circle of the world.

But it is the soul of a nation which matters the most to its future, which calls for the most sacred guarding in its present.

Our soul is the product of centuries. It was born in the multitude of souls living in many lands, souls of some of high degree, but mostly souls of very plain people who sought a thing called freedom -- who sought it under several forms of governing in other lands but came hither early and late to attain freedom more freely.

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In the three centuries and more since those who came here to carry out certain longings of the spirit, they, and the millions who followed and the stock that sprang from them, have won forward constantly and consistently toward an ideal which in itself has moved onward with each generation.

In body, this improving civilization of ours is cared for in its comforts and in its health to a degree far beyond the knowledge and, therefore, the ideals of the early days. It still has far to go, both in the attainment of a wider security and also in the progress that science tells us is still an undisclosed probability of the future. The mind of our people has gained in equal measure.

One pride of America is in the universality of its education, the wide dissemination of information, its thirst for facts, its craving to search the unknown, and the scope of its opportunity.

Too many of us, I fear, are prone to think of the land of today in terms of the body and terms of the mind. That means that too many of us seek a future for the nation that lies in the continued progress of the health and the security and the learning of the individual and of the individual's family and friends -- the physical and the

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That is a natural motive. In the light of what we read from day to day and week to week, it is a proper motive for all we do.

But in the hearts of America there lies for most of us another motive -- a higher, nobler motive perhaps.

It is the motive that urges us to protect the soul of America as well.

It is no new thing -- this soul -- it was here full-fledged in the conquering of the wilderness. It grew to manhood with the growth of the democratic ideal. It has been mature among us for a century and a half.

It speaks to us in our daily lives in ways which are often forgotten because they seem so assured; it speaks to us here in the Capital of the nation; it speaks to us through the processes of governing in the sovereignties of forty-eight States; it speaks to us in our counties, in our cities, in our villages and in our towns. Sometimes

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we do not hear it -- this voice of freedom -- because its voice is an accepted and unquestioned privilege.

The America we know could not live on if its mind and its body were imprisoned or circumscribed or wounded or killed.

But it is likewise the truth that if the mind and the body lived, and the very soul of America were cut off, America would not live. That is why in days of clear danger it is the part of right and of righteousness that in our defense we place the maintenance of the soul first and always first; for if we keep wholly safe, the frame of our democracy, the ideals of our ancient freedom, and all the other things that go with it will still be ours.

Into this splendid evolution of our free institutions, into the long success of a people's government, fits the undying belief in Divine Guidance. This is the reason that in the face of perils we have never visaged before, we place first the motive of protecting the everlasting freedom of the institutions we have learned to call "government", and call for the help of God for the soul of America.

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SECOND DRAFT

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There come times in the life of every nation when in the midst of swift happenings it must pause for a moment to take stock -- to recall to mind what its place in history has been and remembering what it has been, rediscover what it is today. If we do not, we risk a pitfall or a wrong turning. Ours is such a time.

The lives of nations are determined, not as the lives of men are by a count of years, but by the measure of the human spirit. The life of a man is three score years and ten: a little more, a little less. The life of a nation is the lifetime of its will to live. Of all living and continuing things, only a nation lives and continues, not by natural law or by some arbitrary term of years, but by the strong endurance of its inward purpose.

For three hundred years the word, America, has meant in every tongue, to every people, the New World. It has meant this not because this continent was newly found but for a different reason: because all those who came here, men and women out of many places, believed that they would

find here, or would make here, a new life -- a fuller life.

Three centuries of history have justified and fortified this belief. We now know that a new life, a free life for free men such as never yet existed in the world, can be created on this continent. We still believe that the New World is America, and America is building here in this place a new life, larger and more generous than any life that men have lived before us.

Eight years ago a danger hung over our land -- a danger which concerned material things. As I stood here then, we were in the midst of it. We knew its shock and its threat to our daily lives as individuals and to our existence as a nation. We sensed its causes. We knew that quick action, unwonted action, bold action had to be the order of the day.

These last eight years have been long years, crowded with new things. They have been fruitful years for the people of our land; they have brought us a greater measure of security; and a better understanding that life's ideals are not to be measured only in wholly material things.

Most vital to our present and our future is this picture of a democracy which conquered this almost overwhelming crisis at home; put away many evil doings; built new structures on enduring lines; and at the same time preserved the fact and the essence of its democracy. For action has been taken within the framework of the Constitution of the United States. The coordinate branches of our government continue to function as a three horse team. The Bill of Rights remains inviolate. The freedom of elections is wholly maintained. The dire prophets of the downfall of America and democracy have seen their evil predictions come to naught.

Democracy has been proven to be the most powerful of man's creations. Its strength lies not in material resources alone. It lies rather in the unhampered initiative of individual men and women joined together in a common enterprise, a common will. That kind of initiative and that kind of will have constructed a civilization capable of infinite progress in the improvement of man's lot. And it is because, of all the forms of government, democracy and democracy alone enlists the full force of

free man's enlightened will rather than the brute strength of slaves that government so conceived cannot perish.

Like a person a nation has a body -- a body that must be fed and clothed and housed and given the means of locomotion that fit our day.

Like a person a nation has a mind -- a mind too that must fit our day in its relation to those minds of other nations which are so near to us now in the whole circle of the world.

Like a person a nation has a soul. It is the soul of a nation which matters the most to its future, which calls for the most sacred guarding in the present.

Our soul is the product of centuries. It was born in the multitude of souls living in many lands, souls of some of high birth, but mostly souls of very plain and common people who sought a thing called freedom -- who had sought it in vain under other forms of governing in other lands.

In the three centuries and more which have followed, those who came here to carry out the longings of their spirit, and the millions who followed, and the stock that sprang from them -- all have moved forward constantly and

consistently toward an ideal which in itself has become higher and clearer with each generation.

Today the body of this nation -- in this improving civilization of ours -- is being cared for in its comforts and in its health to a degree far beyond the knowledge or dreams of the early days. We still have far to go.

We have still to overcome some of the lag which the preceding generation permitted in meeting the social and economic needs of the twentieth century. For we know how much the survival of democracy depends upon its ability to provide opportunity and security commensurate with our resources and capacities. Democracy cannot forever tolerate wealth without service, or poverty without fault. We continue to seek the attainment of a wider security and the progress in the standard of living that science tells us is still a probability of the future.

The mind of our nation and of our people has gained in equal measure.

One pride of America is in the universality of its education, the wide and unrestricted dissemination of information, its thirst for facts, its craving to search the unknown and to extend the frontiers of science; and

the scope of its opportunity for the free play and interchange of ideas.

Too many of us, I fear, are prone to think of our land of today, in terms only of the body and of the mind. Too many of us seek a future for the nation that lies only in the continued progress of the security and health and learning of the individual -- the physical and the mental comforts of life.

This is but natural. It was the instantaneous instinct of the earliest human beings to seek shelter against impending physical attack. In the same way, we with the higher culture of today, seek weapons to protect our minds and bodies against threatened danger.

In the light of what we read from day to day and week to week, that search for survival and protection is a proper motive for all we do.

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Today the body of this nation -- in this improving civilization of ours -- is being cared for in its comforts and in its health to a degree far beyond the knowledge or dreams of the early days. We still have far to go.

We have still to overcome some of the lag which the preceding generation permitted in meeting the social and economic needs of the twentieth century. For we know how much the survival of democracy depends upon its ability to provide opportunity and security commensurate with our resources and capacities. Democracy cannot forever tolerate wealth without service, or poverty without fault. We continue to seek the attainment of a wider security and the progress in the standard of living that science tells us is still a probability of the future.

The mind of our nation and of our people has gained in equal measure.

One pride of America is in the universality of its education, the wide and unrestricted dissemination of information, its thirst for facts, its craving to search the unknown and to extend the frontiers of science; and

the scope of its opportunity for the free play and interchange of ideas.

Too many of us, I fear, are prone to think of our land of today, in terms only of the body and of the mind. Too many of us seek a future for the nation that lies only in the continued progress of the security and health and learning of the individual -- the physical and the mental comforts of life.

This is but natural. It was the instantaneous instinct of the earliest human beings to seek shelter against impending physical attack. In the same way, we with the higher culture of today, seek weapons to protect our minds and bodies against threatened danger.

In the light of what we read from day to day and week to week, that search for survival and protection is a proper motive for all we do.

But in the hearts of America there lies for most of us another motive -- a higher, nobler motive.

It is the motive that urges us to protect the soul of America as well.

It is no new thing -- this soul of America. It was born here in the conquering of the wilderness. It grew to manhood with the growth of the democratic ideal. It has been mature among us for a century and a half.

It speaks to us in our daily lives in ways which are often unnoticed because they seem so assured. It speaks to us here in the Capital of the nation. It speaks to us through the processes of governing in the sovereignties of forty-eight States. It speaks to us in our counties, in our cities, in our villages and in our towns. Sometimes

SIXTH DRAFT

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

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On each national day of Inauguration since 1789, the people have renewed their sense of dedication to the United States.

In Washington's day the task of the people was to create and weld together a nation.

In Lincoln's day the task of the people was to preserve that nation from disruption from within.

In this day the task of the people is to save that nation and its institutions from disruption from without.

To us there has come a time, in the midst of swift happenings, to pause for a moment and take stock -- to recall what our place in history has been, and to rediscover what we are and what we may be. If we do not, we risk the real peril of inaction.

Lives of nations are determined not by the count of years, but by the lifetime of the human spirit. The life of a man is three-score years and ten: a little more, a little less. The life of a nation is

the fullness of the measure of its will to live.

There are men who doubt this. There are men who believe that democracy, as a form of government and a frame of life, is limited or measured by a kind of mystical and artificial fate: that, for some unexplained reason, tyranny and slavery have become the surging wave of the future -- and that freedom is an ebbing tide.

But we Americans know that this is not true.

Eight years ago, when the life of this Republic seemed frozen by a fatalistic terror, we proved that this is not true. We were in the midst of shock -- but we acted. We acted quickly, boldly, decisively.

These later years have been living years -- fruitful years for the people of this democracy. For they have brought to us greater security and, I hope, a better understanding that Life's ideals are to be measured in other than material things.

Most vital to our present and our future is this experience of a democracy which successfully survived crisis at home; put away many evil things; built new structures on enduring lines; and, through it all,

maintained the fact of its democracy.

For action has been taken within the three-way framework of the Constitution of the United States. The coordinate branches of the government continue freely to function. The Bill of Rights remains inviolate. The freedom of elections is wholly maintained. Prophets of the downfall of American democracy have seen their dire predictions come to naught.

Democracy is not dying.

We know it because we have seen it revive -- and grow.

We know it cannot die -- because it is built on the unhampered initiative of individual men and women joined together in a common enterprise -- an enterprise undertaken and carried through by the free expression of a free majority.

We know it because democracy alone, of all forms of government, enlists the full force of men's enlightened will.

We know it because democracy alone has constructed an unlimited civilization capable of infinite progress in the improvement of human life.

We know it because, if we look below the surface, we sense it still spreading on every continent -- for it is the most humane, the most advanced, and the most *- and, in the end, the most unconquerable -* powerful, of all forms of human society.

A nation, like a person, has a body -- a body that must be fed and clothed and housed, invigorated and rested, in a manner that fits our day.

A nation, like a person, has a mind -- a mind that must be kept informed and alert, that must know itself, and understand the hopes and the needs of its neighbors -- all the other nations that live within the narrowing circle of the world.

And a nation, like a person, has something deeper, something more permanent, something larger than the sum of all its parts. It is that something which matters most to its future -- which called forth the most sacred guarding of its present.

It is a thing for which we find it difficult -- even impossible -- to hit upon a single simple word.

And yet we all understand what it is -- the spirit -- the faith of America. It is the product of centuries.

It was born in the multitudes of those who came from many lands -- some of high degree, but mostly plain people -- who sought here, early and late, to find freedom more freely/

The democratic aspiration is no mere recent phase in human history. It is human history. It permeated the ancient life of early peoples. It blazed anew in the middle ages. It was written in Magna Carta.

In the Americas its impact has been irresistible. America has been the New World in all tongues, to all peoples, not because this continent was a new-found land, but because all those who came here believed they could create upon this continent a new life -- a life that should be new in freedom.

Its vitality was written into our own Mayflower Compact, into the Declaration of Independence, into the Constitution of the United States, into the Gettysburg Address.

Those who first came here to carry out the longings of their spirit, and the millions who followed, and the stock that sprang from them -- all have moved forward

constantly and consistently toward an ideal which in itself has gained stature and clarity with each generation.

The hopes of the Republic cannot forever tolerate either undeserved poverty or self-serving wealth.

We know that we still have far to go; that we must more greatly build the security and the opportunity and the knowledge of every citizen, in the measure justified by the resources and the capacity of the nation.

But it is not enough to achieve these purposes alone. It is not enough to clothe and feed the body of this nation, and instruct and inform its mind. For there is also the spirit. And of the three, the greatest is the spirit.

Without the body and the mind, as all men know, the nation could not live.

But if the spirit of America were killed, even though the nation's body and mind, constricted in an alien world, lived on, the America we know would have perished.

That spirit -- that faith -- speaks to us in our daily lives in ways often unnoticed, because they seem so obvious. It speaks to us here in the Capital of the nation. It speaks to us through the processes of governing in the sovereignties of forty-eight States. It speaks to us in our counties, in our cities, in our towns, and in our villages. It speaks to us from the other nations of the Hemisphere, and from those across the seas -- the enslaved, as well as the free. Sometimes we fail to hear or heed these voices of freedom because to us the privilege of our freedom is such an old, old story.

The destiny of America was proclaimed in words of prophecy spoken by our first President at his first Inaugural in 1789 -- words almost directed, it would seem, to this year of 1941: "The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered deeply,finally, staked on the experiment intrusted to the hands of the American people".

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If we lose that sacred fire -- if we let it be smothered with doubt and fear -- then we shall reject the destiny which Washington strove so valiantly and so triumphantly to establish. The preservation of the spirit and faith of the nation does, and will, furnish the highest justification for every sacrifice that we may make in the cause of national defense.

In the face of great perils never before encountered, our strong purpose is to protect and to perpetuate the integrity of democracy.

For this we muster the spirit of America, and the faith of America.

We do not retreat. We are not content to stand still. As Americans, we go forward, in the service of our country, by the will of God.
