

As I said in my Inaugural Address, America remains involved in the world, by history and by choice, shaping a balance of power that favors freedom. To achieve this goal, we need a foreign policy that serves America's vital interests and speaks for our highest ideals, a foreign policy that is clear and consistent and confident, true to our values and true to our friends.

To lead this effort at this unique moment in history, I picked a unique leader. Many times over the past four decades, America has called on Colin Powell, and each time he has answered the call. When his country called him to serve as a foot soldier, Colin Powell answered the call. When his country needed him to help defeat a tyrant brutalizing his neighbors and destabilizing a vital region of the world, he answered the call. When America needed him to serve the high purpose of building the character of our young and to promote voluntarism, he answered the call.

Today America calls on Colin Powell again. He is a leader who understands that

America must work closely with our friends in times of calm if we want to be able to call upon them in times of crisis. He understands that our Nation is at its best when we project our strength and purpose with humility. He understands that if we do not set our own agenda, it will be set by others, by adversaries abroad or by the crisis of the day.

I know of no better person to be the face and voice of American diplomacy than Colin Powell. His dignity and integrity will add to the strength and authority of America around the world.

Congratulations, Mr. Secretary.

[*At this point, Secretary Powell made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Alma Powell, wife of Secretary Powell. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary Powell.

Remarks at a Luncheon With Freshman Members of the House of Representatives *January 26, 2001*

Welcome to the people's house. Here we are in week one. I hope you're as enthused about your job as I am about mine. I, first, look forward to saying hello to each of you, and I know the Vice President does, as well.

We've begun a series of policy initiatives. First is education. I've been meeting with mostly the senior Members of the House and Senate—although a few freshmen have shown up in the meetings—to hear about a vision that I think is so important for America, and that is, every child get educated and a way to do so.

There will be other issues that we'll be talking about—military preparedness, Medicare and health care, Social Security reform, tax relief—and I look forward to working with you all. I come to Washington with a positive spirit of the possible, that I refuse to let any bitterness that may be lingering around inhibit us from rising above the expectations of the American people.

The people—some people—take a look at the election and say, "Well, gosh, the country is too divided. Nothing will happen." Our mission is to prove them wrong. It's to not only restore faith in Government