

VOA New

Bush to Get Back to Work After Enjoying Election Win (03 Nov 2004, 19:56 UTC)

President Bush has won a second four-year term in office. The Republican incumbent delivered his victory speech shortly after his Democratic Party opponent, John Kerry, conceded defeat.

Mr. Bush spoke in a building named for the last Republican president to win re-election: Ronald Reagan.

He looked out at the cheering crowd with tired eyes and savored the moment, telling his supporters America has spoken.

"The voters turned out in record numbers and delivered an historic victory," he said.

In his remarks Mr. Bush made clear he believes he has received a mandate from the American people to continue his foreign and domestic policies.

He said the United States is entering a season of hope, both at home and abroad, and made specific mention of Afghanistan and Iraq.

"With good allies at our side we will fight this war on terror with every resource of our national power so our children can live in freedom and in peace," he added.

But the president also acknowledged that a deep political divide plagues America. He spoke directly to voters who cast ballots for his opponent, and said he will do all he can to deserve their trust.

"A new term is a new opportunity to reach out to the whole nation," he noted. "We have one country, one Constitution and one future that binds us."

His words brought to an end to a bitter, hard-fought election season. The president had hoped for a quick victory, but a long night of vote counting in the crucial state of Ohio delayed the outcome.

Senator Kerry formally conceded in a brief telephone conversation with the president some twelve hours after the polls closed and once it became clear Mr. Bush had an insurmountable lead.

A short time later Senator Kerry told supporters in his hometown of Boston, Massachusetts that he offered to work with Mr. Bush to heal the nation's political wounds.

"We talked about the danger of division in our country and the need - - the desperate need -- for unity, for finding the common ground together. Today, I hope that we can begin the healing," said Mr. Kerry.

Mr. Kerry's running mate, Senator John Edwards, was at his side and struck a more defiant tone. He said even though the outcome of this election will not change, the Kerry campaign will continue to insist that every vote is counted and all voters are heard.

"And I want to talk to the tens of millions of people who worked along side us, who believed in our cause and stood with us," said Mr. Edwards. "You can be disappointed, but you cannot walk away. This fight has just begun."

John Kerry will remain in the Senate, but John Edwards is retiring from Congress. A Republican, Richard Burr, will take his North Carolina seat. Mr. Burr will be part of an increased Republican majority in Congress when the new session begins in January.

Among those who will not be returning is Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle. He lost his bid for reelection to Republican John Thune. It was the first time in half a century that a senate leader was voted out of office.