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President Promotes Theme of Liberty in Inauguration Speech

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Amid unprecedented security, George W. Bush took the oath of office Thursday beginning his second term as President of the United States. VOA's Jim Bertel reports the president called on Americans to spread liberty, democracy and personal freedom around the world.

On a cold wintry day, George W. Bush placed his hand on a family bible and recited the oath of office, beginning his second four-year term as president of the United States.

Tens of thousands of people gathered in near freezing temperatures for the swearing in at the West Front of the Capitol. Three former presidents including the president's father George H.W. Bush were on the podium for the ceremony.

Following a 21- gun salute, Mr. Bush spoke to the nation outlining what he called a "hopeful vision for America," supporting the growth of democracy in every nation and ending tyranny.

"The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world," said the president.

During the 20-minute speech, Mr. Bush did not directly mention the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan, but he paid tribute to the men and women who, in his words, died "fighting our enemies."

And he acknowledged the strained relations with some nations, underscoring the importance of ties to them. "And all the allies of the United States can know: we honor your friendship, we rely on your counsel and we depend on your help.

The inaugural address echoed many of the president's campaign themes including improving education and expanding health insurance and retirement benefits. He also spoke directly to the nation's young people: "Make the choice to serve in a cause larger than your wants, larger than yourself, and in your days you will add not just to the wealth of our country, but its character."

Thursday's ceremony was the first presidential inauguration since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Security was extremely tight with police shutting down a large part of the nation's capital.

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Text of President Bush's Inaugural Speech

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY Vice President Cheney, Mr. Chief Justice, President Carter, President Bush, President Clinton, reverend clergy, distinguished guests, fellow citizens: On this day, prescribed by law and marked by ceremony, we celebrate the durable wisdom of our Constitution, and recall the deep commitments that unite our country. I am grateful for the honor of this hour, mindful of the...

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Bush Sworn In for Second Term

President Bush has taken the oath of office for a second term. The theme of his inaugural address can be summed up in one word: freedom. On a crisp January day, at the appointed hour, the president put his hand on a bible and repeated the traditional oath. Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who is undergoing treatment for thyroid cancer, administered the oath on the west front of the Capitol. Members of the U.S. Congress served as witnesses, along with a crowd...

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President Bush, First Lady Attend Inaugural Balls

Following President Bush inauguration for a second term Thursday he attended a series of lavish inaugural balls, including one special gala for American military personnel. The president and First Lady Laura Bush went to nine balls, spending about 20 minutes at each party, greeting supporters. The balls capped a day of events for President Bush that included lunch with members of Congress and a parade. The president also signed his Cabinet nominations...