

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSETEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO BE DELIVERED AT  
THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY OF  
DONALD RUMSFELD AS SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

We are assembled here today to swear in as Secretary of Defense one of the most dedicated, talented and capable public servants it has been my privilege to know in twenty-seven years of public life.

A friend was once asked to give a thumb-nail description of Don Rumsfeld's work pattern and he said it could be summed up in two simple statements: One, Don works at a stand-up desk. And two, his staff does not work at stand-up desks -- but they do very little sitting down.

Donald Rumsfeld, in a series of challenging legislative and administrative capacities, has demonstrated beyond question his ability to grasp the complexities of issues and organizations, to work tirelessly and effectively at whatever task may engage him, and to serve his country faithfully and well.

As a Member of Congress from Illinois, he demonstrated a talent for staying in tune with the will of the people he served, for representing their interests with fidelity and courage, and for winning the confidence and respect of his fellow Members of Congress.

As head of the Office of Economic Opportunity and later as Director of the Cost of Living Council, he exhibited the organizational and leadership abilities which have characterized his career in public service.

In these varied positions, he also showed great awareness of and compassion for the social and economic needs of our nation. That awareness and compassion accompany him here.

As the United States' Ambassador to NATO, he demonstrated his strong commitment to a strong defense for America and our allies in Western Europe.

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His service as Ambassador was distinguished by a strengthening of the commitment to Atlantic security and by his own diplomatic skills which he successfully employed in a very sensitive and important post.

As my Assistant at the White House, he has shown that he is a man of near-inexhaustible energy, a man who takes charge of a situation quickly, forcefully and efficiently, a man with a wide variety of gifts and interests and expertise.

Don Rumsfeld knows, as I know, that a strong national defense for America is the surest guardian of our nation's independence and of peace in the world. He knows, as I know, as everyone in this Administration knows, that it is the certainty of America's military strength that makes possible our negotiations for peaceful cooperation with other great powers of the world.

He knows, as I know, that the price of that strength and security is high, but it is a price that must be paid, for the price is never greater than the worth of a strong defense.

You all know where I stand on defense. All those who say they are for a strong defense and a strong foreign policy should join me, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State to maintain adequate defense budgets in the Congress. As I have said before, a military capability second to none permits us to act firmly in foreign policy around the world in defense of the national interest.

As Don begins his new duties and assumes this new challenge, he does so with my personal best wishes and my thanks for accepting a very difficult and demanding assignment.

Don Rumsfeld has my complete confidence and trust; he will earn that of the nation and the Department of Defense because he will do a superb job as our new Secretary of Defense.

It is my pleasure to introduce for swearing in by Mr. Justice Stewart, the thirteenth Secretary of Defense-designate, the Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld.

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