

FOR RELEASE SATURDAY AM's  
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Office of the Vice President

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TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE VICE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES DOCUMENTS CEREMONY  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

July 2, 1976

In 200 eventful years, we Americans have changed in every possible way, except in our fidelity to our fundamental political principles and institutions. Our Republic remains the oldest, continuous, fundamentally unchanged, political system in the world. Tonight, as we launch this Bicentennial weekend, let us remember, understand, and celebrate that remarkable fact.

We Americans remain the faithful political descendants of our Founding Fathers because we continue to agree with the ideas they immortally expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution -- the belief that liberty and democracy can be a blessing to mankind if carefully structured and moderated, and, if not, a curse.

We Americans happily had a path marked out for us by the American founders leading to the blessings of liberty and democracy.

We come here tonight to acknowledge our indebtedness to the principles and institutions they devised, to give witness to their success, and to renew our dedication to that compound and sober blend of liberty and democracy which is the essence of our national heritage. The very form of our ceremony tonight testifies to that compound and sober American blend of liberty and democracy.

We have here tonight the Assemblage of the American Democratic Republic, a ceremony in which are assembled all the representative elements of our two hundred year old political system.

Here in the Hall are the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the United States, and the Chief Justice -- representing our system of the separation of powers.

In my constitutional capacity as Presiding Officer of the Senate, I have the honor to represent the principle of bicameralism.

Here tonight also are Governors, Mayors, and other local officials, representing the American principles of federalism and decentralization. And also joining in this Assemblage of the Republic are leaders of our private voluntary associations, representing the American principle of creative, private, voluntary action.

For all our faults and failings, we here tonight, together with all our fellow citizens everywhere, express the principles and represent the institutions devised by our Founding Fathers; separation of powers to protect liberty and also secure competent governing power; bicameralism to balance and refine the popular will; federalism and decentralization to guard against despotism and to allow the American people energetically to solve their political problems as much as possible at the local level; and private, voluntary associations so that the people themselves may freely and creatively supply their own needs without dependence upon paternal government.

(MORE)

Like our founders, we do not believe in a simple centering of all power in a streamlined, monolith of government; rather, we believe that liberty and democracy can only be achieved by these complex principles and institutions of the American Democratic Republic.

We come back here tonight to draw strength anew from our old and tested principles and institutions, so that we may go forward with orderly creativity into our Third Century.

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