



My Fellow Americans: Presidents Speak to the People in Troubled Times

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The most interesting and inspiring presidential speeches, from Franklin Roosevelt to Barack Obama.

From Franklin Roosevelt to Barack Obama, American presidents have faced unprecedented challenges at home and abroad. From the onset of the Great Depression, through World War II, the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Cold War, Desert Storm and the War on Terror, American presidents have warned and rallied the nation during each crisis. Presidents have also addressed the people in times of triumph -- the creation of the United Nations, advances in civil rights, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War.

My Fellow Americans includes the speeches that capture times of challenge, conflict and change, with such memorable phrases as "We have nothing to fear but fear itself," "Ask not what your country can do for you" and "Begin again the work of remaking America," which have entered the vernacular and have become a part of our heritage.

This book is a record of how our presidents established their leadership through thick and thin. The language of the speeches reflects the country's mood over decades of fear and hope and the ongoing faith and values that sustain our nation.

My Fellow Americans is divided into six parts:

- 1933-1945: Roosevelt
- 1945-1961: Truman and Eisenhower
- 1961-1969: Kennedy and Johnson
- 1969-1981: Nixon, Ford and Carter
- 1981-1993: Reagan and Bush
- 1993-2009: Clinton, Bush and Obama.

Each part is introduced with a short essay that provides a timeline and context for the events of the period.

There is also

an introduction to the book that focuses on the president's use of language to inspire listeners. Illustrated with 30 black-and-white historical photographs, *My Fellow Americans* is a stunning testament to America's recent history.

The American Constitution, Article II, Section 3, mandates that the president "shall from time to time give to Congress information on the state of the union." Since George Washington delivered the first State of the Union address in 1790, each president has addressed Congress and the people of the United States every year. Presidents have also given inaugural and farewell addresses as well as many formal and informal speeches. From these speeches there is a vivid and immediate record of the major triumphs and tragedies the nation has faced and clear portraits of the men who have led.

Famous speeches in the book include:

Roosevelt's first Inaugural Address, 1933:

"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Eisenhower's Farewell Address, 1961:

"We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence ... by the military-industrial complex."

Kennedy's Inaugural Address, 1961:

"Ask not what your country can do for you..."

Johnson's State of the Union Address, 1967:

"We have chosen to fight a limited war in Vietnam in an attempt to prevent a larger war."

Reagan's Evil Empire speech, 1983:

"[Do not] ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire."

George W. Bush's State of the Union Address, 2004:

"We are engaged in the defining ideological struggle of the 21st century."

Barack Obama's Inaugural
Address, 2009:

"Begin again the work of remaking America."

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