

"Probably more
tomorrow (12/20)."
per Bill Safire.

THE SPIRIT OF '76

To believe in America, to believe in all America stands for, is to believe in more than a body politic. To believe in America is to have faith in the soul of America -- to have faith in the unquenchable, irrepressible American spirit.

What is that American spirit? What do we mean when we talk about the 'Spirit of '76' ? The American spirit, the moral force that gives this Nation its character, weaves together many motives and many dreams:

The American spirit is man's age-old yearning for liberty in the context of law -- that force that enables a person to remain an individual even as he becomes part of a community.

The American spirit is the tradition of generosity, of helping those who cannot help themselves, not because we have to but because we want to.

The American spirit is the will to compete, an ethic in which the hard-working person gets ahead, and the result is a system that opens the door to opportunity for all.

The American spirit is the idealism that refuses to despair in the face of adversity -- the strength-giving hope that has always astounded the cynics and the pessimists.

Spirit of '76 - 2

The American spirit is the love of challenge -- the need that two centuries ago drove us to reach across our own continent, and drove us in this decade to reach out and touch the moon.

The American spirit is our sense of destiny as a Nation; it is our sense of responsibility as well as our sense of humor as a people; it is our good common sense as individuals.

INDIVIDUALITY

To inaugurate means to begin. A second inaugural can mean a new beginning -- not just a new beginning for an administration, but a chance for a new beginning in the life of every American.

That is why I do not address myself at this solemn moment to what orators call 'the American people.' Instead, I speak to the American person, to each individual American as a separate and unique human being.

For if there is one thing that we have learned in recent years, it is this: The American of today will not permit himself to be treated by government as part of a mass, or as a statistic who does not count. It has never been more evident that the future of our country depends on the character, the self-reliance, the industry and the sense of responsibility of the individual American.

ON MUTUAL TRUST

Almost four years ago, when I went abroad for the first time as President to help to rebuild our alliances with the nations of Europe, a great statesman used a single word to describe what was urgently needed: in French, "confiance" -- in English, "trust."

We have discovered, in our foreign relations, how it is possible to build trust between friends, and even to build trust between great adversaries.

Here at home, it should be possible to continue the process of rebuilding trust between races, between generations, between people of different political views and different economic status.

Written on our coins are the words "In God We Trust." In the spirit of that commitment to our creator, we would all do well to learn to trust each other.