

July 4th Bush Speech: Anti-war protesters call for Bush impeachment

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Bush welcomes new US citizens on 4th of July

By PETE YOST, Associated Press, Fri Jul 4, 1:36 PM ET

President Bush invoked the memory of Thomas Jefferson Friday in welcoming new U.S. citizens at a naturalization ceremony at Monticello, saying "I'll be proud to call you a fellow American."

On his final Fourth of July as president, Bush told an audience at the home of the Declaration of Independence's author that he was honored to be present for the naturalization.

Anti-war protesters shouted out calls for Bush's impeachment on nine occasions during Bush's brief remarks, and the president responded by saying he agrees that "we believe in free speech in the United States of America."

The last six Fourth of July holidays have taken place amid continuing violence in Iraq. Bush's addition of 28,000 U.S. troops last year in Iraq helped foster a measure of stability in what is now the sixth summer of the war.

The 150 or so demonstrators, from a variety of groups opposing Bush's policies on the war in Iraq, also rallied along the path of the president's motorcade to Monticello.

Bush mentioned neither the war in Iraq nor the battle against terrorism in his speech, other than to say that "we pay tribute to the brave men and women who wear the uniform."

For the people assembled with him at the naturalization ceremony, he said: "When you raise your hands and take your oath, you will complete an incredible journey. ... From this day forward, the history of the United States will be part of your heritage."

"Throughout our history," he said, "the words of the declaration have inspired immigrants around the world to set sail to our shores. ... They made America a melting pot of culture from all across the world. They made diversity a great strength of our democracy."

"Those of you taking the oath of citizenship at this ceremony hail from 30 different nations," Bush noted. " ... You all have one thing in common — and that is a shared love of freedom ... and this is the love that makes us all Americans."

Said Bush: "This is a fitting place to celebrate our nation's independence. Thomas Jefferson once said he'd rather celebrate the Fourth of July than his own birthday. To me, it's pretty simple — the Fourth of July weekend is my birthday weekend."

Before his brief remarks, the president was given a tour of Jefferson's home including the room where the author of the Declaration of Independence died on July 4, 1826, the same day as the death of Jefferson's predecessor, John Adams.

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