

REMARKS AT MY FAREWELL AND AWARD CEREMONY
by
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Mr. Secretary, Pete:

Thanks for the kind remarks.

They bring to mind that old crack about the difference between a testimonial speech and a eulogy:

- At the testimonial speech, there's one person who believes it.

I want to thank everyone here for coming to this send-off.

What I do in fact believe is that I enjoy enormous good fortune in various spheres.

I'm the beneficiary of the love of the generations of my family from that of my father and mother through to that of my children.

I'm the beneficiary of the grit by which my father survived Nazi-dominated Europe and of his insight in determining to engineer a life for himself in America.

So I feel not only proud but lucky to be an American. I don't take the United States for granted.

America itself is a lucky country, a golden land. But it's reckless to leave such luck to chance.

America's blessings of freedom and peace don't perpetuate themselves willy-nilly. They have to be cultivated with intention and protected with vigilance.

And that's why I regard as a crowning piece of personal good fortune the opportunity I've had to serve our country these last four years as Under Secretary.

When the 9/11 terrorists murdered Americans at home by the thousands and threatened that the worst is yet to come, President Bush and his team had the duty:

to try prevent the next attack,
to comprehend the challenge as war,
to craft strategies and execute them.

We're doing this.

This Department's men and women – civilians and military – led by Secretary Rumsfeld, his deputies Paul Wolfowitz and Gordon England and by Dick Myers and Pete Pace, have played a role that historians will look back on, I believe, with the kind of admiration we feel for the Americans who secured the blessings of liberty for themselves and us in

the Revolutionary War,
the Civil War and
the three World Wars of the 20th Century (One, Two and Cold).

It's been a privilege to have a hand in the work of helping secure our nation and our friends and interests in the world during this time.

The work has been politically controversial, as the charred hides of some of us attest.

But the controversies are not unprecedented, are not surprising and are not necessarily unhealthy.

A few weeks ago, my wife Yana and I visited Fort McHenry in Baltimore with Dore, our nine-year-old. We got to read together Francis Scott Key's entire poem.

In the fourth, generally unsung stanza is the line: "Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just"

This is a striking line. It drives home that what makes America great is that Americans are not supposed to assume, uncritically, that everything we do as a country is wise and just.

We'll have victory over our enemies, the poet says, when our cause is worthy of a people who appreciate their blessings. Americans do and should debate such matters.

In the war on terrorism, America's cause is decidedly just, for our enemies stand for the close-minded tyranny of the videotaped beheading and the suicide atrocity.

As we've seen before in history, our enemies now tend to underestimate the fierceness and tenacity of Americans in defense of our freedom, our way of life.

Success won't be a near-term proposition. But, when it comes, it will be due largely to the sacrifice and courage of our armed forces and to the wisdom and work of people present in this auditorium right now.

I feel grateful to be associated with the Defense Department and, in particular, the men and women of the Policy organization.

- You have been admirable colleagues.
- Many of you have become my close friends.
- I know you'll continue to shine in support of the Secretary and the President under the leadership of Eric Edelman and Ryan Henry.

May you go from strength to strength!

Thank you – and farewell.