

OPINIONS & LETTERS

COLUMN LEFT

Bush Inaugural Address

By Charlie Ara

The devil is in the details.

Well, what's new? George Bush wants to spread Democratic forms of government all over the world. In fact, he hints (reinforced by the Rev. Billy Graham at the National Cathedral Prayer Service) that God is calling him to this task.

Hello! Thomas Jefferson argued that America would be more secure in a world with

more democracies. Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton have been among those presidents calling for the spread of democracy.

So what is different? It is in the how! Some have said that there are already plans in the making to invade Iran. As much as the Bush Administration has denied it, plans to invade Iraq were in the making prior to 9/11.

What is different now is that Bush has set a pattern of going it alone with token allies. This is scary. If, in fact, Mr. Bush feels there is a divine mandate for more pre-emptive wars, killing thousands for the sake of his interpretation of freedom, where is the justification for this in the Bible, the Torah and the Koran or in any other literature of sacred religious traditions?

Or if this perceived divine mandate is said to come from a direct revelation, it is either true, and we better follow the lead, or it is false. In that case, should we not wonder if our leader has been misled by his own illusions and sense of grandiosity. With so many lives at stake, when will we learn that war is not the answer? You certainly cannot tell 100,000 dead Iraqis that they are now free.

Yes, the devil is in the details! Many of us feel that peace is the work of justice and that dialogue is the way to win the minds and hearts of people. Mideast scholar Thomas Friedman is for encouraging dialogue among Muslim extremists and Muslim progressives as a way of moving their nations onto the path of freedom.

Let us hope that the Bush Administration will forgo the path of war and realize that it is really the battle of ideas that need to be encouraged.

Text of Article

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Charlie Ara
President Emeritus, Hubert Humphrey Democratic Club

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