

Remarks
Governor George E. Pataki
Laying of the Cornerstone for Freedom Tower
July 4, 2004

Today is the Fourth of July, Independence Day.

On this day, two hundred and twenty eight years ago, our founding fathers proclaimed our faith in freedom...

They declared that this nation would be founded upon that ideal;

They declared that this nation would become the home of the free.

And for two hundred and twenty eight years, on each July 4th, we have celebrated our country's birth – and reaffirmed our faith in these fundamental liberties:

The right to freely speak and assemble...

The right to worship where and how we see fit...

And yes, the right to live - not in fear - but in freedom.

On September 11th 2001, this nation was challenged; attacked by those who sought to shake our faith in that freedom, our confidence in democracy.

They sought to deny us those unalienable rights, so wisely, bravely and boldly proclaimed by our forefathers so many years ago.

They attacked us to break our spirit.

Instead, they broke our hearts.

But even in the depths of sadness, our strength, our courage and our commitment to defend freedom never wavered.

The people of New York, the people of America understood we were attacked for respecting one another, for believing in one another, and for treating one another as equals.

We were attacked because of our commitment to the ideal proclaimed on that first Fourth of July...

The ideal that has attracted people from every corner of the globe;

We were attacked because of our faith in freedom.

How badly our enemies underestimated the resiliency of this city and the resolve of these United States.

How badly our enemies underestimated the power and endurance of freedom. In less than three years, we have more than just plans on paper – we place here today the cornerstone, the foundation of a new tower...

...a new soaring tribute that will climb 1,776 feet high - marking the year of our nation's birth and proudly declaring our steadfast allegiance to freedom...

...a tower that will rise and reclaim our glorious skyline, replicate that great lady liberty - our majestic statue in the harbor, and stand as a beacon of freedom to all peoples of the world.

...a tower that will honor the heroes we lost on that tragic day, and serve as a reminder that not only did thousands of our friends and family die on this sacred ground, but that they lived, worked, loved and dreamed here too.

Today is indeed a momentous day.

Today we take 20 tons of Adirondack granite - the bedrock of our State - and place it as the foundation, the bedrock, of this new symbol of American strength and confidence.

Today, we lay the cornerstone for a new symbol of this City and this country, and of our resolve to triumph in the face terror.

Today we build the Freedom Tower.

In signing the Declaration of Independence, our forefathers defiantly laid the cornerstone of our nation and unmistakably signaled its independence from foreign rule.

Today, we, the heirs of that revolutionary spirit of defiance, lay this cornerstone and unmistakably signal to the world the unwavering strength of this nation, and our resolve to fight for freedom.

Let us make certain that future generations know the story of this hallowed ground, and of the men and women who so bravely perished here...

Let this great Freedom Tower show the world that what our enemies sought to destroy – our democracy, our freedom, our way of life – stands taller than ever.

May God Bless the people of New York, and may God Bless the United States of America.

Thank you.

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