

Eurasia here in the State Department and fill in for the assistant secretary when he is not around. And that is what I'm doing tonight and it is an honor to have you here. This is a gala dinner. It is beautiful room, a beautiful building. We just had a chance to have this reception in these wonderful surroundings. And this reason for this is to honor you, to thank you for what you've done to support the Franklin House and to support our common efforts to remember and honor and preserve our legacy and our history as a nation through Benjamin Franklin and his home in London. I want to thank you very much for that.

I understand that some other administration official is giving some remarks tonight somewhere across town; something about Iraq I think. So I'm very pleased that you made the choice to come here. The foundation that you've created, the Benjamin Franklin House Foundation is a terrific organization because it is devoted to the memory of one of the most influential of the founding fathers of our nation. And he happened to be the best known American of his time. He loved London. And at the same time he loved the new nation that he helped to found. And I can't think of a man who better symbolizes the length of affection, the common values, the mutual warmth and commitment between the United Kingdom and the United States than we get from Benjamin Franklin.

The Franklin House is the only surviving structure where Benjamin Franklin lived. And it is a daily reminder of the life and times of 300 years ago or 250 years ago. And the United States and Britain are both fortunate that this foundation exists and is supporting the preservation and restoration of that historic facility.

I want to thank Lady Manning for being here. She is the spouse of the UK ambassador to the United States, David Manning, Sir David, who I was just saying I had the pleasure to meet. I remember, she is a memorable person, although she doesn't, as her husband was leaving his job as ambassador to NATO to go become the National Security Adviser for Prime Minister Blair. And I was leaving my job as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Lord Robertson who was the secretary general of NATO to come back to Washington to work at the National Security Council. And he husband becoming the National Security Adviser to the prime minister very graciously said, oh we are going back to the same job. Not quite, not quite.

I want to thank Marcia Balisciano for being here and for helping put this all together. She is the director of the Franklin House of London and is with us this evening.

As I understand it this is the first time that the U. S. government, the State Department is hosting this kind of event. That is a mistake. We should have done this long ago and we should do it again. So thank you for putting this together and coming.

Now if these people weren't enough to make one nervous, I'm told that we also have Walter Isaacson here and due to speak later on. That is a daunting thing for anyone. Everything that we know about Benjamin Franklin, his life, his time, how we interpret what that meant. We know because of his work. And for someone like me being asked to come up and say a few words about Benjamin Franklin and then being told that Walter Isaacson is going to speak, I think maybe we should have had a long conversation about global warming instead.

Also with us is Colleen Graffy who I want to acknowledge. She is an American who spent the last 20 years living in London before joining us here at the State Department. I think Colleen is responsible for the scheduling of this event tonight on the date the president is speaking. And until today she was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Diplomacy. Colleen will have a few words to say in a minute.

We have some other speakers tonight and I've mentioned those. I do want to say a few things about Benjamin Franklin and what that means

to me to talk about Benjamin Franklin here. The first is that, as anyone who practices diplomacy, especially out ties with Europe, you can't help but have a special affection for Benjamin Franklin. He was the American pioneer in this field. He was first he was in London trying to avert war, and then when war came he came back to this country and helped founded and insure that it succeeded. And the country we have today is largely due to the efforts of him and the other founding fathers. When he returned from London he took a few months to accomplish that task of putting our country together and went off to France. And there again, he established our first alliance as a nation with France. He brokered deals, signed treaties and also sold the unfolding American adventure to a skeptical Paris court. And playing the rustic, here we have an educated renaissance man going around Paris wearing a coonskin cap, and convincing the French, an aristocracy still, that they needed to support the democratic American colonies in the war. Now that is diplomacy. I also think of Benjamin Franklin as my hometown hero. I grew up outside of Philadelphia. I remember as a kid going down the Franklin Institute, a hands on science museum in Philly. That was one of the highlights of things that we did. And of course that was the memory of Franklin the inventor and the scientist. Part of the lure that I grew up with knowing as a kid growing up outside of Philadelphia was that he established our first public company, our first library, our first insurance company, the University of Pennsylvania,

the first teaching hospital and so on and so on. He first in practically everything that I knew about our city. And if as Silvio Badini said, Americans are tinkers and thinkers, Ben Franklin epitomizes this nation before it was even created. He was an intellectual, and a writer and also an inventor. Things like bifocals, remember, Franklin stove, lightening rod and it is remarkable to think that next week we celebrate the 301 anniversary of Franklin's birth. Because it is very hard to think of anybody, anyone who died within the last ten years, who is as present in our lives today as Franklin, is 300 years after his birth. He was one of the original knowledge age thinkers. He said an investment in knowledge always pays the best interest. And he used his role as a printer to propagate this knowledge, and not just making valuable improvements in printing technology but also in understanding what the spread of ideas can mean in the world. He didn't event the Internet but he would certainly know what to do with it if he were here today. Most importantly for me as a diplomat is embodiment of our values as a nation and their reflection abroad. Few people have done more to make our country better and few people have done more to strengthen America's critical alliances in the world and export the American ideal of freedom.

President Bush is known for his second inaugural address and his passionate commitment to security and freedom. It was Franklin who

said, they that give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety. And this essential understanding of the link between security and advancing freedom is at the heart of the American identity today. Franklin was globalist, he said where liberty is there is my country. In other words, his idealism in foreign policy and his love of liberty knew no boundaries and no frontiers.

Well obviously our president is speaking tonight. He is talking about Iraq, the way forward, a lot of challenges facing our country today. Facing our country today, facing the UK today. It is really, Secretary Rice said in our staff meeting this morning, this is a crucible time for our country. What she meant by that is the time when our challenges are tough and the question is what we resolve we show as a nation, and what our meddle is as a nation. What we do based on our values in the world.

What the example of Franklin shows is that while today's challenges are different, the idea that the values of freedom themselves are critical to the security of our nation, is actually a very old idea. And not for nothing did the great Scottish essayist Tom Carlyle call Franklin the father of all Yankees. That is not a bad title.

Thank you very much.

I'd like to introduce Colleen Graffy, recently reinstated as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs.