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History 380

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Nixon's Inaugural Addresses

The 1960s and 1970s presented the United States with an immense amount of change. With the widened age gap there was also a broadening of political fundamentals and ideologies. This essay will be revealing the changes and similarities of the late 1960s and the early 1970s through the Inaugural Addresses of former president Richard Nixon. Analyzing the speeches and comparing the major focuses, problems, solutions, and the tone of both pieces to provide a well-rounded conclusion on similarities and differences for the four year time span.

In order to provide a background for these two speeches it is important to first describe the overall tone of each piece. Nixon's first inaugural address on January 20, 1969, provided a new found appreciation for the American youth. With quotes like "Spiraling pace of change" (1:05) and "I know America's Youth, we can believe in them," (3:28) Nixon frequently hinted to a new start or a new chapter in history. Similarly in his second Inaugural address just four years later, Nixon affirmed his time in office and called to "Move forward from the beginnings we have made." (4:40). Overall the tone Nixon gave for these two speeches were fairly similar.

The major focus for both of these inaugural speeches were filled with a powerful rhetoric of peace. In the first speech in 1969 Nixon stated "The greatest title history can bestow is the title of peace maker," (2:10) and in his second speech in 1973 "The chance to build such peace is the noblest endeavor in which a nation can engage." (5:50) Nixon showed a great understanding for what the people of America wanted to hear. The nation was in a time of war time blues with the

protest of the war and the impending threat of the red scare. He also knew that the age gap and civil rights movement brought forth necessary change and a call for equality. All these characteristics showed prevalent in both of Nixon's Inaugural Address speeches.

The speeches offered a glimpse into the ideology of the Nixon administration and how he planned to spend his years in office. In both Inaugural addresses Nixon spoke on creating a better nation. In the first speech Nixon had goals toward "full employment, better housing, excellence in education, and enhancing the quality of life." (7:24) Four years later, for his second term he looked toward "Better health, better education, better housing and cleaner environment." (6:30) These goals for followed along a similar path through his time in office. Along with the betterment of society Nixon looked toward what he called the 'new' and to "Turn away from the condescending policies of paternalism, of Washington knows best." (8:20) in his, 1973, second inaugural speech.

The foreseeable problems and solutions Nixon spelled out in his speeches were clear and concise. Analyzing these two speeches offered a strong sense of freedom and democracy for all was a strong aspect to the Nixon administration. He planned to "Go forward together with all mankind," in 1969, and to "Make every other nations conflict our own," in 1973. Nixon spoke of open communication with the government in, 1969, and of togetherness in as humans above race in, 1973.

With a strong rhetoric of peace at home and abroad to the growing tolerance of political and social change Nixon presented meaningful themes, for the time, in both of his Inaugural Addresses. From the turn of the 1960s to the beginning of Nixon's second term the goals that the Nixon administration held key shared many similarities.

Bibliography

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