

largest Muslim population in the world.

Back then, people said that the Philippines could do no better than the dictator they had, Ferdinand Marcos. People said that the Koreans and Chinese didn't care about freedom, or that their Confucian heritage predisposed them to tyranny, or that they were incapable of democracy because they had no historical experience with it. Those assertions ran counter to what President Reagan believed. As he put it in an historic address to the British Parliament in 1982, "It would be cultural condescension or even worse to say that any people prefer dictatorship to democracy."

In the Philippines, Ronald Reagan and his Secretary of State, George Shultz, initiated a persistent effort to prod Marcos to embrace democratic change. Supported by America's firm insistence, the Philippine people finally forced Marcos to step down in 1986—helping turn that country from dictatorship to democracy. The following year, we saw a similar development in South Korea. Not long after that, Taiwan began to demonstrate that Chinese people, too, craved freedom and democratic self-government.

And we may well remember the democracies emerging from the shadow of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe ... today moving forward to build free institutions and representative self-government. Like the recovering societies who stepped forward in 1949 to join NATO against Soviet expansion, countries like Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, along with seven other democracies of Central Europe, have also joined NATO. And they've become active contributors in the Balkans, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and in the broader war against terrorism.

The President tells a story about the power of liberty ... about how President Truman and the American people believed after the Second World War that a free society could help turn Japan from an enemy in war to an ally in peace. And about how, today, he and Japan's Prime Minister Koizumi can sit down and talk about how to keep the peace in the Korean Peninsula, or in Iraq. "What's going to happen someday," said the President, "is that an American President is going to sit down with a duly elected leader of Iraq to talk about peace. And our children and grandchildren will be better off."

Just as in the years after World War II, victory will require great risk and sacrifice, and much hard work. The three Muslim leaders I mentioned earlier have risked their reputations, their freedom and even their lives to stand up for freedom and democracy and religious tolerance. President Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan knows that his life is at risk every day for the cause that he believes in.

Thousands of Iraqis are signing up to join the new army and national guard and police force, knowing that they are risking their lives for the cause of a new Iraq. On my recent visit to Iraq, I met with a young Marine whose life had been saved by five members of the Iraqi National Guard, who risked their own lives to rescue him when he was wounded under fire. I met with the President of Iraq, whose predecessor on the Governing Council was assassinated by a suicide car bomb. I met with the Deputy Prime Minister, who was the target of an assassination attempt by Al Qaeda-associated terrorists two years ago in Northern Iraq. I met with Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, who was almost chopped in half by an ax wielded by one of Saddam's assassins in his apartment in London 25 years ago.

We met with the very impressive Sunni Arab Governor of the Province of Nineveh, Osama