

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ANDREW CARD, JR.
TALL SHIPS PARADE OF SAIL
JULY 4, 1992
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Thank you, Walter (Cronkite) ... and a special welcome to Prince Phillip of Spain. Mayor Dinkins, distinguished guests, fellow Americans:

It was said of Columbus that he believed his discovery of the new lands beyond the gates of Hercules would usher in the Apocalypse -- the end of time.

In a way he was right -- for his voyages meant the end of the world as the Europeans and all the civilizations of the Americas knew it. With the massive exchange and encounter of peoples, foods and animals that came in Columbus' wake, a fantastic transformation took place throughout the societies of the Old and New Worlds. As these "seeds of change" took root on every continent, the boundaries of tradition were forever altered.

Columbus' voyage also meant a new beginning. For out of this crucible of cultures -- this mix of peoples from every corner of the globe -- an entirely new civilization arose here on this continent: an American civilization.

One based upon the principles of liberty, equality and democracy. Principles we celebrate each 4th of July -- America's Independence day.

Columbus' voyage was "apocalyptic" for another reason. Apocalypse comes from the Greek word "to be revealed" -- and more was revealed than simply the New World to the Old. What was also revealed was man's insatiable quest for knowledge -- the need to discover and explore no matter what the odds or the risk.

"We Americans celebrate discovery" -- President Bush recently said at a dedication ceremony marking Columbus Day -- "because we're never satisfied, because we are ever romancing the next horizon."

This need to explore, to surmount almost any difficulty is part of our seafaring tradition. From our first days as a nation, we sent ships to explore our waterways and to seek new passages to the Far East for commerce.

This seafaring spirit of exploration continues today, of course, but no longer by clipper ships seeking new and quicker routes. Instead, it's underwater vessels exploring the unfathomable depths of the oceans, or space craft exploring the outer reaches of the heavens.

So the age of discovery is far from over. And like Columbus, we too seek to probe the secrets of the world.

What wonders will be revealed to us, again, is anyone's guess. But after 500 years, the adventure of exploration--which truly began with Columbus' voyage -- will continue well into the 21st century.

Thank you.