When President Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany, he included this paragraph.

The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest (taking other lands), no dominion (control). We seek no indemnities (exceptions) for ourselves, no material compensation (money) for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them.

Today we will be looking at how Presidents Bush and Obama made similar statements.

President Obama’s speech to the UN:

It has been less than two years since a vendor in Tunisia set himself on fire to protest the oppressive corruption in his country, and sparked what became known as the Arab Spring.  And since then, the world has been captivated by the transformation that’s taken place, and the United States has supported the forces of change.

We were inspired by the Tunisian protests that toppled a dictator, because we recognized our own beliefs in the aspiration of men and women who took to the streets.

We insisted on change in Egypt, because our support for democracy ultimately put us on the side of the people.

We supported a transition of leadership in Yemen, because the interests of the people were no longer being served by a corrupt status quo.

We intervened in Libya alongside a broad coalition, and with the mandate of the United Nations Security Council, because we had the ability to stop the slaughter of innocents, and because we believed that the aspirations of the people were more powerful than a tyrant.

And as we meet here, we again declare that the regime of Bashar al-Assad must come to an end so that the suffering of the Syrian people can stop and a new dawn can begin.

We have taken these positions because we believe that freedom and self-determination are not unique to one culture.  These are not simply American values or Western values -- they are universal values.  And even as there will be huge challenges to come with a transition to democracy, I am convinced that ultimately government of the people, by the people, and for the people is more likely to bring about the stability, prosperity, and individual opportunity that serve as a basis for peace in our world.

President Bush

We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.

America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one. From the day of our Founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this earth has rights, and dignity, and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of Heaven and earth. Across the generations we have proclaimed the imperative of self-government, because no one is fit to be a master, and no one deserves to be a slave. Advancing these ideals is the mission that created our Nation. It is the honorable achievement of our fathers. Now it is the urgent requirement of our nation's security, and the calling of our time.

So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.

This is not primarily the task of arms, though we will defend ourselves and our friends by force of arms when necessary. Freedom, by its nature, must be chosen, and defended by citizens, and sustained by the rule of law and the protection of minorities.