

Reporting Exercise: The President's Inaugural Address

You should assume that you are the political counselor in a foreign embassy in Washington, preferably from one of the major powers, and that your Ambassador has asked you to prepare a draft report (maximum six pages double-spaced) analyzing the President's Inaugural Address. The address is scheduled to be given before a national audience shortly after at noon on January 20. In the real world the Ambassador would expect a draft on his desk the next morning. Your Ambassador is an impatient diplomat and your home ministry wants a quick reaction to the President's speech. The purpose of the report is to highlight for your home country the foreign and domestic policy issues which are going to absorb the US Government's attention in the year ahead, particularly those which relate to your country's interests or to American policy in general. You should consider whether there are any specific actions that the Embassy should take with the State Department or the White House. The format for the report is as follows:

To: The Foreign Ministry

From: Embassy Washington

January 21, 2015

CONFIDENTIAL

Subject: President Trump's Inaugural Address

(You might add to the subject line a teaser designed to attract readers back home, for example "Statesmanship on Display" or "Exercise in Futility", or "Sound but Little Substance". Here is your chance to be creative. Obviously you will have to expand on the theme you suggest in the subject line.)

Summary: In four or five sentences give the essence of your analysis including the principal points on which you want your home government to focus.

Follow the summary with six to eight paragraphs of discussion/analysis of the Speech. You may wish to report on any critical (or supportive) editorial comments that may have appeared the morning following the Speech. End the report with a paragraph entitled either Conclusions or Recommendations. If you believe there is something your government should do, this is the place to say what that action should be. Possible steps might include consultation by the Ambassador or members of the Embassy staff with the State Department or a formal statement by your government supporting a particular Presidential policy. Do not feel that you have to make a recommendation unless the issues that you identify affect your government's interests in an important way. You should, however, reach a conclusion about the significance of the speech using the theme you have hinted at in the subject line and put in your summary. Since this is a general political section reporting message, it should be in the third person throughout. The only

possible exception would be in the recommendation paragraph where the Ambassador may interject his/her own views. Those views should be in the first person. In American usage the cable will always be signed with the Ambassador's surname, in this case yours, whether or not there is Ambassadorial comment.