which we're doing and to call upon our citizens, if they've got time, to help somebody in need. As you said, the doctor from Wyoming benefited just as much as the woman in Guatemala did. And that's the beauty of giving.

And so I thank you all for joining today. Our panelists did a magnificent job, like I knew they would. I thank you all very much for your interest in coming. To my fellow citizens, I appreciate you taking time. I appreciate you being involved. Thank you for caring about the plight of our fellow human beings in the neighborhood in which we live. For those of you from other countries, welcome to America. You'll find this to be a loving country, full of decent, caring, fine people. And it is an honor to be the President of such a country.

Que Dios les bendiga. May God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City at Reagan National Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Mariano Canu, cofounder, Labradores Mayas; and President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Tour of GrafTech International Ltd. in Parma, Ohio

July 10, 2007

Good, thanks. I'm proud to be with you all. It's great to be at GrafTech here in Cleveland. I've come to Cleveland to highlight a couple of important issues. First, energy independence is an important part of our Nation's future. And one way to achieve energy independence is to promote technologies that will enable us to drive our economy without the use of Middle Eastern oil, for example. And one such technology is hydrogen fuel cells. And GrafTech is on the leading edge of developing a technology that will work, that will be competitive with other forms of energy, and that will enable us, on the one hand, to be less dependent on oil and better stewards on—of the environment.

And so I'm glad to be with these entrepreneurs, these scientists, these thinkers. We've—as part of the hydrogen fuel cell initiative that I proposed to the Congress, this company got a grant. And I think it's a wise use of taxpayers' money, to help the people in this company develop this new technology. This forklift right here is powered by a hydrogen fuel cell. Doesn't require any oil or products derived from oil, and the exhaust from this is water.

And so we're going to continue to promote these kinds of technologies. And so I want to thank you all for having me. I'm about to go to a—after lunch, go to a hospital to talk about the need for a health care system that is patient-driven. I will resist the idea of the Federal Government running the health care system. And I'm going to spend some time talking during a townhall meeting about the kinds of reforms that we ought to be promoting out of Washington that encourage there to be a consumer-driven health care system. I mean, we'll take care of the poor, and we'll help the elderly. But we believe health care is best run in the private sector, not by the government.

And finally, I'm going to spend some time talking about the war on terror and our need to succeed in Iraq. And I'm going to remind the people in the audience today that troop levels will be decided by our commanders on the ground, not by political figures in Washington, DC, and that we've got a plan to lead to victory. And I fully understand that this is a difficult war, and it's hard on the American people. But I will once again explain the consequences of failure to the American people, and I'll explain the consequences of success as well.

And so I thank the people of Cleveland for welcoming me here. I'm glad to be in your city. Looking forward to a full day.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:59 a.m.

Remarks to the Greater Cleveland Partnership and a Question-and-Answer Session in Cleveland, Ohio

July 10, 2007

The President. Thank you, sir. Thank you, Fred. Thanks for having me. Thank you,

Fred. Thanks for coming. Thanks for having me. It's a smart marketing tool, you know, all the cameras. [*Laughter*] I thought for sure the largest chamber of commerce was in Texas, but I guess not. [*Laughter*]

I'm thrilled to be back in Cleveland. I've had a fascinating day. I went to a small business that is on the cutting edge of changing the way we're going to consume energy. I just came from the Cleveland Clinic, which is one of the most fabulous hospitals in America.

I do want to spend a little time talking about our economy, talking about health care and energy policy that will be an integral part of making sure the economy continues to grow. I'd like to spend a little time talking about the war against extremists and radicals. And I'd like to answer some of your questions, if you have any.

Before I do, I want to tell you, Laura sends her best. She's arguably the most patient woman in America. [*Laughter*] She's a fabulous First Lady and a great mom. I love her dearly, and she told me to say hi to you all, so, hi. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate Joe Roman, who works with Fred. Thanks for setting this deal up. Appreciate the chance to come and visit with fellow citizens here in Cleveland. I'm the Commander in Chief; I'm also the educator in chief. Part of my job is to explain the philosophy behind the decisions that I have made. I'm honored you'd give me a chance to do so.

I'm traveling with a good man, the Congressman from this area—one of the Congressmen from this area, Steve LaTourette. Proud to be with you, Congressman. Thank you for your time. State Auditor Mary Taylor is here. Thanks for being here, Mary. I met the mayor of Cleveland across the street at the hospital. I was proud to be with him. I thank him for his time, for taking time out of his day. I thank Toby Cosgrove of—Doc, thank you for being here—from the hospital there across the street. I thank the docs, by the way, for taking time to show me some amazing technology.

Let me first talk about our economy. It's—our economy is changing, and it's strong. I remember back to—early on in my administration when we were confronted with some very difficult times. There was a recession; the economy had gotten overheated, and it was correcting. And then we got hit by an enemy that killed nearly 3,000 of our citizens, which such an attack obviously would have an effect on the economy. Then there were some corporate scandals that had a psychological effect on our economy. I mean, people were beginning to worry about the system where people were not upholding the law, taking advantage of the situation, taking advantage of shareholders.

And yet we acted and cut taxes—and cut them hard because I believe—[*applause*]—because one of the philosophical drivers of this administration is, is that if you have more money in your pocket to spend, save, or invest, the economy is more likely to grow. In other words, there's always a conflict in Washington about how—what's the proper amount of money in Washington and what is the proper amount of money in your pocket. I'm one of these fellows that err on the side of trusting people to spend their money more than trusting government. And therefore, we cut—[*applause*].

I'm not trying to elicit applause—thank you, but—[*laughter*]—and our plan has worked. I don't know if you noticed last month that we added another 132,000 new jobs. We've added over 8 million new jobs since August of 2003. Entrepreneurship flourishes when people have got more capital in their pocket.

One of the interesting things about the tax cuts that we proposed is that a lot of the tax cuts were aimed at small businesses. One of the statistics that makes our economy interesting and, I believe, robust is that 70 percent of new jobs are created by small-business owners. And that's an important thing for our fellow citizens to remember, particularly those in Congress who are thinking about something to do with the Tax Code.

Most small businesses are subchapter S corporations or limited partnerships. In other words, they pay tax at the individual income tax rate. So therefore, when you cut income taxes on everybody who pays taxes—in other words, when you lower the rates, it affects the ability of small businesses to keep capital; in other words, keep more of what they earn. And when a small business keeps more of

what they earn, it is more likely that business will expand. And therefore, when you hear me say that 8 million new jobs have been created since August of 2003, I might as well have said, as well, the small-business sector of America is strong. And the best way to keep it that way is to keep taxes low.

And now we're going to have a debate on that in Washington. And that's going to be the interesting philosophical argument. You'll hear people say in Washington, "Well, we need to raise taxes in order to either pay for new programs or balance the budget." I happen to believe we can balance the budget without raising taxes if we're wise about how we spend your money. And we're proving it possible.

Tomorrow I'm going to talk about the size of the deficit. I'm not going to guess what that will be, but I can predict it's going to be substantially lower than it was 3 years ago. And we didn't raise your taxes. We kept your taxes low, which caused the economy to grow, which yielded more tax revenues. And because we set priorities, the deficit is shrinking.

And the big fight in Washington is going to be whether or not the budgets that the Congress is trying to now pass is going to go through. It's not; I'll veto them if they're excessive in spending. I'm not going to let them raise your taxes. I think it would be bad for the economy. I think it would be bad for entrepreneurship.

Let me talk about health care, since it's fresh on my mind. [*Laughter*] The objective has got to be to make sure America is the best place in the world to get health care, that we're the most innovative country, that we encourage doctors to stay in practice, that we are robust in the funding of research, and that patients get good, quality care at a reasonable cost.

The immediate goal is to make sure there are more people on private insurance plans. I mean, people have access to health care in America. After all, you just go to an emergency room. The question is, will we be wise about how we pay for health care? And I believe the best way to do so is to enable more people to have private insurance. And the reason I emphasize private insurance, the best health care plans—the best health care policy is one that emphasizes private health. In other words, the opposite of that would be government control of health care.

And there's a debate in Washington, DC, over this. It's going to be manifested here shortly by whether or not we ought to expand what's called SCHIP. SCHIP is a program designed to help poor children get insurance. I'm for it. It came in when I was the Governor of Texas. I supported that. But now there are plans to expand SCHIP to include families—some proposals are families making up to $80,000 a year. In other words, the program is going beyond the initial intent of helping poor children. It's now aiming at encouraging more people to get on government health care. That's what that is. It's a way to encourage people to transfer from the private sector to government health care plans.

My position is, we ought to help the poor, and we do through Medicaid. My position is, we ought to have a modern medical system for the seniors, and we do through Medicare. But I strongly object to the government providing incentives for people to leave private medicine, private health care to the public sector. And I think it's wrong, and I think it's a mistake. And therefore, I'll resist Congress's attempt to federalize medicine.

I mean, think of it this way: They're going to increase the number of folks eligible through SCHIP. Some want to lower the age for Medicare. And then all of a sudden, you begin to see a—I wouldn't call it a plot, just a strategy—[*laughter*]—to get more people to be a part of a federalization of health care. In my judgment, that would be—it would lead to not better medicine but worse medicine. It would lead to not more innovation but less innovation.

And so—but you got to be for something in Washington. You can't be against the federalization; you've got to be for a plan that enhances the relationship between doctor and patient, and that's what I'm for. Here's what I believe in: One, I believe in health savings accounts as an alternative to the federalization of medicine. It gives people the opportunity to save, tax-free, for routine medical costs and, at the same time, have a catastrophic health care plan to back them up.

I like the idea of people making decisions that are—that will, one, enhance their health and, two, save money. The doc told me that—we were looking at one of these brilliant heart guys working for him. You're not going to believe the technology in this hospital, by the way. If you're a Cleveland resident, you ought to be proud of this hospital. It's unbelievable.

He said something pretty wise, though. He said, "You can have all the technology that man can conceivably create, but if you continue to smoke, we're going backwards. If you're not exercising, if you're not taking care of the body yourself, all the technology isn't going to save your life." In other words, there is a certain responsibility that we have as citizens to take care of ourselves. And a health savings account actually provides a financial incentive for you to do that.

I believe in plans that enable small businesses to congregate across jurisdictional lines so they can afford insurance, afford spreading risk just the way big corporations can do. In other words, one way to control costs is to enable small businesses, many of which are having trouble affording insurance, to pool risk.

I'm a strong believer in medical liability reform. We've got a legal system which is driving up the costs of medicine because docs are practicing defensive medicine, and driving good doctors out of practice. And it makes no sense to have a legal system that punishes good medicine. And therefore, I strongly believe that the Congress ought to pass Federal medical liability insurance for our doctors and our providers.

I believe in information technology. The first time I came to Cleveland Clinic, we were talking about how to modernize our hospital systems and our doctors' offices into the 21st century. Perhaps the best way to describe the problem is, we've got too many doctors still writing out prescriptions by hand. Most of them can't write to begin with. [*Laughter*] And then they pass the file from one person to the next. That's inefficient in this new era. I mean, technology is changing the way we live; it ought to be changing the way medicine operates. And it is at Cleveland Clinic. I envision the day, one day, when all of us will have our own medical electronic record that will be safe from snoopers. In other words, it will be private but will make health care more efficient.

Cleveland Clinic did something interesting. I went to four different stations, and after every station, they gave me an outcomes book. In other words, "We're willing to be measured," says the good doc. There ought to be transparency in medicine. How many of you have ever actually tried to price a medical service? Probably not many. How many of you have ever said, "Gosh, I wonder whether this health care quality is better than the neighbors." I doubt any of you have—many of you have done that. Why? Because the system is not geared toward that. Somebody else pays your bills. If you really think about it, and you're working, say, for a company in America, and they provide a health care plan for you, there's a third-party payer. Well, if somebody else pays the bills, why do you care what the cost is at the time of purchase?

In other words, the whole plan has got to be to bring more accountability into health care, to make the consumer more responsible for making proper and rational decisions. That's what accountability does. And I applaud you for that, Doc. That's what transparency in pricing means. In other words, you would be able to shop for price.

But the system, by the way, the tax system does not enable the individual to be incented to buy insurance in the private sector. If you work for a company and you get insurance, you get a good tax benefit. If you're an individual and buy insurance, you don't get the same tax benefit. That doesn't make any sense. The Tax Code needs to be reformed. The Tax Code ought to treat everybody equally when it comes to health care. And therefore, one proposal, one way to deal with that is something I talked to the Congress about, and said, if you're a married person and you're working, you ought to get a $15,000 deduction, just like a mortgage deduction, from your income whether you're working for corporate America or you're working on your own, whether you're working for a small-business owner or you're looking for a job.

And that way, you begin to make sure the Tax Code is a level playing field. And that

way, an individual market begins to grow because you have got an incentive at that point in time to go out and purchase health care. As a matter of fact, you won't get your deduction unless you purchase health care if you're in the individual market.

The whole point I'm trying to make is, there's an alternative to the federalization of health care. It doesn't make a nice, neat sound bite. It's not something that's easy to sell—what do you care about making sure you expand SCHIP, which sounds nice and cozy. But nevertheless, it is an alternative that will work, and it is working right here in America today.

The technological changes in the hospital across the street have been amazing. The quality of care has been fantastic. There's just more we can do to make sure we continue to be the leader, without wrecking the health care system.

Energy—in order to keep this economy strong—and we do have a strong economy—not only have we added 8.2 million new jobs since August of 2003; interest is low; inflation is down. I mean, this thing is buzzing. There are some parts of the country that are hurting. The manufacturing sector up here isn't doing as well as other parts of the country. However, I would remind you that the unemployment rate in Ohio is 5.8 percent. Is that perfect? No. Is it better than it has been? You bet it is.

But the—one of the issues to make sure that we continue to grow strong in the years to come is energy. I mean, we're just too dependent on oil. I know that sounds hard for a Texas guy to say. [*Laughter*] You're probably wondering whether I mean it. [*Laughter*] I do. It's a national security issue, to be dependent on oil from parts of the world where some of the folks don't like us. It's an issue that's got to be dealt with—now.

There's an economic security issue when it comes to being dependent on oil. When the demand for crude oil goes up in a place like China because of economic growth, it causes the international price of oil to go up, which affects the gasoline price here in Cleveland, Ohio. That's the way it works. High crude oil prices yield to higher gasoline prices. And therefore, there's an economic issue for being dependent on oil.

And there's an environmental cost for being dependent on oil. When we're burning carbon, it creates greenhouse gases, which is an issue that we need to deal with. So we have a fantastic opportunity to do something different for the sake of our economy, for the sake of our national security, and for the sake of the environment.

Today I went to a fascinating, little company here that is building hydrogen fuel cells. Hydrogen is the input; water is the output; and in the meantime, your car is going. Hydrogen fuel cells are coming. And there's a role for the Federal Government to—spending your money to promote new technologies to enable us to become less dependent on oil and better stewards of the environment.

Imagine one day being able to drive your car with hydrogen as its power source and water driblets as the output of your engine. And that day is coming. Now, it's down the road a little bit, but nevertheless, it is a part of a comprehensive plan to make sure we become less dependent on oil. In the meantime, when it comes to powering your cars, I want to tell you, I'm a big believer in having our farmers grow a product that will enable us to drive our cars. I think it makes sense to spend your money to invest in new technologies or to research new technologies, so that when a fellow grows switch grass, for example, that grass can be processed into ethanol, which can power your automobile.

Now, I don't know if you know this or not; we're up to about 7 billion gallons of ethanol being produced and used in America. That's up from 2 billion 3 or 4 years ago. That's a good deal, if you're interested about energy independence, because that energy is coming from corn growers here in America. The problem is, we're growing a lot of corn for ethanol, which means the price of corn is going up for the pig farmer. So we've got to relieve the pressure on the pig farmer—[*laughter*]—well, not all—everybody—but pig farmer is paying—use a lot of corn. And therefore, we're spending money on technologies. And I believe more and more people are going to be using ethanol to power their automobiles.

It's happening in the Midwest a lot now. Cellulosic ethanol breakthroughs will mean

that we're going to be having ethanol produced from wood chips or switch grasses, which means the market will spread across the United States, which will make us less dependent on oil. And by the way, the exhausts from ethanol are a lot cleaner than the exhaust from hydrocarbon-based fuels.

We need to be promoting nuclear power. If you're really interested in the environment, like a lot of people are, then we ought to be promoting a renewable source of energy that emits no greenhouse gases. And one of the places where your government is spending money and is part of this comprehensive plan to change our energy mix is to figure out a better way to deal with the waste, nuclear waste. And I'm a big believer in reprocessing and fast-burner reactors, which is fancy words for, we can burn down the fuel—reuse it, burn it down to less volume and less toxicity.

We've got 250 years of coal, at least, in America. If we're interested in becoming less dependent on foreign sources of energy, we ought to be using energy here at home in a wise way. But coal can be dirty, and therefore, we're spending a lot of your money on developing clean coal technologies.

And my only point to you is, is that one of the reasons I've come to Cleveland is to herald some of the new technologies. As a matter of fact, a fellow came up to me at this place, and he said, "Now, you're a wind person." I said, "Well, yes, you know, I—a lot of hot air here." [*Laughter*] And he said, "We got a new industry evolving here: windmills." That's fine. I support that. I think it makes a lot of sense. It makes us less dependent on foreign sources of oil. And that's an—important for making sure this economy continues to grow.

So my stop here has been really aimed at heralding technology. You got to be optimistic about America's future because of some of the great technologies that are taking place. And two of the areas where technology is really going to change America for a long time coming is in the energy field and in the medical field.

I want to talk about this war we're in. First of all, I regret I have to tell you we're in war. I never wanted to be a war President. I—now that I am one, I'm going to do the best I can to protect America.

My mind changed on September the 11th, 2001. It changed because I realized the biggest responsibility government has is to protect the American people from further attack and that we must confront dangers before they come to hurt us again. That's one of the really valuable lessons of September the 11th, is to recognize that oceans can't protect us from an enemy that is ideologically driven and who will use murder as a tool to achieve their political objectives.

Some in America don't believe we're at war, and that's their right. I know we are and, therefore, will spend my time as the President doing the best I can to educate people about the perils of the world in which we live and that we have an active strategy in dealing with it.

First, the enemy—these folks aren't isolated folks, you know; they just kind of randomly show up. They have an objective. They believe as strongly in their ideology as I believe in ours. They believe that they have a obligation to spread a point of view that says, for example, if you don't worship the way we tell you to worship, there will be a consequence; just like I believe we have an obligation to defend a point of view that says, what matters is the right for you to choose your religion, and you're free to do so in the United States of America.

They believe that they can use—they have no value for human life, see. That's what distinguishes them from us in another way. They will kill a Muslim, a child, or a woman in a moment's notice to achieve a political objective. They are dangerous people that need to be confronted.

And that's why, since September the 11th, our policy has been to find them and defeat them overseas so we don't have to face them here at home again. Now, that is a strong—a short-term strategy because the long-term strategy has got to be one that marginalizes these extremists and radicals by promoting an alternative ideology—I like to say, an ideology based on light, an ideology that promotes hope, an ideology when given a chance has worked every time to lift people's spirits. And that's the ideology based upon liberty,

the chance for people to live in a free and open society.

And it's hard work. And this war is on a multiple of fronts. One front is Afghanistan. And the front that is consuming the American people right now is Iraq. And I fully understand how tough it is on our psyche. I fully understand that when you watch the violence on TV every night, people are saying, is it worth it? Can we accomplish an objective? Well, first, I want to tell you, yes, we can accomplish and win this fight in Iraq. And secondly, I want to tell you, we must for the sake of our children and our grandchildren.

You know, I was very optimistic at the end of '05 when 12 million Iraqis went to the polls. I know it seems like a decade ago. It wasn't all that long ago that, when given a chance, 12 million people voted. I wasn't surprised, but I was pleased; let me put it to you that way. I wasn't surprised because one of the principles on which I make decisions is that I believe in the universality of freedom. I believe that freedom belongs to every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth. As a matter of fact, to take it a step further, I believe it is a gift from an Almighty to every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth. And therefore, I wasn't surprised when people, when given the chance, said, I want to be free. I was pleased that 12 million defied the car bombers and killers to vote.

Our policy at that point in time was to get our force posture in such a position—is that we would train the Iraqis so they would take the fight to those who would stop the advance of democracy, and that we'd be in a position to keep the territorial integrity in place and chase down the extremists. That was our policy. We didn't get there in 2006 because a thinking enemy—in this case, we believe Al Qaida, the same people that attacked us in America—incited serious sectarian violence by blowing up a holy religious site of the Shi'a. And then there was this wave of reprisal.

And I had a decision to make. Some of Steve's colleagues—good, decent, patriotic people—believed the best thing for the United States to do at that point in time was to step back and to kind of let the violence burn out in the capital of Iraq. I thought long and hard about that. I was deeply concerned that violence in the capital would spill out into the countryside. I was deeply concerned that one of the objectives of Al Qaida—and by the way, Al Qaida is doing most of the spectacular bombings, trying to incite sectarian violence. The same people that attacked us on September the 11th is the crowd that is now bombing people, killing innocent men, women, and children, many of whom are Muslims, trying to stop the advance of a system based upon liberty.

And I was concerned that the chaos would more enable them to—more likely enable them to achieve their stated objective, which is to drive us out of Iraq so they could have a safe haven from which to launch their ideological campaign and launch attacks against America. That's what they have said. The killers who came to America have said, with clarity, "We want you out of Iraq so we can have a safe haven from which to attack again."

I think it's important for the Commander in Chief to listen carefully to what the enemy says. They thrive on chaos. They like the turmoil. It enables them to more likely achieve their objectives. What they can't stand is the advance of a alternative ideology that will end up marginalizing them.

So I looked at consequences of stepping back—the consequences not only for Iraq but the consequences for an important neighborhood, for the security of the United States of America. What would the Iranians think about America if we stepped back in the face of this extremist challenge? What would other extremists think? What would Al Qaida be able to do? They'd be able to recruit better and raise more money from which to launch their objectives. Failure in Iraq would have serious consequences for the security of your children and your grandchildren.

And so I made the decision, rather than pulling out of the capital, to send more troops in the capital, all aimed at providing security, so that a alternative system could grow. I listened to the commanders that would be running the operation—in this case, the main man is a man named General David Petraeus, a smart, capable man who gives me his candid advice. His advice: "Mr. President,

is—we must change the mission to provide security for the people in the capital city of Iraq as well as in Anbar Province in order for the progress that the 12 million people who voted can be made." That's why we've done what we've done.

And we just started. He got all the troops there a couple of weeks ago. He asked for 20-something thousand troops, and I said, if that's what you need, Commander, that's what you got. And they just showed up. And they're now beginning operations in full.

And in Washington, you got people saying, stop. And here's my attitude about this—and I understand there's the debate, and there ought to be a debate in our democracy, and I welcome it. I welcome a good, honest debate about the consequences of failure, the consequences of success in this war. But I believe that it's in this Nation's interests to give the commander a chance to fully implement his operations. And I believe Congress ought to wait for General Petraeus to come back and give his assessment of the strategy that he's putting in place before they make any decisions. That's what the American people expect. They expect for military people to come back and tell us how the military operations are going.

And that's the way I'm going to play it as the Commander in Chief. I'll be glad to discuss different options. I mean, the truth of the matter is, I felt like we could be in a different position at the end of 2005. I believe we can be in a different position in awhile, and that would be to have enough troops there to guard the territorial integrity of that country, enough troops there to make sure that Al Qaida doesn't gain safe haven from which to be able to launch further attacks against the United States of America, enough troops to be embedded and to help train the Iraqis to do their job.

But we couldn't get there without additional troops. And now I call upon the United States Congress to give General David Petraeus a chance to come back and tell us whether his strategy is working. And then we can work together on a way forward.

In the meantime, the Iraqis have got to do more work. This coming week, I'll be presenting a—to the Congress a list of some of the accomplishments and some of the shortfalls of their political process. They've asked us to report on 18 different benchmarks. That's what the Congress said in this last supplemental spending bill. They said, come back here in mid-July and give us an interim report as to whether or not any progress is being made in Iraq. And that's what we'll be doing. So at the end of this week, you'll see a progress report on what's been happening in Iraq—and then in September, a final report on the benchmarks that I accepted and that Congress passed.

And so that's the challenge facing the country. And it's a necessary—in my judgment, it's necessary work. I wouldn't ask a mother or a dad—I wouldn't put their son in harm's way if I didn't believe this was necessary for the security of the United States and peace of the world. And I strongly believe it. And I strongly believe we will prevail. And I strongly believe that democracy will trump totalitarianism every time. That's what I believe. And those are the belief systems on which I'm making decisions that I believe will yield the peace.

You know, it's really interesting; in my position, I obviously have a unique view of things at times. And one of the most interesting views that I've been able to—of history that I've been able to really focus on is our relationship with Japan. I've told this story a lot because I find it to be very ironic.

When my dad was a young guy, right out of high school, he joined the United States Navy, became a Navy torpedo bomber pilot and fought the Japanese. They were the sworn enemy of the United States of America. And he, like a lot of other young people, gave it their all. And a lot of people died on both sides of the war. As a matter of fact, it was—the Japanese, as you rightly know, was the last major attack on the United States prior to September the 11th, 2001. Some 60 years later, I'm at the table talking about the peace with the Japanese Prime Minister, Prime Minister Koizumi.

I find that to be an inspiring story and a hopeful story. It's a story about the ability of liberty to transform enemies into allies. It's a story about the ability for those who fought to become partners in peace. Prime Minister Koizumi and now Prime Minister

Abe are close friends of mine in the international arena. We talk about the spread of democracy in the troubled part of the world because we both have seen the effects of democracy in our own relationship.

I've got great faith in the power of liberty to transform the world for the sake of peace. And the fundamental question facing our country is, will we keep that faith?

Thanks for letting me come and visit with you. And now I'll be glad to answer some questions.

Main guy, first question. Sure, okay. [*Laughter*]

National Aeronautics and Space Administration/Appropriations

Q. Well, this may seem like it was rigged, Mr. President——

The President. Okay.

Q. ——but there are people——

The President. There have been a few rigged questions in my day. [*Laughter*] I'm not telling you which way they were rigged though. [*Laughter*]

Q. Mr. President, like this world-class health care institution, NASA Glenn is one of the crown jewels, along with the talented people there, in our new economy crown. As you know, we recently won the crew exploration vehicle contract. We're very happy about that. Given all the competing demands for resources in Washington, what kind of funding do you see for NASA and its mission going forward?

The President. Yes. That's a awkward question to ask a Texan. [*Laughter*] I think that NASA needed to become relevant in order to be—to justify the spending of your money, and therefore, I helped changed the mission from one of orbiting in a space shuttle—in a space station to one of becoming a different kind of group of explorers. And therefore, we set a new mission, which is to go to the Moon and set up a launching station there from which to further explore space.

And the reason I did that is, I do want to make sure the American people stay involved with—or understand the relevance of this exploration. I'm a big—I support exploration, whether it be the exploration of new medicine—through, like, NIH grants—the exploration of space through NASA. I can't give you the exact level of funding.

I would argue with you that we got a lot of money in Washington—not argue, I'll just tell you, we got a lot of money in Washington. [*Laughter*] And we need to make sure we set priorities with that money. One of the problems we have in Washington is that unlike the books I saw at the hospital—of which, you're on the board—that said "results," we're not very good about measuring results when we spend your money. A lot of time, the program sound nice; a lot of time, the results don't match the intentions.

So one of the things I've tried to do through the OMB is to be results-oriented, and when programs don't meet results, we try to eliminate them. And that's hard to do. Isn't it, Steven? Yes. But, no—I believe in exploration, space exploration. And we've changed the mission to make it relevant. Thanks.

Yes, sir.

Relations With the Muslim World/U.S. Foreign Policy and Diplomacy/War on Terror

Q. Mr. President, I'm originally from Pakistan.

The President. Pakistan, good.

Q. When I travel there, my friends over here say that I'm crazy to go back——

The President. Yes.

Q. And when I'm there, the people over there say I'm crazy to go back. [*Laughter*]

The President. You're, like, in between a rock and a hard place, brother. I mean——

Q. That's right, that's right. My question for you is, what are we doing with public diplomacy to change the minds and the hearts of a billion and a half Muslims around the world?

The President. Yes. I appreciate that; great question. First, let me say that I'm confident your answer is, I love living in America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, the country where you can come and ask the President a question and a country where—are you Muslim?

Q. Yes.

The President. ——where you can worship your religion freely. It's a great country

where you're able to do that. Go ahead and sit down. Have you made a living?

Q. Yes, I do——

The President. ——a country where can come and make a living regardless of your background. [*Laughter*] Seriously. It's a great thing about America. If you dream and work, you can achieve. And we need to keep it that way.

His question is a good question. A lot of people in the Muslim world believe that the United States is at war with Islam, that the response to the attack on our country was one where we attacked somebody based upon their religion. And I, for one, obviously need to battle that image because we're not facing religious people; we're facing people whose hearts are filled with hate, who have subverted a great religion.

Most Muslims reject the kind of violence perpetuated on innocent people by Al Qaida. I happen to believe—I just don't—believe they're religious people who murder the innocent to achieve political objectives.

And so step one is to make it clear that we reject radical and extremism and murderers, not reject a great religion. Step two is to encourage people like you to go to Pakistan. You're more credible than I am amongst your pals there. You can say, "You're not going to believe America. You're not going to believe the country where people from all different backgrounds, all walks of life, can live in freedom."

And I don't exaggerate to you because the best diplomacy we have is when citizens travel overseas and/or people come here to America. One of the problems we faced when it came to diplomacy, public diplomacy, right after 9/11 is, we shut her down. You couldn't get in this country, particularly, perhaps if you were from Pakistan. I mean, this country said, "Whoa, we got a new world," and therefore, it was, stop a lot of student visas. You might remember, some of the kids that flew those airplanes were on—here as students. And we did what most Americans expected us to do—made sure we inventoried where we were so we could best protect the American people.

And we've learned a lot since then. So I'm pleased to report to you that, working with Condi—and it's her main responsibility—is that we've got now more students coming to America from other countries, but through a much better screening process. I can't think of a better way to help change people's attitudes about America than having them come here and see for themselves.

One of the big issues we have, of course, is the public airways. There's a lot of television stations in the Middle East who spread some of this propaganda. It's easy to kick America around. And Karen Hughes is now the head of public diplomacy in the State Department, and we spend a lot of time trying to figure out how to counter the false and negative message about America with the true story of our country.

And so we're on a multiple of fronts—visits, exchanges, better messaging. We've got to be careful about our language here, and I am. As a matter of fact, interestingly enough, right after September the 11th, one of the first places I went was to a mosque—or, actually, an Islamic center there in Washington, DC. I went back to the same center 50 years later—50 years after Eisenhower, Ike, dedicated it, to send a message about America.

But we've got a lot of work to do on that front. It's a great question. Pakistan, by the way, is a—Musharraf is a strong ally in the war against these extremists. I like him, and I appreciate him. I'm, of course, constantly working with him to make sure that democracy continues to advance in Pakistan. But he's been a valuable ally in rejecting extremists. And that's important, to cultivate those allies.

See, again I repeat to you—and this is hard for some Americans to understand—we are at the beginning stages of a major ideological struggle that will affect the security of the United States. And it's a struggle between moderation and extremists. It's a struggle between radicals who kill and rational people who want to live in peace.

Most Muslim mothers want their children to grow up in peace; they're just like mothers in the United States. There's some universal characteristics of people. And the fundamental question facing us as a country is, will

we have wise policies that confront these extremists? And the first step toward wise policy is recognizing they exist and we're at war with them.

And it's—look, I spend a lot of time thinking about this issue. That's what you pay me to do. And I'm briefed every day about threats on the homeland. And you should be grateful to—the fact that there are a lot of good, good, honorable people, either at home or overseas, doing everything in their power to protect you.

I wish I could report that this thing, this threat, this struggle, is going to end shortly; it's not. That doesn't mean we have to have kinetic action all the time. But it does mean America must not lose faith in our values and lose sight of our purpose. And that's going to be the challenge facing this country.

I'm worried about isolationism. I'm worried about people saying, it's not worth it anymore; it's too hard; let it happen over there; it's not going to affect us. It will affect us. And frankly, I'm worried about protectionism, where people say, it's too hard to trade; let's just wall ourselves off from the rest of the world.

Anyway, it's a long answer to a good question.

Yes, ma'am.

Immigration Reform

Q. Mr. President, I know immigration has been a big problem in the U.S. And what is your next step with the immigration bill?

The President. Yes, thanks. [*Laughter*] I view it as—no, it's a great question. No, I appreciate that. Actually, I view it as a great opportunity. And thank you very much for that question. As you know, I've had a difference of opinion with people in both political parties on this issue. I felt like now is the time to address the immigration issue and not just pass it on and hope it gets better.

I believe in rule of law, and therefore, I know that the Federal Government needs to enforce law. One law is—one part of the law is, don't sneak into our country. And therefore, we have been aggressive at border security, which is making sure we modernize our border. You've probably never been down there; I grew up down there. It's a big border. And it's really long, and in parts of it, between Arizona and Mexico, you don't know where the border is. There's no—it's like desert.

Secondly, there is a powerful force in the world, and it's called parenthood. And when you're poor and you got mouths to feed and you got an opportunity to put some money on the table—food on the table, you're going to come if you can see that opportunity. And you'll do everything you can to get here to put food on the table. I used to say, family values don't stop at the Rio Grande River.

And so you shouldn't be surprised that a whole industry has sprung up where people get stuck in the back of an 18-wheeler or—and come to work. That troubles a lot of Americans; I understand. What I'm telling you is, it's hard to enforce this border, but we're doing a better job of doing it.

I happen to believe the best way to really enforce the border, however, is to recognize that people are coming to do work Americans aren't doing, and therefore, there ought to be a way for people to do so in a rational way. That's why I supported what's called a temporary-worker plan that said, you can come and do a job an American is not doing, on a temporary basis, so you don't have to sneak across the border. In other words, one way to take pressure off the border is to have a way for people to come here on a temporary basis legally.

Now, Steve was telling me—I was telling Steve—we're doing a good job, by the way. If you notice in the papers today, the arrests are down. In other words, fewer people are coming. Last year, by the way, we arrested and sent back across over a million people. In other words, there's a lot of action down there. It may not look like it or sound like it on your radios or TVs, but there's a lot of work going on.

There's a lot of nursery people up here in this part of the world, I understand. But one of these days, these nursery people are going to say, "We can't continue to grow our business because we can't find the workers." Americans are—I don't know what the proper terminology is for nursery worker—pruning, that's a—we'll try pruning—[*laughter*]—planting, planting—starts with a "P." [*Laughter*] The question is, can they find enough workers? I was talking to a fellow today at

lunch. He said, "We need more high-skilled workers here in Cleveland, H–1B visas."

The system isn't working, is what I'm telling you. It's a great question, by the way. The system—and I'm glad you asked it—the system isn't working. And I felt it needed to be fixed and went to Congress—and, by the way, the other question is, what do you do with the 12 million people already here? There's 12 million people, they estimate, here illegally. Some of them have been here a long time. Some of them been good citizens. You may even know some of them. They've raised kids. Some of the kids were born here, went to college—good, productive citizens in America. What do you do with them? You kick them out? I mean, I didn't think that was practical. As a matter of fact, I know it's not practical. Or you make them a citizen off the bat? No, you don't do that. That's called amnesty. That says, okay, fine, you broke the law; there's—you get rewarded. You can't have that kind of system.

And so I supported a system that said, you pay a fine if you've been here that long; you show you're not a criminal; you show you paid your taxes; you go back home to touch base, to apply for the right to get in line—not ahead of somebody who has been trying to get here legally, but in line.

Anyway, it didn't work. And we'll have to see whether or not the forces that recognize we've got to do something for the sake of the economy and sake of the border continue to mount because there wasn't the political will in Washington to get anything done on a comprehensive basis. And that's what happens sometimes in politics.

One of the things I try to remind people in Congress is this—I've told this story a lot as well. You get stuck on a story when you're President; you generally stay on it. [*Laughter*] Anyway, I was at the Coast Guard Academy, giving a graduation speech there. And the number-one guy in the class, his grandfather was a migrant worker from Mexico. And he talked with such unbelievable pride about a country where a fellow can come to do jobs Americans weren't doing, to work, and here his grandson is, speaking in front of the President, talking about a bright future.

We should never lose confidence in the ability for this great country to assimilate people into our culture. I think it's healthy that people come to America with a dream. I think it's healthy that people say, "Just give me a chance, and I'll work my heart out so a next generation can succeed."

And so in my line of work, ma'am, you just lay out what you think is right. I'm not the kind of fellow to tell you—I don't run focus groups and polls to tell me what I think is right. I try to lead—[*applause*]—I felt it was the right thing to do. It didn't work, but I'm glad I tried because when it's all said and done, I'll be able to look in the mirror and say, you came, and you did what you thought was the right thing for the country.

Yes.

Visa Wavier Program

Q. Mr. President, I have an organization that has supported the captive nations of the world for 48 years. And our members are sincerely interested in this Visa Waiver Program——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——for friendly countries so people could visit their relatives and friends on a shorter basis, like 30 days, 60 days. Are you in favor of this?

The President. Great question. Are you from the Baltics? You are?

Q. Sort of. I'm of Polish decent.

The President. Polish decent. Well, that's right. Here's the thing she's talking about: In the Soviet era, we had a different visa policy with Soviet countries than we did with, say, Western European countries. And the danger—not the danger—the issue was—I take it back, not danger—issue—[*laughter*]—was that people would come and overstay their visas. In other words, people would say, I'm coming to travel and visit, but, in fact, they were coming to stay. And therefore, there was an accountability system in place that's been around for a long time.

Fast-forward to today. Polish troops helped us liberate Iraq, and yet the citizens that supported a Government that helped us liberate Iraq aren't treated the same as citizens from other allies.

And so to answer your question, yes, I am for changing the visa waiver policy for Poland

and countries like Poland. And every time I go—as you know, I was in Poland—you may not know—I was in Poland the last trip and the Czech Republic and Bulgaria and Albania. And they wanted to know, question one is, when are you going to treat us like everybody else in the European Union? And my answer was, we're working on a comprehensive immigration bill—[*laughter*]—to address a lot of issues. And that was one of the issues we were trying to address.

In the name of fairness, Condi and I are working on—with Congress on a new Visa Waiver Program. Great question.

Yes, sir. Go ahead and yell it out.

War on Terror/Spread of Democracy

Q. Mr. President, first of all, as a fairly conservative talk show host, I'd like you to please tell Congress to leave the fairness doctrine in the ground where it is.

The President. Thank you—yes. [*Laughter*]

Q. Second of all, going back to Iraq, sir, you mentioned Muslim mothers want their children to grow up in peace.

The President. Right.

Q. The children of extremists, however, are being trained right now.

The President. Correct.

Q. We've seen the videos. We have seen the indoctrination—schoolchildren being indoctrinated to hate Americans and to hate Jews.

The President. Correct.

Q. The next generations of terrorists are already being bred. Isn't is true that regardless of how long it takes to win in Iraq or Afghanistan, the war on terror will never, ever truly be ended?

The President. I think the strategy—first of all, I've read a lot of history, and I'm certainly no history expert, but I wonder what the rhetoric would have been like at the beginning of the cold war. Is it possible people might have speculated—and again, I can't tell you if this is—I'm just kind of speculating now—is it possible people speculated that, after the indoctrination of so many children about the wisdom of Marx, that this cold war would ever end?

After Korea, I suspect no one would have predicted what I'm going to tell you now, that after years and years of bloodshed in the Far East, our relations in the Far East are strong, not only with Japan, the former enemy, South Korea, ally, but an ally, by the way, that went through a troublesome march to democracy. They're now a democracy, but you might remember that during the period of that change, they went through a pretty strong-handed military government.

We got good relations with China. I don't think in the early fifties anybody would have predicted that the Chinese marketplace would more likely look like what Adam Smith envisioned rather than Karl Marx, although the political system lags, admittedly. But nevertheless, there's a lot of—my only point to you is, I don't think people could have seen what life was like.

And so, yes, it's going to be a struggle—you're right—for a lot of reasons. But is it impossible to—achieve the marginalization of those who are able to radicalize people, and I think it is. I think it is. And not only I think it is; I think it's necessary.

I believe that forms of government matter. I believe that frustration and hopelessness, because people don't have a sense of future, makes it easier for radical movements and radicals to be able to recruit. That's what I believe. And therefore, that's why I'm such a strong believer in advocating the march of democracy in the Middle East.

And look, I fully understand that, and this is a very interesting ideological debate—people call me—he's a hopeless idealist, they say. But I also think it's realistic to understand, unless we change the conditions of how people live, that it's going to be hard to marginalize those who would prey upon the young. You notice, none of these guys that have given the orders are actually the suicide bombers. That's why they're still giving the orders. [*Laughter*] But they're able to prey upon young people. And I think a lot of it has to do with education. And no question, we're working with governments such as Musharraf's Government to address the madrassas. Education matters a lot, whether it be in helping to eradicate poverty or helping to deal with radicalism.

But if you living in a society where you have no hope, then you're going to look for another form of false hope. So I happen to

think the idea of encouraging people to adopt forms of government that give people hope is in our national interest.

Now, this is a different foreign policy than what we used to espouse here. It used to be, in many ways, what mattered was calm, apparent calm. What mattered most was stability. Let's have a foreign policy that promotes stability to make sure we get plenty of cheap energy as well.

After September the 11th, I came to the conclusion that such a foreign policy promoted instability because while things might look calm on the surface, beneath the surface broiled frustration and doubt and hopelessness. And so the policy that I advocate is one that promotes democracy as an alternative in this ideological struggle, all aiming to marginalize the recruiters and give hope to the recruitees. And do I believe it can work? I do. That's why I told you the Japanese story.

History has been—history—liberty prevails every time if we stay with it, if you think about history. Think about Europe. There were two major wars on the continent of Europe, and today, Europe is whole, free, and at peace. Why? Because forms of government matter. And it's in our interest—and I've said this once, and I'll say it again: It's in our interest not to lose faith in certain fundamental values.

And it's hard work, particularly hard work given the fact that we live in this world in which news and imagery travels instantly. The enemy knows that. The interesting thing, they know a lot about us in America. They know we're kind-hearted, decent people who value human life. And they understand that Americans will recoil from the violence on our TV screens. That's what they know. And I know—or I strongly believe that if we recoil and leave the region with precipitous withdrawals or withdrawals not based upon conditions on the ground, it's going to get worse, not better. And my attitude is, now is the time to do the hard work so your children can more likely grow up in peace.

That's what I believe, sir. And that's why I'm making my decisions.

Yes. A couple of more, then you're paying me a lot of money, and I've got to go back to work. [*Laughter*]

Native American Rights

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Yes, sir.

Q. ——Republican Presidents, going back to the Nixon administration, have strongly favored Indian self-determination.

The President. India?

Q. American Indian self-determination and first-nations communities. And it seems like the conservative Court, however, has been consistently eroding that self-determination. What has your administration—what position does your administration take with respect to sovereignty and Native American rights?

The President. Very interesting question. I believe in the sovereignty of the Indian nations. And far be it for me to second-guess Court decisions. On the other hand, I will continue to put judges who strictly interpret the Constitution and not legislate from the bench. But I do support the notion of sovereignty. It's really interesting.

Yes, sir. You're next, after him.

Disaster Preparedness and Response/ Pandemic Flu

Q. Sorry about that. Mr. President——

The President. Doc.

Q. ——I'm a pediatrician at Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital across the street—[*inaudible*]—Cleveland.

The President. Thank you, sir. Nutritionist?

Q. Pediatrician, yes, sir.

The President. Pediatricianist.

Q. Yes, sir. Returning to a domestic item very quickly——

The President. Must feel good to be a healer.

Q. It is, sir. Thank you. Good to serve. One of the things that we're passionate about in pediatrics now, both at Rainbow and across the Nation, is disaster preparedness and disaster response, specifically the needs of children. Could you comment, Mr. President, on how well-prepared we are as a nation for, God forbid, the next Katrina or pandemic flu or some such calamity?

The President. We learned a lot of lessons from Katrina. Lesson one is, is that we've got to make sure local governments are better prepared to respond. Lesson two is that

there's seamless decisionmaking between the State and local government. And lesson three is, is that if need be, the Federal Government needs to move troops in there, regardless of what the local people want.

We are better prepared and drill it a lot. Great question. The more difficult question is his question on pandemic flu. I asked Mike Leavitt, who is the head of HHS, and Chertoff to—he's the Homeland guy—to chair—Department of Homeland Security—[*laughter*]—Secretary of Homeland Security. [*Laughter*] In Crawford, we kind of shortcut it. [*Laughter*] Anyway, look, nobody has accused me of being Shakespeare, you know? [*Laughter*] Anyway—I just hope you can figure out what I'm saying—[*laughter*]—is we spend a lot of time on pandemic flu. One way you anticipate a crisis is, you kind of wargame it.

The first—I'm going to try to see if I can remember as much to make it sound like I'm smart on the subject. But I actually spend a lot of time on it because I am concerned that if the pandemic flu, the H5N1 virus were to mutate to the point where it becomes transmittable from bird to human to human, we'll have a significant international problem on our hands. So step one is to work with countries where the virus is more likely to show up and mutate on transparent information systems.

When I went to Vietnam, one of the things we looked at was the Vietnamese reporting process of the detection of chicken viruses and whether or not that virus was mutating to the point where it could become infectious. And we've done a good job of that. As a matter of fact, at the APEC—which is the countries around the Pacific Rim—meeting, the last two meetings and this next one I'm going to in Australia, I always make it a point for—to talk about the need for all of us to be in a position where we can share information and track the mutation of the virus.

The issue, as you know, is that there is no, like, inoculation that will stop the spread. Yet we're spending a lot of money on trying to develop new vaccines based not upon eggs but on genetics. And Leavitt says we're making some pretty good progress.

Thirdly, just in case it were to hit here in the United States, we have stockpiled a lot of the spray. What's it called—anyway—Tamiflu. It may work, may not work. But just in case it does work, we got a lot of stockpile for you—[*laughter*]—we do, as a way to try to, at least, arrest somewhat the spread of the disease.

But the ultimate effect—and this is what the dangerous thing about this is—is the ultimate public policy decisions are going to be, do we shut down America? Do you say that nobody can come in and out of your city? Or do you shut down all air travel? And so we've war-gamed a lot of options. And Mike has traveled the country—Mike Leavitt—to State and local government to help them think through different procedures that would be necessary to try to halt the spread of this virus if it were to mutate.

For example, how would a local community deal with schools? We happen to believe that the local response would be a better response than the Federal Government trying to one-size-fits-all each community's response. And that, as you know—I mean, there's different responses to different hurricanes that have hit, and so it would be a little uneven. And so we're trying to train as best as we can and war-game it out. It's a very interesting question you got.

I would give us a "A" for recognizing that we need to think about it. And until we get this vaccine—and by the way, we do have it teed up pretty well, where the vaccine makers will be willing to go full production if we can find the proper vaccine to manufacture. We're spending a lot of money on it at NIH—through NIH. And I'd give us good marks for recognizing the issue, good marks for doing something about it, and the only—I can't tell you what marks we'll get in response because, thankfully, we haven't had to respond, but we're watching carefully.

Yes, sir. Good question.

Education/President's Domestic Agenda

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. If you talk to a lot of neighborhood folks here in Cleveland, they say that there's a war on terror brewing in our neighborhoods with an increase in crime over the past few months.

The President. Yes.

Q. What are your thoughts on how we can improve opportunity and decrease crime in urban areas to make Cleveland an international metropolis?

The President. No, thanks. Yes, great question. First of all, there is—crime is rising in some communities—under some crime, like, I think it was 1 percent last year. In other words, no question that—look, I'm an education guy; let me just put it bluntly. I don't see how you can provide a hopeful future for a child if the child can't read, write, or add and subtract. Now, that's pretty elementary. But it doesn't happen enough. And therefore, I strongly support accountability in public schools. I happen to believe that it is a huge advance in kind of providing—promoting opportunity.

See, when I was the Governor of Texas, I was appalled at the number of schools that just shuffled kids through and hoped that they learned something. And then you know what happened? We get about the 9th or 10th grade, and lo and behold, they can't read. And oops, it's a little late. Too bad, just go on through. It's much easier, by the way, to give up on a kid early and just kind of socially promote. And so I insisted, as Governor of Texas and then working with people like Steve LaTourette, to change the way the Federal Government deals with education.

Now, I believe strongly in local control of schools, okay. I believe you ought to chart the paths to excellence here. I believe that the government closest to the people governs best because you're most responsive to the needs of your particular community. That's what I believe. However, I also believe that if the Federal Government spends money, we have the right to ask whether or not certain objectives are being met.

And so inherent in No Child Left Behind is a solid demand by results-oriented people who want to know whether or not an inner-city kid can read at grade level by the third grade. I don't think that's too much to ask, to set a standard and have expectations that must be met in return for Federal money. A matter of fact, I think that is the way to make sure that—I used to call it this way: challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations.

Let's just face it—let me finish here—let's just face it; let's be honest about our ourselves. There is a mindset at times that certain kids are too hard to educate. Maybe the mother or daddy doesn't speak English as the first language or inner-city kids, as if there's no inherent God-given talent that, if properly motivated, can enable that kid to excel.

And so I strongly believe it's in the national interests to say, we expect you to read—unless, of course, you happen to believe they can't. I'm a high expectations person. I believe if you set low expectations, you know what you're going to get? You're going to get low results. I believe every child can learn. That's what I believe. And I believe that governments ought to expect to have good results.

And so inherent in this education proposal, which is now the law—which, frankly, has irritated a lot of people; it just has. That's what happens when you hold people to account—that, I think, it makes sense to say, no excuses; we want you to read. And we want you to read not only at the third grade but at the fourth grade and at the fifth grade and at the sixth grade and at the seventh grade. And we're going to test to make sure you do.

You design the test. If you believe in local control of schools, the test ought to be designed, and they ought to be rigorous. And by the way, if you're a poor inner-city student, and you can't read at grade level, we will use that diagnostic tool to provide you additional money to make sure that you get the help that you need in order to make sure you're not left behind.

And frankly, I don't care if that parent spends that money at the public school or a church or a private tutor. All I want is to make sure that that child gets the extra help he or she needs to make sure that the next time they test on reading or math, they're at grade level. And if a school—no, wait, let me finish. I'm not through yet because you got me started on something I strongly believe in. [*Laughter*]

And if the school won't change nor teach, I believe parents ought to be given different options. We shouldn't have a school system that locks people into persistent failure, if you're interested in changing the dynamics of an inner-city, for example.

You know, we did something in Washington very interesting—that I found interesting, at least. We have now got a scholarship program, opportunity scholarships. See, the Federal Government funds the DC city and—a lot of the DC city and the schools, and so we can do this in Washington. So we have opportunity scholarships that go to poorer parents, where the parent can take that money and send their child to a parochial school or a private school. The line is out the door. It's amazing what happens when you give parents options.

Part of the accountability system, by the way, enables parents to understand reality as well. When I was Governor, I talked to a lot of parents, and they say, "Man, my child's school is great. I'm real happy with the school, Governor; we're doing great." And then all of a sudden, the test scores get posted, and if the school isn't meeting expectations compared to the other schools, the parent might say, well, maybe the school is not doing so good, and they start getting involved.

I—and so step one of your question is, let's get it right early. I believe strongly in after-school programs. I believe that we've got to change the aspirational notions of some of our children that college is a good thing to do and that success is available for people who go to college. I mean that—and community colleges—I'm a big believer in community colleges. I think that's part of having a hopeful tomorrow for inner-city—or not inner-city—to know that college is available. That's why I'm a big, strong supporter of Pell grants as a way to encourage kids to go to college.

I am concerned about a society that has not—a part of our society that hasn't accumulated assets. It's interesting; a lot of us have grown up in a world in which asset accumulation, savings, has been an integral part of our societies. In parts of Cleveland, I suspect, people don't have assets. They haven't had the capacity or the willing—or the ability to save money. That's why I believe that when we reform Social Security, that we ought to give people the option of setting aside some of their own money they've earned in the Social Security system as a savings account that can earn compound interest, just like money that we put in our own savings account. I want people to own assets. One of the big reasons I've pushed homeownership is, I like the idea of encouraging and fostering independence by ownership.

And so—and finally, one way to help inner-city youth—this is a subject I've thought a lot about—is to encourage the involvement of faith-based and community-based programs in the compassionate delivery of love and help. And that's a different idea for a welfare system, see. I am a big believer in the ability of faith-based programs to help change people's lives. I, for one, believe that a faith-based program can help people quit drinking—me, for starters. I believe that there is nothing more powerful than a mentor putting an arm around a child who needs love and says, I love you. Many of the faith-based programs are full of people who are in the program in the first place because they believe in the universal admonition to love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself.

And therefore, one of the initiatives that I have put forth in Washington, that is quite controversial, is that we ought to open up programs—Federal money to faith-based programs, so long as, one, they don't proselytize, and two, so long as they help meet a social objective. Why shouldn't we say that we ought to be spending your taxpayers' money on programs to help inner-city kids regardless of what the delivery system is? Why shouldn't we say, faith-based programs that many times are able to go into neighborhoods that other programs aren't able to go into—why shouldn't we empower them to help people realize in life that there may be a better path than the path one may be tempted to go down?

So there's a comprehensive agenda. My dream is for all of us to feel that the promise of America belongs to them. And it's a great country. It is; it's a fabulous country. I know people are frustrated, and people get concerned. But I would hope we would all keep things in perspective and realize what a fantastic nation we have.

I mean, when you really compare our life here compared to the lives of others around the world, we're blessed. To that end, to whom much is given, much is required. And

that's why we're in the lead when it comes to solving the pandemic of HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa and working to end malaria. These are two achievable objectives. One is to get antiretrovirals into the hands of people who suffer. And American taxpayers have been incredibly generous. And it ought to make you feel good about a country that is willing to say, I see suffering, and I want to help. In other words, we're working on suffering at home, and we ought to work on suffering abroad as well.

I'm asking Congress for $30 billion. It's double the HIV/AIDS initiative that we've got in place. But let me tell you an interesting statistic. When we first got going on the initiative in 2003, I think it was, 50,000 people were getting antiretrovirals in the countries that we were working in. Today, over 1.2 million people's lives have been saved because of the generosity of the American taxpayer.

And now we're on an initiative to end malaria, or cut it at least in half, in affected countries around the world. Should we be doing that as a country? The answer is, absolutely, we should be. And the reason why is, is that we're a blessed nation. And we've become even doubly blessed by helping others be able to deal with disease and realize the blessings of an Almighty. That's what I believe.

Listen, I got to hop. [*Laughter*] Thanks for your time. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:42 p.m. at the InterContinental Hotel Cleveland. In his remarks, he referred to Frederick R. Nance, chairman of the board of directors, and Joseph D. Roman, president and chief executive officer, Greater Cleveland Partnership; Mayor Frank G. Jackson of Cleveland, OH; Delos M. "Toby" Cosgrove, chief executive officer and chairman of the board of governors, the Cleveland Clinic; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan.

Proclamation 8160—Captive Nations Week, 2007

July 10, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Liberty is the path to lasting peace and the unalienable right of every man, woman, and child. During Captive Nations Week, we underscore our commitment to protecting human rights, advancing democracy and freedom, and ending tyranny across the globe.

Expanding freedom is a moral imperative, and today more people are free than ever before. Freedom is reaching around the world, and America is working side-by-side with new democracies in Liberia, Mauritania, Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan. The people of Kuwait held elections in which women were able to vote and run for office for the first time, and the elected parliament is exercising real influence with the government. We continue to stand firmly behind the citizens of Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Iraq as they defend their democratic gains against extremist enemies. Many are making great sacrifices for liberty, and they deserve our steadfast support.

While there is progress in freedom's advance, nations such as Belarus, Burma, Cuba, North Korea, Syria, Iran, Sudan, and Zimbabwe still oppress their citizens. My Administration recently created the Human Rights Defenders Fund to provide grants for the legal defense and medical expenses of democratic dissidents arrested or beaten by repressive governments. In addition, we have nearly doubled funding for democracy projects throughout the world. The American people believe that the flame for freedom burns in every human heart, and that light cannot be extinguished by governments, terrorists, or tyrants. During Captive Nations Week, we remember that human freedom is the key to achieving respect for all human rights.

The Congress, by Joint Resolution approved July 17, 1959 (73 Stat. 212), has authorized and requested the President to issue