Weekly Compilation of

Presidential Documents

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Editor's Note: The President was in Manchester, NH, on October 1, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, October 1, 2004

Remarks in Racine, Wisconsin

September 24, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming out. As you can tell, I've been traveling your good State by bus. Nothing better than taking a bus trip throughout southern Wisconsin. What a fantastic, beautiful part of the world, full of great people. And a great place to end is right here in Racine. Thanks for coming out today.

Listen, the reason I'm traveling around by bus is because I'm asking for the vote. I'm here to ask for your vote, and I'm here to ask for your help. I think it's really important for you to convince your friends and neighbors to go to the polls. We live in a free society, and we have an obligation to vote in a free society. So the first thing I'm doing—I'm going to ask you to do is to register your friends and neighbors. And make sure that as you register your friends and neighbors, to register discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. And then, after you register them to vote, head them to the polls. And when you get them to the polls, tell them, if they want a safer, stronger, and better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm sorry that Laura is not here. I wish she were here. She is a great wife, a wonderful mother, and a great First Lady. And I appreciate my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Look, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hair. [*Laughter*] I picked him for his experience, his judgment, and the fact that he can get the job done for the American people.

Listen, I'm proud of my Secretary of Health and Human Services. You've trained him well. You taught Tommy Thompson a lot. He is a great friend, and he's doing a terrific job on behalf of our country.

I'm proud to be traveling with Congressman Paul Ryan. He is a breath of fresh air. He's a good, honest man who, like me, married well. [*Laughter*] I appreciate Congressman Mark Green being here today too. Both of them represent your State well.

The State treasurer is with us; Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker. I call him Scott W. [*Laughter*] A lot of State and local officials here. Tim Michels, running for the United States Senate is here. I look forward to working with him in the United States Senate.

I appreciate my friend Rick Graber, who is the party chairman of Wisconsin. I appreciate him being here. Mary Buestrin is the national committeewoman.

Listen, what I'm doing is I'm telling you thanks for the grassroots activists. All of the people who have put the signs and get on the telephones and encourage people to register and vote, thank you for what you're doing, and thank you for what you're going to do as you're coming down the stretch. We're going to carry the State of Wisconsin.

I appreciate Charlie Sykes, who emceed this program.

Listen, today on the bus, I had the honor of meeting with Casey Perry and some other State—members of the National Troopers Coalition. These are law enforcement officers who are out there every single day to protect the people of Wisconsin and around the country. I always found, when you're riding down the highway, it's good to have some troopers with you. [*Laughter*] These men were here to inform me that the National Troopers Coalition endorsed my candidacy for President. I am honored to have their endorsement. I'm honored to have it because of the risks they take. I'm honored to have it because of the values they stand for. I'm honored to have it because of the kind of people they are. I'm proud to have you by my side. God bless you all. Thank you.

You know, I'm looking forward to this campaign. I've been coming to Wisconsin a lot. I suspect I'll be coming some more. I enjoy coming here. I'm looking forward to coming back. I want to tell you where I stand, what I believe, and where I intend to lead this Nation for 4 more years.

I believe every child can learn and that every school must teach. That's what I believe. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. See, like you, I was tired of that practice of just shuffling kids through the schools, year after year, grade after grade, without teaching them the basics. I believe every child can learn, and I expect every school to teach. That's why we've raised the standards. That's why we're measuring early, before it's too late to solve problems. That's why we believe in local control of schools. And that's why we're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. Medicine was changing, but Medicare wasn't. I went to Washington to solve problems. We had a problem in Medicare. See, Medicare would pay nearly $100,000 for the heart surgery but would not pay one dime for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. Medicare needs to be modernized. I worked with Republicans and Democrats. We've strengthened Medicare. Seniors will get prescription drugs in 2006, and we're not going to turn back to the old days.

I believe in the energy, innovative spirit of America's workers, small-business owners, farmers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax cut in a generation. When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people what this economy has been through. It's been through a recession. As a matter of fact, the stock market started to head down about 5 months before we showed up in Washington. Then there was a recession. And then we found out some of our citizens didn't tell the truth. There were some corporate scandals. We passed new laws, and we made it abundantly clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

And then we got attacked, and that hurt our economy. But our economy is strong and growing stronger. We've overcome these obstacles. We've got great workers, great farmers. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong, and the tax cuts made a difference.

We've added about 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. We've added 107,000 manufacturing jobs since January. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, which is lower than the average of the seventies, the eighties, and the 1990s. And right here in Wisconsin, your unemployment rate is 4.8 percent. This economy is strong. It's getting stronger, and we're not turning back.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If we show uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership. And that is why with your help, we'll carry Wisconsin and win a great victory in November.

The world in which we live is changing. The generation of our dads and granddads—in that generation, a man generally had one job, one career, and moms stayed at home. But times have changed a lot since then. Many workers have more than one job and more than one career, and many women work inside the house and outside the house. And yet the systems of our Government, the most fundamental systems, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training, labor law, was all designed for yesterday, not tomorrow. In the next 4 years, we'll work to transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to be able to make your own choices and to realize the great promise of America.

I fully understand a hopeful society is one that has a growing economy. I have a plan to make sure this recovery is lasting prosperity. If you want to keep jobs here in America, America must be the best place in the

world to do business. It's as simple as that. That means less regulations on the employers and job creators. That means less frivolous lawsuits on the employers and job creators.

If we want to keep jobs here in America, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. I sent up a plan that encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel, that says we've got to modernize our electricity grid, that says we'll use clean coal technology, that we'll explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. In order to keep jobs here in America, this country must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure this economy grows and people in Racine, Wisconsin, can find work, we've got to open up markets. See, we open up our markets for goods from other countries. If you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and better quality. That's why Republicans and Democrat administrations have opened up our markets. So what I'm saying to places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." See, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure this economy grows, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington. And we've got to keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. Make no mistake about it. The fellow I'm running against has promised $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending—so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I say "so far" because we still got October to go. [*Laughter*] Two-point-two trillion is a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "That's easy. We'll just tax the rich." We've heard that before, haven't we? First of all, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for $2.2 trillion in new spending, so there's a tax gap. Guess who usually gets stuck with filling the tax gap? Secondly, when you hear that language "tax the rich," hold on to your wallets, because the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason. So you get stuck. The good news is, we're not going to let him tax you, because we're going to win in November.

Let me say something else about the Tax Code. It's a complicated mess. It's a million pages long. The American people spend 6 billion hours a year filling out the tax forms. In a new term, I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together to simplify the Tax Code so you're treated more fairly.

Today, down the road, I talked about making sure workers have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Our workforce is changing. Sometimes workers don't have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'm such a big believer in the community college system here in Wisconsin and around the world. We're going to spend more Federal money to make sure community colleges are more accessible.

Do you realize most jobs—or new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet only about one in four of our students gets there. That's why I believe, in our high schools, we should fund early intervention programs to help at-risk students. We need to place special emphasis on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income American families, we'll make sure more families—more workers start their career with a college diploma.

We're going to do something about our health care system too. But I promise you this: When we reform health care, we're going to let you make the decisions. There's a fundamental difference in this campaign; there is a philosophical divide. My opponent wants Government to dictate to you.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I think that's the wrong approach to health care. See, we're going to make sure the poor and the indigent get good health care by expanding community health centers in every poor county in America. That makes sense. We'll make sure the children's health programs for low-income Americans are fully subscribed to by those who qualify. That makes sense. We have a practical, commonsense plan.

I understand half the working uninsured work for small businesses. There's a reason why they're uninsured. Small businesses are

having trouble affording health care. And one of the reasons they're having trouble affording health care is because they can't pool risk. So I think we ought to allow small businesses to pool together across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy health care at the same discounts big companies get to. We'll expand tax-free health savings accounts. We'll give small-business tax credits to encourage them to put money into health savings accounts for their employees.

In order to make sure that health care is available and affordable in Wisconsin and around the country, we've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are driving good doctors out of practice and running up your costs. There's a difference of opinion in this campaign. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

Listen, we have a commonsense, practical plan to make sure health care is available and affordable. In all we do to make sure medicine works in America, we will make sure that the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In times of change, in a changing world, it helps if somebody owns something to bring stability in their lives. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high under my administration. More and more people from all walks of life are able to open up the door where they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." And over the next 4 years, we'll continue to expand homeownership to every corner of our country.

In terms of our retirement systems, they were designed for yesterday. They need to be designed for tomorrow. If you're on Social Security today, you have nothing to worry about. You will get your check. I don't care what the political rhetoric is in a campaign, you're going to get paid. You remember, 4 years ago in Wisconsin, they were saying, "If George W. gets in, the seniors aren't going to get their checks." You might remember that. Yes, well—[*laughter*]—that's what happens. Seniors got paid. You will get paid again. If you're a baby boomer, you're fine. We're fine. There's enough money in the trust to take care of us.

But we need to worry about our younger workers. We need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. I think in order to make sure Social Security is around for a new generation, younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and set up a personal savings account that they can call their own.

In a world of change, some things won't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we will support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the globe, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence-gathering services. We're staying on the offensive. We are striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will continue to work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and around the world, and we'll prevail. Our strategy is succeeding. Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world only 4 short years ago: Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point of terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan

is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew he had harbored Abu Nidal, the leader of a terrorist organization that carried out attacks in Asia and Europe. We knew Abu Abbas had been in Iraq—he's the fellow that killed Leon Klinghoffer. We knew Zarqawi had been in Baghdad. He's the person now beheading our citizens in order to shake our will. We knew that—we knew his long history, Saddam's history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. He was firing at our pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. Saddam Hussein was a threat. It is important this country never forget the lessons of September the 11th. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. We cannot forget that lesson.

So I went to the Congress. The Congress looked at the intelligence, the same intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history I remembered, and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I did, concluded that Saddam was a threat, and voted "yes" when it came to the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, he must try all options to solve a problem. And so I was hopeful that diplomacy would work. I was hopeful that we wouldn't have to commit our troops. And so I went to the United Nations, and I gave a speech there, and I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence. They remembered the same history, and they concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat. As a matter of fact, by a U.N. Security Council resolution they voted 15 to nothing to say, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe when an international body speaks, it must mean what it says.

Saddam Hussein wasn't about to listen to the demands of the free world. He had ignored the demands of the free world for over a decade. I think this was maybe the 17th resolution that had been passed. He doubted whether or not the international body would keep its word. He defied the inspectors the U.N. sent in. So I have a choice to make at this point in time. Diplomacy has failed. Saddam Hussein was given a last chance. Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman——

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. ——or do I take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Listen, we didn't find the stockpiles we all thought would be there, but Saddam Hussein had the capability of manufacturing weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to an enemy. And after September the 11th, that is a risk we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. And America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Because we acted in our self-interests, 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq are now free. Think about Afghanistan, what life was like there less than 4 years ago. Think about it. Young girls were not allowed to go to school. The Taliban was so dark in their vision that they'd haul their mothers out in the public square and whip them if they didn't toe their line. They didn't believe in freedom at all. Their mindset was the exact opposite of what America stands for. Today, because we acted, 10 million citizens in Afghanistan, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. Fantastic. This society is going from darkness to light because the people are free, and we're better off for it. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror.

In Iraq, despite ongoing acts of horrible violence, that country has got a strong Prime Minister, and it's going to have elections in January. It's in our interests that Iraq be free. Free societies will be hopeful societies. Free

societies will not breed resentments and export for terror. Free societies will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. Our strategy is clear. We'll help the Iraqis and the Afghans defend themselves by training citizens—their own citizens so they can do the hard work. We'll help them get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

We got a great military. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example to those who wear the uniform. We appreciate your service. I've had the privilege of meeting those who wear the uniform at bases here at home and across the world. I know their courage and their unselfish decency. Ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And we owe our troops and their loved ones the full support of the Federal Government. That's why I went to the Congress last September, a year ago, to ask for $87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in harm's way. This was really important legislation. This was vital money, money for spare parts and ammunition, for body armor, for hazard pay, for health benefits. It's the kind of thing that you'd want your troops to have—and the troops not only in Iraq but Afghanistan as well. We received great bipartisan support for that funding request, so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out there campaigning, tell people about this statistic: Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding for our troops. And two of those four are my opponent and his runningmate. They asked him. Of course, you know this. He said his answer to why he voted the way he did, he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] You've heard that. They then said, well—they kept pressing him. He said he was proud of his vote. And finally, he just said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We've got hard work to do in Iraq. And it's tough, and it's hard. I know it's hard. The terrorists over there cannot defeat our military. The only tool they've got is the ability to shake our will. We care for human rights and human dignity. Every life matters to the American people. And therefore, when we see people beheaded on our screens, we cry and we weep, and the terrorists know that. They know we've got a conscience. And we know they don't have a conscience. We must not allow them to shake our will. It's important that we succeed in Iraq. It's important for our security and for the peace of the world that we defeat the terrorists there. This is a central front in the war on terror.

Fortunately, we've got a partner, a strong partner in Iraq named Prime Minister Allawi. I was with him yesterday in the Oval Office, had a great visit with him. When I was in New York and saw him, I asked him, "Is it true that—about the story I had heard?" He said, "It's true." He told me the story about the night he woke up in a bed in a flat in London. See, he had been—he had left the country because Saddam Hussein wanted to kill him. And he woke up one night—this is a true story—his wife in his bed next to him, and there's two people next to his bed with axes, sent by Saddam Hussein. They were trying to ax him to death. He survived. He's now the Prime Minister of that country. He's a tough guy who understands. He understands we must not yield. We'll stand with him. When America gives its word, America must keep its word.

If we expect to win this war on terror and secure the homeland, we must be clear about what we say. And the President must mean what he says. That's why you can't keep changing positions based upon polls. My opponent has had seven or eight different positions on Iraq. He can't decide if we should be there or not be there. You cannot lead if you don't know where you want to lead. You cannot lead if you don't know what you believe. You cannot lead if you get blown around by the political winds. Yesterday he criticized the Prime Minister of Iraq.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Right after the Prime Minister spoke to the United States Congress, right after he gave an important

speech, Senator Kerry went out and stood in front of the cameras and questioned Prime Minister Allawi's credibility.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Earlier this week, he said he would prefer the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein to the situation in Iraq today.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In order for us to succeed in Iraq, the Iraqi people must believe the American people will stand with them. In order to have credibility with those people who are fighting for freedom, the leaders of this country must not send mixed signals. They must earn the credibility of the Iraqi people. Twenty-five million people want to be free in that country, and when they're free, we're better off for it. I'll continue to lead this country with clarity. When I say something, I'll mean what I say.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Part of our strategy is to continue working with our friends and allies. I was on the phone this morning with Prime Minister Tony Blair. He understands that Iraq is a central front in the war on terror. He understands the stakes. He understands the need for leaders to stand up and lead, and he is a leader. And I appreciate him. I thank him every time I have a chance to for joining this coalition. Do you realize we've got over 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to work to strengthen alliances, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. That's what I believe. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. Recently in New York, I had a visit with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I said, "I'll tell you, I'm traveling the country talking about you." He said, "Fine, make sure you tell them I like Elvis." [*Laughter*] And so I do talk about him because I find it really interesting, really interesting. And I want the youngsters to understand—to listen to this because I think it will give you some clarity about why I decide what I decide—is that I sit down and talk with the leader of a country that we were at war with some 60 years ago. That's a lot of time if you're 58 like me. [*Laughter*] It seems like forever. [*Laughter*] It's not a lot of time, though, in the march of history. It wasn't all that long ago, in other words, that we were at war with Japan. My dad fought against the Japanese. I promise you, a lot of folks out here relatives fought against the Japanese too in what was one tough war. A lot of people lost their lives.

After World War II, my predecessor Harry S. Truman believed that we should work with the Japanese to build a democracy. A lot of people in this country questioned the wisdom. You can understand why. There was a lot of bitterness toward the Japanese. They were our enemy. We had just fought them. But there were folks in this country that believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally. And so they did the hard work after World War II, developing that country, and to build that country into a democracy. And because of that work, today, I talk to Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about the peace we all want, talking about how to make the world more peaceful.

So when you hear me say, "I believe in the transformational power of liberty," think about the fact that the American President and the leader of Japan are working together for peace. Some day, an American President and a duly elected leader of Iraq will sit down at the table to talk about peace, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their freedom. I believe women in the Middle East long to be free. I believe they want their young daughters to be able to grow up in a hopeful society. I believe that if given a chance, the people in the broader Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. And I believe these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems

of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this land. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to a new generation. We'll continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On the bus, we were talking to the troopers about that day, September the 14th, 2001, when we stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I know I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember talking to a guy who came out of the rubble, had bloodshot eyes, and he's exhausted for trying to find his buddies and people that were hurt. And he looked me right in the eye and said, "You don't let me down." I wake up every morning since that day trying to better figure out how to protect our country. I will never relent in defending the security of America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled your great State and our country, I made a pledge that if you gave me the chance to serve I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I have been elected. With your hard help—with your hard work and your help, I will continue to do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. On to victory. Thank you all. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. at General John J. Pershing Park. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Wisconsin State Treasurer Jack C. Voight; Richard W. Graber, State chairman, and Mary F. Buestrin, national committeewoman, Republican Party of Wisconsin; radio show host Charlie Sykes; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7822—National Hunting and Fishing Day, 2004

September 24, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America is a land of majestic beauty, and we take pride in our wildlife, forests, mountains, lakes, rivers, and coastlines. Outdoor recreation is an important part of our Nation's heritage. On National Hunting and Fishing Day, we celebrate the remarkable progress we have made in conserving our environment and recognize those who have worked to conserve our natural resources.

America's hunters and anglers represent the great spirit of our country and are among our Nation's foremost conservationists. These citizens have worked to protect habitat and restore fish and wildlife populations. They volunteer their time, talents, and energy to countless conservation projects, because they recognize the importance of maintaining the natural abundance of our country for future generations.

My Administration is committed to achieving a cleaner, safer, and healthier environment for all Americans, including our hunters and anglers. My Administration has expanded opportunities to hunt and fish at national wildlife refuges and improved habitat on public and private lands. We have cut phosphorus releases into our rivers and streams, and I signed the Healthy Forests Restoration Act to help protect our forests from the risk of wildfires.

Americans are blessed to live amid many wonders of nature, and we have a responsibility to be good stewards of the land. I commend all who advance conservation and help our citizens enjoy the benefits of our environment. These efforts ensure that our national heritage remains a source of pride for our citizens, our communities, and our Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 25, 2004, as National Hunting and Fishing Day. I call upon the people of the United States

to join me in recognizing the contributions of America's hunters and anglers, and all those who work to conserve our Nation's fish and wildlife resources.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 1, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 4. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

September 25, 2004

Good morning. This week, I was honored to welcome the Prime Minister of a free and sovereign Iraq to the White House. In less than 3 months, Prime Minister Allawi and his Government have accomplished a great deal, despite persistent violence in parts of Iraq. The enemies of freedom are using suicide bombings, beheadings, and other horrific acts to try to block progress. We are sickened by their atrocities, but we will never be intimidated, and freedom is winning.

We're making steady progress in implementing our five-step plan toward the goal we all want, completing the mission so that Iraq is stable and self-governing and American troops can come home with the honor they have earned.

The first step was achieved on June 28th, not only on time but ahead of schedule, when the coalition transferred full sovereignty to a government of Iraqi citizens.

The second step is to help Iraq's new Government establish stability and security. Nearly 100,000 fully trained and equipped Iraqi soldiers, police officers, and other security personnel are working today, and the Iraqi Government is on track to build a force of over 200,000 security personnel by the end of 2005.

In Najaf and other important areas, Iraqi military forces have performed with skill and success. The Government's strategy is to surround and isolate enemy militias, reach out to the local population, and negotiate from a position of strength. Serious problems remain in several cities. Yet, Prime Minister Allawi believes this combination of decisive action and outreach to peaceful citizens is the most effective way to defeat the killers and secure the peace. And America stands with him.

The third step in our plan is to continue improving Iraq's infrastructure. Today, in most of Iraq, children are about to go back to school, parents are going back to work, and new businesses are being opened. Electricity has been restored above pre-war levels. Telephone service has increased dramatically. In the next several months, more than $9 billion will be spent on contracts that will help Iraqis rebuild schools, refurbish hospitals and health clinics, repair bridges, upgrade the electrical grid, and modernize the communications system. Prime Minister Allawi and I agree that the pace of reconstruction can and should be accelerated, and we're working toward that goal.

The fourth step in our plan is to enlist additional international support for Iraq's transition to democracy. The multinational force of some 30 nations continues to help secure a free Iraq, and we are grateful for the service and sacrifice of all. Our coalition is also grateful that the United Nations has reestablished its mission in Baghdad. We are grateful to the G–8 countries and the European Union for pledging support to the new Iraqi Government. We are grateful to the NATO Alliance for help in training Iraqi forces. And we are grateful to many of Iraq's creditors, which have agreed to a further reduction of Iraq's debt.

The fifth and most important step in our plan is to help Iraq conduct free national elections no later than January. An Iraqi electoral commission has already hired personnel and is making key decisions about election procedures. Just this week, the commission began a public education campaign to inform Iraqis about the process and encourage them to become voters. United Nations electoral advisers are on the ground in Iraq, and Prime

Minister Allawi and I have urged the U.N. to send more personnel to help ensure the success of the Iraqi elections.

The war for Iraq's freedom is a fight against some of the most ruthless and brutal men on Earth. In such a struggle, there will be good days, and there will be difficult days. But every day, our resolve must remain the same: Iraq, America, and our coalition will stand firm; and Iraq will be free; the world will be more peaceful; and America will be more secure.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:45 a.m. on September 24 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 24 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Proclamation 7821—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2004

September 25, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Americans have always answered the call to serve our Nation. Many brave American men and women have made the ultimate sacrifice to defend freedom's blessings, and no one feels their loss more deeply than their mothers. On Gold Star Mother's Day, we remember these mothers who have suffered the loss of a son or daughter through service to our country. We honor their courage and perseverance and the memory of their children.

Across our Nation, these compassionate and generous women are volunteering to serve veterans, helping families of service members, supporting educational programs that promote patriotism and citizenship, and turning their grief into action. They inspire all Americans with their compassion and service. On this day, people across America join together to honor our Gold Star mothers and send our gratitude, prayers, and best wishes to them and to their families.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 115 of June 23, 1936 (49 Stat. 1895 as amended), has designated the last Sunday in September as "Gold Star Mother's Day," and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Sunday, September 26, 2004, as Gold Star Mother's Day. I call upon all Government officials to display the flag of the United States over Government buildings on this solemn day. I also encourage the American people to display the flag and hold appropriate meetings in their homes, places of worship, or other suitable places as a public expression of the sympathy and respect that our Nation holds for our Gold Star Mothers.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:04 a.m., September 28, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 29.

Remarks in a Discussion on Education in Springfield, Ohio

September 27, 2004

The President. Thank you all for being here. Appreciate you being here. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Okay, thanks. We got to get started here. Thank you. Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. I'm honored so many came out. Thanks for the warm welcome here in Springfield. It's such a pleasure to be here. I'm excited to be here.

I've come to let you know that I've got a reason for seeking the vote again, that I'm

not only here to ask for your vote, I'm here to explain to you why I want to be President for 4 more years. See, I don't think you can just hold the office of President. I think you have to have a reason to hold the office. And so we're going to talk about some key issues about how to make sure America is a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place.

I'm also here to ask for your help. See, I understand you can't win a race for the Presidency alone. It requires the grassroots, those people who put up the signs and make the phone calls and register the voters. We have a—thank you all for doing that. First of all, I understand a crowd this big just doesn't happen. Somebody had to work to make it happen, so thanks for organizing this event. Thank you for coming.

You notice I've been joined by some of your fellow citizens here. We're here to talk about education, but before we do so, I've got some other things on my mind.

First thing on my mind is for you to get out and register friends and neighbors. Don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. I know a lot of Democrats who want America to be a safer place. I know a lot of Democrats who want our schools to fulfill their promise. I know a lot of Democrats who are interested in having a health care system that works. I know a lot of Democrats who are going to vote for us. So when you get people going to the polls, make sure you remind your Republican friends, your independent friends, and your discerning Democrat friends to vote for Bush-Cheney.

So I woke up on the ranch this morning, and Laura said, "Tell everybody hello in Ohio." So, Laura says hello. She was a public school librarian when I met her—again. We went to seventh grade at San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas. And so, years later, my friend O'Neill brought me over to his backyard for a barbecue, and there was Laura. I fell in love—love at first sight. So I said—eventually, I said—eventually, I asked her to marry me. She said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. People of this country got to see Laura in New York City give a speech. They saw a compassionate, decent, fine woman. Really proud of her. I hope you leave here realizing that I'm going to give you some—well, I know I'm going to give you some reasons why you should put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He's a fine man. You know, I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] Of course, I didn't pick him because of his hair. I picked him because of his experience, his judgment. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

I want to thank my friend Mike DeWine, and Fran for joining us today. He's a great United States Senator. Proud you're here, Mike. He's on the bus. He said as we pulled in here, he said, make sure you remind everybody that he, Mike DeWine, was born right here in Springfield. He's what we call a home boy. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank my friend Dave Hobson, the Congressman from this district. I appreciate you, Dave. Proud you're here. Chairman John Boehner is with us today. Mr. Chairman, the Congressman from the district next door, thanks for coming. We're going to talk a little bit about education. I want you to understand he is the father of this fantastic reform we put in place. He carried the legislation in the House of Representatives. It would not have happened without his leadership—a great Congressman. Thanks for coming.

Congressman Mike Turner from Dayton, Ohio—appreciate you coming, Mike. Real proud of you. [*Applause*] Sounds like they've heard of you.

I want to thank Joe Deters, who is with us today, the treasurer of the State of Ohio. Thanks for coming, Joe. I want to thank all the State and local officials. I know the party chairman is here. I want to thank Bob Bennett for his leadership for the Ohio party. But most of all, I want to thank you all. I really do appreciate you coming. I want to thank you for giving me a chance to share some thoughts with you.

I like getting out amongst the people. I like sharing my philosophy with people. I like to tell people what I believe. First of all, I

want you to know I understand that we're living in changing times. Now, think about this. When our dads were coming up or our grandfathers were growing up, a person generally had one career and one job, with one pension plan and one health care system. And that person was usually a man.

Today, we live in a different world, when you think about it. The workforce has changed dramatically. People tend to change jobs and sometimes careers, often. And the workforce not only has men in it, but it has got women who work both in the house and outside the house. We have time—times have changed, yet the fundamental systems of our Government have not changed. The fundamental systems of Government were designed for yesterday, not for tomorrow. I'm running for 4 more years to help redesign the systems of Government so people have a chance to realize their dreams.

The job of Government is to help people realize their dreams, not to dictate to people. There's a fundamental philosophical difference in this campaign about the role for Government in people's lives. We believe Government ought to help people. My opponent believes Government ought to tell people how to live their lives.

And so they said, "What do you mean?" Well, I'll tell you what I mean. I mean, for example, labor laws ought to be changed. There ought to be flex-time in the labor laws. That will allow moms to be able to do their work at the workplace and the home. The labor laws ought to be family-friendly. They ought to change with the times.

The Tax Code needs to change. The Tax Code is a complicated mess. It's full of special interest loopholes. In a new term, I'll bring people from both parties together to simplify the U.S. Tax Code, the Federal Tax Code, that will reflect the changing times and make the code more fair.

The pension plans—we need to think differently about pension plans. Listen, times have changed, but the Social Security system hasn't. Now, listen, if you're on Social Security, you're going to get your check. I remember the 2000 campaign. They all said, "Well, if George W. gets in, you're not going to get your check." You got your check, didn't you? You'll probably hear it again. You'll probably hear it again: "Oh, he's got some plan to take—he'll take the money away from you." It's just not the case. If you're a baby boomer, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to think about our kids and our grandkids when it comes to Social Security. I think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own tax money and set up a personal savings account so Social Security has a chance to meet its promise, a personal savings account you call your own, a personal savings account the Government cannot take away.

The health care system ought to reflect changing times. I mean, if you're changing jobs, it makes sense to have a health care system that enables you to carry with you a health savings account. See, I believe we ought to continue to expand health savings accounts, which gives people a chance to save tax-free, earn money tax-free, spend money on health care needs tax-free, that you own. It's a new way of looking at health care, but it's a way to make sure that the decisions are made between doctors and patients, not between bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

A couple of other points I want to make on health care. It makes sense to take care of those who can't help themselves. We need to help the poor and the indigent when it comes to health care. That's why I'm for expanding community health centers to every poor county in America. We want people to get good primary care and good preventative care in places other than the emergency rooms of hospitals. So we'll continue to take care of those who need help here in America. We'll make sure the children's health care program for low-income families is expanded and families take advantage of that.

We'll continue to make sure Medicare fulfills its promise. You might remember those old Medicare debates. They called them "Mediscare." They tried to lure you into talking about Medicare, then they tried to whip you in the political process if you did. I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents. I saw a problem in Medicare, and I'll tell you what it is. Medicare would pay, for example, nearly $100,000 for heart surgery. It would not pay a dime for the prescription drugs that could

prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense to the senior citizens, and it made no sense to the taxpayers. We've strengthened Medicare for our seniors, and in 2006, seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage in Medicare. And the system is better, and we're not going to turn back to the old days of not making sure our seniors have got good health care.

Now that you got me cranked up, on health care, I've got a few other things to tell you. Most of the uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses have trouble affording health care. One of the reasons why is there's no purchasing power. I think small businesses ought to be allowed to join together so they can purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies are able to do.

No, I got a lot of ideas on how to make sure health care works. I understand what's causing some of the cost of health care to rise, and these are these frivolous lawsuits. You ask your docs what it's like to try to practice medicine, ask your ob-gyns what it's like to try to practice medicine when they're getting sued and sued and sued by frivolous lawsuits. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors, the hospitals, and the patients. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

As you can tell, I'm ready to go. What I'm telling you, there's a big philosophical difference in the campaign. There really is, when it comes to health care. My opponent believes the Government ought to decide for you. I don't. I believe the best health care system is when we take care of the poor, make sure seniors have got good health care, and make sure the decisions in the health care are made by patients and doctors, not by bureaucrats in the Nation's Capital.

See, I believe that we're recognizing the world is changing, and make sure the systems of Government change with the world so people can realize their dreams. We've created—will help to create a hopeful society, but you can't be a hopeful society unless this economy grows.

Now, listen, I want you to remind your friends and neighbors what we've been through when it comes to this economy. We went through a recession. As a matter of fact, the stock market started to go down months before Vice President Cheney and I showed up in Washington, and then we had a recession. We started to recover from the recession, and we found out some of the citizens of this country forgot what it meant to be a responsible person. In other words, they didn't tell the truth. And those corporate scandals shook our confidence, make no mistake about it. By working with Members of Congress and in the Senate, we passed tough laws, and we made it abundantly clear that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then the enemy hit us, and it cost us jobs.

These were mighty obstacles to overcome. But we've overcome those obstacles. One, we got great workers in America. We got great farmers in America. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. We also overcame it because of well-timed tax cuts. The economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

I understand you've been hit hard in Ohio. I know that. That's why I proposed what's called opportunity zones, a place where counties like Clark County can apply to become an opportunity zone and be able to have—be able to get—attract business with better tax treatment, better regulatory treatment, ways to make sure that in changing times economies that need help are able to get the help. No, I know there's people still hurting in this State, and that's why it's important to continue to promote pro-growth, pro-small-business, pro-farmer economic policies.

It's one thing to say we've overcome the obstacles. The real question is how do we make sure that this prosperity lasts. So I'll give you some ideas. First, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If you want jobs to stay right here in America, we better make sure this is the best place to create jobs. That means less regulations on our businessowners and employers. It

means we've got to do something about frivolous lawsuits that make it hard for people to expand their job base.

If you want to make sure jobs stay here, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. Listen, if you don't have energy, you're not going to have jobs. We need to make sure the electricity system is reliable. You in Ohio know what I'm talking about. We've got to make sure that we use alternative sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. We've got to make sure that we continue to enhance conservation. We've got to make sure we use our technology so we can burn coal. We've got to make sure we use our technology so we can continue to explore for natural gas. What I'm telling you is if we want jobs to be here in America, this country must become less reliant on foreign sources of energy.

A couple other points I want to talk about. One, in order to make sure jobs are here, we need to open up markets for U.S. products. It would be a mistake to adopt the policies of economic isolationism. Do you realize, one in five manufacturing jobs in America depend upon exports? If you're good at something, we ought to promote it. If you're good at growing crops, we ought to be selling crops all around the world. If you're good at manufacturing things, we ought to make sure you have a chance to do so. We've opened up our markets for foreign goods. This is not just the policy of this administration, it's the policy of both Republican and Democrat Presidents. And I'll tell you why. If you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price or higher quality. That's how the marketplace works. It makes sense to—to give you more choices as a consumer. It makes economic sense.

And so what I say to places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." And I say that—and not only that, we've used the tools at my disposal to make it clear to China and other countries we expect to be treated fairly. And the reason I say that with certainty—that it's good for America—is I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

Finally, to make sure you've got jobs here in Ohio and all across America, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Running up the taxes—running up taxes on the American people would hurt economic growth. So the—so taxes are an issue.

The fellow I'm running against has proposed $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending so far. [*Laughter*] We still got October to go—[*laughter*]—three debates in October. So they said, "How are you going to pay for all that money?" And by the way, 2.2 trillion is a lot, particularly for—or even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" It's a legitimate question, isn't it? "In the course of a campaign, you made all these promises, you're going to do all this stuff on health care, and all this stuff on here, and all that stuff on there, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, that's easy. We'll just tax the rich."

Now, we've heard that before. I know you've heard that before. By the way, most small businesses in America are—pay tax at the individual income-tax rate. Ninety percent of the small businesses are sole proprietorships or limited partnerships. Therefore, they pay income tax at the individual rate. And so you hear him say, "Well, we're going to tax the rich. We're just going to run up the top two brackets." The first thing wrong with that proposal is you're starting to tax the job creators of America. Seventy percent of the new jobs in America are created by small businesses. It makes no sense to tax the job creators in this country just as this economy is being to recover.

Secondly, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for $2.2 trillion of new spending. So there's a tax gap. Guess who usually fills the tax gap when there is one? You do. Yes, I know. Thirdly, the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason. That's to stick you with the bill. The good news is you're not going to get stuck with the bill, because we're going to carry Ohio again and win in November. [*Applause*]

Okay. Let me talk about—thank you for coming. Thank you. We got work to do. Save your energy. Save your energy. [*Laughter*]

I want to talk about education. A hopeful America is one in which not one child is left behind. I went to Washington, as I told you,

to solve problems, not to pass them on to future generations. We saw a problem. Congressman Boehner saw a problem too in public schools, and the problem was this, that people were just being shuffled through school grade after grade, year after year without learning the basics. That's a problem.

If you want a hopeful America, you better make sure every child learns and they learn early, before it's too late. So I worked with the Congressman. I said, "I tell you what we'll do. We'll increase spending at the Federal level, but we're going to start asking some important questions, starting with, can the children read?" Seems like to make sense, doesn't it? If you're going to increase spending, you ought to at least know whether or not the system is working.

So John and I and others drafted some legislation called the No Child Left Behind Act, the heart of which says the following things. One, we trust local people to make the right decisions for the schools. We're going to talk about some school decisionmakers—with some school decisionmakers here.

Secondly, it says we need to measure, not the Federal Government doesn't need to measure, the people outside of Washington need to measure so we can determine whether or not we're meeting goals. And the first goal is every child reading by third grade—at grade level by the third grade. It seems to make sense, doesn't it? That's a legitimate request to ask of the school systems, in return for 49-percent increase in K-through-12 funding since I've been in Washington, DC, that people learn how to read, write, add, and subtract.

Thirdly, we're raising the standards. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. What that means is, when you lower the standards, you get lousy results. We can't have a hopeful America unless every child has a chance to succeed because every child has been taught how to read and write and add and subtract. As a result of the legislation we passed, an achievement gap is beginning to close in this country. It's happening.

I'll tell you what else we did, which is an important part of the accountability system. We—I'm going to use a fancy word—disaggregated results. That means we measured by race, for example. See, we want to know if every child is learning to read and write and add and subtract. We don't want any doubt in our mind that the system is making sure it's hopeful for everybody. You don't know whether every child is learning to read and write and add and subtract unless you measure, unless you show the results, unless you say to parents, "This school is great. This school needs help."

Some people say, "You shouldn't test. You're just punishing the schools." I disagree. By not testing, you're punishing children. By testing, you can determine what needs to be cured. You can't solve a problem unless you diagnose the problem. And we're using the accountability system as a diagnostic tool to lift the sights and the spirits of every child in this country.

So that's what we're here to talk about, the No Child Left Behind Act. It's a vital piece of legislation. Someone said, "Well, you know, when you look back, what's going to be important?" Well, I'll tell you, the peace is going to be important when I look back on my time as your President, but also making sure that this education system fulfilled its promise, that our teachers had the tools necessary to teach.

One of the things we've got in the program we're going to talk about is teacher training, that the local folks were able to make the right decisions, that moms and dads were happy with what they were receiving, that the community was involved. No, I'm proud of this piece of legislation. We're not going to turn back. We're not going to allow my opponent to weaken it. We're going to continue moving forward to make sure every child has a chance to realize his or her dreams.

A couple of other things I want to talk about. We're going to make sure that in high school, there's at-risk—programs for at-risk kids. Listen, if you're going to start a job in a changing world, you need a college degree. Yet, one in four of our students doesn't get there. And since they don't get there, it means we better do something better. So we're going to make sure we intervene in high schools on reading and math and sciences. We'll continue to expand reading

and sciences. We're going to continue to expand Pell grants. We want to make sure that everybody has a chance to start their career with at least 2 years of college, in order to make sure there's a hopeful tomorrow. In other words, we got to plan not only to build on No Child Left Behind but to take the progress of No Child Left Behind, the success of No Child Left Behind to our high schools.

In a changing world, a lot of times people need a new set of skills. You know what I'm talking about. When you've seen jobs leave, new jobs come in, and oftentimes, somebody needs a little help in making sure they got the skills necessary to fill the jobs. That's why I'm such a strong believer in the community college system in America. I want to make sure workers have a lifetime of learning opportunity in this country.

These are all plans to make sure education works from K all the way through lifetime.

Now, let me talk to some people who know what I'm talking about. We got George Tombaugh with us. He is the superintendent of——

George Tombaugh. Westerville School District.

The President. Good. Where is that?

Mr. Tombaugh. Northeast side of Columbus, Ohio.

The President. There you go. How are things in Westerville?

Mr. Tombaugh. Very good, sir. We have a great school system and a great staff.

The President. Good. So tell me what life is like under No Child Left Behind.

[*Mr. Tombaugh made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, see, one thing that's important about accountability is it lets you determine whether the curriculum you're using is working. If you're using a lousy curriculum, you're going to get lousy results. And it helps schools adjust. It helps teachers understand whether or not the systems they use work. This is a tool. This is a helpful tool. Measurement is good. I've heard all the excuses. Listen, I was a Governor at one time, and you heard them all, "Oh, all they're doing is teaching the test"—I'm sure you've heard that—or "They're testing too much."

If you use the accountability system properly, it is a great diagnostic tool to make sure children have a chance. You know what I'm talking about when I tell you sometimes we walk into a classroom and see a classroom full of child that are—these so-called "hard to teach." You know what happened with the so-called "hard to teach," don't you? They just moved them through. That's how you handled the so-called "hard to teach" when you didn't have an accountability system—or a classroom full of children whose moms or dads might not speak English as a first language. "Let's just move them through. No one is going catch us." I'm not saying it was that conscious, but it happened. It was practiced. And it wasn't right, and it wasn't fair, and it wasn't what America stands for. Every child should have a chance.

You ready to go? Good job. Kathy Rank, sitting right here next to—I'm sitting right here next to the Ohio Teacher of the Year. Thank you.

First of all, all the teachers out there need to know how much I appreciate you being a teacher. It is a noble and important profession. And if youngsters are looking for a great way to serve our country, teach. Teach a child. Impart knowledge. What a fantastic way to make a living. Thanks for coming. Where do you teach?

Kathy Rank. I teach at Bennett Intermediate, which is part of Piqua City School System.

The President. Great, and what grades?

Mrs. Rank. Fourth grade.

The President. Fourth grade. That's good. I remember my fourth grade teacher, Augustine B. Crosby. [*Laughter*] Somebody someday is going to sit back and say, "Gosh, I remember my teacher, Kathy Rank." What's the nature of the school, kind of school?

[*Mrs. Rank made further remarks.*]

The President. Yes, good job. That's great. You can see why she's teacher of the year. One of the things I think we need to do—and I talked to John about this on the bus, although I think people in the White House have already talked to him about it—is to set up about a half-a-billion-dollar fund to reward teachers who are helping students meet the standards and goals, as an incentive

program. I know we need to have loan forgiveness—student loan forgiveness for teachers who teach in special ed or math or science in schools that need special ed, math, or science teachers. Matter of fact, the loan forgiveness ought to go from 5,000 to $17,500 to provide incentives for teachers to fill the needs where they're needed most. I still believe we ought to continue to increase teacher training funds. These teachers have got great hearts, and sometimes they need the tools necessary to be able to teach the curriculum that works.

So, thanks for coming. Congratulations. See you in Washington——

Mrs. Rank. All right. I'm looking forward to it.

The President. ——Teacher of the Year award.

Tracy Reiner is with us, a mom. Tell us about your little guy, Tracy.

Tracy Reiner. Well, I have three great kids. They're here with me today. I have Zach, who's in sixth grade; Joshua, who's in fourth grade; and Abby, who's in third grade. They attend Hopewell Elementary in the Lakota School System in West Chester——

The President. Good.

Mrs. Reiner. ——where you'll be speaking later today, I understand.

The President. Yes, we're ready to crank it up, yes. [*Laughter*] I'm just warming up here. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Reiner. And if I could just add real quick, the principal sends his greetings, and he wants you to know there is very much support in the Lakota School System for you.

The President. Oh, thank you. I appreciate you saying that. Tell me about Josh, and the No Child Left Behind Act.

[*Mrs. Reiner made further remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Mrs. Reiner. And I need to add this, that my children know discipline. In fact, they were just reminded last night about discipline. But this is not—[*laughter*].

The President. You probably want to keep that one to yourself, Mom, you know. [*Laughter*] She's turning this into Dr. Phil, you know. [*Laughter*] Don't worry about it. The same thing happened to me a couple of times. [*Laughter*] Listen to your mother, though. Still listening to mine. [*Laughter*]

[*Mrs. Reiner made further remarks.*]

The President. It's working. Good job. Congratulations, Josh. Ninety-nine, brother. Let me—Tracy talked about parental involvement; I think there needs to be community involvement as well. See, I think we need to support our teachers and principals and superintendents. You know, a lot of people look to Washington. You're not going to find support out of Washington. You'll find money. You'll find good law, but the truth of the matter is, a responsible society is one in which people who live close to the school systems support the school systems and support the teachers.

Nick is with us today, Nick Lashutka. He is the—what do you do, Nick?

Nick Lashutka. I'm the director of government relations at the Ohio Business Roundtable.

The President. Good. And so, therefore, why are you sitting here? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Lashutka. Because improving Ohio's public schools is the single most important priority for our organization.

The President. There you go. And your organization is called the Roundtable. I guess you meet at a round table, but why would you call it the—what's it—who sits at the table?

Mr. Lashutka. Our organization consists of the CEOs of the State's largest business enterprises, and we focus on issues of competitiveness. And for us, a growing economy and the elements of that are primary for our mission. And at the center of that, what really drives that is talent, and that's having an educated citizenry. It's having a qualified workforce, and it's having the kind of individuals in our public schools that are capable of going on, earning higher degrees and being able to be really——

The President. So what are you doing? How are you helping?

[*Mr. Lashutka made further remarks.*]

The President. Great. Good job. Thanks for coming. Listen, thank you all for being here. We're making progress. We're achieving what every American wants, every child

receive—being able to realize their dreams through a good education.

I want to talk about keeping the peace. I want to talk about the challenges we face to secure this country, make the world and America a safer place. You know, later on this week, I'm going to have a chance to debate my opponent. It's been a little tough to prepare, because he keeps changing positions on the war on terror. He voted for the use of force in Iraq and then didn't vote to fund the troops. He complained that we're not spending enough money to help in the reconstruction of Iraq, and now he's saying we're spending too much. He said it was the right decision to go into Iraq; now he calls it the wrong war. Probably could spend 90 minutes debating himself. [*Laughter*]

You cannot lead when people don't know where you stand. In order to make sure America is a safer place——

Audience member. We need you as a leader! [*Laughter*]

The President. In order to make sure America is safer, the President must speak clearly and mean what he says. I'll share some lessons with you about September the 11th. We face a brutal enemy that has no conscience. They are the kind of people that you just can't reason with. It makes no sense for anybody to say, "Oh, all we've got to do is change our ways because they'll change their visions." It's just not true. You can't negotiate with these people. You cannot rationalize with these people. The best way to protect America is to stay on the offense against them around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We're making progress. We're working with our friends and allies to bring Al Qaida to justice. Seventy-five percent of their leadership has been brought to justice. Just yesterday, if you noticed, that in Pakistan, one of the killers of Danny Pearl had been arrested. One by one, we're finding these people.

It's a different kind of war. And first of all, I wish I wasn't talking about war. We didn't ask for this war. This war came to our shores. And there's only one way to deal with it, and that is to do everything we possibly can to protect the American people using all our assets, using everything at our disposal. And anything short of that will mean this Government has not done its duty to the American people. Our most solemn duty is to protect you.

Now, we can make sure the Homeland Security Department works well and do a better job on our borders and ports, which we're doing. But the only way to protect America in the long term is to—to protect America at all is to stay on the offense against these killers and to spread liberty and freedom. That's the only way we can protect this country.

In a different kind of war, we had to recognize that we're not facing a nation; we're facing a group of people who have adopted an ideology of hatred and love to find places where they can hide. They're like parasites. They kind of leech on to a host and hope the host weakens over time so they can eventually become the host. That's why I said to the Taliban in Afghanistan, "Get rid of Al Qaida. See, you're harboring Al Qaida." Remember, this is a place where they trained—Al Qaida trained thousands of people in Afghanistan. And the Taliban, I guess, just didn't believe me. And as a result of the United States military, Taliban no longer is in existence and the people of Afghanistan are now free. In other words, when you say something as President, you better make it clear so everybody understands what you're saying and you better mean what you say. And I meant what I said. [*Applause*] Okay, hold on for a minute. Thank you all. I meant what I said for the sake of peace, because I understood that America would become more secure by denying Al Qaida safe haven and training bases in Afghanistan.

But I want to tell you something else that's on my mind during the course of my decisionmaking. I understand how powerful freedom can be. And I want you to think about Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that the Taliban were running that country. People say, "What were they like?" They're the opposite of America. If you had a point of view that didn't coincide with what they thought, you were in trouble. They didn't believe in the freedom of anything. They have a dark vision about the world. We have a vision based upon light. We believe in freedom. We believe you can worship freely

any—in this country, any way you want—any way you want. It's your right. You can speak your mind. You can participate in the political process. You can write any editorial you want in this country. That's freedom. That's not what the Taliban thought. You know that young girls weren't allowed to go to school, or many—most young girls weren't allowed to go to school under the Taliban. Imagine a society like that. It's hard for Americans to visualize that.

So not only was Al Qaida being able to train there in Afghanistan, but it was a repressive society. Repressive societies breed violent people. Repressive societies breed those who are willing to strike at those of us who love freedom as well.

Today, in Afghanistan—I want you to hear this fact—today, in Afghanistan some—a little more than 3 years since we liberated them, 10 million people have registered to vote, 41 percent of whom are women, in the elections that will be held in about the first—let's see, I think the 9th of October. Think about that, a country that has gone from darkness to light because of freedom. Freedom is powerful. It's powerful. Unbelievable statistic, I think. And I tell you why it's important. One way to defeat the ideologs of hate is to spread freedom. Free societies answer to the hopes and needs of the average citizens. Free societies do not export terror. Afghanistan is an ally now in the war on terror. In order to make sure America is secure in the long run, we must have allies standing with us in the broader Middle East.

Another lesson I learned is that we've got to deal with threats when we see them. We've got to take a threat seriously before it fully materializes. Prior to September the 11th, the American President and policymakers could say, "Well, we see a threat, but it's probably not going to come and hurt us." That all changed on September the 11th. Every time we see a threat now, we must take it seriously before it comes to hurt us again.

And so I looked around the world and saw a significant threat in Saddam Hussein. I'll tell you why I saw a threat. One, he a was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. Secondly, he was firing missiles at U.S. pilots who were enforcing the sanctions placed upon him by the world. Thirdly, I knew exactly how he felt about the demands of the free world. As they say down in Texas, he could care less. After all, they'd passed 16 different resolutions, and he ignored them all. Fourthly, there was terrorists like Abu Abbas, Abu Nidal—Abu Abbas is the guy who killed Leon Klinghoffer; Abu Nidal, famous terrorists. We knew Zarqawi was in and out of Baghdad. He had terrorist connections. He also used weapons of mass destruction. The lessons of September the 11th were we must take these threats seriously.

I went to the Congress and said, "We see a threat." Members of the United States Congress from both political parties looked at the same intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history I had just recited to you, and concluded that, yes, Saddam Hussein was a threat, and not only that, concluded that they—that force might be necessary, and they authorized the use of force for the President, if necessary, to use force to deal with the threat.

My opponent, he looked at the same intelligence I looked at. He remembered the same history I remembered. And when it came time to vote for the authorization of force, he voted "yes."

So I went to the United Nations. Let me tell you why I did: Because the President must try all means to prevent war. I understand the consequences of putting our troops in harm's way, and before any President puts one troop in harm's way, they best try all different means the solve the problem. And I was hoping that diplomacy would work. I was hoping that finally Saddam Hussein would listen to the demands of the free world. At the United Nations, I laid out our case. They looked at the intelligence. They concluded with a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council that Saddam Hussein should disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. Fifteen to nothing was the vote. As a matter of fact, they also sent in inspectors into Iraq. The problem was Saddam Hussein systematically deceived the inspectors. You can't inspect unless you get cooperation. They got no cooperation.

It was clear that he wasn't about to cooperate with the United Nations. It was clear that,

once again, he was going to ignore the demands of the free world. Diplomacy wasn't working. So I have a choice to make at this point in time: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and just hope for the best when it came to a madman who brutalized his own people, or do I take action necessary to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

A couple of other things. I know what you know. We've got a great military. I want to thank those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the loved ones of those who wear the uniform. And when we put our troops in harm's way, they need to have the full support of the Federal Government—the full support. That's why I went and asked for $87 billion of additional spending for important—this is an important piece of legislation. After all, it's for ammunition, fuel, spare parts, body armor, hazard pay, health benefits, things necessary when you've got your troops in combat. This money was going to go to not only those in Afghanistan but Iraq. It was vital.

Fortunately, Members of Congress here knew how vital it was, and they stood up like most of the Members of Congress and voted, "Yes. We'll fund the troops." As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against funding our troops, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. Now, when you're out there campaigning, I want you to remind the good folks of this statistic. There were only four Members of the United States Senate who said, "Yes, we're going to send troops," but, "No, we're not going to pay for them." In other words, "Yes, we're going to send troops by authorizing force"—they voted to authorize force—but then when the troops were in harm's way, did not vote the money to support the troops. Only 4—there's 100 Members of the Senate; 4 voted that way, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

So they asked him, they said, "How could you possibly have made that vote?" He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." You've got to be able to speak clearly in order to make this world a more peaceful place. You cannot expect to lead this world if you try to take both sides of every position. Finally, they kept pressing him. He said, "The whole thing's a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We'll prevail. We will prevail if we're resolute and determined. We'll prevail because we'll stay on the hunt, and we've got a great coalition of nations. There are 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. People are doing hard work, and I appreciate the sacrifice the people of those countries are making right alongside our troops. I'll continue to build these coalitions. I'll continue to praise the people and not denigrate the contributions. But one thing I'll never do is I'll never turn over national—our country's national security decisions to leaders of other countries. [*Applause*]

Finally, a couple of other things. Thank you all very much. I appreciate that. A couple of other points I do want to make. They'll be short, you'll be happy to hear. [*Laughter*]

We've got hard work in Iraq, no question about it. And the reason why is because people are trying to stop the march of freedom. These terrorists cannot beat our military. They cannot beat our military. The only thing, the only weapon they have is their willingness to behead a citizen and put it on TV. The only weapon they have is the capacity to shake our conscience. They understand people in America. See, we value human rights and human dignity. Our heart breaks when a—for the family of those two fellows who were beheaded, just as Prime Minister Allawi was here.

This guy, Zarqawi and his crowd, they are so coldblooded that they have no conscience. Yet, they know we do. And their main tool is their capacity to get on our TV screens, with horror that the American people just cannot stomach it, because we're civilized and we love and we're compassionate. It's really important for them not to be able to shake our will. I'll tell you why. A free Iraq is in our interests. A free Iraq will become an ally in the war on terror. A free Iraq will be such a hopeful example for other nations. A free Iraq will serve as stark contrast to the hateful ideology of these people.

We'll stay with the Iraqi people because when America gives its word, it must keep its word in order to make the world a more peaceful place. We'll stay with the Iraqi people because it's in our interests. We'll stay with the Iraqi people because they long for freedom; they desire to be free.

People say to me, "Well, maybe certain parts of the world don't want to be free." I strongly disagree. I believe people want to be free because I believe freedom is the gift from the Almighty God to each man and woman in this world.

Schools are being rebuilt. The electricity is up to pre-war levels. Hospitals are functioning. Children are being immunized. But it's hard work. It's hard work. And—but amidst this hard work, remember this: Elections are going to be held in January. This country is headed to democracy. I appreciate visiting with Prime Minister Allawi. He's a guy who woke up one day in a London flat to see two men standing beside his bed with axes, sent by Saddam Hussein to kill him. He, fortunately, got out of that, got wounded severely. He knows firsthand what it means to be dealing with a tyrant. He is determined. He is strong. He tells me right to my face, "Mr. President, we will succeed." And I believe him. We'll succeed so long as the United States does not grow weary or tired and allow these thugs to shake our will. And it's in our interests.

I want to tell you a story, and then I'll—let me tell you a story I like to tell people. It's my—with my dealings—the story is about my dealings with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I saw him in New York recently. I said, "Do you mind if I tell people about you?" And he should have said, "You already started." But anyway—[*laughter*]—he said, "Not at all." So I'm going to tell you about him.

First, he likes Elvis—[*laughter*]—favorite movie is "High Noon." Anyway, I like to tell the story about talking to Prime Minister Koizumi, because I'm talking to the leader of a former enemy. It was 60 years ago or so we were fighting the Japanese. My dad was there. I'm sure your relatives were there, a bloody war.

And after World War II was over with, Harry S. Truman, one of my predecessors, said, "We'll help Japan become a self-governing democracy." A lot of people in the United States didn't believe that was capable of happening. Some people said, "Why even bother. They're the enemy." But Harry Truman and others in this country believed that liberty has got the capacity to transform enemies to allies. That's what he believed.

And that's what I believe. So I sit at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi, and we're talking about the peace we all want. We're talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place. Think about that for a minute. There we were at war with an enemy, and today, the leader of Japan and the United States are working together in concert for peace. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace, talking about how to make sure peace comes in a troubled part of the world so our children and our grandchildren can grow up in a more peaceful, peaceful world.

We have an obligation, I think—this generation has an obligation to do the hard work, the hard work to defend ourselves from these brutal killers, the hard work to spread freedom and liberty, the work necessary so that someday, people will look back at us and say, "Thank goodness they didn't lose faith. Thank goodness they were strong in their beliefs that we can overcome this evil and that liberty will help change the world for the better."

I want to thank you all for coming. I'm ready to go. God bless you all, and God bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. at the Midwest Livestock and Expo Center. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Robert T. Bennett, chairman, Ohio Republican Party; television host Phillip "Dr. Phil" McGraw; Amjad Hussain Farooqi, Pakistani terrorist killed by Pakistani military forces in Nawabshah, Pakistan, on September 26, who participated in the 2002 kidnaping and later killing of Wall Street Journal journalist Daniel Pearl; Eugene Armstrong and Jack Hensley, American citizens who were killed in Iraq on September 20 and 21, respectively, by militants led by senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi

of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Xenia, Ohio

September 27, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Mayor. There you go. Thanks, Mr. Mayor. Listen, thank you all for coming out to say hello. As you can see, I'm taking a bus trip. [*Laughter*] It's a fantastic way to see your beautiful State. I get to wave to people, shake some hands, and tell people that I'm running for a reason. I want this country to be a safer country, a stronger country, and a better country.

I'm proud to be with Mike and Fran DeWine and Congressman Dave Hobson. I want to thank you for coming out to say hello. I'm asking for your help. I'm asking for your vote. We've going to win Ohio again. We're going to win in November.

God bless you all. Thanks for coming. Great to see you all. Thanks for being here. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:16 p.m. at the Greene County Courthouse. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor John Saraga of Xenia, OH; and Senator Mike DeWine of Ohio and his wife, Fran. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in West Chester, Ohio

September 27, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Thanks for coming.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all for coming. That's what I'm here to tell you: I'm ready to lead this Nation for 4 more years. And I'm here to ask for your vote.

I think you've got to get out among the people and give them a reason. That's what I'm here to do today. I'm here to give you a reason why you ought to put me back in office for 4 more years. I not only want your vote; I want your help. I'd like for you to register your friends and neighbors, tell them we have a duty in this country to participate in democracy. Register your Republican friends; register your independent friends; register your discerning Democrat friends, people like Zell Miller. And then when it's voting time, head them to the polls and tell them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Thanks for coming. It's a good sign when this many people come here for a rally. Let me tell you what I think. I think we're going to carry Ohio again, and I think we're going to win a great victory in November.

I wish Laura were here today to see this crowd. I'm going to have dinner with her tonight, and I cannot wait to tell her what I saw. As you might remember, she was a public school librarian. I asked her to marry me. She said, "Fine, just so long as I don't ever have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. The American people got to see her in New York City a while ago, saw what a strong, compassionate, great lady she is. I love her dearly. Perhaps the most important reason to put me back into office is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate. Dick Cheney is a fine man. Listen, I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hair. I picked him because of his experience, his sound judgment. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

I'm proud to be on this stage with John Boehner. What a fine man he is and a great United States Congressman. I'm proud to have worked with him on important legislation, and I'm proud to call him friend. I'm honored that Mike DeWine is with me today, the fine United States Senator from the State of Ohio. I appreciate you coming, Mike. Speaking about Senators, I hope you put George Voinovich back in office. He's a fine leader, good man.

I appreciate Congressman Rob Portman, Dave Hobson, who is with us, Mike Turner, Steve Chabot. I want to thank you all for coming. I'm proud you're serving the people of the great State of Ohio so well.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I know the Lieutenant Governor and the State auditor. My friend

Joe Deters is here. Write him in. Make sure you write him in. He's a good one.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists. I see my friend Anthony Munoz is here. I appreciate you.

Audience members. Munoz!

The President. Yes. He can still play, I agree. [*Laughter*] Fortunately, he's on my team. I need him, and I appreciate his hard work.

I want to thank Darryl Worley. I'm honored you're here, Darryl. I hope you like his music as much as I do.

Lakota East High School and Lakota West High School, thank you all for being here.

Most of all, thank you all for coming. It lifts my spirits to see so many people. I'm honored you're here, and I appreciate your interest in this campaign. You know, I'm looking forward to campaigning. I like it. I like to tell people what I believe, where I stand, and where I intend to lead this Nation for the next 4 years.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I didn't like a system that had low expectations and just shuffled kids through school year after year, grade after grade without teaching the basics. That's not right. That's not the America we know. So I worked with John Boehner to change the laws. We've raised the standards. We now measure so we can solve problems early, before they're too late. We trust the local people to run their schools. We're making progress in America. An achievement gap is closing, and we're not going to turn back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents. I felt like we had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was modernizing, but Medicare wasn't. Take, for example, the fact that Medicare would pay some $100,000 for heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That wasn't fair to our seniors. It's not fair to the taxpayers. We brought people together. We've strengthened and modernized medicine. Our seniors will be getting prescription drugs in Medicare in 2006, and we're not going to turn back.

I believe in the energy and innovative spirit of America's workers and small-business owners and farmers and ranchers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

Listen, our economy has been through a lot. You might remember the stock market had been declining for about 5 months prior to our arrival in Washington, DC. And then when the recession came and hit us, and then some of our citizens forgot what it meant to be a responsible American. They didn't tell the truth to their shareholders and their employees. We passed tough laws in the face of those corporate scandals. We made it abundantly clear, we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we got hit on September the 11th, and that hurt our economy as well.

When you're out there rounding up the vote, you remind people what this economy has been through. But our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, which is lower than the unemployment rate—average unemployment rate in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Still, parts of our country are lagging behind. You've got some people who are hurting here in Ohio. I know that. I'm not going to rest until every American who wants to work can find a job. We'll continue to promote pro-growth, pro-small-business, pro-farmer economic policy so everybody has a chance to be able to make a living.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your

help, we'll carry Ohio and win a great victory in November.

I understand the world we live in is changing. In the generation of our dads and granddads, a man generally had one job, one career, worked for one company that provided a pension plan and health care. This is a different world we're living in. Many people change jobs and careers during the course of a lifetime. Women work inside the house and now outside the house as well. Yet, the fundamental systems of our Government haven't changed. In a changing world—think about this—the fundamental systems, the Tax Code and health coverage and pension plans and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. I'm running for 4 more years to help transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped and prepared and thus truly free to make your own choices and pursue your own dreams.

A hopeful society is one that helps people realize their dreams. A hopeful society is one in which people can find work. I have a plan to make sure this recovery is lasting prosperity. If we want jobs to stay here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If we want jobs here, we've got to do something about these needless regulations that hamper our small-business owners. If you want jobs here in America, we must do something about the frivolous lawsuits that make it hard to expand the job base.

Listen, if you want jobs here, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. You cannot have a growing economy without a good energy plan. I submitted a plan that encourages conservation, a plan that uses renewables like ethanol and biodiesel, a plan that says we can use our coal in environmentally friendly ways by using clean coal technology, a plan that says we'll explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways using new technologies, a plan that modernizes our electricity grid, a plan that recognizes that in order to keep jobs here, America must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Listen, to create jobs, we've got to reject economic isolationism. We don't want to wall ourselves off from the world. One in five jobs in the manufacturing sector in this country depend on exports. See, we've opened up our markets—I didn't open up the markets. Previous Presidents, both Republicans and Democrats, just like me realized it's to your advantage that you've got more products to choose from. See, when you get more products to choose from, you're going to find what you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the marketplace works. That's why I'm saying to places like China, "You treat us the way we treat you. You treat us fairly just the way we treat you fairly. You open up your markets to our people." And I say that because I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the rules are fair.

To create jobs, to make sure people can find work here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has proposed $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending—so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Imagine what's going to happen when we get to October. [*Laughter*] Two-point-two trillion, that's a lot of money, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Fine. We'll just tax the rich." You've heard that, haven't you? See, you can't raise enough money to pay—by taxing the rich to pay off $2.2 trillion worth of new spending. There's a tax gap. You know who fills the tax gap.

Audience members. We do.

The President. Yes, you do. I'll tell you something else about that rhetoric, "tax the rich." The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason, to stick you with the bill. The good news is, he's not going to tax you, because we're going to win in November.

I'll say something else about the Tax Code.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I told you, our systems need to change. The Tax Code needs to change. It is a complicated mess. The Tax Code is a million pages long. Our people spend 6 billion hours a year filling out taxes. It's full of special interest loopholes. I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together in a new term to simplify this Tax

Code, to make it more fair for the people of America.

See, I've got a plan to make sure our workers have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. These are changing times, and the nature of jobs change with them. And sometimes people need help in order to get the skills necessary to fill the jobs for the 21st century. That's why I'm such a strong backer in the community college system. I also understand that most new jobs in a changing world are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet only one in four of our students gets there. That's why we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk in our high schools. That's why we'll emphasize math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we need to do something about our health care system. When it comes to health care, I want you to listen to this debate now, coming down the pike. When it comes to health care, we have a philosophical divide. My opponent wants Government to dictate to you. I want you to decide. I want you to be the decisionmaker.

More than half of the Americans who are currently uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. In order to make sure these good folks have got health care, in order to make sure health care is more available and affordable for small-business owners, we must allow small businesses to pool together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies can. Under this plan, small-business owners and employees will be the deciders. My opponent opposes this kind of plan. He wants Government to decide on behalf of people.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We need to expand tax-free health savings accounts. We'll give small-business owners tax credits to encourage them to put money in health savings accounts for their employees. We want people owning a health savings account so they can make medical decisions on the advice of a doctor, not on somebody working for an HMO. We will expand community health centers to every poor county in America to help the indigent and the poor. We want people to have access to health care. We'll make sure that our low-income children's programs are fully enrolled in. We want people to—people who can't afford health care—we want to make sure health care is available for them.

But I'm going to tell you what else we need to do. In order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we've got to stop these junk lawsuits that are running good doctors out of practice and running up the cost of your health care. I've talked to too many ob-gyns in this country who are getting sued and having trouble practicing their medicine, and that hurts women. No, we need to make sure that we do something different than what we're doing in lawsuits—in the legal system today. See, you cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now. Now, in all we do to make sure health care is available and affordable, we'll make sure that the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

Listen, in changing times, it helps people to have stability if they own something. The homeownership rate in America is at an all-time high under my administration. More and more people are owning their own home. We've got a plan over the next 4 years to continue to expand homeownership to every corner of this country. I want more people owning the—opening up that door of the house they live in and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

We've got to think differently about retirement systems too. Listen, if you're on Social Security, you don't have a thing to worry about. You might remember the campaign 4 years ago when they said, "If George W. gets elected, you're not going to get your check." Remember those ads? You got your check, didn't you? Don't listen to them this time, either. Baby boomers are in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. We need to think differently about retirement. I think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own money and set up a personal savings account to make sure Social Security meets its promise, a Social Security account you call your own, a Social Security account that Government cannot take away.

We have a difference of philosophy in this campaign. My opponent's programs expand Government. My programs expand freedom and opportunity for every American.

Listen, in changing times, things—some things won't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we'll support the institutions that gives our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

And we'll continue to work to spread the responsibility culture in this country. The culture of our country is changing from one that said, "If it feels, good do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We'll defend the homeland. We will transform our military. We'll strengthen our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. We will defeat the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will work to advance liberty and freedom throughout the world, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting terror; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members have been brought to justice. We've led. Many have joined. And America and the world are safer.

We've still got hard work. This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some hard decisions. The hardest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression. We knew he was a sworn enemy of America. We knew of his support for terror. After all, he harbored Abu Nidal, the leader of a terrorist organization that carried out attacks throughout Europe and Asia. Abu Abbas was in his country. He's the person that killed Leon Klinghoffer. Zarqawi, the beheader, had been in Baghdad prior to our arrival. We knew Saddam Hussein's long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. We knew that. And we know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In this dangerous world, we must never forget the lessons of September the 11th. We have a duty to protect the American people. We must take each threat seriously. So in Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat, and I went to the Congress. The Congress looked at the intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history I remembered, and voted overwhelmingly to authorize the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at, and he voted "yes" when it came time to authorize the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, he must try everything possible to prevent war. And so I went to the United Nations hoping that diplomacy would finally work with Saddam Hussein. That's why I went there. I have a duty to the moms and dads and husbands and wives

of those who wear the uniform to try everything to protect our country without the use of the military. And so I stood in front of the United Nations and made the case. They looked at the same intelligence I did. They remembered the same history, and they voted 15 to nothing to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe when an international body speaks, it must mean what it says.

Saddam Hussein didn't believe it. He didn't believe it. Why should he? After all, for 16 years, he had ignored the United Nations—excuse me, 10 years, 16 resolutions. That's resolution after resolution after resolution. As a matter of fact, when they sent inspectors into his country, he systematically deceived them. Diplomacy wasn't going to work. He wasn't about to listen to our demands. So we gave him a last chance. He ignored the last chance. And then I had a choice to make: Take the word of a madman, forget the lessons of September the 11th, or do what's necessary to defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq now live in freedom. Think about what happened in Afghanistan. That was a country run by the Taliban. They were barbarians. They think the exact opposite of the American people. They do not believe in freedom. Many young girls were not allowed to go to school in that country. Imagine a society that would not allow young girls to go to school, and then when their moms stepped out of line, they whipped them in the public square, sometimes killed them in a sports stadium. But today, the free people of Afghanistan are now able to register to vote. Ten million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming October elections. It's a powerful statement of freedom.

It's in our interests that Afghanistan be free. There's no longer training camps there. Al Qaida can no longer find safe haven. Afghanistan is now an ally in the war on terror. And Afghanistan stands as a bright light, stands in contrast to that ideology of hatred spread by our enemies.

In Iraq, despite ongoing violence, they now have a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections will be held in January. I met with Prime Minister Allawi. He's a strong man. I wanted to make sure he was as committed to freedom as we were. He is. I looked him in the eye. He told me, he said, "Mr. President, we'll succeed if you don't let these terrorists shake your will." I told him, I said, "When America gives its word, Mr. Prime Minister, America will keep its word." A strong man, who knows that they can achieve their objective, which is a free society.

It's in our interest they achieve a free society. It's in our interest that Iraq be free. Iraq will be an ally in the war on terror. Iraq will be standing with the nations of freedom to stop these ideologues of hate from advancing their cause. You know, when the Prime Minister was here, he received great accolades, except there was one noticeable voice. My opponent criticized Prime Minister Allawi here in the United States.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He criticized a brave man who's risking his life for the freedom of his country and for our security. You cannot lead; you cannot lead a coalition; you cannot convince the Iraqi people that we stand with them if when their Prime Minister and their leader comes to U.S. soil, someone is willing to criticize him. He was wrong to question his credibility. America must stand with these people as they make the hard choices for freedom. It's in our interest.

The world will be more peaceful when Iraq is free, and Iraq will be free. And that's our mission. We will help train Iraqi citizens and Afghan citizens so they can do the hard work of defending their country against these terrorists who want to stop the march of freedom. We'll get them on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with honor they have earned.

Listen, we've got a great United States military. I'm proud to be their Commander in Chief. And I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. Thank you, sir.

And I want to assure the loved ones of those who wear the uniform, they'll have the full support of the Government. That's why I went to the Congress and asked for $87 billion to provide vital equipment and fuel and ammunition, body armor for our troops in harm's way in both Iraq and Afghanistan. This was an important piece of legislation. Matter of fact, it was so important, we got great bipartisan support. Only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against the funding request, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people of this fact: Four Members of the United States Senate voted to authorize force and didn't vote to fund the troops, only four Members, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember, they asked him, "How could you make that vote?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." They kept pressing him. He said he's proud of his vote. And finally, he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

I appreciate the contributions our friends and allies are making in our cause. They've been helping. We've got some 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, nearly 30 in Iraq, and I thank them. I'm not going to denigrate their service. I'm going to continue to thank their service in the cause of freedom. I believe they're doing useful, important work. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to work with our allies and friends, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Later this week, I'm going to have an opportunity to debate my opponent. It's been a little tough to prepare for the debates because he keeps changing his positions—[*laughter*]—especially on the war. I mean, after all, he voted for the use of force but against funding the troops. He said that we're not spending enough money to reconstruct Iraq, yet now says we're spending too much. He said it was the right decision to go into Iraq, yet now he calls it the wrong war.

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. I think he can spend 90 minutes debating himself. [*Laughter*] You cannot lead if you don't know where you stand. I'm going to continue to speak as clearly as I can and tell the people what I believe. And I'm not going to change positions when times get tough.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe the wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I like to tell the people that one of my favorite leaders is Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I saw him in New York. I said, "Do you mind if I talk about you on the campaign trail?" He said, "Fine." I said, "All right. I'm going tell them you like Elvis,"—[*laughter*]—which he does. [*Laughter*]

I want you to think about this when you're explaining to people about what I mean by the transformational power of liberty. Think about this fact, that it wasn't all that long ago that we were fighting Japan as a sworn enemy of America. Fifty-eight years ago, it seems like a long—if you're 58 years old, it seems like a long time. [*Laughter*] In the march of history, it really wasn't all that long. My dad was in the war. I suspect many people's relatives were in that war against a sworn enemy.

After we won World War II, Harry Truman said, "Why don't we help the Japanese become a democracy," because he believed in the transformational power of liberty. There were a lot of skeptics in our country then. They said, "Well, you know, they were an enemy. They can't be a democracy," or, "Why worry? They were an enemy. They inflicted too much harm on us." But fortunately, the President and others stood their line. They believed, and today, because of that belief, I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about how to keep the peace we all want. Think about that. And that's what we want. We want our children and grandchildren to be able to grow up in a peaceful world.

I believe we have that obligation to work for that peaceful world. And when we succeed in Iraq—you see, Zarqawi has only got one weapon. He can't beat us militarily. The only thing he can do is shake our conscience

because we value human rights and human dignity. We weep when we see the brutality he inflicts on TV. It breaks our—that's the only weapon he has. We also understand that freedom will whip the Zarqawis of the world in the long term. In the long term, free societies will make this world a peaceful place. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, and they'll be talking about the peace. And our children and our grandchildren will be able to grow up in a better world.

I believe the women in the broader Middle East yearn to be free. I believe that moms in every society want to raise their children in a free society. I believe that if given the chance, people in the broader Middle East will choose the finest government ever devised by man, and that's democracy. I believe all these things not because freedom is America's gift to the world; I believe this because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We will continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I'll never forget the day. I'll never forget the sights and sounds of standing in that rubble. I remember workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember doing my best to console those who had come out of the rubble, and a guy looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Don't let me down." I've waken up every morning since that day thinking about how best to protect America. I will never relent in defending the security of this country, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I said if you—I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve our great country, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help and with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Thank you, firefighters.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:39 p.m. at Voice of America Park. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Lt. Gov. Jennette Bradley and Auditor of State Betty Montgomery of Ohio; Ohio State Treasurer Joseph T. Deters, write-in candidate for county prosecutor, Hamilton County, OH; pro football Hall of Famer Anthony Munoz; country music entertainer Darryl Worley; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Supplemental Budget Request To Support Comprehensive Response and Recovery Efforts After Hurricanes Ivan and Jeanne

September 27, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On September 8th, I signed into law Public Law 108–303, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, which provided $2 billion in supplemental funds for hurricane-related disaster relief. On September 14th, I submitted a supplemental request totaling $3.1 billion to continue immediate assistance to address the impact of Hurricanes Charley and Frances.

Due to Hurricanes Ivan and Jeanne and other hurricane-related needs, I am requesting additional emergency funds from the Congress. I now ask the Congress to consider the enclosed requests, totaling over $7.1 billion, for additional emergency FY 2004 supplemental resources for the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Homeland

Security, the Interior, Justice, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs; as well as the Corps of Engineers, International Assistance Programs, and the Small Business Administration.

I hereby designate these specific proposals in the amounts requested herein as emergency requirements. These additional requests will support response and recovery effort to address the critical needs associated with the effects of Hurricanes Ivan and Jeanne and other storms in southern and eastern States and other affected areas. In addition to this enacted and requested emergency funding, Federal agencies will continue to use existing resources and programs for response and recovery efforts from all recent hurricanes and storms.

I urge the Congress to limit this emergency funding to those items directly related to the recovery efforts from the impact of these recent major disasters and to act expeditiously on this and my September 14th emergency supplemental request.

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Executive Order 13358—Assignment of Functions Relating to Certain Appointments, Promotions, and Commissions in the Armed Forces

September 28, 2004

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. *Assignment of Functions to the Secretary of Defense.* The Secretary of Defense shall perform, except with respect to the Coast Guard during any period in which it is not operating as a service in the Navy, the functions of the President under the following provisions of title 10, United States Code:

(a) subsection 1521(a);

(b) the first sentence of subsection 12203(a);

(c) the first sentence of subsection 14111(a), except with respect to reports relating to the grades of brigadier general or above, or rear admiral (lower half) or above; and

(d) subsection 14310(a), except with respect to removals relating to a promotion list for grades of brigadier general or above, or rear admiral (lower half) or above.

Sec. 2. *Assignment of Functions to the Secretary of Homeland Security.* The Secretary of Homeland Security shall perform, with respect to the Coast Guard during any period in which it is not operating as a service in the Navy, the functions assigned to the President by the following provisions of the United States Code:

(a) subsection 1521(a) of title 10;

(b) the first sentence of subsection 12203(a) of title 10;

(c) subsection 729(g) of title 14, except with respect to approval of, or removal of a name from, a report relating to the grades of rear admiral (lower half) or above; and

(d) subsection 738(a) of title 14, except with respect to removals relating to a promotion list for grades of rear admiral (lower half) or above.

Sec. 3. *Reassignment of Functions Assigned.* The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security may reassign the functions assigned to them by this order to civilian officers, within their respective departments, who hold a position for which the President makes an appointment by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, except that the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security may not reassign the functions assigned by sections 1(b) and 2(b), respectively. The Secretary of Defense may not reassign the function assigned by section 1(c) of this order except to such an officer within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (as defined in section 131(b) of title 10).

Sec. 4. *General Provisions.* (a) This order shall take effect on October 1, 2004.

(b) Nothing in this order shall be construed to limit or otherwise affect the authority of the President as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces

of the United States, or under the Constitution and laws of the United States to nominate or to make or terminate appointments.

(c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees or agents, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 28, 2004.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:31 a.m., September 29, 2004]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on September 30.

Remarks Following an Inspection of Hurricane Damage in Lake Wales, Florida

September 29, 2004

I want to thank the McKenna boys for showing us around here, giving us a chance to see the devastation that took place here from not just one hurricane but three hurricanes. I want to thank my brother Jeb for his hospitality and his leadership. I want to thank Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, for being down here. I want to thank Charlie Bronson, secretary of agriculture. I want to thank Adam Putnam, Congressman from this part of the world. Every time I see Adam, all he does is talk about oranges. His hair is kind of orange.

I understand a lot of people in this area, like Marty and Pat, were hit hard by Jeanne and Charley and Frances. These are storms that have taken lives, storms that have created severe flooding, storms that caused major power outages, and storms that damaged farms and homes and hospitals and roads. It's been a devastating period for the State of Florida. It is the first time in nearly 120 years that four hurricanes have hit the same State in a single season. People of Florida have met historic challenges with extraordinary strength and generosity.

State emergency response teams have saved lives by evacuating people before the storm and responding swiftly after the storm arrived. Power crews and telephone workers are putting in long hours to restore services. Despite week after week of strain, faith-based groups like Southern Baptists and the Salvation Army are setting up kitchens to feed the hungry. The Red Cross is running shelters and providing medical services for the injured. The National Guard is distributing supplies and conducting safety patrols. Across the State, people are showing great compassion and helping their neighbors make it through these storms, and I thank them for their care and their decency.

The Federal Government is continuing our active role in the recovery efforts. We're working closely with Governors like Jeb and with other State and local officials to make sure resources reach the people who need it. I've asked Congress to provide $12.2 billion to respond to Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne. My request provides resources to repair bridges and highways and hospitals. It includes funding for the Small Business Administration to make loans to homeowners and small businesses. It includes more than $8 billion for FEMA, the largest amount ever provided in response to a natural disaster. FEMA has responded rapidly to all four storms, and they continue working to make disaster assistance available to people in need.

I want to thank Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and FEMA Director Mike Brown for their tremendous work these past few weeks. They, and those who work for FEMA, have the gratitude of the administration and the people of this country.

I know Florida's agriculture sector has been hit especially hard. Marty and Pat almost lost half their orange crop. I know a lot of other growers have lost a lot of crop too. My budget request will provide vital assistance to the citrus growers and to other farmers and ranchers who've suffered losses. Secretary Veneman and I will also ensure that Florida farmers are treated fairly on the global market and that no country takes advantage of citrus growers during this time of

disaster. My administration will make sure that citrus remains a strong part of this State's economy.

The Federal Government is committed to helping people here get back on their feet. I call on Congress to pass my supplemental request quickly so we can get more people in Florida the help they need. These have been trying weeks for Americans across the Southeast, especially in this State. Once again, I want to thank Jeb for his outstanding leadership. I thank the citizens of Florida for their great courage and their decency. Our Nation is praying for the victims of these storms. We pray for all who come to their aid.

May God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:39 p.m. in an orange grove owned by brothers Marty and Pat McKenna. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Charles H. Bronson; and Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response Mike Brown. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Disaster Relief Officials and Volunteers in Stuart, Florida

September 30, 2004

Thank you all very much for being here. And I'm really glad to be with my brother Jeb, the Governor, who has done such a—Jeb has shown tremendous leadership and compassion during these trying days for this great State. I am really proud of him.

I want to thank Mike Brown of FEMA. He has worked really hard as well to help relieve the suffering from these storms.

I want to thank all the State and local officials for working hard. I had the chance to meet some county commissioners from this county, people from the sheriff's office, people from the police department, all of whom are spending an extraordinary amount of time helping the citizens here who hurt.

I appreciate the strong leadership of the—of those who represent the armies of compassion. I'm proud to stand with the men and women of the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and other faith-based and community groups that are providing important relief. Volunteers like these behind me have worked long hours to help those affected by the storms—long hours not only in Florida but in other States as well. The Red Cross, for example, has sheltered over 400,000 people. The Salvation Army, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Convoy of Hope from Springfield, Missouri, and other faith-based groups have set up kitchens and helped feed the hungry.

Unions and truckers have transported supplies. Young people have given up free time to lend a hand. I just met with some of the high school students here from Martin High School who are volunteering to help the Red Cross. I thank them for their example. I thank them for their service.

See, these volunteers show the true heart of America. Because we're a compassionate people, we care when a neighbor hurts; we long to help somebody when help is needed. They have the gratitude of all they've served, and they have the admiration for our whole country.

Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne have strained the resources of many relief organizations. People across the Nation have donated money and supplies to help their efforts. I'm grateful for their generosity. I hope many more Americans will continue to contribute. It's very important for our fellow citizens to understand the strain on the resources for the Red Cross, for example, or the Salvation Army or other faith-based groups. And if you want to help, if you want to participate in helping the good folks in this part of the country who hurt, contribute. You can contact the Red Cross at 1–800–HELPNOW or the Salvation Army at 1–800–SALARMY or the Florida Volunteer and Donations Hotline at 1–800–FLHELP1. Or you can contact one of the many other organizations that are providing help.

The Federal Government is working closely with State and local authorities to help people recover. FEMA is working with Florida's Emergency Response Team and the National Guard to ensure safety. Medical

personnel are treating the sick and the injured. Earlier today I visited a FEMA disaster recovery center where hurricane victims can go to register for disaster assistance.

I've asked Congress to provide $12.2 billion in Federal funds to respond to these storms. I urge the Congress to pass my supplemental request quickly so the people of Florida can get the help they need.

People in Florida and many other States are coming through a trying time. I thank all those who've reached out to help the neighbors in need. I thank the leaders who have shown strength and composure during difficult times. And to our fellow citizens facing hardship, the prayers of our Nation are with you, and America stands with you.

Thank you all for coming. God bless your compassion.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:36 a.m. at the American Red Cross, Martin County Chapter. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response Mike Brown. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on a Constitutional Amendment on Marriage

September 30, 2004

Today a bipartisan majority of U.S. Representatives voted in favor of a constitutional amendment affirming the sanctity of marriage as a union between a man and a woman. I am disappointed that the House failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds vote. Because activist judges and local officials in some parts of the country are seeking to redefine marriage for the rest of the country, we must remain vigilant in defending traditional marriage. I welcome the important debate underway across America on this issue.

Presidential Debate in Coral Gables, Florida

September 30, 2004

Jim Lehrer. Good evening from the University of Miami Convocation Center in Coral Gables, Florida. I'm Jim Lehrer of the News Hour on PBS. And I welcome you to the first of the 2004 Presidential debates between President George W. Bush, the Republican nominee, and Senator John Kerry, the Democratic nominee.

These debates are sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates. Tonight's will last 90 minutes, following detailed rules of engagement worked out by representatives of the candidates. I have agreed to enforce their rules on them. The umbrella topic is foreign policy and homeland security. But the specific subjects were chosen by me. The questions were composed by me. The candidates have not been told what they are, nor has anyone else.

For each question, there can only be a 2-minute response, a 90-second rebuttal, and at my discretion, a discussion extension of 1 minute. A green light will come on when 30 seconds remain in any given answer, yellow at 15, red at 5 seconds, and then flashing red means time's up. There is also a backup buzzer system if needed. Candidates may not direct a question to each other. There will be 2-minute closing statements but no opening statements.

There is an audience here in the hall, but they will remain absolutely silent for the next 90 minutes, except for now, when they join me in welcoming President Bush and Senator Kerry. [*Applause*]

Good evening, Mr. President, Senator Kerry.

As determined by a coin toss, the first question goes to you, Senator Kerry. You have 2 minutes.

Preventing Future Terrorist Attacks

Do you believe you could do a better job than President Bush in preventing another

9/11-type terrorist attack on the United States?

Senator Kerry. Yes, I do. But before I answer further, let me thank you for moderating. I want to thank the University of Miami for hosting us. And I know the President will join me in welcoming all of Florida to this debate. You've been through the roughest weeks anybody could imagine. Our hearts go out to you, and we admire your pluck and perseverance.

I can make America safer than President Bush has made us. And I believe President Bush and I both love our country equally, but we just have a different set of convictions about how you make America safe. I believe America is safest and strongest when we are leading the world and when we are leading strong alliances.

I'll never give a veto to any country over our security, but I also know how to lead those alliances. This President has left them in shatters across the globe, and we're now 90 percent of the casualties in Iraq and 90 percent of the costs. I think that's wrong, and I think we can do better.

I have a better plan for homeland security. I have a better plan to be able to fight the war on terror: by strengthening our military; strengthening our intelligence; by going after the financing more authoritatively; by doing what we need to do to rebuild the alliances; by reaching out to the Muslim world, which the President has almost not done; and beginning to isolate the radical Islamic Muslims, not have them isolate the United States of America.

I know I can do a better job in Iraq, where I have a plan to have a summit with all of the allies, something this President has not yet achieved, not yet been able to do to bring people to the table. We can do a better job of training the Iraqi forces to defend themselves. And I know that we can do a better job of preparing for elections. All of these, and especially homeland security, which we'll talk about a little bit later.

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, you have a 90-second rebut.

President Bush. I too thank the University of Miami and say our prayers are with the good people of this State who've suffered a lot.

September the 11th changed how America must look at the world. And since that day, our Nation has been on a multipronged strategy to keep our country safer. We've pursued Al Qaida wherever Al Qaida tries to hide; 75 percent of known Al Qaida leaders have been brought to justice. The rest of them know we're after them.

We've upheld the doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist." And the Taliban, no longer in power; 10 million people have registered to vote in Afghanistan in the upcoming Presidential election.

In Iraq, we saw a threat, and we realized that after September the 11th, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. Saddam Hussein now sits in a prison cell. America and the world are safer for it.

We continue to pursue our policy of disrupting those who proliferate weapons of mass destruction. Libya has disarmed. The A.Q. Khan network has been brought to justice. And as well, we're pursuing a strategy of—of freedom around the world, because I understand free nations will reject terror; free nations will answer the hopes and aspirations of their people; free nations will help us achieve the peace we all want.

Likelihood of Future Terrorist Attack

Mr. Lehrer. New question, Mr. President, 2 minutes. Do you believe the election of Senator Kerry on November the 2d would increase the chances of the U.S. being hit by another 9/11-type terrorist attack?

President Bush. I don't believe it's going to happen. I believe I'm going to win because the American people know I know how to lead. I've shown the American people I know how to lead. I have—I understand everybody in this country doesn't agree with the decisions that I've made, and I made some tough decisions. But people know where I stand. People out there listening know what I believe, and that's how best it is to keep the peace.

This Nation of ours has got a solemn duty to defeat this ideology of hate, and that's what they are. This is a group of killers who

will not only kill here but kill children in Russia, that will attack unmercifully in Iraq hoping to shake our will. We have a duty to defeat this enemy. We have a duty to protect our children and grandchildren. The best way to defeat them is to never waver, to be strong, to use every asset at our disposal, is to constantly stay on the offensive, and at the same time, spread liberty.

And that's what people are seeing now is happening in Afghanistan. Ten million citizens have registered to vote. It's a phenomenal statistic, that if given a chance to be free, they will show up at the polls. Forty-one percent of those 10 million are women.

In Iraq, no doubt about it, it's tough. It's hard work. It's incredibly hard. You know why? Because an enemy realizes the stakes. The enemy understands a free Iraq will be a major defeat in their ideology of hatred. That's why they're fighting so vociferously. They showed up in Afghanistan when they were there because they tried to beat us, and they didn't. And they're showing up in Iraq for the same reason. They're trying to defeat us. And if we lose our will, we lose. But if we remain strong and resolute, we will defeat this enemy.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety-second response, Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. I believe in being strong and resolute and determined, and I will hunt down and kill the terrorists, wherever they are. But we also have to be smart, Jim, and smart means not diverting your attention from the real war on terror in Afghanistan against Usama bin Laden and taking it off to Iraq, where the 9/11 Commission confirms there was no connection to 9/11 itself and Saddam Hussein, and where the reason for going to war was weapons of mass destruction, not the removal of Saddam Hussein.

This President has made, I regret to say, a colossal error of judgment. And judgment is what we look for in the President of the United States of America.

I'm proud that important military figures are supporting me in this race: former Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff John Shalikashvili; just yesterday General Eisenhower's son, General John Eisenhower, endorsed me; General—Admiral William Crowe; General Tony McPeak, who ran the Air Force war so effectively for his father. All believe I would make a stronger Commander in Chief. And they believe it because they know I would not take my eye off of the goal, Usama bin Laden. Unfortunately, he escaped in the mountains of Tora Bora. We had him surrounded. But we didn't use American forces, the best trained in the world, to go kill him. The President relied on Afghan warlords that he outsourced that job to. That's wrong.

President's Judgment on Foreign Policy

Mr. Lehrer. New question, 2 minutes, Senator Kerry. "Colossal" misjudgments—what colossal misjudgments, in your opinion, has President Bush made in these areas?

Senator Kerry. Well, where do you want me to begin? [*Laughter*] First of all, he made the misjudgment of saying to America that he was going to build a true alliance, that he would exhaust the remedies of the United Nations and go through the inspections. In fact, he first didn't even want to do that, and it wasn't until former Secretary of State Jim Baker and General Scowcroft and others pushed publicly and said, "You've got to go to the U.N.," that the President finally changed his mind—his campaign has a word for that—and went to the United Nations.

Now, once there, we could have continued those inspections. We had Saddam Hussein trapped.

He also promised America that he would go to war as a last resort. Those words mean something to me, as somebody who has been in combat, "last resort." You've got to be able to look in the eyes of families and say to those parents, "I tried to do everything in my power to prevent the loss of your son and daughter." I don't believe the United States did that, and we pushed our allies aside.

And so today, we are 90 percent of the casualties and 90 percent of the cost, $200 billion—$200 billion that could have been used for health care, for schools, for construction, for prescription drugs for seniors, and it's in Iraq. And Iraq is not even the center of the focus of the war on terror. The center is Afghanistan where, incidentally, there were more Americans killed last year than the year before, where the opium production is 75 percent of the world's opium

production, where 40 to 60 percent of the economy of Afghanistan is based on opium, where the elections have been postponed 3 times. The President moved the troops, so he's got 10 times the number of troops in Iraq than he has in Afghanistan, where Usama bin Laden is. Does that mean that Saddam Hussein was 10 times more important than Usama bin Laden—excuse me—Saddam Hussein more important than Usama bin Laden? I don't think so.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety-second response, Mr. President.

President Bush. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at and declared, in 2002, that Saddam Hussein was a grave threat. He also said, in December of 2003, that anyone who doubts that the world is safer without Saddam Hussein does not have the judgment to be President. I agree with him. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein.

I was hoping diplomacy would work. I understand the serious consequences of committing our troops into harm's way. It's the hardest decision a President makes. So I went to the United Nations. I didn't need anybody to tell me to go to the United Nations; I decided to go there myself. And I went there hoping that, once and for all, the free world would act in concert to get Saddam Hussein to listen to our demands. And they passed a resolution that said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe when an international body speaks, it must mean what it says.

But Saddam Hussein had no intention of disarming. Why should he? He had 16 other resolutions, and nothing took place. As a matter of fact—my opponent talks about inspectors—the facts are that he was systematically deceiving the inspectors. That wasn't going to work. That's kind of a pre-September-10th mentality, to hope that somehow resolutions and failed inspections would make this world a more peaceful place. He was hoping we'd turn away. But there was, fortunately, others beside myself who believed that we ought to take action, and we did. The world is safer without Saddam Hussein.

Priorities in the War on Terror

Mr. Lehrer. New question, Mr. President, 2 minutes. What about Senator Kerry's point, the comparison he drew between the priorities of going after Usama bin Laden and going after Saddam Hussein?

President Bush. Jim, we've got the capability of doing both. As a matter of fact, this is a global effort. We're facing a—a group of folks who have such hatred in their heart, they'll strike anywhere with any means. And that's why it's essential that we have strong alliances, and we do. That's why it's essential that we make sure that we keep weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of people like Al Qaida, which we are. But to say that there's only one focus on the war on terror doesn't really understand the nature of the war on terror.

Of course we're after Saddam Hussein—I mean, bin Laden. He's—he's isolated. Seventy-five percent of his people have been brought to justice. The killer in—the mastermind of the September the 11th attacks, Khalid Sheik Mohammad, is in prison. We're making progress, but the front on this war is more than just one place. The Philippines—we've got help—we're helping them there to bring—to bring Al Qaida affiliates to justice there. And of course Iraq is a central part of the war on terror. That's why Zarqawi and his people are trying to fight us. Their hope is that we grow weary and we leave. The biggest disaster that could happen is that we not succeed in Iraq. We will succeed. We've got a plan to do so, and the main reason we'll succeed is because the Iraqis want to be free.

I had the honor of visiting with Prime Minister Allawi. He's a strong, courageous leader. He believes in the freedom of the Iraqi people. He doesn't want U.S. leadership, however, to send mixed signals, to not stand with the Iraqi people. He believes, like I believe, that the Iraqis are ready to fight for their own freedom. They just need the help to be trained. There will be elections in January. We're spending reconstruction money. And our alliance is strong. That's the plan for victory. And when Iraq is free, America will be more secure.

Mr. Lehrer. Senator Kerry, 90 seconds.

Senator Kerry. The President just talked about Iraq as a center of the war on terror. Iraq was not even close to the center of the war on terror before the President invaded it. The President made the judgment to divert forces from under General Tommy Franks from Afghanistan before the Congress even approved it, to begin to prepare to go to war in Iraq. And he rushed to war in Iraq without a plan to win the peace.

Now, that is not the judgment that a President of the United States ought to make. You don't take America to war unless you have a plan to win the peace. You don't send troops to war without the body armor that they need. I've met kids in Ohio, parents in Wisconsin, places—Iowa, where they're going out on the Internet to get the state-of-the-art body gear to send to their kids—some of them have got them for a birthday present. I think that's wrong. Humvees—10,000 out of 12,000 Humvees that are over there aren't armored. And you go visit some of those kids in the hospitals today who were maimed because they don't have the armament.

This President just—I don't know if he sees what's really happening out there, but it's getting worse by the day—more soldiers killed in June than before, more in July than June, more in August than July, more in September than in August. And now we see beheadings, and we've got weapons of mass destruction crossing the border every single day, and they're blowing people up. And we don't have enough troops there.

President Bush. Can I respond?

Mr. Lehrer. Let's do a—one of these one-minute extensions. You have 30 seconds.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

First of all, what my opponent wants you to forget is that he voted to authorize the use of force and now says, "It's the wrong war at the wrong time at the wrong place." I don't see how you can lead this country to succeed in Iraq if you say "wrong war, wrong time, wrong place." What message does that send our troops? What message does that send our allies? What message does that send the Iraqis?

No, the way to win this is to be steadfast and resolved and to follow through on the plan that I've just outlined.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds, Senator.

Senator Kerry. Yes, we have to be steadfast and resolved, and I am. And I will succeed for those troops, now that we're there. We have to succeed. We can't leave a failed Iraq. But that doesn't mean it wasn't a mistake of judgment to go there and take the focus off of Usama bin Laden. It was. Now, we can succeed, but I don't believe this President can. I think we need a President who has the credibility to bring the allies back to the table and to do what's necessary to make it so America isn't doing this alone.

Homeland Security

Mr. Lehrer. We'll come back to Iraq in a moment, but I want to come back to where I began, on homeland security. This is a 2-minute new question. Senator Kerry, as President, what would you do specifically, in addition to or differently, to increase the homeland security of the United States, than what President Bush is doing?

Senator Kerry. Jim, let me tell you exactly what I'll do, and there are a long list of things. First of all, what kind of mixed message does it send when you've got $500 million going over to Iraq to put police officers in the streets of Iraq and the President is cutting the COPS program in America? What kind of message does it send to be sending money to open firehouses in Iraq, but we're shutting firehouses, who are the first-responders, here in America?

The President hasn't put one nickel—not one nickel—into the effort to fix some of our tunnels and bridges and most exposed subway systems. That's why they had to close down the subway in New York when the Republican Convention was there. We hadn't done the work that ought to be done. The President—95 percent of the containers that come into the ports, right here in Florida, are not inspected. Civilians get onto aircraft, and their—their luggage is X-rayed, but the cargo hold is not X-rayed. Does that make you feel safer in America?

This President thought it was more important to give the wealthiest people in America a tax cut rather than invest in homeland security. Those aren't my values. I believe in protecting America first. And long before President Bush and I get a tax cut—and that's

who gets it—long before we do, I'm going to invest in homeland security, and I'm going to make sure we're not cutting COPS programs in America, and we're fully staffed at our firehouses and that we protect the nuclear and chemical plants. The President also, unfortunately, gave in to the chemical industry, which didn't want to do some of the things necessary to strengthen our chemical plant exposure.

And there's an enormous undone job to protect the loose nuclear materials in the world that are able to get to terrorists. That's a whole other subject, but—I see we still have a little bit more time. Let me just quickly say, at the current pace the President will not secure the loose material in the Soviet Union—former Soviet Union for 13 years. I'm going to do it in 4 years. And we're going to keep it out of the hands of terrorists.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety-second response, Mr. President.

President Bush. I don't think we want to get to how he's going to pay for all these promises. It's like a huge tax gap and—anyway, that's for another debate.

My administration has tripled the amount of money we're spending on homeland security, to $30 billion a year. My administration worked with the Congress to create the Department of Homeland Security so we could better coordinate our borders and ports. We've got 1,000 extra Border Patrol on the southern border, more than 1,000 on the northern border. We're modernizing our borders. We've spent $3.1 billion for fire and police—$3.1 billion. We're doing our duty to provide the funding.

But the best way to protect this homeland is to stay on the offense. We have to be right 100 percent of the time, and the enemy only has to be right once to hurt us. There's a lot of good people working hard. And by the way, we've also changed the culture of the FBI to have counterterrorism as its number one priority. We're communicating better. We're going to reform our intelligence services to make sure that we get the best intelligence possible. The PATRIOT Act is vital. It's vital that the Congress renew the PATRIOT Act, which enables our law enforcement to disrupt terror cells.

But again, I repeat to my fellow citizens, the best way to protect you is to stay on the offense.

Mr. Lehrer. Yes, let's do a little—yes, 30 seconds.

Senator Kerry. The President just said the FBI had changed its culture. We just read on the front pages of America's papers that there are over 100,000 hours of tapes unlistened to. On one of those tapes may be the enemy being right the next time. And the test is not whether you're spending more money. The test is, are you doing everything possible to make America safe? We didn't need that tax cut. America needed to be safe.

President Bush. Of course we're doing everything we can to protect America. I wake up every day thinking about how best to protect America. That's my job. I work with Director Mueller of the FBI. He comes into my office, when I'm in Washington, every morning talking about how to protect us. There's a lot of really good people working hard to do so. It's hard work.

But again, I want to tell the American people, we're doing everything we can at home, but you better have a President who chases these terrorists down and bring them to justice before they hurt us again.

Criteria for Withdrawal of U.S. Troops From Iraq

Mr. Lehrer. New question, Mr. President, 2 minutes. What criteria would you use to determine when to start bringing U.S. troops home from Iraq?

President Bush. Let me first tell you that the best way for Iraq to be safe and secure is for Iraqi citizens to be trained to do the job. And that's what we're doing. We got 100,000 trained now, 125,000 by the end of this year, over 200,000 by the end of next year. That is the best way. We'll never succeed in Iraq if the Iraqi citizens do not want to take matter into their own hands and protect themselves. I believe they want to. Prime Minister Allawi believes they want to.

And so the best indication about when we can bring our troops home—which I really want to do, but I don't want to do so for the sake of bringing them home; I want to do so because we've achieved an objective—

is to see the Iraqis perform, is to see the Iraqis step up and take responsibility.

And so the answer to your question is, when our generals on the ground and Ambassador Negroponte tells me that Iraq is ready to defend herself from these terrorists, that elections will have been held by then, that there's stability, and that they're on their way to—you know, a nation of—that's free. That's when. And I hope it's as soon as possible. But I know putting artificial deadlines won't work. My opponent one time said, "Well, get me elected, I'll have them out of there in 6 months." That's—you can't do that and expect to win the war on terror.

My message to our troops is: Thank you for what you're doing; we're standing with you strong; we'll give you all the equipment you need; and we'll get you home as soon as the mission's done, because this is a vital mission. A free Iraq will be a ally in the war on terror, and that's essential. A free Iraq will set a powerful example in the part of the world that is desperate for freedom. A free Iraq will help secure Israel. A free Iraq will enforce the hopes and aspirations of the reformers in places like Iran. A free Iraq is essential for the security of this country.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds, Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. Thank you, Jim. My message to the troops is also "Thank you" for what they're doing, but it's also, "Help is on the way." I believe those troops deserve better than what they are getting today. You know, it's interesting, when I was in the ropeline just the other day coming out here from Wisconsin, a couple of young returnees were in the line, one active duty, one from the Guard. And they both looked at me and said, "We need you. You've got to help us over there."

Now, I believe there's a better way to do this. You know, the President's father did not go into Iraq—into Baghdad, beyond Basra. And the reason he didn't is, he said—he wrote in his book, because there was no viable exit strategy. And he said our troops would be occupiers in a bitterly hostile land. That's exactly where we find ourselves today. There's a sense of American occupation.

The only building that was guarded when the troops went into Baghdad was the oil ministry. We didn't guard the nuclear facilities. We didn't guard the foreign office, where you might have found information about weapons of mass destruction. We didn't guard the borders. Almost every step of the way, our troops have been left on these extraordinarily difficult missions. I know what it's like to go out on one of those missions where you don't know what's around the corner. And I believe our troops need other allies helping. I'm going to hold that summit. I will bring fresh credibility, a new start, and we will get the job done right.

Mr. Lehrer. New——

President Bush. Jim——

Mr. Lehrer. All right, go ahead. Yes, sir.

President Bush. I think it's worthy for a followup——

Mr. Lehrer. Sure.

President Bush. ——if you don't mind.

Senator Kerry. Let's change the rules. We can add a whole—[*inaudible*].

Mr. Lehrer. We can do 30 seconds each here.

President Bush. All right. My opponent says, "Help is on the way," but what kind of message does it say to our troops in harm's way, "wrong war, wrong place, wrong time"? That's not a message a Commander in Chief gives—or "This is a great diversion." As well, help is on the way, but it's certainly hard to tell it when he voted against the $87 billion supplemental to provide equipment for our troops and then said he actually did vote for it before he voted against it. That's not what Commander in Chiefs does when you're trying to lead troops.

Mr. Lehrer. Senator Kerry, 30 seconds.

Senator Kerry. Well, you know, when I talked about the $87 billion, I made a mistake in how I talk about the war. But the President made a mistake in invading Iraq. Which is worse? I believe that when you know something's going wrong, you make it right. That's what I learned in Vietnam. When I came back from that war, I saw that it was wrong. Some people don't like the fact that I stood up to say no, but I did. And that's what I did with that vote. And I'm going to lead those troops to victory.

Planning and International Cooperation in Iraq

Mr. Lehrer. All right, new question, 2 minutes, Senator Kerry. Speaking of Vietnam, you spoke to Congress in 1971, after you came back from Vietnam, and you said, quote, "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" Are Americans now dying in Iraq for a mistake?

Senator Kerry. No, and they don't have to, providing we have the leadership that we put—that I'm offering. I believe that we have to win this. The President and I have always agreed on that. And from the beginning, I did vote to give the authority because I thought Saddam Hussein was a threat. And I did accept that—that intelligence. But I also laid out a very strict series of things we needed to do in order to proceed from the position of strength, and the President, in fact, promised them. He went to Cincinnati, and he gave a speech in which he said, "We will plan carefully. We will proceed cautiously. We will not make war inevitable. We will go with our allies." He didn't do any of those things.

They didn't do the planning. They left the planning of the State Department on the State Department desks. They avoided even the advice of their own general. General Shinseki, the Army Chief of Staff, said, "You're going to need several hundred thousand troops." Instead of listening to him, they retired him. The terrorism czar, who has worked for every President since Ronald Reagan, said, "Invading Iraq in response to 9/11 would be like Franklin Roosevelt invading Mexico in response to Pearl Harbor." That's what we have here.

And what we need now is a President who understands how to bring these other countries together to recognize their stakes in this. They do have stakes in it. They've always had stakes in it. The Arab countries have a stake in not having a civil war. The European countries have a stake in not having total disorder on their doorstep. But this President hasn't even held the kind of statesmanlike summits that pull people together and get them to invest in those stakes. In fact, he's done the opposite; he pushed them away. When the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, offered the United Nations, he said, "No, no, we'll go do this alone."

To save for Halliburton the spoils of the war, they actually issued a memorandum from the Defense Department saying, "If you weren't with us in the war, don't bother applying for any construction." That's not a way to invite people.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds.

President Bush. That's totally absurd. Of course the U.N. was invited in, and we support the U.N. efforts there. They pulled out after Sergio de Mello got killed, but they're now back in, helping with elections. My opponent says we didn't have any allies in this war? What's he say to Tony Blair? What's he say to Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland? I mean, you can't expect to build an alliance when you denigrate the contributions of those who are serving side by side with American troops in Iraq.

Plus, he says the cornerstone of his plan to succeed in Iraq is to call upon nations to serve. So what's the message going to be? "Please join us in Iraq for a grand diversion"? "Join us for a war that is a wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time"? I know how these people think. I deal with them all the time. I sit down with the world leaders frequently and talk to them on the phone frequently. They're not going to follow somebody who says this is "the wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time." They're not going to follow somebody whose core convictions keep changing because of politics in America.

And finally, he says we ought to have a summit. Well, there are summits being held. Japan is going to have a summit for the donors. There's $14 billion pledged, and Prime Minister Koizumi is going to call countries to account to get them to contribute. And there's going to be an Arab summit of the neighborhood countries, and Colin Powell helped set—helped set up that summit.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds, Senator.

Senator Kerry. The United Nations' Kofi Annan offered help after Baghdad fell. And we never picked him up on that and did what was necessary to transfer authority and to transfer reconstruction. It was always American-run.

Secondly, when we went in, there were three countries, Great Britain, Australia, and the United States. That's not a grand coalition. We can do better.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds, Mr. President.

President Bush. Well, actually, he forgot Poland. And now, there are 30 nations involved, standing side by side with our American troops, and I honor their sacrifices. And I don't appreciate it when a candidate for President denigrates the contributions of these brave—brave soldiers. It's—you cannot lead the world if you do not honor the contributions of those who are with us. He called them the "coerced and the bribed." That's not how you bring people together.

Our coalition is strong. It will remain strong, for my—so long as I'm the President.

Postwar Iraq

Mr. Lehrer. New question, Mr. President, 2 minutes. You have said there was a, quote, "miscalculation of what the conditions would be in postwar Iraq." What was the miscalculation, and how did it happen?

President Bush. No, what I said was that because we achieved such a rapid victory, more of the Saddam loyalists were around. In other words, we thought we'd whip more of them going in. But because Tommy Franks did such a great job in planning the operations, we moved rapidly, and a lot of the Ba'athists and Saddam loyalists laid down their arms and disappeared. I thought we would—they would stay and fight, but they didn't. And now we're fighting them now.

It's—and it's hard work. I understand how hard it is. I get the casualty reports every day. I see on the TV screens how hard it is, but it's necessary work. And I'm optimistic. See, I think you can be realistic and optimistic at the same time. I'm optimistic we'll achieve—I know we won't achieve if we send mixed signals. I know we're not going to achieve our objective if we send mixed signals to our troops, our friends, the Iraqi citizens.

We've got a plan in place. The plan says there'll be elections in January, and there will be. The plan says we'll train Iraqi soldiers so they can do the hard work, and we are. And it's not only just America, but NATO is now helping. Jordan is helping train police. The UAE is helping train police. We've allocated $7 billion over the next months for reconstruction efforts, and we're making progress there. And our alliance is strong. Now, I just told you, there's going to be a summit of the Arab nations. Japan will be hosting a summit. We're making progress.

It is hard work. It is hard work to go from a tyranny to a democracy. It's hard work to go from a place where people get their hands cut off or executed, to a place where people are free. But it's necessary work, and a free Iraq is going to make this world a more peaceful place.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds, Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. What I think troubles a lot of people in our country is that the President has just sort of described one kind of mistake, but what he has said is that even knowing there were no weapons of mass destruction, even knowing there was no imminent threat, even knowing there was no connection of Al Qaida, he would still have done everything the same way. Those are his words. Now, I would not.

So what I'm trying to do is just talk the truth to the American people and to the world. Truth is what good policy is based on. It's what leadership is based on.

The President says that I'm denigrating these troops. I have nothing but respect for the British and for Tony Blair and for what they've been willing to do. But you can't tell me that when the most troops any other country has on the ground is Great Britain with 8,300, and below that, the 4 others are below 4,000, and below that, there isn't anybody out of the hundreds, that we have a genuine coalition to get this job done. You can't tell me that on the day that we went into that war and it started, it was principally the United States, the—America and Great Britain and one or two others; that's it. And today we are 90 percent of the casualties and 90 percent of the costs.

And meanwhile, North Korea has gotten nuclear weapons. Talk about mixed messages, the President is the one who said we can't allow countries to get nuclear weapons. They have. I'll change that.

Candidates' Candor and Consistency

Mr. Lehrer. New question, Senator Kerry, 2 minutes. You've just—you've repeatedly accused President Bush, not here tonight but elsewhere before, of not telling the truth about Iraq, essentially of lying to the American people about Iraq. Give us some examples of what you consider to be his not telling the truth.

Senator Kerry. Well, I've never, ever used the harshest word, as you did just then, and I try not to. I've been—but I'll, nevertheless, tell you that I think he has not been candid with the American people, and I'll tell you exactly how.

First of all, we all know that in his State of the Union Message he told Congress about nuclear materials that didn't exist. We know that he promised America that he was going to build this coalition. I just described the coalition. It is not the kind of coalition we were described when we were talking about voting for this. The President said he would exhaust the remedies of the United Nation and go through that full process. He didn't. He cut it off, sort of arbitrarily. And we know that there were further diplomatics—efforts underway. They just decided the time for diplomacy is over and rushed to war without planning for what happens afterwards. Now, he misled the American people in his speech when he said, "We will plan carefully." They obviously didn't. He misled the American people when he said, "We'd go to war as a last resort." We did not go as a last resort. And most Americans know the difference.

Now, this has cost us deeply in the world. I believe that it is important to tell the truth to the American people. I've worked with those leaders the President talks about. I've worked with them for 20 years, for longer than this President, and I know what many of them say today, and I know how to bring them back to the table.

And I believe that fresh start, new credibility, a President who can understand what we have to do to reach out to the Muslim world, to make it clear that this is not—you know, Usama bin Laden uses the invasion of Iraq in order to go out to people and say the—America has declared war on Islam. We need to be smarter about how we wage a war on terror. We need to deny them the recruits. We need to deny them the safe havens. We need to rebuild our alliances. I believe that Ronald Reagan, John Kennedy, and others did that more effectively, and I'm going to try to follow in their footsteps.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds, Mr. President.

President Bush. My opponent just said something amazing. He said Usama bin Laden uses the invasion of Iraq as an excuse to spread hatred for America. Usama bin Laden isn't going to determine how we defend ourselves. Usama bin Laden doesn't get to decide. The American people decide. I decided. The right action was in Iraq.

My opponent calls it a mistake. It wasn't a mistake. He said I misled on Iraq. I don't think he was misleading when he called Iraq a grave threat in the fall of 2002. I don't think he was misleading when he said that it was right to disarm Iraq in the spring of 2003. I don't think he misled you when he said that if—anyone who doubted whether the world was better off without Saddam Hussein in power didn't have the judgment to be President. I don't think he was misleading. I think what is misleading is to say you can lead and succeed in Iraq if you keep changing your positions on this war, and he has. As the politics change, his positions change, and that's not how a Commander in Chief acts.

I—let me finish. The intelligence I looked at was the same intelligence my opponent looked at, the very same intelligence. And when I stood up there and spoke to the Congress, I was speaking off the same intelligence he looked at to make his decisions to support the authorization of force.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds—we'll do a 30-second here.

Senator Kerry. I wasn't misleading when I said he was a threat. Nor was I misleading on the day that the President decided to go to war when I said that he had made a mistake in not building strong alliances and that I would have preferred that he did more diplomacy. I've had one position, one consistent position, that Saddam Hussein was a threat; there was a right way to disarm him and a wrong way. And the President chose the wrong way.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds, Mr. President.

President Bush. The only thing consistent about my opponent's position is that he's been inconsistent. He changes positions. And you cannot change positions in this war on terror if you expect to win. And I expect to win. It's necessary we win. We're being challenged like never before, and we have a duty to our country and to future generations of America to achieve a free Iraq, a free Afghanistan, and to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction.

Hard Decisions/Support for the Military

Mr. Lehrer. New question, Mr. President, 2 minutes. Has the war in Iraq been worth the cost in American lives? Ten thousand fifty two—I mean, 1,052 as of today.

President Bush. No, every life is precious. Every life matters. You know, my hardest—the hardest part of the job is to know that I committed the troops in harm's way and then do the best I can to provide comfort for the loved ones who lost a son or a daughter or a husband and wife.

And you know, I think about Missy Johnson, who is a fantastic young lady I met in Charlotte, North Carolina, she and her son, Bryan. They came to see me. Her husband, P.J., got killed. He'd been in Afghanistan, went to Iraq. You know, it's hard work to try to love her as best as I can, knowing full well that the decision I made caused her loved one to be in harm's way. I told her, after we prayed and teared up and laughed some, that I thought her husband's sacrifice was noble and worthy, because I understand the stakes of this war on terror. I understand that we must find Al Qaida wherever they hide. We must deal with threats before they fully materialize—and Saddam Hussein was a threat—and that we must spread liberty, because in the long run, the way to defeat hatred and tyranny and oppression is to spread freedom. Missy understood that. That's what she told me her husband understood.

So you say, was it worth it? Every life is precious. That's what distinguishes us from the enemy. Everybody matters. But I think it's worth it, Jim. I think it's worth it because I think—I know in the long term, a free Iraq, a free Afghanistan will set such a powerful example in the part of the world that's desperate for freedom—it will help change the world—that we can look back and say, "We did our duty."

Mr. Lehrer. Senator, 90 seconds.

Senator Kerry. I understand what the President is talking about, because I know what it means to lose people in combat. And the question, is it worth the cost, reminds me of my own thinking when I came back from fighting in that war, and it reminds me that it is vital for us not to confuse the war, ever, with the warriors. That happened before.

And that's one of the reasons why I believe I can get this job done, because I am determined, for those soldiers and for those families, for those kids who put their lives on the line—that is noble. That's the most noble thing that anybody can do. And I want to make sure the outcome honors that nobility.

Now, we have a choice here. I've laid out a plan by which I think we can be successful in Iraq, with a summit, by doing better training faster, by cutting—by doing what we need to do with respect to the U.N. and the elections. There's only 25 percent of the people in there. They can't have an election right now. The President is not getting the job done.

So the choice for America is, you can have a plan that I've laid out in four points, each of which I can tell you more about, or you can go to johnkerry.com and see more of it, or you have the President's plan, which is four words, "More of the same." I think my plan is better. And my plan has a better chance of standing up and fighting for those troops. I will never let those troops down and will hunt and kill the terrorists, wherever they are.

Mr. Lehrer. New—all right, sir, go ahead. Thirty seconds.

President Bush. I understand what it means to be the Commander in Chief, and if I were to ever say this is the wrong war at the wrong time at the right—wrong place, the troops would wonder, "How can I follow this guy?" You cannot lead the war on terror if you keep changing positions on the war on terror and say things like, "Well, this is

just a grand diversion." It's not a grand diversion. This is an essential, that we get it right. And so I—the plan he talks about simply won't work.

Mr. Lehrer. Senator Kerry, you have 30 seconds, right.

Senator Kerry. Secretary of State Colin Powell told this President the Pottery Barn rule: If you break it, you fix it. Now, if you break it, you made a mistake. It's the wrong thing to do, but you own it. And then you've got to fix it and do something with it. Now, that's what we have to do. There's no inconsistency.

Soldiers know, over there, that this isn't being done right yet. I'm going to get it right for those soldiers, because it's important to Israel. It's important to America. It's important to the world. It's important to the fight on terror. But I have a plan to do it. He doesn't.

Timeline for Withdrawal From Iraq/ Conditions in Iraq

Mr. Lehrer. Speaking of your plan, new question, Senator Kerry, 2 minutes. Can you give us specifics—in terms of a scenario, timelines, et cetera—for ending U.S.—major U.S. military involvement in Iraq?

Senator Kerry. The timeline that I've set out—and again, I want to correct the President, because he's misled again this evening on what I've said. I didn't say I would bring troops out in 6 months. I said, "If we do the things that I've set out, and we are successful, we could begin to draw the troops down in 6 months." And I think a critical component of success in Iraq is being able to convince the Iraqis and the Arab world that the United States doesn't have long-term designs on it.

As I understand it, we're building some 14 military bases there now, and some people say they've got a rather permanent concept to them. When you—when you guard the oil ministry but you don't guard the nuclear facilities, the message to a lot of people is, "Maybe—well, maybe they're interested in our oil." Now, the problem is that they didn't think these things through properly, and these are the things you have to think through.

What I want to do is change the dynamics on the ground. And you have to do that by beginning to not back off of Fallujahs and other places and send the wrong message to the terrorists. You have to close the borders. You've got to show you're serious in that regard. But you've also got to show that you're prepared to bring the rest of the world in and share the stakes.

I will make a flat statement: The United States of America has no long-term designs on staying in Iraq. And our goal, in my administration, would be to get all of the troops out of there, with the minimal amount you need for training and logistics as we do in some other countries in the world after a war to be able to sustain the peace. But that's how we're going to win the peace, by rapidly training the Iraqis themselves.

Even the administration has admitted they haven't done the training, because they came to Congress a few weeks ago and asked for a complete reprogramming of the money. Now, what greater admission is there, 16 months afterwards, "Oops, we haven't done the job. We've got to start to spend the money now. Will you guys give us permission to shift it over into training?"

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds.

President Bush. There's 100,000 troops trained, police, guard, special units, border patrol. There's going to be 125,000 trained by the end of this year. Yes, we're getting the job done. It's hard work. Everybody knows it's hard work because there's a determined enemy that's trying to defeat us.

Now, my opponent says he's going to try to change the dynamics on the ground. Well, Prime Minister Allawi was here. He is the leader of that country. He's a brave, brave man. When he came, after giving a speech to the Congress, my opponent questioned his credibility. You can't change the dynamics on the ground if you've criticized the brave leader of Iraq. One of his campaign people alleged that Prime Minister Allawi was like a puppet. That's no way to treat somebody who's courageous and brave, that is trying to lead his country forward.

The way to make sure that we succeed is to send consistent, sound messages to the Iraqi people that when we give our word, we will keep our word; that we stand with

you; that we believe you want to be free. And I do. I believe that the 25 million people, the vast majority, long to have elections. I reject this notion—and I'm not suggesting that my opponent says it, but I reject the notion that some say that if you're Muslim you can't be free; you don't desire freedom. I disagree, strongly disagree with that.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds.

Senator Kerry. I couldn't agree more that the Iraqis want to be free and that they could be free. But I think the President, again, still hasn't shown how he's going to go about it the right way. He has more of the same.

Now, Prime Minister Allawi came here, and he said the terrorists are pouring over the border. That's Allawi's assessment. The national intelligence assessment that was given to the President in July said: Best case scenario, more of the same of what we see today; worst case scenario, civil war. I can do better.

President Bush. Yes, let me——

Mr. Lehrer. Yes, 30 seconds.

President Bush. The reason why Prime Minister Allawi said they're coming across the border is because he recognizes that this is a central part of the war on terror. They're fighting us because they're fighting freedom. They understand that a free Afghanistan or a free Iraq will be a major defeat for them, and those are the stakes. And that's why it is essential we not leave. That's why it's essential we hold the line. That's why it's essential we win, and we will. Under my leadership, we're going to win this war in Iraq.

Future U.S. Military Action

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, a new question, 2 minutes. Does the Iraq experience make it more likely or less likely that you would take the United States into another preemptive military action?

President Bush. I would hope I never have to. I understand how hard it is to commit troops. I never wanted to commit troops. I never—when I was running—when we had the debate in 2000, I never dreamt I would be doing that. But the enemy attacked us, Jim, and I have a solemn duty to protect the American people, to do everything I can to protect us.

I think that by speaking clearly and doing what we say and not sending mixed messages, it is less likely we'll ever have to use troops. But a President must always be willing to use troops. It must—as a last resort.

The—I was hopeful diplomacy would work in Iraq. It was falling apart. There was no doubt in my mind that Saddam Hussein was hoping that the world would turn a blind eye. And if he had been in power—in other words, we had said, "Let's let the inspectors work," or "Let's hope to talk him out; maybe an 18th resolution would work," he'd have been stronger and tougher, and the world would have been a lot worse off. There's just no doubt in my mind. We would rue the day if Saddam Hussein had been in power.

So we use diplomacy every chance we get, believe me. And I—I would hope never to have to use force. But by speaking clearly and sending messages that we mean what we say, we've affected the world in a positive way. Look at Libya. Libya was a threat. Libya is now peacefully dismantling its weapons programs. Libya understood that America and others will enforce doctrine, and the world is better for it.

So to answer your question, I would hope we'd never have to. I think by acting firmly and decisively, it will mean it's less likely to—less likely we have to use force.

Mr. Lehrer. Senator Kerry, 90 seconds.

Senator Kerry. Jim, the President just said something extraordinarily revealing and, frankly, very important in this debate. In answer to your question about Iraq and sending people into Iraq, he just said, "The enemy attacked us." Saddam Hussein didn't attack us. Usama bin Laden attacked us. Al Qaida attacked us.

And when we had Usama bin Laden cornered in the mountains of Tora Bora, 1,000 of his cohorts with him in those mountains, with the American military forces nearby and in the field, we didn't use the best trained troops in the world to go kill the world's number one criminal and terrorist. They outsourced the job to Afghan warlords who only a week earlier had been on the other side fighting against us, neither of whom trusted each other. That's the enemy that attacked us. That's the enemy that was allowed to walk out of those mountains. That's the

enemy that is now in 60 countries with stronger recruits.

He also said Saddam Hussein would have been stronger. That is just factually incorrect. Two-thirds of the country was a no-fly zone when we started this war. We would have had sanctions. We would have had the U.N. inspectors. Saddam Hussein would have been continually weakening. If the President had shown the patience to go through another round of resolution, to sit down with those leaders and say, "What do you need? What do you need now? How much more will it take to get you to join us," we would be in a stronger place today.

President Bush. First, listen——

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds.

President Bush. ——of course I know Usama bin Laden attacked us. I know that. And secondly, to think that another round of resolutions would have caused Saddam Hussein to disarm, disclose is ludicrous, in my judgment. It just shows a significant difference of opinion. We tried diplomacy. We did our best. He was hoping to turn a blind eye, and, yes, he would have been stronger had we not dealt with him. He had the capability of making weapons, and he would have made weapons.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds, Senator.

Senator Kerry. Thirty-five to forty countries in the world had a greater capability of making weapons at the moment the President invaded than Saddam Hussein. And while he has been diverted with 9 out of 10 active duty divisions of our Army either going to Iraq, coming back from Iraq, or getting ready to go, North Korea's got nuclear weapons, and the world is more dangerous. Iran is moving towards nuclear weapons, and the world is more dangerous. Darfur has a genocide. The world is more dangerous. I'd have made a better choice.

Preemptive Action/International Cooperation

Mr. Lehrer. New question, 2 minutes, Senator Kerry. What is your position on the whole concept of preemptive war?

Senator Kerry. The President always has the right and always has had the right for preemptive strike. That was a great doctrine throughout the cold war, and it was always one of the things we argued about with respect to arms control. No President, through all of American history, has ever ceded, and nor would I, the right to preempt in any way necessary to protect the United States of America. But if and when you do it, Jim, you've got to do in a way that passes the test, that passes the global test, where your countrymen, your people, understand fully why you're doing what you're doing and you can prove to the world that you did it for legitimate reasons.

Here we have our own Secretary of State who's had to apologize to the world for the presentation he made to the United Nations. I mean, we can remember when President Kennedy, in the Cuban missile crisis, sent his Secretary of State to Paris to meet with de Gaulle, and in the middle of the discussion to tell them about the missiles in Cuba, he said, "Here, let me show you the photos." And de Gaulle waved them off and said, "No, no, no, no. The word of the President of the United States is good enough for me." How many leaders in the world today would respond to us, as a result of what we've done, in that way?

So what is at test here is the credibility of the United States of America and how we lead the world. Iran and Iraq are now more—Iran and North Korea are now more dangerous. Now, whether preemption is ultimately what has to happen or not, I don't know yet. But I'll tell you this, as President, I'll never take my eye off that ball. I've been fighting for proliferation the entire time—antiproliferation the entire time I've been in the Congress. And we've watched this President actually turn away from some of the treaties that were on the table. You don't help yourself with other nations when you turn away from the global warming treaty, for instance, or when you refuse to deal at length with the United Nations. You have to earn that respect. And I think we have a lot of earning back to do.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds.

President Bush. Let me—I'm not exactly sure what you mean, "passes the global test." You take preemptive action if you pass a global test? My attitude is you take preemptive action in order to protect the American

people, that you act in order to make this country secure.

My opponent talks about me not signing certain treaties. But let me tell you one thing I didn't sign—and I think it shows a difference of our opinion, the difference of opinions—and that is that I wouldn't join the International Criminal Court. This is a body based in The Hague where unaccountable judges and prosecutors could pull our troops, our diplomats up for trial. And I wouldn't join it. And I understand that in certain capitals around the world that that wasn't a popular move. But it's the right move, not to join a foreign court that could—where our people could be prosecuted. My opponent is for joining the International Criminal Court. I just think trying to be popular kind of in the global sense, if it's not in our best interest, makes no sense. I'm interested in working with other nations and do a lot of it. But I'm not going to make decisions that I think are wrong for America.

North Korea and Iran

Mr. Lehrer. New question. Mr. President, do you believe that diplomacy and sanctions can resolve the nuclear problems with North Korea and Iran? Taking them in any order you would like.

President Bush. North Korea, first—I do. Let me say I certainly hope so. Before I was sworn in, the policy of this Government was to have bilateral negotiations with North Korea. And we signed an agreement with North Korea that my administration found out that was not being honored by the North Koreans. And so I decided that a better way to approach the issue was to get other nations involved, just—besides us.

And in Crawford, Texas, Jiang Zemin and I agreed that the nuclear-weapons-free north—peninsula—Korean Peninsula was in his interest and our interest and the world's interest. And so we began a new dialog with North Korea, one that included not only the United States but now China. And China has got a lot of influence over North Korea, in some ways more than we do.

As well we included South Korea, Japan, and Russia. So now there are five voices speaking to Kim Chong-il, not just one. And so if Kim Chong-il decides again to not honor an agreement, he's not only doing injustice to America, he'd be doing injustice to China as well. And I think this will work. It's not going to work if we open up a dialog with Kim Chong-il. That's what he wants. He wants to unravel the six-party talks—or the five—the five-nation coalition that's sending him a clear message.

On Iran, I hope we can do the same thing, continue to work with the world to convince the Iranian mullahs to abandon their nuclear ambitions. We've worked very closely with the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany, and Great Britain, who have been the folks delivering the message to the mullahs that if you expect to be part of the world of nations, get rid of your nuclear programs. The IAEA is involved. There's a special protocol recently been passed that allows for instant inspections. I hope we can do it, and we've got a good strategy.

Mr. Lehrer. Senator Kerry, 90 seconds.

Senator Kerry. With respect to Iran, the British, French, and Germans were the ones who initiated an effort—without the United States, regrettably—to begin to try to move to deter the nuclear possibilities in Iran.

I believe we could have done better. I think the United States should have offered the opportunity to provide the nuclear fuel, test them to see whether or not they were actually looking for it for peaceful purposes. If they weren't willing to work a deal, then we could have put sanctions together. The President did nothing.

With respect to North Korea, the real story, we had inspectors and television cameras in the nuclear reactor in North Korea. Secretary Bill Perry negotiated that under President Clinton. And we knew where the fuel rods were, and we knew the limits on their nuclear power. Colin Powell, our Secretary of State, announced one day that we were going to continue the dialog and work with the North Koreans. The President reversed him publicly, while the President of South Korea was here. And the President of South Korea went back to South Korea bewildered and embarrassed because it went against his policy. And for 2 years, this administration didn't talk at all to North Korea.

While they didn't talk at all, the fuel rods came out. The inspectors were kicked out.

The television cameras were kicked out. And, today, there are four to seven nuclear weapons in the hands of North Korea. That happened on this President's watch. Now, that, I think, is one of the most serious sort of reversals or mixed messages that you could possibly send.

Mr. Lehrer. I want to make sure—yes, sir—but in this one minute, I want to make sure that we understand—the people—the people watching you understand the differences between the two of you on this. You want to continue the multinational talks, correct?

President Bush. Right.

Mr. Lehrer. And you want—you're wanting to do it——

Senator Kerry. Both. I want bilateral talks which put all of the issues from the Armistice of 1952, the economic issues, the human rights issues, the artillery disposal issues, the DMZ issues, and the nuclear issues on the table.

Mr. Lehrer. And you're opposed to that, right?

President Bush. The minute we have bilateral talks, the six-party talks will unwind. It's exactly what Kim Chong-il wants. And by the way, the breach on the agreement was not to plutonium. The breach on the agreement is highly enriched uranium. That's what we caught him doing. That's where he was breaking the agreement.

Secondly, you said—my opponent said that he'd work to put sanctions on Iran. We've already sanctioned Iran. We can't sanction them anymore. There are sanctions in place on Iran. And finally, we were a party to the convincing—to working with Germany, France, and Great Britain to send their Foreign Ministers into Iran.

Iran/Sudan

Mr. Lehrer. New question, 2 minutes, Senator Kerry. You mentioned Darfur, the Darfur region of Sudan. Fifty thousand people have already died in that area, more than a million are homeless, and it's been labeled an act of ongoing genocide. Yet, neither one of you or anyone else connected with your campaigns or your administration that I can find has discussed the possibility of sending in troops. Why not?

Senator Kerry. Well, I'll tell you exactly why not, but I first want to say something about those sanctions on Iran. Only the United States put the sanctions on, alone, and that's exactly what I'm talking about. In order for the sanctions to be effective we should have been working with the British, French, and Germans and other countries. And that's the difference between the President and me. And there again, he sort of slid by the question.

Now, with respect to Darfur, yes, it is a genocide. And months ago, many of us were pressing for action. I think the reason that we're not saying send American troops in at this point is several-fold. Number one, we can do this through the African Union, providing we give them the logistical support. Right now, all the President is providing is humanitarian support. We need to do more than that. They've got to have the logistical capacity to go in and stop the killing, and that's going to require more than is on the table today.

I also believe that it is—one of the reasons we can't do it is we're overextended. Ask the people in the Armed Forces today. We've got Guards and Reserves who are doing double duties. We've got a backdoor draft taking place in America today, people with stop-loss programs where they're told, "You can't get out of the military," 9 out of our 10 active duty divisions committed to Iraq one way or the other, either going, coming, or preparing. So this is the way the President has overextended the United States.

That's why, in my plan, I add two active duty divisions to the United States Army, not for Iraq but for our general demands across the globe. I also intend to double the number of Special Forces so that we can do the job we need to do with respect to fighting the terrorists around the world. And if we do that, then we have the ability to be able to respond more rapidly. But I'll tell you this, as President, if it took American forces, to some degree, to coalesce the African Union, I'd be prepared to do it, because we could never allow another Rwanda. It's a moral responsibility for us in the world.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds.

President Bush. Back to Iran, just for a second. It was not my administration that put

the sanctions on Iran. That happened long before I arrived in Washington, DC.

In terms of Darfur, I agree, it's genocide, and Colin Powell so stated. We have committed $200 million worth of aid. We're the leading donor in the world to help the suffering people there. We will commit more, over time, to help.

We were very much involved at the U.N. on the sanction policy of the Bashir Government in the Sudan. Prior to Darfur, Ambassador Jack Danforth had been negotiating a north-south agreement that we would hope would have brought peace to the Sudan. I agree with my opponent that we shouldn't be committing troops, that we ought to be working with the African Union to do so—precisely what we did in Liberia. We helped stabilize the situation with some troops, and when the African Union came, we moved them out. My hope is that the African Union moves rapidly to help save lives. Fortunately, the rainy season will be ending shortly, which will make it easier to get aid there and help the long-suffering people there.

Character of the Candidates

Mr. Lehrer. New question, President Bush. There are clearly, as we have heard, major policy differences between the two of you. Are there also underlying character issues that you believe—that you believe—are serious enough to deny Senator Kerry the job as Commander in Chief of the United States?

President Bush. Whew, that's a loaded question. [*Laughter*]

First of all, I admire Senator Kerry's service to our country. I admire the fact that he is a great dad. I appreciate the fact that his daughters have been so kind to my daughters in what has been a pretty hard experience for, I guess, young girls seeing their dads out there campaigning. I admire the fact that he's served for 20 years in the Senate, although I'm not so sure I admire the record. I won't hold it against him that he went to Yale. Nothing wrong with that.

I—my concerns about the Senator is that in the course of this campaign I've been listening very carefully to what he says, and he changed his positions on the war in Iraq, changed his positions on something as fundamental as what you believe in your core, in your heart of hearts, is right in Iraq. You cannot lead if you send mixed messages. Mixed messages send the wrong signals to our troops. Mixed messages send the wrong signals to our allies. Mixed messages send the wrong signals to the Iraqi citizens.

And that's my biggest concern about my opponent. I admire his service. But I just know how this world works and that in the councils of government, there must be certainty from the U.S. President. Of course, we change tactics when need to, but we never change our beliefs, the strategic beliefs that are necessary to protect this country in the world.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety-second response, Senator.

Senator Kerry. Well, first of all, I appreciate enormously the personal comments the President just made, and I share them with him. I think only if you've—if you're doing this, and he's done it more than I have in terms of the Presidency, can you begin to get a sense of what it means to your families. And it's tough. And so I acknowledge his daughters. I've watched them. I've chuckled a few times at some of their comments. [*Laughter*] And——

President Bush. I'm trying to put a leash on them. [*Laughter*]

Senator Kerry. Well, I know, I've learned not to do that. [*Laughter*] And I have great respect and admiration for his wife. I think she's a terrific person——

President Bush. Thank you.

Senator Kerry. ——and a great First Lady. But we do have differences. I'm not going to talk about a difference of character. I don't think that's my job or my business. But let me talk about something that the President just sort of finished up with—maybe someone would call it a character trait; maybe somebody wouldn't—but this issue of certainty. It's one thing to be certain, but you can be certain and be wrong. It's another to be certain and be right, or be certain and be moving in the right direction, or be certain about a principle and then learn new facts and take those new facts and put them to use in order to change and get your policy right.

What I worry about with the President is that he's not acknowledging what's on the ground. He's not acknowledging the realities of North Korea. He's not acknowledging the truth of the science of stem cell research or of global warming and other issues. And certainty sometimes can get you in trouble.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds.

President Bush. Well, I think—listen, I fully agree that one should shift tactics, and we will in Iraq. Our commanders have got all the flexibility to do what is necessary to succeed. But what I won't do is change my core values because of politics or because of pressure. And it is—one of the things I've learned in the White House is that there's enormous pressure on the President, and you cannot wilt under that pressure. Otherwise the world won't be better off.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds.

Senator Kerry. I have no intention of wilting. I've never wilted in my life, and I've never wavered in my life. I know exactly what we need to do in Iraq and my position has been consistent. Saddam Hussein is a threat. He needed to be disarmed. We needed to go to the U.N. The President needed the authority to use force in order to be able to get him to do something because he never did it without the threat of force, but we didn't need to rush to war without a plan to win the peace.

Nuclear Proliferation

Mr. Lehrer. New question, 2 minutes, Senator Kerry. If you are elected President, what will you take to that office thinking is the single most serious threat to the national security of the United States?

Senator Kerry. Nuclear proliferation—nuclear proliferation. There are some 600-plus tons of unsecured material still in the former Soviet Union, in Russia. At the rate that the President is currently securing that, it will take 13 years to get it.

I did a lot of work on this. I wrote a book about it several years ago—maybe 6 or 7 years ago, called "The New War," which saw the difficulties of this international criminal network. And back then, we intercepted a suitcase in a Middle Eastern country with nuclear materials in it, and the black market sale price was about $250 million. Now, there are terrorists trying to get their hands on that stuff today.

And this President, I regret to say, has secured less nuclear material in the last 2 years since 9/11 than we did in the 2 years preceding 9/11. We have to do this job. And to do the job, you can't cut the money for it. The President actually cut the money for it. You have to put the money into it and the funding and the leadership.

And part of that leadership is sending the right message to places like North Korea. Right now the President is spending hundreds of millions of dollars to research bunker-busting nuclear weapons. The United States is pursuing a new set of nuclear weapons. It doesn't make sense. You talk about mixed messages. We're telling other people, "You can't have nuclear weapons," but we're pursuing a new nuclear weapon that we might even contemplate using.

Not this President. I'm going to shut that program down, and we're going to make it clear to the world we're serious about containing nuclear proliferation. And we're going to get the job of containing all of that nuclear material in Russia done in 4 years. And we're going to build the strongest international network to prevent nuclear proliferation. This is the scale of what President Kennedy set out to do with the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. It's our generation's equivalent, and I intend to get it done.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds, Mr. President.

President Bush. Actually, we've increased funding for dealing with nuclear proliferation about 35 percent since I've been the President.

Secondly, we've set up what's called the—well, first of all, I agree with my opponent that the biggest threat facing this country is weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a terrorist network. And that's why we've put proliferation as the—one of the centerpieces of a multipronged strategy to make the country safer.

My administration started what is called the Proliferation Security Initiative, over 60 nations involved with disrupting the transshipment of information and/or weapons of mass destruction materials. And we're—been effective. We busted the A.Q. Khan network.

This was a proliferator out of Pakistan that was selling secrets to places like North Korea and Libya. We convinced Libya to disarm. It was an essential part of dealing with weapons of mass destruction and proliferation.

I'll tell you another way to help protect America in the long—in the long run is continue with missile defenses, and we've got a robust research and development program that has been ongoing during my administration. We'll be implementing a missile defense system relatively quickly. And that is another way to help deal with the threats that we face in the 21st century. My opponent is opposed to the missile defenses.

Mr. Lehrer. Just for this one-minute discussion here, is it just—for whatever seconds it takes—so it's correct to say that if somebody is listening to this, that both of you agree—if you're reelected, Mr. President, and if you are elected—the single most serious threat you believe—both of you believe is nuclear proliferation?

President Bush. In the hands of a terrorist enemy.

Senator Kerry. Weapons of mass destruction, nuclear proliferation. But again, the test of the difference between us—the President has had 4 years to try to do something about it, and North Korea has got more weapons. Iran is moving towards weapons. And at his pace, it will take 13 years to secure those weapons in Russia. I'm going to do it in 4 years, and I'm going to immediately set out to have bilateral talks with North Korea.

Mr. Lehrer. Your response to that.

President Bush. Again, I can't tell you how big a mistake I think that is, to have bilateral talks with North Korea. It's precisely what Kim Chong-il wants. It will cause the six-party talks to evaporate. It means that China no longer is involved in convincing, along with us, for Kim Chong-il to get rid of his weapons. It's a big mistake to do that. We must have China's leverage on Kim Chong-il, besides ourselves. And if you enter bilateral talks, they'll be happy to walk away from the table. I don't think that will work.

President Vladimir Putin of Russia

Mr. Lehrer. All right, Mr. President, this is—this is the last question, and 2 minutes. It's a new—new subject, new question. And it has to do with President Putin and Russia. Did you misjudge him, or are you—do you feel that what he is doing in the name of antiterrorism by changing some democratic processes is okay?

President Bush. No, I don't think it's okay and said so publicly. I think that there needs to be checks and balances in a democracy and made that very clear—that by consolidating power in a central government, he's sending a signal to the Western world and the United States that—that perhaps he doesn't believe in checks and balances. And I've told him that.

He's also a strong ally in the war on terror. He is—listen, they went through a horrible situation in Beslan where these terrorists gunned down young school kids. But it's the nature of the enemy, by the way. That's why we need to be firm and resolved in bringing them to justice. It's precisely what Vladimir Putin understands as well.

I've got a good relation with Vladimir, and it's important that we do have a good relation because that enables me to better comment to him and to—better to discuss with him some of the decisions he makes. I found that in this world that it's important to establish good personal relationships with people so that when you have disagreements, you're able to disagree in a way that is effective.

And so I've told him my opinion. I look forward to discussing it more with him as time goes on. Russia is a country in transition. Vladimir is going to have to make some hard choices, and I think it's very important for the American President as well as other Western leaders to remind him of the great benefits of democracy, that democracy will best help the people realize their hopes and aspirations and dreams. And I will continue working with him over the next 4 years.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds, Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. Well, let me just say quickly that I've had an extraordinary experience of watching up close and personal that transition in Russia, because I was there right after the transformation, and I was probably one of the first Senators, along with Senator Bob Smith of New Hampshire, a former Senator, to go down into the KGB underneath Treblinka Square and see reams of files with

names in them. And it sort of brought home the transition to democracy that Russia was trying to make.

I regret what's happened in these past months, and I think it goes beyond just the response to terror. Mr. Putin now controls all the television stations. His political opposition is being put in jail. And I think it's very important for the United States, obviously, to have a working relationship that is good. This is a very important country to us, and we want a partnership. But we always have to stand up for democracy. As George Will said the other day, "Freedom on the march, not in Russia right now."

Now, I'd like to come back for a quick moment, if I can, to that issue about China and the talks, because that's one of the most critical issues here, North Korea. Just because the President says it can't be done, that you'd lose China, doesn't mean it can't be done. I mean, this is the President who said there were weapons of mass destruction, said "mission accomplished," said we could fight the war on the cheap, none of which were true. We can have bilateral talks with Kim Chong-il, and we can get those weapons at the same time as we get China, because China has an interest in the outcome too.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds, Mr. President.

President Bush. You know my opinion on North Korea. I can't say it any more plainly.

Mr. Lehrer. Right. Well, but what—he used the word "truth" again.

President Bush. Pardon me?

Mr. Lehrer. Talking about the truth of the matter. He used the word "truth" again. Did that raise any hackles that you—with you?

President Bush. Oh, I'm a pretty calm guy. [*Laughter*] I mean, I don't take it personally.

Mr. Lehrer. All right. Yes.

President Bush. But you know, look, we looked at the same intelligence. We came to the same conclusion, that Saddam Hussein was a grave threat. And I don't hold it against him that he said "grave threat." I'm not going to go around the country saying he didn't tell the truth, when he looked at the same intelligence I did.

Senator Kerry. It was a threat. That's not the issue. The issue is what you do about it. The President said he was going to build a true coalition, exhaust the remedies of the U.N., and go to war as a last resort. Those words really have to mean something. And unfortunately, he didn't go to war as a last resort. Now we have this incredible mess in Iraq, $200 billion—it's—it's not what the American people thought they were getting when they voted.

Closing Statements

Mr. Lehrer. All right, that brings us to closing statements. And again, as determined by a coin toss, Senator Kerry, you go first, and you have 2 minutes.

Senator Kerry. Thank you, Jim, very much. Thank you very much to the university again. Thank you, Mr. President.

My fellow Americans, as I said at the very beginning of this debate, both President Bush and I love this country very much. There is no doubt, I think, about that. But we have a different set of convictions about how we make our country stronger here at home and respected again in the world.

I know that for many of you sitting at home, parents of kids in Iraq, you want to know, who is the person who could be a Commander in Chief who can get your kids home and get the job done and win the peace? And for all the rest of the parents in America who are wondering about their kids going to a school or anywhere else in the world, what kind of world they're going to grow up in, let me look you in the eye and say to you: I've defended this country as a young man in war, and I will defend it as President of the United States. But I have a difference with this President. I believe we're strongest when we reach out and lead the world and build strong alliances. I have a plan for Iraq. I believe we can be successful. I'm not talking about leaving. I'm talking about winning. And we need a fresh start, a new credibility, a President who can bring allies to our side.

I also have a plan to win the war on terror, funding homeland security, strengthening our military, cutting off finances, reaching out to the world—again, building strong alliances.

I believe America's best days are ahead of us because I believe that the future belongs

to freedom, not to fear. That's the country that I'm going to fight for, and I ask you to give me the opportunity to make you proud. I ask you to give me the opportunity to lead this great Nation so that we can be stronger here at home, respected again in the world, and have responsible leadership that we deserve.

Thank you, and God bless America.

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, 2 minutes.

President Bush. Thank you very much, tonight, Jim. Thank you, Senator.

If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. That's not going to happen so long as I'm your President. In the next 4 years, we will continue to strengthen our homeland defenses. We will strengthen our intelligence-gathering services. We will reform our military. The military will be an all-volunteer army. We will continue to stay on the offense. We will fight the terrorists around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We'll continue to build our alliances. I'll never turn over America's national security needs to leaders of other countries as we continue to build those alliances. And we'll continue to spread freedom. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe that a free Iraq is in this Nation's interests. I believe a free Afghanistan is in this Nation's interests, and I believe both a free Afghanistan and a free Iraq will serve as a powerful example for millions who plead in silence for liberty in the broader Middle East.

We've done a lot of hard work together over the last 3½ years. We've been challenged, and we've risen to those challenges. We've climbed the mighty mountain. I see the valley below, and it's a valley of peace. By being steadfast and resolute and strong, by keeping our word, by supporting our troops, we can achieve the peace we all want.

I appreciate your listening tonight. I ask for your vote. And may God continue to bless our great land.

Mr. Lehrer. And that ends tonight's debate. A reminder, the second Presidential debate will be a week from tomorrow, October 8th, from Washington University in St. Louis. Charles Gibson of ABC News will moderate a townhall-type event. Then, on October 13th, from Arizona State University in Tempe, Bob Schieffer of CBS News will moderate an exchange on domestic policy that will be similar in format to tonight's. Also, this coming Tuesday, at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, the Vice Presidential candidates, Vice President Cheney and Senator Edwards, will debate with my PBS colleague, Gwen Ifill, moderating.

For now, thank you, Senator Kerry, President Bush. From Coral Gables, Florida, I'm Jim Lehrer. Thank you, and good night.

NOTE: The debate began at 9:02 p.m. in the Convocation Center at the University of Miami. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist network; Khalid Sheik Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11 attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1, 2003; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; U.S. Ambassador to Iraq John D. Negroponte; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; former President Jiang Zemin of China; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan; and former Senator John C. Danforth, Special Envoy for Peace in the Sudan. Senator Kerry referred to Gen. John M. Shalikashvili, USA, (Ret.), former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Adm. William J. Crowe, Jr., USN, (Ret.), former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Gen. Merrill A. "Tony" McPeak, USAF, (Ret.), former Air Force Chief of Staff; Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, USAF, (Ret.), former National Security Adviser; Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, USA, (Ret.), former Army Chief of Staff; former Secretary of Defense William Perry; and President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea. Senator Kerry also referred to the National Intelligence Estimate and the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Remarks at a Debate Watch Party in Coral Gables, Florida

September 30, 2004

The President. Thank you all for being here. Anything worthwhile on TV tonight? [*Laughter*] I enjoyed it. I had a good time

up there talking about what I believe. No, it's not hard to debate if you know what's in your heart, know where you want to lead this country.

Listen, I too want to thank the people of this State for their courage, compassion, and decency in the face of incredible suffering. These four hurricanes came to this State, and the people of this State have risen up. And when they found a neighbor in need, they provided compassion and help. When they found somebody who's hurting, they provided succor needed. And I thank the people of this State so very much for setting such a great example for the rest of our country.

There I was, standing there on the stage, and guess who I was looking at the whole time? Laura. If you could see a smile occasionally come across my face, that's because I was looking at a lady I love. Then occasionally I'd glance over and see Barbara and Jenna. I love them too. Oh, yes. I want to thank Jenna and Barbara for working so hard in this campaign. I want to thank Laura for her great compassion and composure.

I want to thank my brother Jeb for being such a great Governor for Florida. I mean, when this State needed him, needed his leadership, he showed up. He'd been every—he's been all over this State, working hard to make sure that those who have suffered realize that help is around the corner, that we're doing everything we can to protect people.

Listen, I'm honored to be here with the next United States Senator, Mel Martinez. This man needs to be in the United States Senate. He not only had a fantastic past—as a matter of fact, he's a member of Pedro Pan—but he's got a great future, and the people of Florida will benefit by having Mel Martinez in the U.S. Senate. We love Kitty, Kitty Martinez. She's one of our favorites.

I want to thank—before I went out there to debate, I saw two of the preprogram participants—it's kind of hard for a Texan to say—[*laughter*]—preprogram participants. That would be Rudy Giuliani. I want to thank him for being here.

Audience members. Rudy! Rudy! Rudy!

The President. And I want to thank my friend General Tommy Franks for being here as well.

Now, we've got two more campaigns to go—I mean, two more debates to go. No more campaigns except this one, two more debates to go and a lot of hard work. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we're going to carry Florida again.

I was only disappointed in one thing about the debate tonight: There was not one question on Cuba. Let me tell you my question: *Cuba libre.* [*Applause*] *Quatro mas años.* No, people know where I stand. People know what I believe. I've got a plan to fight these terrorists, to keep this country secure. I've got a plan to spread freedom, not only in the greater Middle East but in our own hemisphere, in places like Cuba. I've got a plan to make this world more peaceful.

I'm looking forward to the debate on domestic policy too. There's some big differences. He's going to run up your taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm going to keep them low. We've got a plan to continue growing this economy, a plan to make sure our children get a good education, a plan to make sure health care works, but a plan that recognizes this: The role of Government is to help people realize their dreams, not to tell people how to live their lives.

Now, I'm honored you all came out. As you know, I'm kind of getting older, so I need to get my sleep. [*Laughter*] We have come to thank you for your steadfast support. Tomorrow morning, first thing, I'm getting up and heading to Pennsylvania, and then I'm going to New Hampshire. What I'm telling you is, I'm going to keep campaigning as hard as I possibly can, carrying our message of a better tomorrow, and we're going to win in November.

God bless. God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 p.m. at the Coconut Grove Expo Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Kitty Martinez, wife of Florida Senatorial candidate Mel R. Martinez; Rudolph W. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Presidential Determination on FY 2005 Refugee Admissions Numbers and Authorizations of In-Country Refugee Status Pursuant to Sections 207 and 101(a)(42), Respectively, of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and Determination Pursuant to Section 2(b)(2) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act, as Amended

September 30, 2004

Presidential Determination No. 2004–53

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Presidential Determination on FY 2005 Refugee Admissions Numbers and Authorizations of In-Country Refugee Status Pursuant to Sections 207 and 101(a)(42), respectively, of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and Determination Pursuant to Section 2(b)(2) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act, as Amended

In accordance with section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the "Act") (8 U.S.C. 1157), as amended, and after appropriate consultations with the Congress, I hereby make the following determinations and authorize the following actions:

The admission of up to 70,000 refugees to the United States during FY 2005 is justified by humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest; provided, however, that this number shall be understood as including persons admitted to the United States during FY 2005 with Federal refugee resettlement assistance under the Amerasian immigrant admissions program, as provided below.

The 70,000 admissions numbers shall be allocated among refugees of special humanitarian concern to the United States in accordance with the following regional allocations; provided, however, that the number allocated to the East Asia region shall include persons admitted to the United States during FY 2005 with Federal refugee resettlement assistance under section 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 1988, as contained in section 101(e) of Public Law 100–202 (Amerasian immigrants and their family members); provided further that the number allocated to the former Soviet Union shall include persons admitted who were nationals of the former Soviet Union, or in the case of persons having no nationality, who were habitual residents of the former Soviet Union, prior to September 2, 1991:

Africa	20,000
East Asia	13,000
Europe and Central Asia	9,500
Latin America/Caribbean	5,000
Near East/South Asia	2,500
Unallocated Reserve	20,000

The 20,000 unallocated refugee numbers shall be allocated to regional ceilings as needed. Upon providing notification to the Judiciary Committees of the Congress, you are hereby authorized to use unallocated numbers in regions where the need for additional numbers arises.

Additionally, upon notification to the Judiciary Committees of the Congress, you are further authorized to transfer unused numbers allocated to a particular region to one or more other regions, if there is a need for greater numbers for the region or regions to which the numbers are being transferred. Consistent with section 2(b)(2) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as amended, I hereby determine that assistance to or on behalf of persons applying for admission to the United States as part of the overseas refugee admissions program will contribute to the foreign policy interests of the United States and designate such persons for this purpose.

An additional 10,000 refugee admissions numbers shall be made available during FY 2005 for the adjustment to permanent resident status under section 209(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1159(b)) of aliens who have been granted asylum in the United States under section 208 of the Act (8 U.S.C. 1158), as this is justified by humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest.

In accordance with section 101(a)(42) of the Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(42)), and after appropriate consultation with the Congress, I also specify that, for FY 2005, the following

persons may, if otherwise qualified, be considered refugees for the purpose of admission to the United States within their countries of nationality or habitual residence:

a. Persons in Vietnam
b. Persons in Cuba
c. Persons in the former Soviet Union
d. In exceptional circumstances, persons identified by a U.S. Embassy in any location

You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress immediately and to publish it in the *Federal Register.*

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 1.

Memorandum on Transfer of Funds Under Section 610 of the Foreign Assistance Act

September 30, 2004

Presidential Determination No. 2004–54

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Transfer of Funds under Section 610 of the Foreign Assistance Act

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including section 610 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (the "Act"), I hereby determine it necessary for the purposes of the Act that $24,852,500 made available under Chapter 3 of Part I of the Act for Fiscal Year 2004 be transferred to, and consolidated with, funds made available under Chapter 4 of Part II of the Act, and such funds are hereby transferred and consolidated.

You are hereby authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register.*

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 1.

Remarks in Allentown, Pennsylvania

October 1, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. It is great——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all for coming. It's—what a beautiful day to be here in the Lehigh Valley. It's great to be back in Allentown. It's a wonderful place to come after a debate.

I'm so honored John McCain is traveling with me today. I'm proud of his friendship. I appreciate his leadership. I appreciate his courage, and I'm really grateful he's for me for President.

We had a great debate last night. It highlighted some of the fundamental differences between my opponent and me, differences I believe are crucial for our national security. It's a big difference when it comes to supporting our troops. When America puts our troops in harm's way, I believe they deserve the best training, the best equipment, and the wholehearted support of our Government.

My opponent last night said our troops deserve better. They certainly deserve better than they got from Senator Kerry when he voted to send them to war and then voted against funding our troops in combat.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You may remember his famous quote about the supplemental funding that I sent up to Congress. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] I understand.

Last night——

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. Last night, he said he made a mistake in how he talked about that vote, but the mistake wasn't what Senator Kerry said. The mistake was what Senator Kerry did.

He voted against supplying our troops after voting for putting them in harm's way. He then went on to say—after saying the 87 billion line, they kept pressing him. He said he was proud of his vote. And finally, he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter."

Then he had a new wrinkle, a new explanation. During an interview this week, he described it as a protest vote.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When we put American troops in harm's way, they certainly deserve better than to have a candidate for President use them as a protest.

Last night, Senator Kerry only continued his pattern of confusing contradictions. After voting for the war, after saying my decision to remove Saddam Hussein from power was the right decision, he now says it was all a mistake.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. But I asked a logical question, does that mean our troops our dying for a mistake?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. That's what he said, "No." You can't have it both ways. You can't say it's a mistake and not a mistake. You can't be for getting rid of Saddam Hussein when things look good and against it when times are hard. You can't claim terrorists are pouring across the border into Iraq yet, at the same time, try to claim that Iraq is somehow a diversion for war against terrorism. The President cannot keep changing his mind. The President must speak clearly, and the President must mean what he says.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. A crucial difference between my opponent and me is the most important question for voters this election: Who can lead this war against terror to victory? Which candidate can best protect America's families and our national security? And here my opponent has a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the war against terror, and he has no plan to win in Iraq. The cornerstone of Senator Kerry's plan for Iraq is that he would convene a summit.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I've been to a lot of summits. [*Laughter*] I've never seen a meeting that would depose a tyrant or bring a terrorist to justice. Senator Kerry claims that he can work with our allies, yet he said those who are standing with us are not a part of a genuine coalition.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He earlier called them "a coalition of the coerced and the bribed," dismissed their sacrifices as window dressing. You cannot lead by pushing away the allies who are already with us or expect any support for a cause you've called a "mistake" or a "grand diversion" or "the wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time." The way to lead this coalition is not be disdainful or dismissive. The way to lead this coalition to victory is to be clear in our thinking, grateful for the sacrifices, and resolute in our determination to defeat the enemy.

One other point I want to make about the debate last night. Senator Kerry last night said that America has to pass some sort of "global test"——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——before we can use American troops to defend ourselves. He wants our national security decisions subject to the approval of a foreign government.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Listen, I'll continue to work with our allies and the international community, but I will never submit America's national security to an international test. The use of troops to defend America must never be subject to a veto by countries like France. The President's job is not to take an international poll. The President's job is to defend America.

I'm grateful you all are here today, because I'm here to ask for your vote. That's what I'm doing. Not only am I here to ask for your vote; I'm here to ask for your help. Listen, I know a lot of people worked hard to put this great crowd together, and I thank you for working hard to do so. I know there's a lot of people working hard to register people to vote, and I want to thank you for doing that too.

And as you register people to vote, make sure you don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. And after you get them registered to vote, I encourage you to turn out that vote. Get them headed to the polls. And remind them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Listen, I like traveling with John McCain a lot. My only regret is that Laura is not here instead of him. [*Laughter*] I kissed her goodbye this morning in Miami, and she said, tell everybody hello in the Lehigh Valley. She was a public school librarian, and when I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, I'll marry you, just so long as I never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "You've got a deal." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise. She's my best advocate. She's a great First Lady.

Audience members. Laura! Laura! Laura!

The President. Listen, I agree with you. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate. I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. He doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. I didn't pick him for his hair. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

I'm proud of the—Tom Ridge. He's done a fabulous job. I want to thank you for preparing him for an incredibly important assignment that he's doing.

I know Arlen Specter is here. I want to—I urge you to put Arlen back in the United States Senate. I want to thank Congressman Pat Toomey. He's a classy guy. He really is. I'm honored to call him friend.

I urge you to put Charlie Dent in the United States Congress. I want to thank all the candidates who are here. I want to thank the local officials who are here. I want to thank the Wil Gravatt Band, who is here. I want to thank the high school band that is here. But most of all, thank you all for coming. It's great to be with so many people.

I'm really looking forward to this campaign. I'm going to tell the people what—where I stand, what I believe, and where I'll lead this Nation for the next 4 years.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I believe we've got to raise the bar. I believe we must measure early to solve problems before it's too late. I know we've got to trust the local people to make the right decisions for your schools. We're making progress in America. We're closing the achievement gap, and we're not going to turn back to the old days.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. Medicare was not modernizing the way medicine was. See, I think the seniors got to have the best when it comes to health care. We used to pay—we'd pay $100,000 when it comes to heart surgery but not one dime for prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense for our seniors. It didn't make any sense for the taxpayers. We're modernizing Medicare for seniors to get prescription drug coverage in 2006, and we're not going to turn back.

I believe in the energy, innovation, and the entrepreneurial spirit of our workers and small-business owners and farmers and ranchers. That's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out gathering up the vote, remind people what this economy has been through. The stock market started going down about 5 or 6 months before Dick Cheney and I showed up in Washington. Then we had a recession. Then we had some corporate scandals. By the way, we passed new laws. It's abundantly clear to people of this country we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of this country. And then we got attacked, and that attack hurt our economy.

But this economy is strong, and it's getting stronger, growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. It's strong because our spirit is strong, and it's strong because of well-timed tax cuts.

We've added about 1.7 million new jobs since last summer. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That is lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate here in Pennsylvania is 5.6 percent. So long as anybody is looking for a job, we'll continue to expand with pro-growth, pro-small-business, pro-entrepreneur economic policies.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I am running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we'll carry Pennsylvania and win a great victory in November.

The world in which we live is changing, and I understand that. Think about the workplace a couple of decades ago. A person would generally have one job, one career, one pension plan, one health care plan, and that person was usually a male. Today, the workforce has changed a lot. People change careers. They change jobs. Women are working inside the house and outside the house. It's a changing world we live in, and yet, the fundamental institutions of our Government, the fundamental systems, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. In a new term, we'll transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices so you can pursue the great dreams of America.

A hopeful society is one in which this economy continues to grow. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If you want jobs here, this has got to be the best place in the world for people to employ people. That means less regulations on our small businesses. That means legal reform so frivolous lawsuits don't make it hard for expanding the job base.

In order to keep jobs here, Congress needs to pass my energy plan that encourages conservation, spends money on research so we can better use renewable sources of energy, promotes clean coal technology, uses technology to explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. We want jobs here; this country must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep jobs here, we've got to reject economic isolationism and open up markets for U.S. products. We've opened up our markets, and it's good for you. The more products you have to choose from, the more likely it is you're going to get what you want at a better price or a higher quality. That's how the marketplace works. So I'm saying to places like China, "You treat us the way we treat you." See, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the rules are fair.

Finally, to make sure we got jobs here and this economy stays strong, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington and we've got to keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has promised at least $2.2 trillion in new spending——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——so far. [*Laughter*] Just getting into October. [*Laughter*] Two-point-two trillion is a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "That's easy. We'll just tax the rich." Yes, we've heard that before, haven't we? [*Laughter*] You can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for $2.2 trillion of new spending. There's a tax gap. Guess who fills the tax gap?

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes. You've heard "tax the rich" before, but the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason—to stick you with the bill. The good news is, we're not going to let him tax you because we're going to win in November.

When it comes to taxes, we've got to do something about the Tax Code. It's a complicated mess, full of special interest loopholes. In a new term, I'll bring Republicans and Democrats together to make this Tax Code more fair for you. We'll make sure our workers have the skills they need. We'll make sure these training programs work and make sure they've got the opportunity to go to community colleges to be able to match their desire to work with the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

I'll tell you what also I understand in a changing world, most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet, that's why I'm for—yet, only one in four of our students gets there. That's why I'm for early intervention programs in our high schools to help our at-risk kids. That's why I'm for emphasizing math and science in the classrooms. That's why, over time, we should require a rigorous examination before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we've got to do something about the health care system. The costs are rising rapidly. They burden our economy, and too many people are uninsured. I have a commonsense, practical plan to make high quality health care more available and more affordable. And we have a difference in this campaign when it comes to health care. If you listen carefully to what my opponent proposes, he wants Government to dictate. He wants Government to tell you how to purchase your health care. He wants the Federal Government to run health care. I want you to decide. I want you to be the decisionmaker when it comes to health care.

More than half of Americans who are currently uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. We've got to change the law to allow small businesses to join together so they can purchase insurance at the same discounts big businesses get to do.

We'll expand tax-free health savings accounts. We'll give small businesses tax credits to pay into health savings accounts for their employees. We want more workers to have their own health accounts so they can base medical decisions on advice from their doctor, not in negotiations with an HMO. It makes sense for people to own their own health account. If you're changing jobs or careers, you want to be able to carry your health account with you. You want to be able to manage it yourself.

Listen, I understand we need to take care of the poor and the indigent in this country, and we will by expanding community health centers to every poor county in America.

But let me tell you what else we need to do to make sure health care is available and affordable. We need to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running good docs out of business. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to make sure we reform health care, I will make sure that the medical decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We'll continue to promote an ownership society in America—in changing times, provide stability in somebody's life if they own their own home. Homeownership rates are at an alltime high in America. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to expand ownership—homeownership to every corner of America. I want more and more people opening the door where they live saying, "Welcome to my house. Welcome to my piece of property."

Let me talk about Social Security right quick. You remember what happened in the campaign in 2000. They said, "If George W. gets elected, they're going to take away the checks of the seniors on Social Security." You remember that, don't you? Yes, it didn't happen. So when they try and say it again in 2004, don't believe them. You'll get your checks. If you're a baby boomer like me, we're okay; we'll get our checks.

But we need to worry about our children or grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own tax money and set up a personal savings account to make sure Social Security fulfills its promise, a personal savings account they call their own, a personal savings account that Government cannot take away.

In this world of change, some things do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we'll support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life

in which every person counts and every being matters. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our volunteer army. We will keep it an All-Volunteer Army. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We'll strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and around the world, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think about this. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because America led, Afghanistan is free and is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members have been brought to justice.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression. We knew his support for terror. Remember, Saddam harbored Abu Nidal, the leader of a terrorist organization that carried out attacks in Europe and Asia. We knew he harbored Abu Abbas, who took refuge in Baghdad after he killed an American, Leon Klinghoffer, because he was Jewish. We knew Zarqawi was in and out of Baghdad. We knew Saddam Hussein's long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. He was a threat.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. And we understand that after September the 11th, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. That's a lesson we must never forget. I'll never forget it. I went to the Congress. Members of both political parties, including my opponent, looked at the same intelligence I looked at and came to the same conclusion as my administration came to, that Saddam Hussein was a threat. They authorized the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief ever commits troops into harm's way, we must try everything possible to deal with threats—everything possible. So I went to the United Nations in the hopes that diplomacy would work. I hoped that Saddam Hussein would listen to the demands of the free world. The United Nations debated the issue. They voted 15 to nothing to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe when an international body speaks, it must mean what it says in order to keep this world peaceful. When you say something, you better mean it.

But Saddam Hussein didn't believe the United Nations. After all, he'd ignored 16 other resolutions. Last night, my opponent said something about, "Well, maybe another resolution would have helped." I just don't think it's realistic. As a matter of fact, the U.N. sent inspectors into Iraq, and as David Kay's report showed, Saddam Hussein was systematically deceiving the inspectors. Somehow thinking inspectors would have caused Saddam Hussein to change is not very clear thinking.

And so at this point in time, I realized diplomacy wasn't working. And so I had a choice to make: Do I take the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

We didn't find the stockpiles everybody thought was there. But knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same action. And the reason why is because Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction. And had the world

turned its head, he would have made those weapons. Had we hoped that a resolution would have worked, he would have been able to realize his dreams. He could have passed that capability or those weapons on to terrorists that hate us. After September the 11th, that was a chance we could not afford to take. The world is better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

By protecting ourselves, 50 million people now live in freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. And that's in our national interest. Just think about what's happened in Afghanistan. It used to be run by this barbaric group called the Taliban. Many young girls were not allowed even to go to school. Their mothers were taken in the public square and whipped because they refused to toe the line of their dark ideology of hatred. Because we acted, 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. In 3 short years, those people have gone from darkness to light because of liberty. And now Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror, and they serve as a bright example for others who wonder whether or not they can live in a free society.

In Iraq, it's hard work. You know it's hard work, and so do I. But Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled for January. We'll succeed in Iraq if we don't send the wrong messages. We'll succeed in Iraq because we've got a plan. And here's the plan. We'll train Iraqis so they can do the hard work in defending themselves; 100,000 troops are trained today, 125,000 by the end of the year. We'll continue to work with them, to give them the equipment, the training they need to defend themselves against the attacks of these terrorists. We'll help them to get the stability, help them on the road to democracy. And then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great United States military, and I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I've talked to Prime Minister Koizumi quite a bit since I've been your President. He's the Prime Minister of Japan. I like to tell this story because I want people to understand exactly what I mean by the transformational power of liberty. It's generally a little longer word than I use—[*laughter*]—transformational. [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Koizumi is the head of a country that was our sworn enemy some 60 years ago. Think about that. My dad fought against the Japanese. John's dad, grandfather, many of your dads and grandfathers did the same thing. Japan was the sworn enemy of America. Harry Truman, after World War II, believed that liberty could transform an enemy into an ally. So after we won that war, despite skepticism of some, he worked to help Japan become a democracy. And as a result of the belief that liberty can change societies, today, I sit down at the table, talking about the peace we all long for, with the head of Japan. Someday, when we succeed in Iraq, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace, and the world our children and grandchildren will grow up in will be better for it.

I believe people long to live in a free society. I believe women in the greater Middle East long to live in freedom. I believe that if given the chance, the people of that troubled part of the world will embrace the most honorable form of Government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We will continue to make the world more peaceful and more free.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of our Nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes this a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day that I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to console people as best I could, and a guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down." Every day since that day, I wake up trying to figure out how better to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. I appreciate you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. at Lehigh Parkway. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Charles W. Dent, candidate for Congress in Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; David Kay, former CIA Special Advisor for Strategy Regarding Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

September 25

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, the President participated in a debate preparation session.

September 26

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response Mike Brown to discuss recovery efforts in Florida in response to Hurricane Jeanne. He also had a telephone conversation with Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida to discuss recovery efforts.

Also during the day, the President participated in a debate preparation session.

The President declared a major disaster in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Jeanne beginning on September 24 and continuing.

September 27

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing and a briefing on Tropical Storm Jeanne.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Springfield, OH. Upon his arrival in the afternoon, he began a bus tour.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Xenia, OH, and then to West Chester, OH, where he concluded his bus tour. Later, he traveled to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, arriving in the evening.

September 28

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

During the day, the President participated in a debate preparation session.

September 29

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Lake Wales, FL, arriving in the afternoon. In Lake Wales, he and Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida toured an orange grove damaged by the recent hurricanes.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Miami, FL.

September 30

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then traveled to Stuart, FL. Later, he returned to Miami, FL.

In the evening, the President traveled to Coral Gables, FL. Later, he returned to Miami, FL.

The President declared a major disaster in Kansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes on August 27–30.

October 1

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Allentown, PA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Cheryl Hornung.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Manchester, NH, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Paul Freeman. At the McIntyre Ski Area in Manchester, he participated in a Victory 2004 rally.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ronald Rosenfeld to be a Director on the Board of Directors of the Federal Housing Finance Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael Butler to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall Scholarship and Excellence in National Environmental Policy Foundation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Robin Cook, Charles L. Glazer, and Peter S. Watson to be members of the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The President announced his intention to appoint David Wayne Anderson, Cynthia R. Church, and Soyna E. Medina as members of the Board of Trustees of the American Folklife Center.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program: John K. Andrews, Jr.; Jim Edgar; Lynette Boggs McDonald; and Lyn Bracewell Phillips.

The President announced his intention to appoint Scott Wallace (Chairman), C. Martin Harris, and William W. Stead as members of the Commission on Systemic Interoperability.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released September 26

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Florida

Released September 27

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: Responding to Hurricanes Ivan and Jeanne

Released September 28

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Released September 29

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Released September 30

Statement by the Press Secretary on the signing of the Joint Verification Mechanism and the Memorandum of Intent on Regional Security in the Great Lakes of Africa

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Millennium Challenge Corporation's designation of seven countries eligible for the 2004 Threshold Program

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Kansas

Released October 1

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that on September 30 the President signed H.J. Res. 107, H.R. 5149, and H.R. 5183

Acts Approved by the President

Approved September 30

H.R. 5149 / Public Law 108–308
Welform Reform Extension Act, Part VIII

H.J. Res. 107 / Public Law 108–309
Making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2005, and for other purposes

H.R. 5183 / Public Law 108–310
Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2004, Part V