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In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. All the tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation.

We are a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves. Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity across our land. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it and know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

God bless. Thank you all. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:48 p.m. at the Marriott Rivercenter. In his remarks, he referred to Tom and Nancy Loeffler, event cohosts; Thomas R. Phillips, chief justice, Texas Supreme Court; State Attorney General Greg Abbott, Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs, and Health and Human Services Commissioner Albert Hawkins of Texas; Diane D. Rath, chair and commissioner, Texas Workforce Commission; State Senator Jeff Wentworth and State Representatives Elizabeth Ames Jones, Edmund Kuempel, and Ken Mercer of Texas; Gov. Rick Perry of Texas; and Priscilla Owen, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

The President's Radio Address
November 1, 2003

Good morning. This week, terrorists launched a series of attacks in Iraq. Their targets included police stations in Baghdad and Fallujah, the headquarters of the International Red Cross, and living quarters for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad. The majority of their victims were Iraqis working to rebuild and restore order to their country and citizens of other nations engaged in purely humanitarian missions.

Some of the killers behind these attacks are loyalists of the Saddam regime who seek to regain power and who resent Iraq's new freedoms. Others are foreigners who have traveled to Iraq to spread fear and chaos and prevent the emergence of a successful democracy in the heart of the Middle East. They may have different long-term goals, but they share a near-term strategy to intimidate Iraqis from building a free government and to cause America and our allies to flee our responsibilities. They know that a free Iraq will be free of them and free of the fear in which the ideologies of terror thrive.

During the last few decades, the terrorists grew to believe that if they hit America hard, as in Lebanon and Somalia, America would retreat and back down. Five years ago, one of the terrorists said that an attack could make America run in less than 24 hours. They have learned the wrong lesson. The United States will complete our work in Iraq. Leaving Iraq prematurely would only embolden the terrorists and increase the danger to America. We are determined to stay, to fight, and to win.

The terrorists and the Ba'athists loyal to the old regime will fail because America and our allies have a strategy, and our strategy is working. First, we are taking this fight to the enemy, mounting raids, seizing weapons and funds, and bringing killers to justice. One example is Operation Ivy Focus, a series of aggressive raids by the Army's 4th Infantry Division that in a little over a month has yielded the capture of

more than 100 former regime members. In other operations, our soldiers have also seized hundreds of weapons, thousands of rounds of ammunition and explosives, and hundreds of thousands of dollars suspected of being used to finance terror operations.

Second, we are training an ever-increasing number of Iraqis to defend their nation. Today, more than 90,000 Iraqis are serving as police officers, border guards, and civil defense personnel. These Iraqi forces are also supplying troops in the field with better intelligence, allowing for greater precision in targeting the enemies of freedom. And we are accelerating our efforts to train and field a new Iraqi army and more Iraqi civil defense forces.

Third, we are implementing a specific plan to transfer sovereignty and authority to the Iraqi people. The Governing Council, made up of Iraqi citizens, has appointed ministers who are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Iraqi Government. The Council has also selected a committee that is developing a process through which Iraqis will draft a new constitution for their country. When a constitution has been ratified by the Iraqi people, Iraq will enjoy free and fair elections.

All these efforts are closely linked. As security improves, life will increasingly return to normal in Iraq, and more and more Iraqis will step forward to play a direct role in the rebirth of their country. And as the political process moves forward and more and more Iraqis come to feel they have a stake in their country's future, they will help to secure a better life for themselves and their children.

The terrorists and the Ba'athists hope to weaken our will. Our will cannot be shaken. We're being tested, and America and our allies will not fail. We will honor the sacrifice of the fallen by ensuring that the cause for which they fought and died is completed, and we will make America safer by helping to transform Iraq from an exporter of violence and terror into a center of progress and peace.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:37 a.m. on October 31 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 31 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Southaven, Mississippi
November 1, 2003

Thank you all. Thanks for coming. I'm honored to be here. I'm honored to be here with the next Governor of the State of Mississippi, Haley Barbour. It is great to be in northern Mississippi. I'm proud to be here with a lot of friends.

You know, I woke up in Crawford this morning. I said to First Lady Bush, I said, "I don't know if I'm going to be able to find the energy to be able to make it through a long day." You know, I'm kind of getting up in years and—[*laughter*]—and here I come to northern Mississippi, where thousands of our fellow citizens are here. You've energized me. I'm thrilled to be here. Thanks for coming.

I appreciate you coming. I appreciate you coming. Haley and I married above ourselves. I'm thrilled that the next first lady of Mississippi is with us today, and that's Marsha. And Laura sends her love.