

pointed at me and said, “Don’t let me down.” As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of America, whatever it takes.

In these times, I’ve also been a witness to the character of this Nation. Not so long ago, some had their doubts about the American character, our capacity to meet serious challenges, our capacity to serve a cause greater than self-interest. But Americans have given their answer. I’ve seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I’ve seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I’ve seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. We’ve all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most.

We will need all of these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every part of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

God bless you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:52 p.m. at the Shrine Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Brad Freeman, California State finance chairman, Gerald L. Parsky, California State chairman, and Mercer Reynolds, national finance chairman, Bush-Cheney ’04, Inc.; and Bill Simon, former California gubernatorial candidate, and his wife, Cindy.

Statement on Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell’s Decision Not To Seek Reelection *March 3, 2004*

For 17 years, Ben Nighthorse Campbell has been a strong advocate in the Congress for the people of Colorado. He has been a leader in seeking the protection of our public lands and natural resources and a tireless champion for Native Americans.

Ben is a patriot who has served his country in Congress, as an airman in Korea, and as a competitor in the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

Laura and I send our best to Ben, his wife, Linda, and their family.

Remarks in a Discussion on the National Economy in Bakersfield, California *March 4, 2004*

The President. John, thanks. Thanks for having me. First, I want to thank your employees for putting up with my entourage. [Laughter] It’s kind of grown since the last time I was here in Bakersfield. [Laughter]

We are here to talk about the economy. I want to—I’m going to have some help here in talking about the economy, people on the frontlines of job creation, people on the frontline of raising their families. Before I do so, I do want to thank you,