

many economic challenges that come in a time of war.

Our Government is also doing its part. With progrowth policies in Washington, we aim to encourage the hard work and optimism of our people. With tax relief, we are strengthening the spirit of enterprise. When people are allowed to keep more of what they earn, that is good for families trying to make ends meet, good for businesses looking for new customers, and good for those looking for jobs in our expanding economy.

Now that jobs are coming back, we must build on this progress and help American workers and families continue to meet the challenges of our changing economy. My plan will help America continue to lead the world, help our workers gain the skills they need, and create an environment where small businesses will thrive and create new jobs.

Our first responsibility is not to raise taxes on hard-working Americans. All of the tax relief we have passed should be made permanent, so families can continue to keep more of what they earn, and businesses can plan for the future with confidence. I have a plan to help businesses and families with the rising costs of health care and reduce the burden of frivolous lawsuits that unnecessarily punish the job creators in America. I'm working to open more markets and level the playing field for American entrepreneurs and farmers and ranchers.

Our global economy requires Americans to remain prepared for change and innovation. That is why I have proposed to help

our public schools and community colleges teach our future workers the skills they need to succeed. For the sake of economic security and job creation, I proposed a national energy policy that encourages conservation and production at home and makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. All of these proposals are aimed at helping Americans prepare to meet new economic challenges, and I will continue to push the Congress to see them enacted into law.

This Fourth of July weekend, as Americans celebrate our freedom, our thoughts are also with the men and women who defend that freedom as members of the United States military. In Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, they are fighting terrorists that threaten America and helping to build hopeful, democratic societies where the ideology of terrorism has no place. Our Nation honors their sacrifice. And one of our greatest sources of pride on this Fourth of July is that men and women like them wear the uniform of our country.

I thank all of our service men and women for standing post. I wish all Americans a happy Independence Day.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:01 p.m. on July 2 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 2 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks on Independence Day in Charleston, West Virginia July 4, 2004

Thank you all. They got the best seat in the house. [Laughter] Glad you all are here. Thanks for coming. Happy Fourth of

July. I am thrilled to be back in your great State to celebrate once again Independence Day, this time in the capital of the

Mountain State, the great city of Charleston, West Virginia. I appreciate the good people of this State. You work hard; you look after your neighbors; and you love your country. And you sure know how to make a President feel welcome. Thank you all.

West Virginia is an important State to our Nation in many ways—in many ways. You're one of the most beautiful places to visit in America. People ought to come here and see the beauty of West Virginia, to see the Almighty's work. There are hard-working people here making the factories hum and the farms producing products we need. Listen, this country is better off because of the coal found here in West Virginia.

Presidents have been coming to this State for a long time. I did a little research. It turns out that a lot of the land owned around Charleston was owned by George Washington. I call him George W. [*Laughter*] And today we remember names like Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Franklin. We honor their courage, and we honor their vision on the Fourth of July. We're thankful that this Nation they created 228 years ago remains free and independent and the best hope for all mankind.

Today is the day we gather with our friends and family and give thanks to the United States of America—give thanks to the fact that we are citizens in a free land. I give thanks to Shelley Moore Capito for serving the people of West Virginia so well in the United States Congress.

I was greeted by your mayor today. I'm honored the mayor, Mayor Danny Jones, took time to say hello. Mr. Mayor, thanks for having me here, and thanks for serving your community. I know; you want me to tell him to fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I appreciate the president of the Charleston City Council, Councilman Tom Lane, for being here as well. Thank you, Councilman—all those who work hard for the people of Charleston.

We've got a lot of State and local officials. I'm honored you all are here. Thanks for inviting me to this beautiful capitol. I appreciate the planning committee for this independence weekend celebration. You know, it takes a lot of effort to put one of these deals together, and a lot of people have been working hard to do so, starting with Spike Maynard, who is the cochairman and the Chief Justice of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. I told the judge I liked being in the presence with somebody who doesn't try to rewrite the Constitution.

I appreciate Mr. Sam Hindman, who is the retired publisher of your newspaper. He's a leader in your community. He's been a community leader for a long time. Thanks, Sam, for your hospitality. I want to thank my friend Bill Raney, president of the West Virginia Coal Association, for being here as well.

I appreciate the U.S. Air Force Ceremonial Brass Band for entertaining you. I want to thank the West Virginia Air National Guard and the 130th Airlift Wing Honor Guard for being here today as well. You've got a proud tradition here in West Virginia, and that is, you've got a fantastic Guard. You've got people—I appreciate you, General. And I appreciate the men and women who wear the uniform of the West Virginia Guard. I want to thank their families, their loved ones, for the sacrifice and dedication the Guard members have showed the United States of America.

There's still West Virginians overseas. We ask for God's blessings on their safety today. The day we celebrate our freedom, we thank them for guaranteeing the freedom of the United States.

And highly decorated Four Star General Doc Foglesong is with us today. General, thanks for being here. He's a son of West Virginia.

I want to thank all the singers and Scouts. By the way, if you're a Boy Scout or Girl Scout leader, thanks for doing what you're doing. Thanks for taking time out

of your life to instill values in our children. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to teach character to the future of our country.

You know, I oftentimes talk about the strength of America is the hearts and souls of our citizens. Listen, one of our strengths is our military—will keep us strong. One of our strengths is that we're a great economic power—will keep us strong. But the true strength lies in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens, people who have heard the universal call to love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself, people who understand that America can be a hopeful place if somebody who hurts is surrounded by somebody who says, "I love you. What can I do to help you? How can I help make your life a better place?"—people who step up and not only teach character to our young but feed the hungry, provide shelter for the homeless, take care of the elderly. No, the strength of this country—make no mistake about it, the strength of this country lies in the hearts and souls of millions of loving American citizens.

I want to thank Aaron Tippin for being here. I like a good country and western singer. He's a good one. I appreciate Barnabus, the group that performed the National Anthem. Thank you all for taking time on your—on the Fourth of July to entertain these good folks.

Finally, I was to head to Pastor Thornton's church, the Bible Center Church here in West Virginia. Pastor Shawn Thornton and his family came in the capitol to meet me, and I was grateful. But I assured him that I was looking forward to his sermon. That's not the reason I missed it. I missed it because the plane broke down. [*Laughter*] But Pastor, thank you and your congregation for rolling out the red carpet for what would have been a Presidential visit to your fine church, but more importantly, Pastor Thornton, thank you for ministering to those who hurt. One of the great things about this particular

church is that the outreach program, into the lives of those who suffer, into the lives of those who wonder if there's hope, is strong and vibrant and real.

I want you to know that on the Fourth, we are proud of our Founders, but I know that the Founders would be proud of America today. They would take a look at this great country and see a place where opportunity is common, where all stand equal before the law, where all can hope for a better life. They'd see a country full of promise and hope; that's what they would see. They would see a nation that is the world's foremost champion of liberty. They would see a nation which stands strong in the face of violent men. They would see a reliable friend of any dissident or political prisoner who dreams of justice. That's what they would see in the great land they created. They would see Americans who care for a neighbor in need and are generous to the sick, to those who struggle here at home, and to those who look for hope around the world. They would see a strong, decent, good-hearted country, and they would see millions of people proud to say, "America is my home." And they would see an America on Independence Day, 2004, that is moving forward with confidence and strength.

Listen, we've been through some tough times in this country. Everybody knows that. We've been tested. But this Nation has responded as we always do, with courage, determination, and optimism. Our economy is healthy and growing, and that's good news, because more people are finding work every single day. That's what we want. We're all working on our public school system. We want to raise the standards, so every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract. No, our forefathers would see a nation of strong values, faith in God, love of our families. They would not only find those values strong all across the country; they'd find them very strong in the State of West Virginia.

I'm thankful you invited me here, especially because you're paying special tribute to the men and women who have served our Nation in uniform. I want to thank you for that. America has always been able to count on the might of our military and on the character and the courage of those who serve.

We've got a lot of veterans here. I want to thank the veterans for setting such a good example, for setting such a good example for those who have followed you. We're proud of your service. We're grateful for the example you have set for America.

On July the 4th, 1942, in the midst of the Second World War, President Franklin Roosevelt gave encouragement to our troops abroad by reminding them of our Nation's founding creed. They were fighting, he said, because Americans believe in "the right to liberty under God." The President said, "for all peoples and races and groups and nations everywhere in the world." Today, a new generation of Americans is wearing the uniform. They are serving the same creed. They are showing the same courage, and they make us proud every single day.

The war on terror has placed demands on our military. In Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere, our people in uniform have been unrelenting in their performance of duty. They've been skillful and courageous. They've accepted hard missions, long deployments, and the difficulties of being separated from their homes and their families. Some have returned home wounded. Some have died. Each is mourned and missed, and each one will be honored by our country forever.

As in other times, Americans are serving and sacrificing to keep this country safe and to bring freedom to others. After the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, this Nation resolved to fight terrorists where they dwell. We resolved to arm the terrorist enemy. Afghanistan, at the time, as you remember, was a terror state, a training camp for Al Qaida killers. Because we

acted, Afghanistan today is a rising democracy and an ally in the war on terror.

Iraq, only last year, was under the control of a dictator who threatened the civilized world, who used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He tormented and tortured the people of Iraq. Because we acted, Iraq today is a free and sovereign nation. And because we acted, the dictator, the brutal tyrant, is sitting in a prison cell, and he will receive the justice he denied so many for so long.

We got a job to do. We have got a job to do, and that is to protect our country. And I've called on good men and women to do so. I'm honored that you're thanking the men and women of uniform today in Charleston, West Virginia.

Our immediate task in battlefronts like Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere is to capture or kill the terrorists. That's our immediate task. We made a decision, you see: We will engage these enemies in these countries and around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

You can't talk sense to them. You can't negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best with these people. We must be relentless and determined and do our duty.

There's no such thing as perfect security in a country as big as ours. And the threats to our homeland are very real. We know the terrorists want to strike the United States again. They do because they want to disrupt our way of life. They want to spread fear. So we've done a lot of things to help, and there's some folks here who are working hard on your behalf. See, we reorganized the Government to make sure there's better communication between the Federal Government and the State government and the local governments. And on behalf of a grateful people, I want to say thanks to the firefighters and the police and the emergency teams of Charleston, West Virginia.

There's a lot of people in this country working hard to make sure this homeland of ours is as secure as it can possibly be

without disrupting the freedoms of our fellow citizens. They're working hard, and I am grateful—I am grateful for the hard work they are doing.

Yet in the long term, our security and safety requires more than defending the homeland and defeating the terrorists abroad. We must work to remove the conditions that give rise to terror in parts of the world like the Middle East: the poverty, the hopelessness, and the resentments that the terrorists exploit. Life in the Middle East will be a far more hopeful and, therefore, a more peaceful place when men and women can enjoy the benefits of a free society, when men and women can elect their own leaders, when the people can decide their own futures.

On this Fourth of July, we confirm our love of freedom, the freedom for people to speak their minds, the freedom for people to worship as they so choose. Free thought, free expression, that's what we believe. But we also understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. And by serving that ideal, by never forgetting the values and the principles that have made this country so strong after—228 years after our founding, we will bring hope to others and, at the same time, make America more secure.

Because we've taken the fight to the enemy, because we've been strong and determined to do our duty to protect America, and because freedom is rising in places they claim as their own, the terrorists are desperate, and they are furious. They're running out of places to hide. They know their cause is failing. They know that time is against them, and their only chance is to shake the resolve of Iraqis, Americans, anybody else who loves freedom. And that's why their actions have grown more cruel and sadistic.

They cover their faces in videos, in the videos of their crimes. But those hoods cannot hide the face of evil. We've seen their

kind before, in overseas death camps and gulags. And as before, America will persevere. We will fear no evil, and we will prevail.

The conditions for successes are now coming together. Afghanistan and Iraq now have responsible leaders. President Karzai of Afghanistan is a good, honest man who wants his people to be free. Prime Minister Allawi of Iraq—he's a good, honest, courageous man who will stand square in the face of these terrorists trying to stop the march of freedom. We've got an ally in these two leaders, because they understand what we know: Free men and women will be peaceful men and women; free men and women will be able to realize their deep desires. Listen, moms and dads in Iraq want to be able to raise their children in a society where their children can have a bright future, just like the moms and dads in America do.

These leaders have said, "We want your help." And America has responded. And nations of the world have rallied to them as well. The NATO Alliance and the EU and the United Nations are all standing behind the newly liberated people of Afghanistan and Iraq. And these good people are taking on more of their own responsibility. Listen, they understand their future depends on their ability to deal with the thugs and criminals and foreign terrorists. And so we're helping them train to do their duty, to do their civic responsibility in a free society.

But what's important for those people is that they can count on America. We have promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to set them on the path to democracy. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

There was a time not so long ago when America was a young democracy. When the Declaration was signed, not many in this world would have bet on the success of the American cause. We were a little group of colonies on the edge of a continent. Our

small and hungry band of soldiers was against the army of a great empire. Many in that empire considered July the 4th, 1776, to be just another day on the calendar. Yet, America's Founders knew that something very important had happened that day, something new and hopeful in the course of human events.

They called the American experiment a "new order of the ages." The time has confirmed their belief. The Colonies became a country. The people of America crossed a continent, and the ideals that created America have crossed the globe.

This history we celebrate today is a testament to the power of freedom to lift up a whole nation. And we still believe, on America's 228th birthday, that freedom has the power to change the world.

May God bless you, and may God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:57 p.m. at the West Virginia State Capitol Grounds. In his remarks, he referred to Sam Hindman, former publisher, Charleston Daily Mail; Maj. Gen. Allen E. Tacket, adjutant general, West Virginia National Guard; Gen. Robert H. "Doc" Foglesong, USAF, commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, commander, Allied Air Forces Northern Europe, and air component commander, U.S. European Command; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Rev. Shawn R. Thornton, senior pastor, Bible Center Church, Charleston, WV; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

Remarks Following a Discussion With Prime Minister David Oddsson of Iceland and an Exchange With Reporters

July 6, 2004

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome the Prime Minister of Iceland to the Oval Office.

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for coming.

I'll have an opening statement. He'll have an opening statement. We'll answer a couple of questions.

I remember my first NATO meeting, and I walked in, and the person who greeted me and made me feel most at home was my friend here. And I've never forgotten that. Iceland has been a steady friend of the United States of America, and they have been an important friend.

We had an interesting discussion on some important issues, and it was a frank discussion. And that's what you expect among friends. It was open and honest. And the Prime Minister is a person who cares deeply about the security of his country and the welfare of his people, and that's

why he's been such an effective leader for the good people of Iceland.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome.

Prime Minister Oddsson. Thank you so much, Mr. President. I'm very happy to be here, not least on the President's birthday. It's a privilege.

President Bush. Thank you for remembering.

Prime Minister Oddsson. Well, we discussed some things—I will make two points. You had just recently, a week ago, in a NATO meeting in Istanbul, a very good meeting, I think, not least because of the firm leadership of the President and his open manner, his easy-speaking manner that everybody understands when he speaks. And he changed the atmosphere inside NATO for the better. The past is behind us. People are united to a future. Secondly, we had the opportunity to discuss the defense issues in Iceland, which is very