

America faces a great threat, and our Government is doing everything in its power to confront and defeat that threat. We have made great progress against the terrorists who seek to harm our Nation. We have made great progress in protecting our homeland. In all that lies ahead, America will stay focused and determined, and we will prevail.

Thank you for listening.

Remarks in Troy, Ohio August 28, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Thank you for bringing your families. Thanks for taking time out of your Saturday morning to provide such a warm welcome to somebody who is coming here to ask for your help and ask for your vote. I'm proud to be in Miami County, Ohio, today to kick off a bus tour across your important State. I'm here to say to you, I'm ready to lead this Nation for 4 more years, and I want your help.

Boehner said if you came to this part of the world, some people might show up to say hello. He was right, and I'm grateful. Thanks for being here. I'm proud to call John Boehner my friend. I know you're proud to call him Congressman. He's doing a great job on the people of this part of the world, and I appreciate serving with him.

I wish Laura were here to see the size of this crowd. She's not going to believe when I tell her how many people came. She's going to say it was just a Texas tall tale. Laura is a great mother, a wonderful wife, a terrific First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons why I hope you put me back into office today, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Listen, I didn't pick him because of

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:25 p.m. on August 27 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 28. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 27 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

his wavy hair. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his sound judgment, his vast experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

I want to thank Governor Bob Taft for joining us today. Mr. Governor, thank you for joining me on this bus trip. We're traveling across this great State of yours, shaking as many hands as possible, looking people in the eye, and saying, "I've got a clear vision of where I want to take this country."

I want to thank Senator Mike DeWine for being on this bus trip with me today. I appreciate working with Mike and the other Senator, George Voinovich. Put George back in there for 6 years. You need him in the State of Ohio. Mike wisely brought his wife, Fran, and daughter, Anna. I'm proud to be traveling with them as well.

I want to thank Secretary of State Ken Blackwell for joining us today.

Mr. Mayor is with us. Mr. Mayor, His Honor, Mike Beamish, is with us. Mr. Mayor, thank you for your hospitality. I appreciate you letting us use this fantastic town square. Such a beautiful sight, made more beautiful by the fact that a lot of your citizens have come here today. My only advice, Mr. Mayor, is make sure you fill the potholes. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate Don McLaurin, the mayor of Trotwood, Ohio, for being here. I want to thank all the local officials. I want to thank the Troy High Marching Band for being here today.

Today when we landed in Dayton, I met Becky Brown. [Applause] She brought some of her cousins with her. [Laughter] Becky is the one millionth person to sign up as a volunteer in the Bush-Cheney '04 effort. That means she's willing to put up signs and willing to get on the phone and willing to work and turn out the vote.

See, we have a duty in our country to vote. We have an obligation to participate in the political process. So I'm here to thank all of you all who are involved in the grassroots efforts here in Ohio. I want to thank you for going to your community centers and your places of worship and where you work and saying to your friends and neighbors, "Register to vote." It's important you do so. And then after you get them registered, remind them to vote. And as they start heading to the polls, tell them if they want an administration that's going to make this country safer, stronger, and better, put Dick Cheney and me back in office.

Listen, we have done a lot in this country. We've accomplished a great deal.

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

The President. We have been through a lot together. And we've accomplished a lot. But there's only one reason to look backward, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. I'm here to tell you that all—we've done a lot. We have more to do. We have more to do to make this country a more secure country. We have more to do to spread the peace. We have more to do to make America a hopeful place for every single citizen.

And that starts with making sure our public schools are the centers of excellence we know they can be. John Boehner mentioned the No Child Left Behind Act. I want to take you back 3½ years ago to

a system that simply moved children through, year after year, grade after grade, without teaching the basics. So we challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We raised the bar, because we know every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract. We expect every child to learn to read and write and add and subtract. We increased Federal funding, but we increased local control of schools and accountability across America so not one child is left behind in this country.

We're making progress. We're closing the achievement gap in America, but there's more to do. We want to make sure math and sciences are emphasized in our high schools, so our youngsters can be able to participate in the jobs of the 21st century. We're going to expand the Internet in the classrooms. We're going to make sure there's early intervention programs available so kids don't slip behind. We're going to make sure that a high school diploma means something over the next 4 years. What I'm telling you is, 4 more years of this administration will help a rising generation earn the skills and confidence necessary to compete in a global world.

We have more to do to make health care available and affordable. When we came to office, you might remember all those political campaigns: "Give us a chance. We'll fix Medicare for our seniors. We'll make sure the system is strengthened and modern." But nothing ever got done. We got the job done for the seniors of America. The Medicare system gives seniors more choices. And starting in 2006, there will be prescription drugs available for those on Medicare.

We're making progress when it comes to health care. We've expanded the number of community centers that are available for low-income Americans. We provided health savings accounts to encourage families to save, tax-free, for their own needs. When it comes to making health care more affordable and available, there is more work to be done over the next 4 years. Most

people get their health care through their businesses. Most new jobs are created by small businesses. Many small businesses are having trouble affording health care. Therefore, in order to help American families, it makes sense to let small businesses pool together and purchase insurance at the same discount that big businesses are able to do.

We will harness technology to reduce costs and reduce error. We will continue to expand research to seek new cures for diseases. And I'll tell you what else you need to do, not only in Ohio but around the Nation, we must stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care and driving docs out of business. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-hospital and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. You have to make your choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients. I am for medical liability reform now. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Washington, DC, bureaucrats.

We've got to make—we've got to do more to make this economy stronger. Listen, I understand there's places here in Ohio that are lagging behind the national recovery. We will continue to work to create an environment for jobs to grow so people can find work. But I want to remind you, we've been through a lot in this country. We've been through a recession and corporate scandals and an attack on our country. Yet, we're overcoming these obstacles. We're overcoming these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. We're overcoming these obstacles because America's farmers and ranchers know what they're doing. We're coming over—we're overcoming these obstacles because we've got the greatest workers in the world in this country. And I think we're

overcoming these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

You might remember that tax relief. We said, "If we're going to provide tax relief, everybody who pays taxes gets relief." We're not going to play politics with your wallet. We raised the child credit to help moms and dads with raising their children. We reduced the marriage penalty. I believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We're helping our small businesses, and it's working. Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.5 million new jobs over the past 12 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent, which is lower than the national average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s.

We're headed in the right direction, but there's more work to be done. In order to keep jobs here in America, this Nation needs an energy policy. We need to encourage conservation. We need to encourage alternative uses of energy. But we need to be using Ohio coal and Ohio natural gas to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure jobs stay here in Ohio and America, we're going to make sure countries treat us the way we treat them when it comes to trade. Our markets are open. They need to open up their markets because American workers can compete with anybody, anyplace, anytime in this world.

We need to get rid of these junk lawsuits that are threatening small businesses all across America. We need to make sure our regulatory system is reasonable and fair. In order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to make sure American workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century, which means we will continue to use our community college systems as a place for people to receive a lifetime of learning in America.

And finally, to make sure this economy grows and jobs stay here in America, we've

got to be wise about how we spend your money. And we've got to keep your taxes low. [Applause] Yes. We have a difference of opinion in this race. I'm running against a fellow who has already promised over \$2 trillion of new spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And there's still September and October to go. [Laughter] He's got plenty of time to go out there and make more promises. They said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, I'm going to tax the rich." You've heard that before, haven't you? Every time they say "tax the rich," the rich dodge and you pay. But we're not going to let him. We're going to beat him in November of this year.

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

The President. I'm running because I know we have more to do to wage and win the war against the terrorists. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up cells around the world, including the United States. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. You realize, over 10 million people have registered to vote in the Presidential elections coming this fall in Afghanistan. Because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first time in that country. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of

mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing missiles at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region.

I saw a threat. One of the important lessons of September the 11th that this Nation must never forget is that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. I went to the United States Congress. I said, "I see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence I had looked at. They looked at the same history of Saddam Hussein and came to the same conclusion, as they authorized the use of force. Republicans and Democrats alike saw a threat, including my opponent.

I then went to the United Nations. Before a President is to commit force, we must try all means necessary to solve a threat peacefully. So I went to the United Nations. I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence, and as they had for over a decade, they concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat. The U.N. Security Council voted 15 to nothing to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." As he had for over a decade, he refused to comply with the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, he systematically deceived the inspectors that were sent into his country.

So I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

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

The President. Even though we did not find the stockpiles we expected to find, Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to the enemy. That was a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. See, after months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, he now agrees with me that even though we did not find the stockpiles we thought we would find, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank him for clearing that up. However, I warn you that there's still a little more than 60 days left in the campaign for him to change his mind again. [*Laughter*]

We have more to do. I'm running because I understand that we must continue to work with our friends and allies to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. You cannot talk sense to these people, see. You cannot negotiate with them. We can't be blind to the realities of the world and hope for the best. We must aggressively pursue them around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will continue to lead this world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a vast coalition of like-minded nations, who are working to secure our people and to spread the peace. We've got nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 involved in Iraq, over 60 involved in a Proliferation Security Initiative to interdict technology and supplies to potentially build weapons of mass destruction. We will

continue to work and build our alliances over the next 4 years. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We will keep our commitments to Afghanistan and Iraq so that they become peaceful, democratic societies. It's in our interests that they become peaceful and democratic societies. These countries are now governed by two strong leaders, leaders who have set their countries on the path to elections.

We have a clear goal in Afghanistan and Iraq. We want a peaceful and democratic country to emerge that are allies in the war on terror. Our military forces will help meet that goal by not only providing security for a political process to develop but by helping to train Afghans and Iraqis so they get to defeat those who want to stop the march of freedom in their own countries. We will complete this mission as quickly as possible, so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

And I'm proud of our military. They're doing the hard work of freedom and peace. I want to thank all the veterans who are here today for setting such a fine example for those who wear the uniform.

I have made a commitment to those who wear our uniform and to their loved ones that they will have the resources they need to fight and win the war against the terrorists. We are meeting that commitment in Washington, DC. Last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. This legislation provided money for body armor, vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, and fuel and spare parts. It was necessary. It was an important piece of legislation. We received great bipartisan support. So strong was the bipartisan support that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against this vital funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they said, “Why did you make that vote?” He said, “I actually voted for the \$87 billion, right before I voted against it.” I suspect you don’t find a lot of people right here in the town square in Troy, Ohio, who talk like that. They then pressed him, and they said, “Don’t you have another explanation?” He said, well, he’s proud of the vote, and then he finally said, “It’s just a complicated matter.” There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In our long run—in the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will serve as powerful examples in a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. Free countries make the world a more peaceful place.

By serving the cause of liberty, we’re bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the cause of liberty, we’re making the world a more peaceful place. By serving the cause of liberty, we’re serving the deepest ideals of our own country. Freedom is not America’s gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God’s gift to each man and woman in this world.

We’ve got more work to do to protect this homeland. I see firefighters and police officers who are here with us today. I want to thank the first-responders for their hard work. You need to know that cooperation at the Federal level and State level and local level has vastly improved since September the 11th, and it needs to be. There’s an enemy that lurks and still hates us. We have more work to do. Yesterday I announced further reforms of intelligence gathering systems to make sure that we get the best information so we can respond to threat to our country. It is essential that Congress renew the PATRIOT Act. The

PATRIOT Act gives our law enforcement vital tools to break and find terrorist cells before they can affect America. No, we’re working hard to secure our ports and secure our borders. There’s a lot of good people working on your behalf to make this homeland more secure.

But I will warn you, reform is not easy in Washington. There’s a lot of entrenched interests there. There’s a lot of people who have spent a lifetime in Washington, and they want to defend the status quo. It’s not enough to advocate reform. You have to be able to get the job done.

And so when you’re out campaigning on my behalf, when you’re out there registering people to vote and then encouraging them to vote, remind them that when it comes to reforming schools so we can increase excellence in every classroom in America, we’re getting the job done. When it comes to health care for our seniors and for American families, we’re getting the job done. When it comes to expanding our economy, defeating the recession, we’re getting the job done. When it comes to defending this homeland and spreading freedom and peace, we’re getting the job done. When it comes to electing a President, reelect somebody who can get the job done.

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

The President. We’re living in a time of change. It’s a time of change, and change can be unsettling. Government must recognize that and Government must stand side by side with workers and families during this time of change. See, we have a difference of philosophy in this race. I believe Government ought to help, not give orders. I believe ought to—Government ought to encourage people to realize their dreams, not dictate to people how to achieve their dreams. And there’s a difference in philosophy that I intend to make and clarify across this country. And one of the ways that Government can help people during

times of change is to encourage an ownership society, is to encourage people to own their own business. There's nothing better than an America for people to know that the entrepreneurial spirit is strong and alive and well.

In order to provide security during a time of change, we ought to encourage health care accounts that people own and call their own, that they can take from job to job. I see we've got a lot of younger workers here, and I want to thank you for coming. But you need to make sure you listen carefully to the debate on Social Security. Baby boomers like me are just fine when it comes to the fiscal sanity of Social Security. People just starting in the workplace better understand that we must think differently about how to strengthen Social Security. I believe the best way to do so is to make sure younger workers have the option of taking some of their own money and putting them in personal savings accounts that they can call their own.

In a changing world, when the workplace has changed, we've got to make sure our work rules are family-friendly. That includes flex-time and comp-time to allow moms and dads to spend more quality time with their children.

In a changing world, there's nothing like owning your own home to provide hope and stability. Homeownership rates are at an alltime high in America. We will continue to promote policy that encourages that moment when somebody opens the door of their dwelling and says, "Welcome to my house." That's what we love to hear. We love to hear that phrase, "Welcome to my piece of property." When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the United States of America.

In a time of change, there are some things that won't change: the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence, and integrity; our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. In a time of change, we will support the institutions that

give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We believe—we stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. Listen, the culture is beginning to change from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," "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. If you are fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in Troy, Ohio, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

The true strength of this country is the hearts and souls of the American citizens. I'll continue to rally the armies of compassion over the next 4 years, call upon those loving souls who have heard the call to love a neighbor so that we can change America one heart, one conscience, and one soul at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. You know, 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 where we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep belief in the values that make America a great place.

None of us will ever forget that era when—that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th,

2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It is a day that I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember walking the line, thanking the firefighters and rescuers who were there, and a guy with bloodshot eyes grabbed me by the arm, stared square in my eyes, and said, "Do not let me down." Moments I will never forget. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect America. I will never relent in defending this country, whatever it takes.

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

The President. We have come through much together. We have been through a lot together. We have done a lot of hard work. We're moving this country forward by extending freedom around the world and opportunity here at home. During the next 4 years, I'll continue to work to spread opportunity and ownership to every corner of the country. I want every citizen to real-

ize the great promise of our blessed land. We will continue to work to pass the enduring values of our country on to another generation. We will lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

When I traveled your State 4 years ago, I made a pledge to our citizens that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your hard work, with your help, I will do so for the next 4 years.

May God bless. Thank you for coming. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:42 a.m. in the Troy Public Square. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio; Ohio Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell; Mayor Michael L. Beamish of Troy, OH; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

Remarks in a Discussion in Lima, Ohio August 28, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. I've got a lot of work to do today. See, I'm here in Lima asking for the vote. I'm here to tell you I've got a reason to seek the Presidency again. There is a reason to want to serve, and that's to keep the country safer and stronger and better. That's why I want to be your President.

And I believe you've got to get out amongst the people and ask them for the vote. So that's what we're doing here in Ohio on this Saturday. And thanks for coming. Thanks for giving me a chance to—we've got a—I've got a different way of talking about what's on my mind and talking about our agenda. I've actually asked some of your fellow citizens to join me today to talk about what it means to own

a business or what it means to own a health savings account, what it means to—what tax relief meant. It's a way of explaining why we have done the things we've done and what we intend to do to make sure this country is a strong country.

I want to talk a little bit about foreign policy. I want to talk about how to spread peace. And then I'm going to answer some of your questions, if you've got some.

Before I do so, I want to tell you that I'm really proud of Laura. She is a wonderful wife. I was a lucky fellow when she said yes. [Laughter] She was a public school librarian when I asked her to marry me. She said, "I'll marry you, just so long as I don't have to give any speeches." [Laughter] It's the only political promise