

Robert D. Ray of Iowa; Stan Thompson, candidate for Iowa's Third Congressional District; Jan Lyons, president, National Cattle-men's Beef Association; Leon "Len" Corzine, first vice president, 2004 Corn Board, National Corn Growers Association; Ron Heck, chairman, American Soybean Association; Keith Berry, president, board of directors, National Pork Producers Council;

Craig Lang, president, board of directors, Iowa Farm Bureau; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), administered by the Farm Service Agency, United States Department of Agriculture.

Remarks in Columbus, Ohio September 1, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Thank you all very much. What a warm welcome. It doesn't get any better than being introduced by Jack Nicklaus in Columbus, Ohio. While you were cheering, I asked him if he had any advice for my golf game. He said, "Quit." [*Laughter*] I'm so honored to be here with Jack and Barbara Nicklaus. He is a—what a class act. And I'm proud to have him endorse my candidacy for the Presidency of the United States.

Jack said he and Barbara are from Columbus—so am I. My grandfather was raised right here in Columbus, Ohio. So I'm here to ask that you send a home-boy back to Washington, DC.

I'm thrilled to be traveling today with Laura. She raised the bar last night. What a fantastic speech she gave. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one is to put her back in for 4 more years.

I appreciate you all coming. I'm here to ask for the vote. See, I believe you've got to come to the people and ask for their vote. I'm here to let you know I'm going to lay out a vision tomorrow night for a safer world and a more hopeful America, that we have done a lot—[*applause*].

I'm here to ask for your help as well. You can't win an election alone. I need you to help register your friends and neigh-

bors. Get on the Internet at georgewbush.com and find out how you can volunteer for this campaign. For those of you who are volunteering, I want to thank you very much for the work you've done and the work you're going to do. There is no question in my mind, with your hard work, we will carry Ohio again and win this country.

I'm looking forward to hearing my superb runningmate's speech tonight. Dick Cheney is a solid citizen. He's got good judgment and sound advice. He's a man who can get the job done.

I'm thankful that Barbara Nicklaus and son Gary Nicklaus are traveling with Jack today. I want to thank both of them for joining us.

I appreciate my friend Senator Mike DeWine joining us today. He's a fine United States Senator. You know, we've been traveling your State by bus, and old Mike showed up every time. He's out there shaking those hands and waving to the crowds. I appreciate his friendship. I also want to urge you to put George Voinovich back into office as your United States Senator. I'm proud that my friend Congresswoman Deborah Pryce is with us. She is a fine Member of the House of Representatives.

I want to thank John McConnell for opening up this beautiful hall. He's a great

citizen of this community who owns the Columbus Blue Jackets. He said, "Do you have any advice?" I said, "I cannot skate." [Laughter] But I appreciate the hospitality.

I want to thank Chris Spielman for being here as well. I'm honored he's here. I appreciate the Pickering Central High marching band for joining us today. I'll try to keep my speech short so you can get home and do your homework.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. I want to thank the folks who put this on, this fantastic rally on. I know it takes hard work to get this many people here. But thanks for all you're doing. I'm here to let you know that I've got a clear vision and strong determination to make this country a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place for every American.

In the past few years, we've been through a lot together, and we've accomplished a lot. But the only reason to look back in a campaign is to determine who best to lead us forward. Even though we've done a lot, I'm here to tell you there's more to do. There's more to do to make this country a hopeful country for every citizen.

We've got more to do to make sure the public schools in America are centers of excellence we know they can be. When I went to office—got into office a couple of years ago, too many of our schools were shuffling children through, grade after grade, year after year, without them learning the basics. We challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations in the public schools in America. We've raised the standards. We believe in local control of schools. And we believe in return for Federal money, people must show us whether or not the children can read and write and add and subtract, because we expect every child to learn in America. Because we're measuring and correcting problems early, before it's too late, the achievement gap in America is closing.

But there's more work to be done. We've got to make sure the Internet is in our high school classrooms. We need to have early intervention programs for junior high and high school students, so they're not left behind. We got to make sure AP courses are expanded. We got to make sure we teach more math and science in the high schools so that kids can compete in this global economy. We want to make sure the high school diploma means something. We'll increase Pell grants and loans so when a high school kid gets out of high school, he's got a chance to go to college. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, a rising generation will have the confidence and the skills necessary to be able to find a job in America.

We've got more to do to make such health care is available and affordable. When I came to office, too many older Americans could not afford prescription drugs, and Medicare didn't pay for them. You might remember those old Medicare debates. Matter of fact, they used to call it "Medi-scare," and the system was getting old. See, we'd pay \$100,000 for a heart operation in Medicare but wouldn't pay for the medicine to prevent the heart operation from happening in the first place. I went to Washington with the desire to improve Medicare for our seniors, and we got the job done.

We're expanding community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. Most people get their insurance through their places of work. Most new jobs are created by small businesses. Many small businesses are having trouble affording health care. To make sure American families get health care, small businesses must be allowed to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies are able to get.

There's more work to be done to make sure health care is accessible and affordable. We'll harness technology to reduce

costs and prevent costly mistakes. We'll expand research to find new cures. In order to make sure your health care system here is a viable health care, we must get rid of the frivolous lawsuits that are running your docs out of business. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

In all we do to improve health care in this country, we will make sure that health decisions are made by patients and doctors and not by Government officials in Washington, DC.

I'm running because I know there's more to do to make sure this economy continues to grow. Our economy has been through a lot. We've been through a recession. We've been through the terrorist attacks. We had the corporate scandals. These were obstacles in the way for good economic growth, but we've overcome the obstacles because America's workers are the finest in the world. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got great farmers and ranchers in America. We've overcome these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. The small-business sector of our economy is thriving in this country. We've overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

We didn't pick winners or losers when it came time for tax cuts. We said, "If you're paying taxes, you ought to get relief." That's the fair way to do it. We also increased the child credit to help moms and dads. We reduced the marriage penalty. I believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We helped our small businesses; this time the check actually was in the mail.

Because we acted, our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, over the past 12 months we've added 1.5 million new jobs. Because we acted, the national unem-

ployment rate is 5.5 percent, well below the national average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

I fully understand we still face challenges in manufacturing communities and places like Youngstown and some other parts of your great State—Canton. I've been to those communities. I know there are workers worried about their future. I've got a plan to continue the economic vitality of this State and this country. I will not rest so long as anybody in your State who wants to work cannot find a job. I'm running because I know there's more to do to create economic vitality.

And to keep jobs here in America, this country must have an energy strategy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. I submitted a plan to the United States Congress that encourages conservation, encourages alternative sources of energy, encourages clean coal technology, encourages environmentally sensitive exploration for natural gas. It's a reasonable plan. It's stuck in the Congress. They need to get it to my desk so we can keep jobs here in this country.

In order to keep jobs here in America, we need tort reform and regulatory relief. In order to keep jobs here in America, we must make sure our trade policies are fair. We've opened up our markets, and it's good for you that we've done so. See, if you've got more to choose from, you're more likely to get a better product at a better price. But it's only fair if other countries treat us the way they treat them. The best trade policy is to open up their markets. The best trade policy is to enforce trade laws. The best trade policy is to say, "Treat us the way we treat you." We can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime, if the rules are fair.

In order to keep jobs in America, we must have a lifetime of learning opportunity for American workers. I'm a big believer in the community college system. I believe they make a lot of sense. It's a good use of taxpayers' money to encourage and help

workers retrain for the jobs which will be created in the 21st century. If we help our workers find the skills necessary to fill the jobs, this economy will continue to grow and people will be able to realize their hopes and aspirations.

In order for this economy to continue to grow and for jobs to stay in America, we must be wise about how we spend your money, and we must keep your taxes low. Running up the taxes on the working people and the small-business owners and the farmers and ranchers of America would hurt this economic recovery. I'm running against a fellow who has already promised over \$2 trillion of new Federal spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And we've still got 60 days to go in the campaign. [*Laughter*] No telling what's going to happen coming down the stretch. So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, I'll just tax the rich." Yes, we have heard that before in American politics. You know what it means, "tax the rich." It means the rich dodge, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him do it. We're going to carry Ohio and this country in November.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not 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 terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, over 10 million Afghan citizens have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential elections. Because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first time in Afghani-

stan. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror, and 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 clear message, Libya has abandoned its 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 weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein and his henchmen murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. Saddam Hussein was a threat. And one of the important lessons of September the 11th, a lesson this country must never forget, is that we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize.

So I went to the United States Congress. I said, "I see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history of Saddam Hussein, and came to the same conclusion—Saddam Hussein was a threat—and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion.

The President must try all options to resolve a threat before he commits troops into combat, and so I went to the United Nations. I said, "I see a threat." They looked at the intelligence, the same intelligence. They remembered the same history, and with a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council, said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The world spoke.

But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the demands of the free world. When we sent inspectors, or when

the U.N. sent inspectors into Iraq, he systematically deceived them. So I have a choice to make at this point in our history: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we expected to find, Saddam had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to the enemy. That is not a risk we could 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.

And 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. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, my opponent now agrees with me that even though we didn't 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 appreciate him clearing all this up. But I caution you, there's still 62 days left for him to change his mind.

I'm running because I understand we have more to do to make this country secure. We will continue to work with friends and allies around the world to pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. You cannot talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best with them. We must aggressively pursue them around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat terror. There's nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved

in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to build on the alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq. We've set clear goals, peaceful and democratic countries that are allies in the war on terror. It's our interest that those countries become peaceful and democratic countries. It's in our interest that they become allies in the war on terror.

They're run by strong leaders now. Our military will help them on their way to the political process that the people demand. We'll help train Iraqis and Afghan citizens so they can do the hard work of defending their democracy. Our troops will complete this mission as quickly as possible so they do not have to stay a day longer than necessary.

In these crucial times, our commitments are kept by the fine men and women of the United States military. At bases across our country and around the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with them. I've seen their unselfish courage and their great decency. I appreciate the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example for those who wear our uniform.

I made a commitment to our troops and to the loved ones of our troops that they will have the resources they need to fight and win this war against the terrorists. Last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. This legislation provided funding for body armor, vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. It was an important funding request, and it received significant bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him to explain his vote. And here's actually what he said: "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." [Laughter] Yes. Now he's offering different explanations. They said—he said he's proud of his vote. And they kept pressing him, and he said, "Well, the whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

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 of liberty in a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries listen to the dreams of their people.

By serving the cause of liberty, we're helping others, and we're making our country more secure. By serving the cause of liberty, we're helping to spread the peace that we all want. By serving the cause of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of our country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect our country. Enemies who hate us are still plotting to harm us. We have a difference of opinion on these terrorists. My opponent said that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic is upside-down. If you ever hear that, tell your friends and neighbors that during the 1990s, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us, long before we went to war with them. These people don't need an excuse for their hatred. I think it's wrong to blame America for the anger and the evil of the killers. We don't create terrorists by fighting back. We will defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

There are a lot of really fine people at the Federal level, the State level, and first-

responders at the local level who are working hard to protect us. I want to thank the first-responders who are here today. I want to thank you for your dedication.

The cooperation has never been better between the Federal, State, and the local government. We're working hard to make sure we get the best intelligence gathering capability. It's important that we know the movements of the enemy. And so we're pushing for reforms for intelligence gathering. It's essential that we renew the PATRIOT Act so law enforcement has the tools necessary to find and disrupt terrorist activity in the United States. We've been pushing hard for reforms to make sure we better guard our borders and safeguard our ports. We created the Department of Homeland Security.

These reforms are hard in Washington. See, there's a lot of entrenched interests there, a lot of people who like the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform; you have to be able to get the job done. So when you're out campaigning, remind people that when it comes to reforming schools, raising the bar, and closing that achievement gap, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms and helping our seniors with modern health, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy and growing jobs so people can find work, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing the homeland and defeating the terrorists and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. And when you're out there working hard to garner the vote and gather the vote, tell them, when it comes time to choose a President, put somebody in there who can get the job done.

Tomorrow night I'm going to talk about how this world of ours is changing, and Government must change with the changing world to make people's lives easier, to give people a chance to be able to realize the full promise of tomorrow. Changing times are difficult times. And one way to

help add security to people's lives during changing times is to promote an ownership society. See, if you own your own health care account and you change jobs, you'll have the security of being able to take it with you from job to job.

We've got a lot of younger folks here today. And I appreciate you coming. Baby boomers like me are in good shape when it comes to Social Security. The system is sound for people like me and older. But if you're a younger worker, you better listen carefully to the debate about the retirement systems here in America. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own tax money and create a personal savings account as a part of Social Security.

We'll continue to create an environment so that people are willing to take risk and create their own small business. We want more small-business owners in America. One of the most hopeful statistics is the fact that today the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. During changing times, owning your own home brings stability in your life. See, we're going to continue to promote an ownership society in America because it brings stability during changing times, but also because I understand when a person owns something, they have a vital stake in the future of our country.

In a time of change, there's some things that won't change: the individual 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 changing times, we must value the institutions that give us direction and purposes, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We believe and stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our 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. You know, the culture is changing from one that says, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which 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 the community in which you live, 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.

For all Americans, these years in our history will 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 that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and an unyielding belief in the values that make this country a wonderful land.

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 I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I was thanking people for their work, and a fellow looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down."

Since that day, I have a duty that has gone on. I wake up every morning trying to figure out how best to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

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

The President. We have come through much together. We have done a lot of hard work. We're moving this country forward, but there's more work to be done. During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership

and hope and opportunity to every corner of this country—I mean every corner. We will pass the enduring values of this country on to a younger generation. We will continue to spread freedom and peace.

You know, when I campaigned across your State 4 years ago, I said if you gave me the great honor of serving as President, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office. And with your hard work

and with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:18 p.m. at the Nationwide Arena. In his remarks, he referred to professional golfer Jack Nicklaus, his wife, Barbara, and their son, professional golfer Gary Nicklaus; and former professional football player Chris Spielman.

Remarks Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in New York City *September 2, 2004*

The President. Thank you all. Mr. Chairman, delegates, fellow citizens: I am honored by your support, and I accept your nomination for President of the United States.

When I said those words 4 years ago, none of us could have envisioned what these years would bring. In the heart of this great city, we saw tragedy arrive on a quiet morning. We saw the bravery of rescuers grow with danger. We learned of passengers on a doomed plane who died with a courage that frightened their killers. We have seen a shaken economy rise to its feet. And we have seen Americans in uniform storming mountain strongholds and charging through sandstorms and liberating millions with acts of valor that would make the men of Normandy proud.

Since 2001, Americans have been given hills to climb and found the strength to climb them. Now, because we have made the hard journey, we can see the valley below. Now, because we have faced challenges with resolve, we have historic goals within our reach and greatness in our future. We will build a safer world and a more hopeful America, and nothing will hold us back.

In the work we have done and the work we will do, I am fortunate to have a superb Vice President. I have counted on Dick Cheney's calm and steady judgment in difficult days, and I am honored to have him at my side.

I am grateful to share my walk in life with Laura Bush. Americans have come to see the goodness and kindness and strength I first saw 26 years ago, and we love our First Lady.

I'm a fortunate father of two spirited, intelligent, and lovely young women. I'm blessed with a sister and brothers who are my closest friends. And I will always be the proud and grateful son of George and Barbara Bush.

My father served 8 years at the side of another great American, Ronald Reagan. His spirit of optimism and good will and decency are in this hall and are in our hearts and will always define our party.

Two months from today, voters will make a choice based on the records we have built, the convictions we hold, and the vision that guides us forward. A Presidential election is a contest for the future. Tonight I will tell you where I stand, what I believe, and where I will lead this country in the next 4 years.