

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 hard-hats there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember a fellow coming out of the rubble, and I was trying to do my best to console them there at the site. And a guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Don't let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better 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. Four years ago, when I traveled your great State, I made a pledge that if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help—with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless, and thank you for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:55 p.m. at Red Rocks Park & Amphitheater. In his remarks, he referred to Cathy Franks, wife of Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Mike Shanahan, head coach, National Football League Denver Broncos and his wife, Peggy; Gov. Bill Owens of Colorado and his wife, Frances; Gwynneth A.E. Dieter, Colorado State chairperson, W Stands for Women, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; entertainer Collin Raye; Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Gen. Franks, who introduced the President.

Statement on the Death of Christopher Reeve

October 11, 2004

Laura and I are saddened by the death of Christopher Reeve. Mr. Reeve was an example of personal courage, optimism, and self-determination. He was brave in the face of adversity and was greatly admired

by millions of Americans. He will be remembered as an accomplished actor and for his dedicated advocacy for those with physical disabilities. We send our prayers and condolences to his family and friends.

Remarks in Colorado Springs, Colorado

October 12, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. It's great to be back in Colorado Springs. I've come back to ask for your vote. I've come back to ask for your help in getting people to the polls on November the 2d. We have a duty in this country to participate in the democratic system. Remind

your friends and neighbors about that duty. Get people from all the neighborhoods in Colorado Springs to show up to vote. Get them to do what all of us must do, to vote on election day. And when you get them headed to the polls, remind them if they want a stronger America, a safer

America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

It's an amazing line of work, isn't it, where you get your daughter to introduce you in front of thousands of people. I'm really proud of Jenna and Barbara. Laura and I love them dearly. I want to thank them for their help on the campaign trail. And it warms my heart and strengthens my spirit to be campaigning with somebody I love a lot.

I wish Laura were here today, speaking about loving somebody a lot. When I asked her to marry me, she was a public school librarian, didn't much care for politics or politicians. [*Laughter*] She said, "Fine, I'll marry you, just so long as I never have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that pledge. She's speaking a lot, and when she does, the American people get to see a compassionate, strong, great First Lady in Laura Bush.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He did a great job in his debate the other night. I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair. [*Laughter*] But I didn't pick him for his hairdo. I picked him because he's a man of sound judgment and great experience. I picked him because he's getting the job done for the American people.

I'm honored to be on the platform with the next United States Senator from Colorado, Pete Coors. I hope when you're turning out the vote for me, you turn out the vote for Pete as well. He'll be taking the place of a really fine fellow in Ben Nighthorse Campbell. I've enjoyed working with Senator Campbell. He's served your State well. And Pete will be serving alongside another fine United States Senator in Wayne Allard. I appreciate Wayne being here. Thanks for coming, Joan. It's good to see you.

I'm honored to be on the stage with a great Governor of the State of Colorado, Bill Owens. He's doing a fine job. I know

something about being a Governor. I was one.

You've got a great Congressman from this district in Joel Hefley. I'm proud that he's here, and how about his wife, State Representative Lynn Hefley. I told Joel the other day, he better hope Lynn doesn't run him in the Republican primary. [*Laughter*]

You know, I got to meet your mayor when I came to give the graduation speech at the Air Force Academy, and I was very impressed by Lionel Rivera, Mr. Mayor. What a good man he is. And I want to thank his wife, Lynn, for being here as well. I want to thank all the State and local officials who have joined us.

I want to thank Sammy Kershaw for being here and entertaining. I want to thank The Walker Williams Band for being here and entertaining everybody. I appreciate the members of the Olympic team who've joined us today, Shane Hamman and Matt Emmons. I'm honored you all are here.

I appreciate those who are here serving in our United States military. I want to thank your families—of the men and women who wear the uniform. Thank you for your sacrifice and your dedication. I want to thank all the veterans who are here today. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

I want to thank the grassroots activists for what you're going to do, to put up the signs and make the phone calls, turn out the vote. There's no doubt we'll carry Colorado again and win a great victory in November.

I'm on my way to Arizona for the final debate. Those debates have highlighted the clear differences between the Senator and me on issues ranging from jobs to taxes to health care to the war on terror. Much as he's tried to obscure it, on issue after issue, my opponent has showed why he earned his ranking as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And several of his statements he made in the last debate simply do not pass the credibility test. With a straight face, he said he'd had only one position on Iraq. [Laughter] I could barely contain myself. In the spring of 2003, Senator Kerry said, "It was the right decision to remove Saddam Hussein from power." Now, he says, "It's the wrong war." In the same debate, he said Saddam was a threat, and then a few minutes later, he said there wasn't a threat in Iraq. And he tries to tell us he's had only one position. Who's he trying to kid? See, he can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

With another straight face, he tried to tell Americans that when it comes to his health care plan, and I quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." The facts are, 8 out of 10 people who get health care under Senator Kerry's plan would be placed on a Government program, see. He can run, but he cannot hide.

Then he was asked to look into the camera—[laughter]—and promise he would not raise taxes for anyone who earns less than \$200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise, he would have to break almost all of his other ones. [Laughter] His plan to raise taxes on the top two brackets would raise, we think, about \$600 billion. But his spending plan costs almost 4 times that much, about \$2.2 trillion. See, you can't have it both ways. To pay for all the big spending programs he's outlined during his campaign, he's going to have to raise your taxes. He can run, but he cannot hide.

You know, after listening to the litany of complaints and the dour pessimism, it took all I could do not to make a face. [Laughter] See, I have a different philosophy. I'm a compassionate conservative. I think Government ought to help people realize their dreams, not tell them how to live their lives. I've led this country with principle and resolve, and that's how I'm going to lead it, with your help, for 4 more years.

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

The President. My plan for a more hopeful America begins with a growing economy that creates good jobs. See, I believe in the energy and innovation and spirit of our workers, our small-business owners, our farmers, our ranchers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out convincing people to vote and to come our way, remind them what this economy and this country has been through. Six months before we got to Washington, the stock market was in serious decline. It foreshadowed a recession. Then we found out some of our citizens forgot what it meant to be a responsible American, and they didn't tell the truth. We passed tough laws to make it abundantly clear we won't tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. Those scandals hurt our economy. And then we got attacked. And the attack cost America 1 million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But we acted. We put tax relief in place, and this recession was one of the shallowest in American history. The tax relief spurred consumption and investment. And as a result, our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. In the past 13 months, we've added 1.9 million new jobs. The unemployment rate nationally is 5.4 percent—lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in the State of Colorado is 5.1 percent. The homeownership rate is at alltime high in America. More minorities own a home than ever before in the history of this country. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. We're moving forward, but there's more work to be done.

In order to make sure jobs are here in America, in order to make sure there's hope in this country when it comes to finding work, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations on our employers. That

means legal reforms so these junk lawsuits don't make it hard for people to find a job.

In order to make sure jobs stay here, Congress needed to pass my energy plan. See, it's a plan that encourages conservation. We spend money on research and development to expand the use of renewables, technologies to help us live different ways at the same lifestyle we're accustomed to, technologies to help us use coal in environmentally friendly ways. I believe we can explore for hydrocarbons in environmentally friendly ways. What I'm telling you is, to keep jobs here, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep jobs here, we got to open up markets for U.S. products. See, we don't want to be closing down markets. We're going to be opening markets. It's to your advantage that our market is open from products for overseas. See, if you've got more choices to choose from, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the marketplace works. So I'm telling places like China, "You treat us the way we treat you. You treat us in a way that opens up your markets," because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure this economy grows, we've got to keep your taxes low. Raising taxes would be the wrong prescription for economic growth. You've heard my opponent—I talked a little bit a while ago about it—he said, oh, he's going to pay for all his programs by taxing the rich. We've heard that kind of rhetoric before. The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason—[laughter]—to pass the tax bill on to you. We're not going to let him tax you, because we're going to win in November.

Speaking about the Tax Code, it is a complicated mess. It's a million pages long. We spend 6 billion hours a year filling out taxes. I'm going to bring Republicans and

Democrats together in a new term to simplify the Tax Code and make it more fair for the American people.

Listen, in order to make sure we can compete in a global war, we've got to educate our workforce. It all starts with making sure our youngsters can read and write and add and subtract. I went to Washington, DC, to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. That's what happened in too many classrooms in America, where they would just shuffle the kid through, you know, the so-called hard-to-educate, an inner-city kid, shuffle him through, or maybe a child whose parents didn't speak English as a first language. "Let's just move him through." See, that's not the America I know. I believe every child can learn. I expect every school to teach. That is why we now measure, so we can solve problems early, before they are too late—before it is too late. We can't have children coming out the back end of the school system that can't read and write and add and subtract anymore, if we expect to compete in the 21st century. Do you realize we're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not going to go back to the days of mediocrity in our schools.

There is more work to be done. I believe we ought to fund at-risk programs in our high schools. I believe we ought to emphasize math and science. I believe, over time, we ought to have a rigorous exam before graduation. I know we'll continue to expand Pell grants for low- and middle-income families. We want more of our kids who graduate to start their career with a college diploma.

To build a more hopeful America, we've got to make sure health care is more available and affordable. We'll have a safety net for those with the greatest need. I'm a strong proponent of community health centers. These are places where the poor and the indigent can get preventative and primary care. It's best they get the care in these centers and not in the emergency

rooms around our country. It is a compassionate way to make sure people get the help they need. We will continue to make sure our health programs for low-income children are fully subscribed to. But we also must address this issue of affordability.

Most of the uninsured are employees of small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. We should allow small businesses to pool together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies can do. I know we need to continue to expand health savings accounts, accounts where people can buy low-premium policies to cover major medical expenses and can set money aside on a tax-free basis to be able to cover their health care needs.

These are vital plans which will help our small businesses, help our young uninsured. These are plans where workers will own their own accounts, so they can base their medical decisions on the advice from their doctor, not in negotiations with an HMO. These are some commonsense, practical ways to make sure health care is available and affordable, without increasing the reach of the Federal Government.

Let me tell you one other practical way to deal with the cost of health care. We've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running good docs out of practice, frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care. See, you can't be pro-lawyer—I mean, pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors and the patients. I'm for medical liability reform—now. In all we'll do to improve health care, this administration will make sure that the decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by Government officials in Washington, DC.

You know, I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. And I saw a problem in Medicare. Medicine was modernizing, but Medicare wasn't. And I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. Let me tell you what I'm talking about, about modernizing and Medicare wasn't. You realize we would pay thousands of dollars for heart surgery under Medicare but not one dime for the prescription drug that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That did not make any sense for our seniors, and it didn't make any sense for the taxpayers. And so I worked with Republicans and Democrats to modernize Medicare. And now, in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage for the first time under Medicare.

Let me talk about Social Security. You might remember the campaign rhetoric of 2000 when they said, "If old George W. gets elected, they're going to take away your check," to our seniors. You still got your check, didn't you? Just remember that, when we talk about how to make sure the Social Security system works for our youngsters. See, baby boomers are okay when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren if we want to make sure Social Security is available to them. We've got to think differently. And so one of the good ideas that I believe is necessary—an idea by the way, that came out of a Commission I formed to take a look at Social Security, headed by the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat from New York—was that younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own tax money and set aside a personal savings account that will earn a better rate of return than the current Social Security system does, so they will have the capacity to be able to realize benefits from a retirement system, a personal account they call

their own, and a personal account the Government cannot take away.

We're living in changing times, and that can be unsettling. That's why I've promoted an ownership society throughout our country. We're living in changing times, but there's some things that don't change, reverence and integrity, compassion and courage. The values we try to live by don't change. In changing times, we must support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every being matters. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. We've got a clear strategy. We'll defend the homeland. We'll strengthen our intelligence gathering services. We'll transform our military so it can do its job. The All-Volunteer Army will remain an all-volunteer army. We're staying on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will continue to work to spread liberty and peace. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think of the world the way it was 3½ years ago. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Al Qaida—Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly

pursuing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a dangerous place, run by a sworn enemy of America. Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, the Government of Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror, and they held Presidential elections last weekend. Because we acted, Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and his support for terror. We knew he hated our country. We knew he had invaded another country. We knew he was shooting missiles at American pilots who were enforcing the sanctions of the world. We knew he had a long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we knew that after September the 11th, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. That's one of the key lessons that we must never forget in order to protect the American people.

In Saddam Hussein, I saw a threat. And I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history my administration remembered. And they concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at. And he came to the same conclusion, and he voted yes when it came time to authorize the use of force.

Before I ever commit troops into harm's way, or any President, we must try all means to deal with the threat. No President ever wants to send our young into harm's way. No President ever wants to have to do that. So I went to the United Nations in hopes that diplomacy would work. That

was my hope. I hoped that the free world would come together and make its voice clear, which it did. The Security Council voted 15 to nothing and said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." Now, I believe that when an international body speaks, it must mean what it says. And that goes for the President as well.

Saddam Hussein had no intention of listening to the demands of the free world. He ignored the resolution. He deceived the inspectors that were trying to get into—that were in his country. Why should he change? This is resolution number 17. Resolution after resolution after resolution had been passed, and nothing happened. He wasn't about to listen. As a matter of fact, when we gave him the final chance, he continued to deceive and evade. 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 do I take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

We did not find the stockpiles that we all thought were there. But I want to remind you what the Duelfer report said. It said that Saddam Hussein retained the intent, the knowledge, and therefore, the capability to rebuild his weapons programs. Now, think about that. It also said that he was gaming the system, using the Oil for Food Programme to try to convince—the polite way of saying it—[laughter]—officials of other nations to get rid of the sanctions that were already weakening. And why would he do that? Well, because he wanted the world to look the other way so he could restart his weapons programs. The greatest danger we face is weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a terrorist enemy. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein in a prison cell.

Because we acted in Afghanistan and Iraq, America is safer and 50 million people

now live in freedom. Think about what happened in Afghanistan over the past weekend. You know, it wasn't all that long ago that young girls were not allowed to go to school. Their mothers were pulled out in the public square and whipped if they didn't toe the line of these ideologues of hate. The Taliban were backward and barbaric. They had a dark view of the world. This past weekend, millions of Afghan citizens voted for their President. The first voter was an Afghan woman, a 19-year-old woman. That society has gone from darkness to light because of freedom. Freedom is powerful.

Iraq will have elections in January. They got a strong Prime Minister. We're fighting off the terrorists who are trying to prevent the elections from happening. Freedom frightens these ideologues of hatred. They can't stand the thought of free societies.

It's in our interest that we expand freedom. It's in our interest that when we tell the Afghan people and the Iraq people we'll stand with them, that we keep our word. It's in our interest that free societies emerge in the broader Middle East, because they will be hopeful societies, societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight the terrorists instead of harboring them. And that helps us keep the peace. Free societies are peaceful societies.

And so our mission is clear. We will help these countries, Afghanistan and Iraq, train their armies and their police so they can do the hard work of defending democracy. We'll help them get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

I made a commitment to our troops and their families that we'll make sure they have the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003 and requested \$87 billion of supplemental funding. This is really important

money. This is money to help our troops in harm's way in both Afghanistan and Iraq. And I was pleased that we received strong bipartisan support for the funding request. It was so strong that only 12 Senators—United States Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. [Laughter] Now, I want to tell you another statistic. Let me just tell you another revealing statistic. There were 4 United States Senators who voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding for our troops in harm's way, only 4 out of 100, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's got to tell you something. So they asked him why, and he issued perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." [Laughter] Now, since then, he's given numerous explanations for why he made the vote. One of the most interesting was he just finally said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." [Laughter] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Listen, on national security, just like domestic policy, we've got big differences between us. I want you to remember that my opponent has had a record—a record in 20 years in the United States Senate. He's had a record of voting against the weapons systems that helped our country win the cold war. He had a record—in 1993, after we got the first World Trade Center attack, he voted to cut the intelligence budget by \$7.5 billion. See, that's part of his thinking. That's record. That happened. He now says he wants a "global test" before taking action to defend America's security.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Think about that, a "global test." The problem is he could never pass his own test. [Laughter] I want you to remember this, now, when you're out gathering people to vote. In 1990, the

United Nations Security Council passed a resolution supporting action to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. The international community was united. Countries throughout the world joined the coalition. Yet, in the United States Senate, after the Security Council resolution, after it became clear there was international support, Senator Kerry voted against the authorization of force. Listen, if driving Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait with the support of the international community does not meet his test, nothing will.

And that is dangerous, a dangerous way of thinking in the world in which we live. We have a different view of our role confronting threats. Just this weekend we saw new evidence that the Senator fundamentally misunderstands the war against terror. See, earlier he questioned whether this is really a war at all, describing it as primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation, instead of a threat that demands the full use of American power. And this weekend he talked of reducing terrorism to, quote, "nuisance"—his word—and compared it to prostitution and illegal gambling.

Our goal is not to reduce terror to some acceptable level of nuisance. Our goal is to defeat terror by staying on the offensive, destroying the networks, and spreading freedom and liberty.

During the next 4 years, I will work with our friends and allies. We'll continue to build strong coalitions. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I like to use my friend Prime Minister Koizumi to explain what I mean by the transformational power of liberty. I saw him in New York in early September, and I—at the United Nations—and I said, "By the way, I'm talking about you on the campaign trail. Do you mind if I continue to do so?" He said, "Not at all." I didn't ask him whether or not I could tell you whether or not Elvis was his favorite singer.

[Laughter] It's true. [Laughter] One of his favorite movies is "High Noon," by the way.

Anyway—[laughter]—so I like to bring him up because he's the head of a country that some 60 years ago we were at war with. My dad fought against the Japanese. I'm sure there's some in this audience who did so, and I know some dads and granddads did as well.

And after the war, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, believed in the transformational power of liberty to convert an enemy into an ally. That's what he believed. So did a lot of other Americans. But there was some great skepticism of what that could mean. You know, we were working for democracy in Japan. A lot of people in this country said, "Why do it? Why bother? Why should we care? They were the enemy." You could understand; families' lives had been turned upside down because of the death of a loved one during that war. People were questioning whether or not it was worthwhile.

But fortunately, they believed in the power of liberty, and today, I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi, the head of Japan, talking about the peace, talking about how the United States and Japan, former enemies and now allies, can work together to achieve the peace we all want for our children and our grandchildren.

I believe we'll succeed in Iraq. I believe there will be a democracy. And I envision the day, someday, when an American President and a duly elected leader of Iraq are sitting down at the table talking about achieving the peace, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe that millions plead in silence in the Middle East for freedom. I believe that women in the Middle East want to have a free society and have their children grow up in a free society. I believe that if given a chance, the people in the Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I be-

lieve all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. 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 and clear vision and a deep faith in the values that make this a great nation.

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'll never forget. There was workers in hardhats there, yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember doing my best to console those people coming out of the rubble. They were there lined up, and we were heading down the ropeline—Rudy Giuliani and Governor Pataki and I were going down the line thanking people and hugging them. And a guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State, I made a pledge that if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. 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 9:37 a.m. at the Colorado Springs World Arena and Ice Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Joan Allard, wife of Senator Wayne Allard; Gov. Bill Owens of Colorado; Mayor Lionel Rivera of Colorado Springs, CO, and his wife, Lynn; entertainers Sammy Kershaw and the Walker Williams Band; Shane Hamman, weightlifter, and Matt Emmons, shooter,

U.S. Olympic team; Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Rudolph W.

Giuliani, former mayor of New York City; and Gov. George E. Pataki of New York. He also referred to the “Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq’s WMD,” issued September 30.

Remarks in Paradise Valley, Arizona October 12, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for being here. I want to thank my friends Jon Kyl and John McCain for their leadership. They’re good, honest people, and they’re good to work with, and they do a great job representing Arizona. I presume you want me to sign the water bill. [Laughter] No wonder you’re here.

Anyway, I finally made it to Arizona—back to Arizona. You know, we’re kind of warming up for these debates. I’m looking forward to tomorrow night. It’s a chance to point out major differences. For example, if the Senator has his way, this is the way every house will feel, because he doesn’t have an energy policy. But it’s going to be a lot of fun. I want to thank Arizona State for hosting the debate, and thank the good city of Phoenix and Tempe for being such gracious hosts.

I’m—will be teaming up here in a minute with Laura. She’s been working her way from east to west. She and little Barbara are campaigning New Mexico today, and Jenna introduced me in Colorado Springs. And I was sitting there watching that gracious young lady introduce me in front of 10,000 people, saying, “My, does time fly,” you know. [Laughter] It’s an unbelievable feeling, really. I told the girls when they were young, I said, “Oh, don’t worry, we’ll go on the famous father-daughter camping trip,” come to the Grand Canyon, maybe ride down the Colorado River. This is the grand camping trip we never took them on, campaigning for President.

[Laughter] But it’s a lot of fun to have your family out there.

I tell people—and this is true—I think it’s true; it’s got some truth to it, at least—that either when I asked her or shortly thereafter, Laura said, you know, “I never want to have to give a political speech. I’ll marry you, but I don’t want to give a speech.” I said, “Okay, you got a deal.” And—but fortunately, she didn’t hold me to the deal. The American people have gotten to see her as a warm, compassionate, great First Lady.

It’s such an honor to serve the people. You know, people say, “Well, gosh, that’s interesting. What’s it like on your marriage, you know, being the President and First Lady?” I say, “It strengthened our marriage. After all, I’ve only got a 45-second commute.” [Laughter] But we’re representing the country together, and Laura has come to know what I know, that we have a chance to really do some good things for people. And I remember when she gave the radio address to the—and spoke to the women of Afghanistan, made it very clear that the American people were standing with them as they went from tyranny to freedom. And the feedback was fantastic, and she realized what I know as well, that just simple gestures and kind—moments of kindness can really make a difference in people’s lives and can help lift spirits and make a valuable contribution to the future of the country.