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The President. Yes. That's a good question. First, let me make this abundantly clear to you: The job of the President is to promote a society in which people are free to worship as they see fit. A valuable and cherished tradition of America is that you can worship an Almighty if you want to, and you're just as patriotic if you choose not to, that if you choose to worship, you can worship any religion that you choose. My job is to make sure that that is a absolute part of the American society in future.

From an individual perspective, as a person, I rely upon faith to give me the strength necessary to do my job. One of the interesting parts of the job, something that I discovered as President, is the fact that a lot of people pray for me. That's a very humbling thought when you think about little old me. People pray for George W. and his family. I don't ask. People just do, and for that I'm grateful, incredibly grateful. I believe in prayer, and I appreciate the prayers of people.

I think the 2004 election will be determined by the American people's decision as to who best can lead the country. That's what I think will determine the 2004 election. I think it's the collective will of the people which make that determination. Some people of faith will participate. Some who don't necessarily agree with faith will participate. The question of the outcome of the race is who best can describe as clearly as possible a positive and hopeful and optimistic future for every single citizen of this country regardless of their political party, regardless of their background, regardless of their economic status. That's what I think will determine the outcome of this election.

Yes, little guy way up there. My favorite dog is Barney. [*Laughter*] That wasn't your question, okay. I think this is going to have to be the last question. I know, I'm sorry. Come on down the road to Lebanon. [*Laughter*]

The Presidency

Q. Mr. President, do you like your job? And is it difficult at times?

The President. Yes. I love my job, and that's why I want to do it for 4 more years. I believe that—a lot of jobs are tough, but that's what makes them worthwhile. My job is the kind of job that you better know who you are and where you're going in order to do it the right way. You can't kind of fumble around with your value system on the people's time. You've got to be rock solid in what you believe.

I tease and say I'm listening to my mother, as the President. Well, that's part of what it means to be rock solid in your values. You get raised a certain way, and that's just the way you are. And you show up, and you do your job. You tell people what you think, make the best decisions you can possibly make. You just can't worry about politics. I'm worried—I am in the political arena. I'm obviously anxious about this election; otherwise, I wouldn't be here asking for the vote. I'm anxious for it to get started. I like to campaign. I like to be with people. But I'm not going to change. I'm not going to change my principles. I'm not going to change my value system in order to win the vote.

I want to thank you all for coming. May God bless. Thank you all. Thanks for being here. Yes. Thanks, everybody. Glad you're here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:32 p.m. at the Hara Complex. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gov. Jennette Bradley and State Treasurer Joseph T. Deters of Ohio; Ohio State Senator Jeff Jacobson; Ohio State Representative Jon Husted; Robert T. Bennett, chairman, Ohio Republican Party; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Remarks in Lebanon, Ohio

May 4, 2004

Thank you all for coming. I'm proud to be the first sitting President to have visited here. I am—actually, I'm a standing President today. [*Laughter*]

I'll tell you why I'm here. I want to—I'm here to tell you I want to be your President for 4 more years. I see clearly where we need to go in order to make this country safer and stronger and better, and I need your help. I need you to find people to register to vote. I need you to turn out the vote. I need you to put up the signs. I need you to do your

duty as Americans and vote, and when you do, I'll be reelected, thanks to your help.

Rob told me 11 other Presidents have visited the Golden Lamb. None of them came on a bus like this. [*Laughter*] I don't think so, do you?

I really appreciate my friends here in Ohio. This is an important State. And it's the State that we're going to work hard to earn the confidence of the people from all walks of life. But it's going to require a good grassroots effort in order for us to get the message out. I want you to make sure you tell your friends and neighbors—it doesn't matter what their political party is—that our message and our vision is one that is positive and hopeful and optimistic for every single American. That's what we believe.

I regret that Laura is not here today. I know it. You drew the short straw. [*Laughter*] You know, I really got lucky when she said yes. She is a fabulous wife, a great mother, and she's doing a wonderful job as the First Lady of this country. I think she deserves 4 more years.

I want—as you get out and gather the vote, remind people that it's the President's job to surround himself with excellence, to put a good team together on behalf of the American people. I've assembled a great Cabinet and a great administration, people from all walks of life, people from different backgrounds, people who have come to Washington, DC, to serve our Nation and not their self-interest. We've had no finer Vice President of the United States than Dick Cheney. Mother heard me say that one time. She said, "Wait a minute, Buster."

No, I'm proud of my team. And I'm proud of working with the Members of Congress. You got a fine Congressman in Rob Portman. I didn't know he was an innkeeper. [*Laughter*] But he's a great guy, an honest fellow, a smart person, a person who cares deeply for the people of Ohio. I traveled today down from Dayton with Congressman Mike Turner, who's doing a fine job as well. I appreciate you coming, Congressman Turner.

I appreciate Lieutenant Governor Jennette Bradley, who is with us today, and State Treasurer Joe Deters. I want to thank the members of the statehouse who are here.

I appreciate the mayor came out today, Amy Brewer. Madam Mayor. She didn't ask for any advice, but I'm going to give her some. [*Laughter*] Fill the potholes, Mayor. [*Laughter*] And thank you for your service.

I want to thank my friend Jo Ann Davidson, who is my regional chairman, a former speaker of the house of Ohio.

I understand Anthony Munoz is here. Where is Anthony? Anthony, *como esta*? Good to see you again, buddy. Thank you for coming. What a class act he is. He's a person who understands that a responsible citizen is somebody who puts something back in the community in which they live. And I'm proud to call you friend, Anthony. Thank you for coming.

I want to thank all the people who care about your country and decided to participate in the political process. It's really important. It's important for citizens to understand we have a duty in democracy to participate. I hope you go out and gather people to the polls. You might suggest they vote for me when you do, and tell them I've got a reason. Look, I'm here asking for the vote. The reason I've come here is I want people to know I want to be your President. I take nothing for granted. I'm here to say, I need your help and want your help to lead this country for 4 more years.

I'm seeking the endorsement of the people. I'm running against the—and it's going to be a tough campaign, by the way. We're not going to take anything for granted, and neither should you. I'm running for a fellow who's got a lot of experience. He's been in Washington an awful long time—so long, he's taken about—both sides of just about every issue. [*Laughter*] That's called Washingtonitis.

And he's seeking the endorsements too. As you might remember, he claims to have picked up some important endorsements from foreign leaders. He just won't give us their names. Here's what he said about that one question. He said, "What I said is true." He said, "I mean, you can go to New York City, and you can be in a restaurant, and you can meet a foreign leader." That's what he said when one of the big-time reporters asked him about it. I've got a hunch this whole thing might be a case of mistaken

identity. [*Laughter*] Just because somebody has an accent or a nice suit or a good table in New York City, it doesn't make him a foreign leader. Whoever these mystery men are, they will not be deciding the election. I'm here to ask for the endorsement not of foreign leaders but of the American people.

And I've got a reason. I've got a job to make this country a safer country. My job is to do everything in our power to protect the American people from an enemy which is coldblooded, an enemy that has no conscience, an enemy which struck us on September the 11th. We have rallied together as a Nation. We're doing everything we can to protect our homeland. Our ports are more secure. The borders are better off. It's harder to get through an airport these days, I fully understand. After all, they're looking inside your shoes, but it's for a reason. It's to make sure that we do everything we can to protect the homeland. But the best way to protect America is to stay on the offensive and bring these killers to justice, one person at a time.

It's important for the President and future President to understand the nature of the war we face. This is more than a war that requires law enforcement and intelligence. That's what some people have said. That's the attitude we took after the World Trade Center was bombed in 1993. We served some legal papers, and some thought the matter was settled. But the enemy was still planning, and they were plotting, and they were training. After the carnage of September the 11th, you need to have a President who understands you can't win this war with legal papers. We've got to use every asset at our disposal.

The terrorists declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. And we're making good progress. We're chasing them down. We've got a lot of friends on the hunt. We're cutting off their money. We're sharing intelligence. We've got some fantastic military troops on the hunt for them. Two-thirds of known Al Qaida leaders have been brought to justice, and the rest of them can feel us breathing down their neck.

You've got to have a President who understands the nature of the war. It's essential that we not show any weakness. We must be determined and strong and unrelenting in our search for those who would do harm to the American people. The war on terror is more than just chasing down Al Qaida. The war on terror is enforcing doctrine. It's essential that when an American President speaks, he speak clearly, and when he says something, means what he says.

When I said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist," I meant what I said. When a President says something, it must be clear, and it must be meaningful. In order to keep the peace, there must be truth in the words of the President. The Taliban found out what I meant. Thanks to our troops and our coalition members, we routed the Taliban from power. And Afghanistan is no longer a training base for Al Qaida.

Part of the war on terror was making sure Al Qaida couldn't train there. Part of the war on terror is to spread freedom in places like Afghanistan. I want you to remember what life was like for little girls in Afghanistan before we arrived. The Taliban were so barbaric and so backwards, so corrupt in their vision, that young girls—many young girls never received an education. Thanks to the United States of America and our brave troops, thanks to our friends and our coalition, not only did we rout the Taliban and America is more safe, we routed out a Government. And now young girls have got hope and optimism for their future.

A President must understand the world the way it is. And after September the 11th, this country needs to have a President who understands that when we see a threat, we must take it seriously before it materializes. When a President sees a threat, he just can't hope it goes away. He just can't hope that somehow the—a tyrant will change his mind.

I saw a threat in Iraq.* I looked at the intelligence and saw a threat. The Congress looked at the intelligence. Members of both political parties looked at that same intelligence and saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council, like me, remembered—we saw more than a threat. We remembered that Saddam Hussein had used weapons of mass

* White House correction.

destruction against his own people and against his neighborhood, that Saddam Hussein professed hatred for America, that he had terrorist ties, that he paid suiciders to kill innocent citizens in the Middle East. We remembered all that.

And so we went to the United Nations, and the United Nations agreed with America when, unanimously, the Security Council said, "Disarm, or face serious consequences." When America speaks, we must mean what we say. We said, "Disarm, or face serious consequences." Saddam Hussein, as he had for a decade, defied the demands of the free world. So I had a choice to make: Either trust the word of a madman, or defend America. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power. Because we acted, torture chambers are closed. Because we acted, democracy is rising in the heart of the Middle East. Because we said something and did what we said, countries like Libya got the message and voluntarily disarmed. Because we acted, America is more secure, and the world is more peaceful.

There's hard work still to do, and like you, I mourn the loss of every life. And like you, I recognize how difficult the work in Iraq is. It's essential that we implement our strategy for the sake of long-term peace and freedom. You see, free societies are peaceful societies.

I also know that freedom is in the soul of every human being. Freedom isn't America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

The Iraqi people long to be free. The Iraqi people want to self-govern. But there are thugs and assassins who want to stop the march to freedom. That's what you're seeing on your television screens. You're seeing a few killers trying to halt the progress of freedom because they understand that freedom will be a major defeat in the cause against terror. Terrorists can't stand free societies. Terrorists understand the power of freedom just like Americans understand the power of freedom. This country will finish what we have begun. We will see that Iraq is free and self-governing and democratic. We will accomplish our mission. We will win this essential victory in the war on terror.

I'm running because I understand the historic opportunity we have. It's an historic moment to help change the world. I believe, as the strongest nation on the face of the Earth, we have a duty and an obligation to spread freedom, to resist tyranny, to help people from all walks of life realize their ambition. And I know that by fulfilling that duty, by using our strength and our influence, by spreading freedom, that we will leave behind a legacy of peace for our children and for our children's children. This is the course that history has put before us, the challenge that history has put before us. We welcome it. We do not shirk our duty. We welcome our duty.

There is a difference of opinion, when it comes to that duty, in foreign policy. My opponent says he approves of bold action in the world but only if other countries do not object. I believe strongly in alliances. I believe strongly in working with other nations that share the same values we share, that understand the need for freedom and peace to be spread throughout the world. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I'm running because I have a vision for a stronger America that's based on a strong economy. I understand the role of Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit flourishes. I understand the job of Government is to empower people to realize their dreams. You see, we have a difference of opinion in this race, the role of the Federal Government versus the role of the private individual.

We went through tough economic times. We've been through a recession and a war and a national emergency and corporate scandals. But I understood that in order to come out of these tough economic times, the best thing to do is not to increase the size and scope of the Federal Government, but the best thing to do is to let people keep more of their own money. In order to grow the economy, when people have more money, they demand—the cornerstone of our pro-growth economic policy is to trust the people of America with their own money.

We're not spending the Government's money in Washington, DC. It's your money, and when you have more money in your pocket, this economy will grow and expand.

I like to say that the numbers look good. First quarter economic growth was strong. Jobs are now being created in Ohio. They're being created nationwide. More people own their home than in a long period of time. Homeownership rate is the highest ever. More minorities are owning their own home. People are starting their own business. It is clear that the economic stimulus package we passed is working. It is clear that people are spending their money far wiser than the Federal Government would have.

And the fundamental question in this campaign is how do we make sure the economy continues to grow? How do we make sure America is the best place in the world to do business? How do we make sure we're the leader in the world? Let me give you some ideas.

First, we've got to make sure we're wise with the people's money. We've got to make sure that we don't run your taxes up. The worst time to raise taxes on the American people would be right now. I'm running against a fellow who's made over a trillion dollars of promises in this campaign, and we're only getting started. We've got 6 months to go, and he's already over a trillion. I can't imagine what it's going to be like next October. And the problem is, he said he's going to pay for it by taxing the rich. That's code word. That's the way they talk in Washington. There's not enough money. You can't tax the rich enough to pay for his promises. Guess who he's going to tax? He's going to tax me and you. You're going to pay for this. He's either going to break his promises on these new spending increases, which I don't think he'll do, or he's going to tax the American people, which I will think he'll do.

This is a terrible time to raise taxes on the American people. You need to put me in office for 4 more years so your taxes won't go up.

We've got to make sure that we've got good trade policy in this country. You hear a lot of talk about ideas that would isolate us from the world. I think that would be a disaster. If we want to be competitive in the long run, we don't want to be isolated. We just want to have a chance to compete.

Presidents before me have opened up the United States for foreign goods because it's good for consumers. If you've got more goods coming in, it gives you more products from which to choose and helps you get a better price for something you want to buy. The problem is we haven't had other countries open up their markets like ours. In order for us to be competitive, in order for us to be—for people to be able to find work in the short term and the long term, you need you a President who will continue to open up foreign markets so we can compete. Just give us a chance to compete. We've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best farmers in the world. "Open up those markets," is what we're saying, "and give us a chance to compete, and this economy will continue to grow and expand."

If we want to compete in the long term, we need tort reform. There's too many frivolous and junk lawsuits that are making it hard for small businesses to expand and grow. We need medical liability reform in this country in order to control the cost of health care. We need health savings accounts and association health care plans. Look, we need to make sure the patient and the doctor are the center of the health care system in the world, not Federal bureaucracies.

If we want to be competitive and strong, if we want our people to be able to find work, you better get you a President who understands we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. I've laid out a strong energy strategy that's stuck in the United States Senate. It's an energy policy that encourages alternative sources of energy. It's an energy policy that encourages conservation. But it's an energy policy that's realistic too. We need clean coal technology. We need clean nuclear power. We need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy if we want this economy to grow.

Finally, if we want to be smart, if we want to be the leading country in the world when it comes to growth so people can work, we got to be better—we've got to be smarter about how we educate our people. I mean, this No Child Left Behind Act I signed is

a good start. I look forward to debate on educational excellence. See, this bill is one that says we're going to raise the standards, not lower the standards. This is a bill that says we believe every child can learn, not just a few. This is a bill that says we expect the very best. This is a bill that says we're going to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations.

You see, if you believe every child can learn, then you want to know; you want to see. This is a bill that says, "For increased Federal dollars, you measure. You get to run your schools"—I believe in local control of schools—"but you measure." You show us whether or not every child is learning to read. And if we find they're not, parents need different choices. When we find that children aren't learning to read, we'll change the curriculum. When we find children stuck in schools that won't teach and won't change, we can demand something better. We've got to insist that no child be left behind in America.

And good policy also understands a vision for the future sees clearly the need to use our community college system to train workers for the jobs which actually exist. You see, we've got a lot of people who want to work, and there are new jobs being created in our economy, what they call the jobs of the 21st century. But they don't have the skills necessary to fill those jobs. This country must expedite, must help, must pay for through Pell grants and other assistance programs, training—programs to train workers for jobs which actually exist.

Sure, there's some jobs leaving, and that breaks our hearts. But there's new jobs being created—better paying, higher-quality jobs. And we have a duty to help train workers to meet those jobs. No, a vision for the future is one that understands that in order for us to compete, we've got to be the best place for people to do business. And the best place means good tax policy, good regulatory policy, and an educated workforce to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

And finally, you need to put me back in office because I understand the true strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. We talk a lot about our military being the strength of America, and it's an important part of our strength. And by the way, I intend to keep the military strong. And if you have a loved one in the military, you thank him on behalf of a grateful Commander in Chief. And we'll continue to push progrowth policies so that we're a wealthy nation. But the strength of this country is the fact that we've got citizens who are willing to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves. The strength of this country is the fact that there are thousands and thousands of citizens who are willing to take time out of their life to help somebody who hurts, to help the lonely, to feed the hungry, to find shelter for the homeless.

You see, the great fabric of America is made up of the thousands acts of kindness and generosity that take place on a daily basis, not because Government has said to do so but because they've heard a call that is bigger than Government. They understand that a responsible citizen is one that reaches out to somebody who hurts. The job of the President is to capture and lift that spirit, is to call people to a service greater than self, is to help change this country one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time by rallying and tapping the true strength of the country, which is the hearts and souls of the American people.

Linda Rabolt is here today. She works for the Interfaith Hospitality Network. [*Applause*] That's good. Some of you heard about Linda. They work at churches in this community to serve 41 families. You see, they saw somebody who hurt, and they reached out to them. They're showing what it means to love a neighbor.

Here's what she said about serving the homeless: "It's not that they don't have needs and desires and dreams. They're just down on their luck." See, Linda sees a better day—a better day. She sees a bright future. "It's rewarding to be a part of their lives," she says, "and to watch them to grow and change and move on."

That's the spirit of this country, isn't it? What a fabulous country we have, a country that's resolute and determined, a country that's resolute never to give in to an enemy that hates us, determined to do what it takes to make the world more peaceful, a country that is compassionate and decent when it

comes to making sure the future is bright for every single citizen. And it is such an honor—such a high honor—to be the President of such a fantastic land.

I thank you for your support. I thank you for your friendship. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:43 p.m. at the Golden Lamb Inn. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gov. Jennette Bradley and State Treasurer Joseph T. Deters of Ohio; Mayor Amy Brewer of Lebanon; Jo Ann Davidson, Ohio Valley regional chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; pro football Hall of Famer Anthony Munoz; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks in Cincinnati, Ohio

May 4, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. It is exciting to end what has been a great bus trip across Ohio right here in a wonderful city, Cincinnati, Ohio. Thanks for coming out tonight. I appreciate you coming out. I appreciate you giving me a chance to thank you for what you're going to do as we come down the stretch in this campaign in 2004.

I'm here asking for your vote, and I'm here asking for your help.

Audience member. *Viva Bush!*

The President. *Vamos a ganar.* That means, we're going to win. We set up a web site called georgewbush.com. It will give you a chance to find out how to volunteer, how to register voters, how to turn them out. We need your help. And when you're talking to people, talk to people from all walks of life about this campaign. Talk to people who may never have voted before about this campaign. Talk to people from different parties about this campaign, because, see, we've got a positive vision. We've got a positive vision for everybody who lives in America. We've got a vision to make sure America is safer and stronger and better. We have a mission to make this country as hopeful as it can possibly be. Put out the word, and we will win in November of 2004.

I wish Laura were here to see this crowd. Listen, a good reason to put me back in there is so she will have 4 more years as the First Lady. She's a great First Lady. She's a fantastic wife and a great mom and a wonderful First Lady. I'm really proud of her. She sends her best. She sends all her best—she sends her best to all her friends here in Cincinnati.

By the way, a measure of a good President is whether or not he surrounds himself with excellence. I do. I put together a fantastic team to serve the American people, people from different backgrounds, people from different walks of life, smart and capable people, all of whom have come to Washington to serve a cause greater than themselves, the United States of America. Our country has got a great Vice President in Dick Cheney.

I want to thank the elected officials who have come here today. Your Governor, Bob Taft, is with us. And Governor, I'm honored you're here. Thank you for coming. Congressman Rob Portman is with us today. I appreciate Congressman Portman. Congressman Steve Chabot is with us today. I'm honored you're here. I mean, we've got statewide officials. We've got elected—local officials. We've got all kinds of people who are here, and I'm proud you've come.

I appreciate the grassroots people who are here. Listen, you've got to work hard to turn out the vote, and that's what we call grassroots. I want to thank you. I'm here to fertilize the grassroots today. I'm here to ask you to grow.

I want to thank our entertainers who are here. I'm proud you've come, Billy. It's good to see you again. I appreciate you coming. My friend Billy Cerveny was with us yesterday, as well as Steven Chapman. I'm honored that Steven was here as well.

The last 3 years have brought serious challenges, and we have given serious answers. We came to office with a stock market in decline, an economy headed into recession. We delivered historic tax relief. And now, our economy is the fastest growing of any major industrialized nation in the world.

We uncovered corporate crimes that cost people their jobs and their savings, so we passed strong corporate reforms. We brought the wrongdoers to account, and we made it clear, we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.