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***Prime Minister Abdullah.*** And we hope to be able to also participate in reconstruction of Iraq and do whatever job we can to help.

***President Bush.*** Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:39 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

## Remarks in a Discussion at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

*July 20, 2004*

***The President.*** Thank you all very much. Please be seated.

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

***The President.*** Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for being here. That's what I'm here to tell you: I'm ready to serve this Nation for 4 more years. And I've got a reason. I've got a reason. I want to continue to make this a safer and stronger and better place for every citizen.

We've got a little different format today. It's an opportunity for me to interface with some of your citizens about why I've done some of the policies that I've done, give them a chance to explain to you how these policies might have helped. Oh, I know, you're probably here thinking I'm going to spend most of the time attacking my opponent. I've got too much good to talk about.

It's very important for the people of this important State to know that we're going to carry the State of Iowa. And I need your help. Listen, there's a place you can go on the web page—I mean, on the Internet called georgewbush.com. And you need to get on there if you want to figure out how to help. So you can get on there, and you can register to vote, or you can figure out ways to help people register to vote, or you can sign up to work in your neighborhood. And that's what I'm here to ask you to do, because we've got a plan to make sure this country is a better place. And I want your help to convincing people from all walks of life, Republicans and discerning Democrats and wise independents.

I am sorry that Laura is not with us.

***Audience members.*** Aw-w-w!

***The President.*** That's generally the reaction. [*Laughter*] It's kind of like, "I wish she'd come and you'd have stayed at home." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, however, our two daughters came today, and I'm proud—I'm really glad they're on the campaign trail with me. It's makes the days a little shorter and the trips a lot more fun.

I want to thank the good people here at this wonderful community college. Norm, I want to thank you. Thanks for having me, Norm, here at Kirkwood. I'm going to talk a little bit about community colleges. They're an integral part of making sure America's future is hopeful, as we want it to be. Thanks for opening it up. It's not easy to host the President. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate the mayor; Mayor Paul Pate from Cedar Rapids is with us today. Thanks for coming, Mayor. I know Chuck Gipp is here. I want to thank Chuck for coming as well, the majority leader of the house of representatives. I want to thank all the other State and local officials. Most of all, I want to thank you all. I want to thank you all.

It's very important—it's very important for the people of this country to understand the stakes that we're confronted with, to understand the challenges we face. The enemy declared war on us, and you've just got to know, nobody wants to be the war President. I want to be the peace President. I want to be the President that after 4 years, 4 more in this office, I want people to look back and say, "The world is a more peaceful place. America is a safer country." Four more years, and America will be safer and the world will be more peaceful.

But in this world, you just can't hope for the best; you have to lead. You have to make the hard decisions to make sure America is a safer place and the world is a more peaceful place.

It's very important never to forget the lessons of that fateful day which changed American history. Let me tell you some of the lessons that I have learned and will continue to apply as your President. First, the terrorists, these radicals who use terror to scare us and frighten us and shake our will, are nothing but a bunch of coldblooded killers. You cannot talk sense to them. You cannot negotiate with them. They must be brought

to justice, in order to make the country more secure. This country is a peaceful country. This country is a country that yearns for freedom and peace. But when the enemy hit us, we resolved—we as a nation resolved—to stay firm and diligent, to do whatever it takes to defend our security.

The second lesson I learned and America must always remember is that when the country says something, we better mean it. In order to make this world a more peaceful place, when we say something, we better act on what we say. And so I said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists, themselves." That's a part of making sure America is more secure. It's one thing to resolve to bring the terrorists to justice—and we are. Al Qaida is slowly but surely being dismantled because of our brave troops and because of our allies. But I also recognized that you cannot allow these radicals, these people who have hijacked a religion, nonreligious people who have hijacked a great religion, to find safe haven.

And so we said to the Taliban that was running Afghanistan, "Get rid of them. Join our side." They refused, of course, and so I had the tough decision to make—and that is to enforce our word in order to make the world a better place. And we did, and we removed the Taliban. And there are no longer Al Qaida training camps. As a matter of fact, Afghanistan is going to hold Presidential elections. And you need to be proud of the fact that your Nation liberated a country so that many young girls now go to school for the first time in their lives.

A second lesson of September the 11th is this very important lesson that I will always remember and I hope the country will always remember, that when we see a threat, we must deal with it before it fully materializes; that we can no longer, when we see a threat, we can no longer hope for the best. We used to think we could hope for the best, until September the 11th changed it all. And now we must deal with it. The military will always be our last option—the last option. But we must deal with threats.

And so I just want to step back and remind you all of the facts. Saddam Hussein was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. He is a person who had used weapons of mass destruction on his own people. He is a person that was allowing terrorists to exit and enter his country, and he provided safe haven for terrorist organizations like that of Abu Nidal or Zarqawi. In other words, he was a danger. Everybody knew he was a danger. After all, the United Nations Security Council had said he was a danger in resolution after resolution after resolution.

I looked at the intelligence—I looked at the intelligence, and it said Saddam Hussein was a threat to the United States. Members of the United States Congress of both political parties looked at the same intelligence, and they came to the same conclusion I came to. Then the U.N. Security Council, yet again, looked at the intelligence and said, "The man is a threat." They also said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." That's what was said by the free world. The world came together and said that. And so we said, "Okay, fine, we'll give him one last chance. It's his choice to make; he gets to make the choice." And he deceived the inspectors. These people who have been over there studying what went on have made it clear. I saw that happening. And then—at least we thought it was happening; it's been verified that it was happening. "What did he have to hide," the free world was saying to themselves. "Why would he not allow inspectors in?" See, he was a threat. He made the choice, not the United States of America. He defied the world.

And I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best? Do I trust the word of a madman? Or do we take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

For a while, we were marching to war; now, we're marching to peace. The world is becoming more peaceful. I told you about Afghanistan; it's a free society. No one would have thought 3 years ago—remember what the world was like 3 years ago? Three years ago, Afghanistan was a troubled area run by the Taliban. Three years ago, Iraq was run by a sworn enemy of the country who was torturing his own people; he had mass graves by the thousands for the people in his country. And today, Iraq is run by a person who believes in the hopes and aspirations of the

Iraqi people, a strong leader named Prime Minister Alawi, a person who wants there to be a free society in Iraq.

And I'm going to tell you something, this is an historic moment. A free Iraq will change the world. A free Iraq will not only make America's short-term security interests better; it will make our long-term security interests better, because the way to defeat the radicals who promote terrorist activity to frighten us and drive us out of the world is to spread freedom. Free societies are peaceful societies. Because we have led—because we have led, 50 million people that once lived in tyranny are now free, and the world is better for it.

Three years ago, Pakistan recognized the Taliban, and Al Qaida was able to transit their country without worry. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror. They're chasing down Al Qaida leadership in the remote regions of that country, and America is safer for it. Three years ago, Saudi Arabia wasn't that worried about Al Qaida. Today, Saudi Arabia is chasing down the Al Qaida leadership. They are bringing them to justice. America is safer for it. Three years ago—3 years ago, Libya—Libya was a friend of the terrorists. Libya had weapons of mass destruction programs. Libya was a danger. Today, Libya has dismantled her programs, and America is safer for it. In three short years, because America has led with friends and allies, the world is changing for the better. The world is becoming a more free place, and therefore, the world is becoming a more peaceful place.

I want to make a couple of more points about our foreign policy and what I intend to do over 4 years. First, let me share an interesting story with you. It's one that has touched my heart deeply. Seven men walked into the Oval Office from Iraq. First of all, coming to the Oval Office is a—it's a pretty powerful experience, American or Iraqi. [*Laughter*] It's the kind of place where people stand outside the door, and they say, "I can't wait to get in there and tell him what for." [*Laughter*] And they walk in, and they get overwhelmed by the Oval Office and say, "Man, you're looking pretty, Mr. President." [*Laughter*]

So these seven come in; all of them had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. You know why? Because his currency had devalued and he needed somebody to blame. This story was picked up and put on TV, and a fellow in Houston, Texas, saw it, a guy named Marvin Zindler. He flew them down, at his—I guess at the expense of a foundation he's put together, and they got new hands. And now they're coming to the United States to see me. I can't tell you what a powerful moment that was. A guy grabbed a pen, and he wrote "God bless America" in Arabic. What a stark contrast between the brutality of a dictator and the great compassion of a free country. He told me, he said—one of those men said, "Thank you, Mr. President." I said, "You don't thank me." I said, "You thank the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States and their loved ones."

We have done the hard work, and there's more hard work to do. But this world is a more peaceful world. And when you give me 4 more years, it's going to be even more peaceful than it is today. We're making progress. We're making progress.

By the way, to whom much has been given, much is owed. Not only are we leading the world in terms of encouraging freedom and peace, we're feeding the hungry; we're taking care of, as best as we possibly can, the victims of HIV/AIDS. No, this is a strong nation, but we are a compassionate nation. And this country ought to be proud of the great heart, the collective heart of the American people. I sure am.

One other point I want to make; then I want to talk about our economy and how to make sure America is a stronger place. We will—we've got great allies. Listen, Great Britain is leading, Poland, Italy. There are 60 countries working on the Proliferation Security Initiative. There are 30 countries in Iraq, 40 countries—nearly 40 in Afghanistan. We've got people working well together. But you need to know something about me: I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We need to make sure the country is a stronger country. That starts by making sure the economy continues to grow. Right quick, we've been through a recession. We've been

through an emergency. We've been through a war. We have been through corporate scandals, and we're growing—and we're growing. The economy is strong, and it's getting stronger. And I think one of the reasons why is because I understand the role of Government is not to try to create wealth but an environment in which the entrepreneur, the small-business person, the farmer can thrive. And we have done just that.

The unemployment rate here is 4.3 percent. That's good. The people of this State are working. Our economy is growing at nearly the fastest rate in 20 years. Homeownership rate is at the highest ever. That's what we want in America, isn't it? We want people owning their own home. We want people owning their own piece of property. Manufacturing is up. And I believe one of the main reasons why is because we cut the taxes on the working people here in the country. We let people keep more of their own money. I like to say, when the American people invest, save, they help create new jobs, which shows they can spend their money far better than the Federal Government can.

So the question is, what are you going to do over the next 4 years to make sure the job growth continues? Here's what we're going to do. We're going to make sure tax policy is fair and consistent. We're not going to let them raise the taxes on you. And I'm going to talk to a couple—we're about to talk to a couple from Cedar Rapids that will help me make my point. By the way, we're about to talk to a small-business owner. You'll find that much of the progrowth program that I promoted in Congress is aimed right at the small-business sector of America. Do you know why? Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by the small-business owners. We've got to make sure the small-business sector is healthy in this country.

In order to make sure we continue to grow, we need sensible energy policy in America. You know something? Driving in this—through this part of the world, which I have done before, I might add, quite a few times—I'm better for it—[*laughter*]—it just reminded me once again, wouldn't it be wonderful for somebody to walk up and say, "Mr. President, the corn crop is up, and we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy." So any reasonable energy policy is to encourage research and development to make sure we can use ethanol better and biodiesel better. It makes sense. It makes sense.

We've got to make sure that we conserve energy better. But listen, we can do things in environmentally friendly ways that we couldn't do 20 years ago. For the sake of national security and economic security, we need to be developing the resources we have here at home to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

You can't have a healthy economy if everybody is getting sued. We need legal reform in this country. We need to make sure people aren't constantly—you ask these small-business owners what it's like to fear a lawsuit, and they're going to tell you, it makes their future uncertain. And with an uncertain future, it makes it more difficult to risk capital.

We need good trade policy. I came to the people of this State and said, "I will work to open up markets for Iowa farmers." I said two things during the campaign. I said, one, we'll promote ethanol, alternative sources of energy. We have done that. And the second thing I said is, we will work to open up markets for Iowa farmers. When you're good at something, we ought to be encouraging it. We're good at growing soybeans. We're good at growing corn, and we're now selling it all around the world.

The temptation is to say, well, you know, we better shut her down; we better have economic isolationism. That would be bad for Iowa. To make sure that we got jobs in the future, we need to be confident. Now look, we've opened up our markets for foreign goods. That's good for consumers. It just wasn't me. It was Presidents before me that made that decision. See, if you have more goods coming in, you have more choices. And when you have more choices as a consumer, you're going to get better quality at better price. That's how the marketplace works. What we need to do is make sure other countries treat us like we treat them. We've got to make sure we have a level playing field for Iowa's entrepreneurs and farmers.

Two other quick points: One, we've got to have reasonable health care, affordable health care. That's why I support association health plans, health savings accounts, and

medical liability reform. Listen, no one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit. Ask your docs what it's like to have the legal system look like a lottery. It doesn't do the consumers any good; it doesn't do the providers any good; it doesn't do small-business owners any good to have a legal system that is not fair and balanced. We need medical liability reform.

So last night on the Truman Balcony, guess who was up there? Chuck Grassley. He said, "Would you mind mentioning my name?" [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." [*Laughter*] I just did. [*Laughter*] He said, "When you go to Iowa, remind them of a promise you made and I made and we kept, and that was to reform Medicare." We reformed Medicare not only to help our seniors—and it's a good bill, and it's going to make a big difference in the lives of the senior citizens of this country—we also reformed Medicare to make sure that Iowa's rural hospitals are treated fairly. So when you see the Senator, you tell him I mentioned his name.

Finally, I want to work hard for 4 more years to make sure the country is a better country. There's two ways to do—there's a lot of ways to do that; let me talk about two. One, we must continue on education reform. We must make sure that every child—every child—can learn to read and write and add and subtract. And we're making great progress; we really are. We've raised the standard. We've raised the standard. And in return for increased Federal money, we're now asking this question, "Can you read?" That's not an unreasonable question to ask, is it? No. We want every child reading at the third-grade level. And it starts by asking, "Show us whether you can."

See, the system oftentimes quit on people. They just shuffled them through. It's what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. And guess who got left behind oftentimes? Families—kids of families who don't speak English as a first language—that's pretty easy to quit on them, isn't it? You walk into a classroom—"Oh, these are the hard-to-educate; just move them through." And that doesn't work. Or how about inner-city, African American kids, oftentimes they're just moved through. We've stopped that practice in Washington, DC. We said, "We'll increase the money, but we're raising the bar, because we know every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract. And now, we want you to show us."

And not only do we want to make sure people are literate in the 4th grade, we're going to make sure people are able to have access to community colleges and to make sure that community colleges continue to teach subjects which are relevant. We're about to talk to a fellow Iowan who went back to school at a community college, and as result of continuing education, now makes more money than she did in her previous job. I mean, education is crucial to make sure the economy continues to grow, and it's crucial to make sure we're a better America.

Now finally, one of the most important initiatives that—I think one of the most important initiatives that we put forth was the Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative. I'll tell you why. You see, some of the problems that people face are really problems of the heart. And Government can't change hearts, but hearts can be changed by loving individuals who are inspired by something greater than Government.

Take, for example, alcohol and drug abuse. We want to save people's lives in America, and sometimes it requires a higher power to help change somebody's life. You change their heart; they change their habits. And Government, therefore, ought not to fear welcoming and opening up grants to programs whose sole being is based upon faith.

In the past it wasn't that way. In the past, they'd say, we can't have an interface with Government and faith. And, by the way, many in the faith community say, "Why do I want to interface with Government? Bureaucracies cause me to lose my mission." We've changed that attitude in Washington. Over the next 4 years, I will continue to promote this Faith- and Community-Based Initiative so that we help save more lives and provide more hope for the American people.

I'm running because I want to make sure America is a safer and stronger and better place. And that's why I'm here, to ask for your help.

Now, let me tell you something. I met John today, John Bloomhall. There he is. Stand up, John. [*Applause*] Yes, that's kind

of nice, scattered round of applause for him. I've asked John to come because he is the president and chief executive officer of Diamond V Mills. Accurate?

***Mr. Bloomhall.*** Yes, correct.

***The President.*** Let me say one thing about how his company is structured, to put this in context. His company is what's called a Subchapter S corporation. As a matter of fact, 90 percent of small businesses—about 90 percent—are either called Subchapter S corporations or sole proprietorships. And what that means is they pay tax at the individual income tax level. So part of our tax policy, as you might recall, was to reduce income taxes at the individual income tax level, including all income tax rates—not just some, not just the politically favored. But the view was, if you pay tax, you get relief.

So what does your company do?

***Mr. Bloomhall.*** We—it's yeast fermentation; we manufacture a animal feed ingredient for animal feeds.

***The President.*** Good. Are the animals eating it this year?

***Mr. Bloomhall.*** A lot of it. [*Laughter*]

***The President.*** That's good. [*Laughter*] Are they eating enough of it to—like, have you hired anybody?

***Mr. Bloomhall.*** Yes, we've added five net new jobs this year.

***The President.*** Yes. See, let me stop you there. Most new jobs are created—started by small businesses. John just stood up and said, "Five net new jobs." Now, that's not a lot, when you think about it. It's a lot for the person who got the job. [*Laughter*] And by the way, there are a lot of Johns in this country who have their own business. There's a huge number of small businesses. They're adding five employees here, five there.

Keep going.

***Mr. Bloomhall.*** Well, we've got 124 employees worldwide. They're the best and the brightest, because as we can save taxes and reinvest it in our business—in capital, in the equipment to automate our manufacturing lines, in science—we hire Ph.D.'s, real good-paying jobs. And we can grow jobs and investment in our country better than the Government can by collecting taxes.

***The President.*** I didn't tell him to say that. But I couldn't have said it any better myself. John said, "Investment." One of the things in the tax relief plan that we passed, it says to small businesses, "We'll encourage you to invest by allowing you what they call bonus depreciation." These are fancy tax words; I'm trying to simplify it. It says, "You invest in planned equipment; you get a tax break for doing so."

Are you going to invest, do you think, this year?

***Mr. Bloomhall.*** Yes, we're investing about 1.3 million this year.

***The President.*** Yes. What do you—when you say "invest," what does that mean? Are you buying things?

***Mr. Bloomhall.*** Primarily capital investment in our plant and equipment.

***The President.*** Like what kind of plant and equipment?

***Mr. Bloomhall.*** Automation equipment so that our employees are not doing the manual jobs; they're doing the thinking jobs. They create greater value to us; we can pay them more; and everybody wins.

***The President.*** Okay. Now, listen, this is a very interesting lesson here, because I think it will explain why we insisted on tax relief and why part of the tax relief was aimed at small businesses. He just said, he's going to invest a million dollars in new plant and equipment. And so when he buys new equipment with that million dollars, that the tax relief has encouraged him to do, somebody has got to make the equipment, see. So he has made a decision that affects an employee—not only his own company, because they have become more productive and he can pay them more, he just said—but an employee in somebody else's business who is making the equipment that John has said, "I want to purchase."

It's these—all these decisions by small-business owners have the cumulative effect of encouraging economic vitality and growth. That's what we're here to understand. And therefore, if we raise the taxes on John, he's not going to make these decisions. It will change his decisionmaking thought process—I presume. Now, I'm not a lawyer, you'll be happy to hear. That's the other team. This is the pro-small-business team.

So anyway, raising taxes—and so let me say something to you so you hear—in the

campaign, you'll hear, "We're going only to tax the rich." That's what you'll hear. Now, this is from a fellow who has promised about $2 trillion of new spending thus far. And only taxing the rich, first of all, creates a huge tax gap, which means buyer beware. You see, if you can't raise enough by taxing the rich, guess who gets to pay next? Yes, the not-rich. [*Laughter*] That's all of us.

On the other hand, when you say you're going to raise those rates at, say, $200,000 or more, that's who he's talking about right there. When you're talking about raising those individual rates, I want our fellow citizens to remember, he's raising taxes on small businesses like John's. Now is not the time to be raising taxes on the small-business owners of America. Thanks, John.

We got the Schlotterbacks with us—Mike and Kathie. Hi, Mike, what do you do?

***Mr. Schlotterback.*** I'm a photographer. I have a photo studio here in town called Fisheye.

***The President.*** Anybody needs some photos developed, take it right over to Mike. [*Laughter*] And Kathie, a mom?

***Mrs. Schlotterback.*** Yes.

***The President.*** How many kids you got?

***Mrs. Schlotterback.*** Two girls—two daughters.

***The President.*** Oh, yes. [*Laughter*]

***Mrs. Schlotterback.*** Lindsie and Cora.

***The President.*** Good to see you all.

Let me tell you something about the tax relief. Some people look at it, and they say, "Oh, tax relief, what's it mean?" I'm going to tell you what it means. Let me tell you what it meant to Mike and Kathie. They saved $1,700.

***Mrs. Schlotterback.*** Correct.

***The President.*** The tax relief we passed—remember, we raised the child credit. So if you got kids, you get a little tax relief, because we want to make it easier for people to raise kids. We reduced the penalty on marriage. What kind of system is it—I don't think it's a very wise Tax Code to penalize marriage. We're trying to encourage marriage in America. And we reduced all rates, and they saved $1,700. That may not seem like a lot to some of the big shots in Washington, but ask them if it's a lot to them.

***Mr. Schlotterback.*** Yes, we were able to take that money which you sent us——

***The President.*** No, no, no, I didn't send it to you. It's your money to begin with.

***Mr. Schlotterback.*** That's right, absolutely.

***The President.*** You just got to keep—you just got to keep more of your own money.

***Mr. Schlotterback.*** Right, right. But these two girls are our top priority, and so we took that money, bought a computer, set up a home office. It allows me to work a little more from home and spend time with these girls.

***The President.*** Yes, that's interesting, isn't it? One of the ways we got to make sure this economy continues to grow is to make sure there is broadband technology throughout the entire country, so people like this good man, people like Mike, can work out of home if they want to or can bring educational information into their home. I mean, this is a tale of the changing economy we're in. Here's a fellow who owns his own business, and he can work out of his home, doing his duty, just like Kathie is, to love their children with all their heart and soul.

Now, let me say something about this. They saved $1,700 in '03, $1,700 in '04. But some of this tax relief is getting ready to expire, see, which means his taxes go up. That's what that means. So when you hear all this stuff about the tax cuts are going to expire, you need to think tax increase—because this couple isn't going to save $1,700 the next time. As a matter of fact, they're going to save something substantially less than that. That will mean they have less money in their pockets, less after-tax disposable income, which is their money to begin with. Congress needs to make the tax relief permanent and not raise taxes.

Where's Dawn? Dawn, where are you? Cayton. Oh, there she is, yes. You were trying to hide.

***Ms. Cayton.*** I'm in red.

***The President.*** Oh, yes, you're in red. This is an interesting story. I feel like—kind of like a talk show host here. [*Laughter*] So I met Dawn, and I said, "What do you do?" And she said——

***Ms. Cayton.*** I'm a registered respiratory therapist with St. Luke's Home Care Services here in Cedar Rapids.

***The President.*** Very good. She is in health care. What did you do before?

***Ms. Cayton.*** I was a mom, but I always worked part-time to help out. I taught gymnastics at Twisters, and I also worked in a hotel a couple nights a week doing night audit.

***The President.*** Okay. And then what happened? You decided to——

***Ms. Cayton.*** Go back to school.

***The President.*** Okay, let me stop you. Actually, right here at Kirkwood, she came back to school. Why? Why did you decide to go back to school?

***Ms. Cayton.*** What motivated me was, my oldest daughter was going into 8th grade, and all of a sudden I realized we had 5 years before she was going to college. And I had always helped out here and there, but I needed to really retrain myself so I could go out and make a lot more money.

***The President.*** Yes. This is a really interesting story. First of all, Government can't make somebody, say, go back to school. That has to come from inside a person's soul. And she said, "I want to go back to school." Government can help, through Federal loans, in this case, I think. But this is something people need to hear, because in order to make sure the economy continues to grow, there's a constant kind of—people have to constantly be educated to meet—to have the skills for the new jobs that are being created.

Health care is a field that is growing all across America, and they're looking for workers. We have a shortage of health care workers, and these workers need to be retrained. Community colleges are a fantastic place for people to be retrained for the jobs of the 21st century. Give me 4 more years, and we will continue to invigorate our community colleges, to help people like Dawn gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs that are being created.

Was it hard to go back to school? I want people listening out there to listen to this story. Because I know somebody's going to say, "I don't want to go back to school. I don't have the energy to go back to school. I kind of think I need to go back to school so I can make more money." Was it hard to go back to school? Tell the truth.

***Ms. Cayton.*** Seriously——

***The President.*** Yes, seriously. [*Laughter*]

***Ms. Cayton.*** I thought about it for one year before I actually did it——

***The President.*** So it was a little hard, otherwise you would have dug right into it.

***Ms. Cayton.*** Right—but, no, I had the support of my family. My husband, Marlin, did all the laundry. [*Laughter*]

***The President.*** Marlin, if we stay in this room any longer, you're going to have a lot to do.

***Ms. Cayton.*** And I have two girls, and they understood; you know, it was a sacrifice for them too, because sometimes I couldn't go to their things, because when you're in the medical field you are in clinical practice as well, so I was at different hospitals, basically getting my schooling.

***The President.*** There are jobs available all across the country. Sometimes people need to be—to gain new skills. There is money available and help available for people to go to community colleges. And when you get new skills, you make more money; you become a more productive employee. That's the kind of economy we're in. I really thank you for sharing that with us. Congratulations.

***Ms. Cayton.*** Thank you.

***The President.*** Okay. I want to talk about—before we all start falling out here—[*laughter*]—I want to talk about one more interesting story. Listen, we've got a lot of strength to this country. Our military is a strength. We'll keep it strong. I will keep it strong. I will work with Congress to do that—which means, by the way, we're going to make sure the people who wear the uniform have got all they need. We owe it to the families, don't we, to say, your son or daughter or husband or wife are getting all you need. That's why that vote on the supplemental last fall was an interesting vote. It kind of explained a different philosophy.

I called it up. I said, "Congress, support these troops. We've put them in harm's way; support them." And the Congress did. We had a good vote. Twelve Senators voted no on the 87 billion, 2 of whom I'm running against. [*Laughter*] And my view is, is that

when you put people in harm's way, they deserve the best. No excuses, by the way.

Secondly, the economy is strong, but the true strength of the county is the hearts and souls of our citizens. That's the strength of America, and I recognize that. I recognize that the role of Government is to promote and to foster this strength.

Today I met Dr. Jim Bell. This is an interesting story. He's what I call a social entrepreneur. He is—he is cofounder of His Hands Ministries. He is a doctor who operates a free clinic in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, that provides help to people who need medical help.

Why did you do this?

***Dr. Bell.*** It was because we're just answering the call.

***The President.*** Yes. It's a faith-based ministry.

***Dr. Bell.*** We're a Christ-centered ministry. And we understand that even as our economy improves—and it is in Cedar Rapids—that there's always going to people who fall between the cracks and that are going to need help. And not only are they going to need help physically, but we believe that our greatest measure of success is seeing a changed life for Christ. I've never been called a social entrepreneur before. I've been called a lot of things.

***The President.*** Do what now?

***Dr. Bell.*** I've never been called a social entrepreneur before.

***The President.*** Well, you are now. Yes, well, it's kind of—you are. First of all, the reason why is entrepreneurs are self-starters. They're motivated by something other than Government law, for example. You don't start your business—you can't pass a law that says, you will start your own business. You decide to start your own—you decided to start your own faith ministry to heal people because you heard a call, you see. And you stepped out, and said, "I've got the courage necessary," you and your cofounders. I presume there's somebody else?

***Dr. Bell.*** Yes.

***The President.*** Yes, okay, the two of you said, "What can we do?" And they started this ministry. It's a fabulous ministry, isn't it?

There's Jim Bells all over America. He's not alone. There's hundreds of thousands of people who have asked themselves, "What can I do to save a life?" And if we had more Jim Bells in the world saving lives, America would be a more hopeful place, wouldn't it? Think of this issue—and I'll get back to you in a minute.

You know there are about a million children whose mothers and fathers—who have a mother and father in prison. Those are kids who wonder whether or not America's promise belongs to them. They think that. Imagine if we could find a mentor for each one of those children. That's the mission. That's one of the goals we're on, is to encourage programs, community-based—you don't have to be a faith-based program, although it turns out faith-based programs are pretty good places to find people who want to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

Government can help. We're not a competitor of Jim. We complement Jim with what's called community health centers. We've been expanding them. I think this is a really good role for Federal taxpayers' money, is to put primary care facilities for the indigent and the uninsured available to keep them out of emergency rooms.

But I really appreciate Jim's program. Anything you need from us—like better liability law? Are you protected under liability law?

***Dr. Bell.*** We are, and we could sure——

***The President.*** Yes.

***Dr. Bell.*** I almost wanted to start talking about medical liability when you were talking about that earlier.

***The President.*** Good.

***Dr. Bell.*** But the partnership that you mentioned is one of the best things that we found in working with Government. And they're going to start a community—they're working on starting a community health center here in Cedar Rapids too, with Federal funding.

***The President.*** Yes.

***Dr. Bell.*** Not only that, we also have found great friends in partnering with our Government organizations here in Cedar Rapids. And I think the most important thing

for us is that we know that we have an administration behind us, is very sentimental towards what we do.

***The President.*** I am sentimental. You know why? Thank you, buddy. I'll tell you why: Because we can change America, one heart and one soul at a time. And Jim recognizes he can't save every soul and help every life, but he can help 1,000, which is what he's done.

The true strength of this country is found in the hearts of people like Jim Bell. Now, he's not going to like hearing me say that, see. He just wants to be anonymous and go about his business. I can look at him in his eyes and tell that. [*Laughter*] But that's what makes him such a great steward.

We got some time for questions, maybe? Unless everybody is about ready to fall out—it's up to you. [*Laughter*] You want me to answer some questions for a while? Yes, what you got? You got a question right there.

***The Presidency/Freedom***

***Audience member.*** Do you like being President?

***The President.*** Do I like being the President? So much so that I want to do it for 4 more years.

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

***The President.*** I'll tell you why—I'll tell why. This is a job where you have a chance, working with others, by the way, and working with our country, to say the world is a better place; to use the influence of the United States of America to spread freedom and peace not only for our own sake but for the sake of others.

And I mentioned to you, little fellow, I think—we're just beginning. I talked about five countries that have changed over the past 3 years, that have made a difference, and your life is going to be better for it. Your life is going to be better because somebody your age can live in a free society in a part of the world that doesn't know freedom.

See, Americans have this great faith in our ideals. And it stems from this: We don't think freedom is America's gift to the world; we know that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

Anybody got a question? How about here in the end zone? Yes.

***HIV/AIDS Initiative***

***Audience member.*** [*Inaudible*]—HIV will work here?

***The President.*** Right. Very good question. Obviously, you're a knowledgeable person. ABC method is the method to—used in Uganda to reduce the number of HIV—incidence of HIV/AIDS, and it's worked. There's three components to it: Abstinence—which, by the way, works every time—[*laughter*]—be faithful, and use condoms. Now, those are—that's what ABC stands for. And it is a method that says that countries must seize the initiative and educate their people about the dangers of HIV/AIDS as part of a prevention program. And it's working. And it's—it's applied everywhere, including the United States; I mean, it makes sense. We do it a little differently in the United States, but nevertheless, it is a strategy that is working.

The second aspect, by the way, of the HIV/AIDS Initiative is to make sure that we get antiretroviral drugs to those poor souls who are suffering from this devastating disease. What's interesting when you talk to the experts, there's something called the Lazarus effect. In other words, people who have had no hope all of a sudden see their neighbor take an antiretroviral drug, and their lives begin to improve, and then they start asking the question, "Gosh, maybe I ought to do this for myself." Now, we don't have the cure for AIDS, but antiretrovirals surely improve the quality of life.

And the third aspect of our strategy is to help the orphans of those—you see, what's happening in our lifetime on the continent of Africa, there is a pandemic. We're losing an entire generation of people. We have 14-year-old young girls raising their brothers and sisters.

And I made the decision—and fortunately, a lot of Members of Congress joined—that we can afford to help, and we should be doing more. And we are. We've got a 15 billion, 5-year program to help save lives. I believe it is in—I know it's in our interests to do so, and I know it's in our heart. In other words, we've got to work here at home too. Don't ever get me wrong, when I talk about foreign initiatives; we're not neglecting the home front. But with this pandemic raging, I believe we have a duty and an obligation.

Thanks for asking the question. It was a great question. We're making a difference. The United States is leading.

Yes, sir.

***Audience member.*** [*Inaudible*]

***The President.*** Thank you, sir. Yes, I'm for that.

Yes, sir. Man with the baby—how old is that baby?

***Audience member.*** Twelve days.

***The President.*** Twelve days? Baby probably think it's in an incubator. [*Laughter*]

***Audience member.*** [*Inaudible*]

***The President.*** Yes, I'll get a picture. Is that the question—can I?

### *Iraqi Reconstruction*

***Audience member.*** How do we get our friends in the media back there to report the positive, good things there are going on in Iraq?

***The President.*** You know history—the question was, how do we get friends in the media to promote the good things in Iraq? Well, that's up to them to do that. One thing we will always honor is a free press here in America. It makes us a better country for it.

History will judge. Let me tell you something interesting about Iraq and history. I read a lot of history. I love history, and I'm reading about—I'm getting clips from the post-World War II period. And there was a lot of discussion right after World War II as to whether or not Germany could be free, whether or not the reconstruction effort was worth it, whether or not the plans and strategies we had in place were working, whether or not they really—had a well thought out strategy to help rebuild Germany. Same in Japan. There was a lot of wondering whether or not Japan could conceivably self-govern, whether or not the reconstruction efforts were working—a lot of doubters, by the way, during that period of time.

And fortunately, my predecessors—predecessor—was optimistic and believed that people yearned to be free and that no matter how hard the work is, that people would eventually become self-governing—it's in their interest—this understanding that no matter the culture in which people live, moms and dads want their children to grow up in a peaceful world and have the very best for their children. And they were diligent and optimistic, and now I can sit at a table with somebody like Prime Minister Koizumi—the leader of a country against whom my dad fought and many of your dads fought as well—and talk about peace. See, he is a partner in peace. He is a friend because a predecessor didn't give up on understanding the power of liberty to change the habits of men and women for the better.

Some day an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected Iraqi official, talking about how to keep the peace, and America will be better off for it.

Yes, little fellow. All right—yes, I'll sign it. I'll be there in a minute. He wants a card signed.

Yes, ma'am. Yes, what you got?

### *President's Pets*

***Audience member.*** What kind of pets do you have in the White House?

***The President.*** I can't stand these tough questions. [*Laughter*] "What kind of pets have we got in the White House?" [*Laughter*] Thank you for asking that question. We have got two. We had three, and unfortunately little Spot has passed on. It was a sad moment. She is—interestingly enough, Spot was born in the White House, when Mother and Dad were there. And curiously enough, Spot passed away in the White House, a happy dog. [*Laughter*] She was happy. We were sad. We loved her dearly—15 years old, I want you to know.

Now we have—we got two left: The cat—the cat's got about nine lives and nine names. [*Laughter*] I just call it Willie. Is that all right? Yes. The girls love Willie. And then the alltime great dog, Barney. [*Laughter*] Barney—Barney is a near-4-year-old Scottish terrier. Gosh, I'm glad you asked. [*Laughter*] He's a fabulous little guy.

Yes, sir, and then you're next.

### *Former Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV*

***Audience member.*** Did Ambassador Wilson lie?

***The President.*** Did Ambassador Wilson lie, is that what you asked? Well, you need to ask the press that question. [*Laughter*]

Yes.

***2004 Presidential Election***

***Audience member.*** Do you think you can beat John Kerry?

***The President.*** Do I think I can beat John Kerry? I do. I do. I need your help, though. I know you're not old enough to vote, but you can put a sign in the yard. And you can go to your neighbor, who may not have made up their mind, and say, "I'll pick up your newspaper for a week—if." [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir, what have you got?

***Immigration***

***Audience member.*** [*Inaudible*]

***The President.*** That's okay, I get the drift. You're trying to figure out how you can get a permanent residence card? Yes. Well, we have a system that I know—first of all, I hope you think it is interesting that you get to come, as a person newly arrived, and ask the President a question. That's our system. It's an open system. I think it's a great thing about America. I love that aspect of the country. And we've got to be a welcoming country, but we've got rules, of course. A nation must have rules.

There is a system that determines whether or not you qualify for asylum. And there's a system that then says that if you're here, if you've got a job, you can stay here for a period of time. But we have rules, and we've got to honor those rules. And it's very important for those who have been here legally not to have somebody who hasn't been to jump ahead of them in line for citizenship purposes. But you're welcome here, and we hope you—you know, good luck. I mean, I think that was your question.

Yes, ma'am.

***Faith-Based Initiative***

***Audience member.*** [*Inaudible*]—missionary. How can we get more—[*inaudible*]—all the paperwork is so hard.

***The President.*** Great question. The question is, is that she is a inner-city missionary program that gets overwhelmed by the paperwork. Well, I think there are—there are groups involved that help people with papers. In other words, there's kind of a—a better way to put it, a centralized overhead group that will help you with your paperwork. You need to call our faith-based shop in Washington, DC—seriously—and ask, because there are programs that help people such as yourself become unburdened by the paperwork and legal and accounting requirements.

Okay, a couple more and then we'll get out of here. Yes, ma'am.

***Freedom of Religion/Prayer***

***Audience member.*** I just got back from Mexico——

***The President.*** *Hablo Espanol?*

***Audience member.*** *Si, yo hablo poquito Espanol.*

***The President.*** Okay, I can hear that. That means, "I speak a little Spanish." [*Laughter*]

***Audience member.*** It made me realize how truly blessed this country is. I think that a lot of people don't understand how truly blessed we are until we see the poverty. But we spent about 10 days praying for this country. But I guess my question to you, Mr. President, is, do you find the importance of actually dedicating a moment in time on your knees in prayer for this country and for the next coming-up election?

***The President.*** That's a great question. Let me just talk about religion and politics. First—first—first, it is essential that this country never abandon the principle that people can worship the way they want to, that you can worship, that you can choose to worship or not worship and be equally patriotic. That's important for people to know.

The second principle is that if you choose to worship, you're equally American if you're a Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu. That's an important part of our society. It's essential that we always honor that. That's called freedom of religion. It's an integral part of the American past, present, and future. The state should never be the church, and the church should never be the state.

Now, having said that, I am inspired, uplifted, and comforted by the fact that millions of our fellow citizens whom I will never know actually take time to pray for me and Laura and our family, for which I am eternally grateful. It's an amazing country, when you think about a country that prays for its leaders, regardless of their political party. It's an amazing——

***Audience member.*** Love you——

***The President.*** Thank you. It's an amazing country, and I can't tell you how grateful I am and touched I am and humbled I am by this—the outpouring of prayer by fellow citizens.

A couple more questions, then we've got to—yes, sir.

***Audience member.*** [*Inaudible*]

***The President.*** Thank you, sir. Thank you. Thanks for saying that.

***Audience members.*** [*Inaudible*]

***The President.*** Okay. If you can't hear it, I'll translate it. And if it's a lousy question, I'll just ask myself a question. [*Laughter*]

### *Significance of September 11, 2001, Attacks*

***Audience member.*** It appears that some people are forgetting 9/11—[*inaudible*]—remember 9/11 and those who are fighting for our freedom——[*inaudible*].

***The President.*** Interesting question. He says it appears to him, there's an effort to forget about 9/11. We'll never forget 9/11. I mean, it is a—I appreciate that question. I think that there is a tendency for people to want to hope that there is normalcy. I remember talking to the country and saying, this is going to be a different kind of experience we're going through and that there will be—people want to live in normalcy.

And his question is, is there a concerted effort to kind of try to push 9/11 out of our memories. No, I don't think so. I don't think so; as a matter of fact, quite the contrary. I think it is one of those events that is a defining moment. Like, 30 years from now when you and I are kind of creaking around and we run into each other, we'll say, "Gosh, you remember where you were on 9/11?" You will, and I will.

The key thing about September the 11th, 2001, is never to forget the lessons that we learned that day. That is the most important aspect of that tragedy, and never forget the lives lost, either. But I think it's going to be—this will be one of those monuments in our history. I mean, it's one of those moments that we just will never forget. And they'll analyze—there will be a lot of history written about it. But my job, and my call to the country, is to never forget—never forget: we've got to take threats seriously, before they materialize; when we say something, mean it; and that we have an obligation to remember there are still people out there that are so evil in their hearts, they will be willing to try to kill again.

And you've got to know something about the homeland. This is—it's hard to defend our homeland. Do you know why? Because we're free. And that's the way we intend to keep it. It's hard to defend a free country. And so the best way to do so is, we've reorganized the Government. We're sharing intelligence like we've never shared intelligence before. And there are really a lot of good people working hard on your behalf, at the Federal level, the State level, and right here in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. And I know you'll join me in thanking the local police and firefighters and EMS teams for their work.

You know what? So I'm looking around the room trying to figure out who is going to be the first to fall out. [*Laughter*] I remember campaigning here with Chuck Grassley in the caucuses, and it was the dead of winter. [*Laughter*] And we went to an elementary school, and it was like really hot inside the elementary school. And I was speaking, and to my left, boom, he hit the deck. And then pretty soon, somebody over here hit the deck. It was a lesson I learned, and that is that I stop speaking before people hit the deck. [*Laughter*]

So I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to give everybody an oxygen break. But before I do, I can't thank you enough for coming. We have a fabulous country. We have got a fabulous country. Together we have been through some hard times. Together we've done some hard things. The spirit of this country is strong and vibrant and real. It's a great country because the people who are fortunate enough to be called Americans are great people.

And there will be—there's lessons we have learned, and the hard work we have done is paying off. The next 4 years will be peaceful years, prosperous years, and hopeful years for everybody fortunate enough to be a citizen of this great country.

I can't tell you how grateful I am you have come. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:42 p.m. in the recreation center. In his remarks, he referred to Norm Nielsen, president, Kirkwood Community College; Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal, who was found dead in his apartment in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 19, 2002; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad al-Alawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

## Remarks in St. Charles, Missouri

*July 20, 2004*

***The President.*** Thank you all very much. I am proud to be back in Missouri, in this great city of St. Charles. John Ashcroft told me this morning that St. Charles was the first capital of Missouri. Today, the way things look, St. Charles is the capital of Bush-Cheney country. I always enjoy coming to the St. Louis area. You might remember the last time I was here, I brought my 30-mile-an-hour fastball. Now look at the Cardinals.

I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm here to let you know I've got more to do for this country, and I want your help. I want you to go to your community centers and your places of worship and your—all around this important part of the country and tell folks they have an obligation to vote. And you might remind them, if they want optimistic, hopeful, determined leadership, vote for George W. Bush and Dick Cheney.

With your help, we carried Missouri in 2000. With your help, we'll carry Missouri in 2004 as a part of a great nationwide victory. So thanks for coming. My only regret is that Laura is not traveling with me.

***Audience members.*** Aw-w-w!

***The President.*** That's generally the reaction. [*Laughter*] And the reason why is because the people understand she is a great First Lady. And I understand I'm a lucky man to have such a fine person as my wife. Tonight I'll give you some reasons why you need to put me back in office, but perhaps the most important reason is so that Laura will have 4 more years.

I want to thank Madam Speaker for her kind introduction. Catherine, thank you for your leadership and your service. I want to thank my friend Matt Blunt. Good to see you, Governor. Peter Kinder is here, and I'm proud Peter is here. I want to thank him for his friendship. Mike Gibbons, all those who serve at the State and local level, thank you for serving our communities and our country.

I particularly want to say thanks to the grassroots activists who are here, the unsung heroes who make all the phone calls and put up the signs and get people to register to vote and remind people that if they're interested in helping, they can get on the Internet at the georgewbush.com site. I'm counting on your help. I'm counting on your support. I'll lay out the vision. You get the people to the polls, and we'll have 4 more years.

And when you're convincing people to do their duty, remind them that the last 3½ years have brought serious challenges, and we have given serious answers. We came to office with the stock market in decline and an economy headed into recession, but we acted. We delivered historic tax relief, and over the past 3 years, America has had the fastest growing economy of any major industrialized nation.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning. So we pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We have captured or killed many leaders of the Al Qaida network. We will stay on the hunt until justice is done and America is secure.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror, the spread of weapons of mass destruction. So we acted against two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We liberated over 50 million people. Once again, America is proud to lead the armies of liberation.

When our great Vice President, Dick Cheney, and I—when we came to Washington, the military was underfunded and underappreciated. So we gave our Armed Forces the resources and respect they deserve, and today, nobody can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

These accomplishments are important to the security and the prosperity of America. You see, it is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. A President must make the hard decisions and keep his commitments. And with your help, that