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he referred to Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld; Gen. George W. Casey, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya. He also referred to organizations described in Section 527 of the Tax Code. A reporter referred to former Senator Bob Dole and Bob J. Perry, chief executive officer, Perry Homes, a Joint Venture.

Remarks in Las Cruces, New Mexico

August 26, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. *Vamos a ganar.* Thanks for coming. It's great to be here. I am proud to be traveling with my friend Rudy Giuliani. This is a part of the world, Rudy, where the boots outnumber the suits. Nice to be in country where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties.

I appreciate so many people showing up. I'm here to ask for the vote. I believe it's important to get out and ask for the vote. I believe it's important to travel this great State and our country talking about where I intend to lead the country. And I'm so proud to be traveling with a man who is a strong leader, a man who brought calm to the citizens of New York City during a tragic day, a man who helped lift the spirit of that important part of our country, Rudy Giuliani.

I told Rudy, I said, "Rudy, we're in good country here in Las Cruces." I said, "I know this part of the State well." You might remember I used to be the Governor of your neighbor. I told Rudy, I said, "I've been to Las Cruces a lot, and here in Las Cruces, you're going to find some really fine people." And after here, we're off to Farmington and then back down to Albuquerque. We're taking this State seriously. With your help, we'll carry New Mexico. With your help, we'll carry the country in November.

I'm sorry Laura is not here.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. No, I understand. I kissed her goodbye in Crawford this morning, and I said, "I've got to go to work." [*Laughter*] She said, you get over to New Mexico, and you remind them that her kinfolk were raised right down the road in Anthony. I'm proud of Laura. She's a great mom, a wonderful wife. I'll give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm real proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He is a fine man. I picked him not necessarily because he's the prettiest face in America. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he can get the job done. I picked him for his experience and his judgment. And I'm proud to be running with him, proud to call him friend, and proud to call him runningmate.

I'm also proud to be working with a great United States Senator in Pete Domenici. Pete is a—he's a close friend. He's a great New Mexican. He's a wonderful person. He is on vacation. I wish he and Nancy a well-deserved rest. I'm proud also to be here with the United States Congressman, Steve Pearce. I'm glad you brought Cynthia. It's good to see you both, proud to work with you.

I'm glad the mayor is here, Bill Mattiace. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming—fill the potholes.

I appreciate Ted Scanlon and los Desperados for playing here today. I appreciate Mariachi Espuelas de la Plata. I'm glad they were here. Thank you all for coming.

Most of all, I want to thank the grassroots activists who are with us today. I want to thank Al Solis, who is the party chairman from Dona Ana County. I want to thank the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls. I ask you to register your friends and neighbors to vote.

We have a duty in this country to vote. We have an obligation in a free society to show up to the polls. Please do your duty and get people to vote. Get them into those polls. Obviously, when you're working to gather the vote, I've got a preference. [*Laughter*] In order to keep this country safer, stronger, and better, put Dick and I back into office.

We've been through a lot together in the last 4 years, and we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only reason to look backward at the record, and that is who best to lead us forward. That's what I want to talk about. I want to remind you, we have much at stake in this election, and we have more

to do to move America forward. We have more to do to create jobs and improve our schools. We have more to do to fight terror, to protect the homeland. We have more to do to spread freedom and peace. We've made much progress. I'm here to tell you I'm ready for the job. I'm ready to accomplish more for the American people.

We have more to do to make America's public schools the centers of excellence we know they all can be so no child is left behind. You might remember when we came to office 3½ years ago, children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised the bar. We believe in local control of schools. But we believe in accountability so we can determine whether every child is learning to read and write and add and subtract.

We have more to do. I understand this is a changing world we live in, and therefore, the jobs of the future will require more knowledge. We've got to expand math and science in our high schools. We need early intervention programs to make sure high school kids can read, write, add, and subtract. We want to make sure the high school diploma means something. Over the next 4 years, a rising generation will have the skills and confidence necessary to realize the American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. Listen, when we came to office, too many older Americans could not afford prescription drugs, and Medicare didn't pay for them. You might remember those old debates about Medicare: "Oh, just elect me. Something is going to get done." But year after year, those promises were empty. We got the job done. We've strengthened Medicare for our seniors.

There's more to do. We've expanded quality care through community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to making—giving Americans more choices, more control over their lives, we're making progress. We're not turning back.

There's more to do over the next 4 years. Most people get their health insurance through small businesses, and yet, small businesses are having trouble providing health coverage. To help more Americans get health insurance, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies get in America.

We'll use technology to reduce costs and prevent mistakes. We'll expand research to seek new cures for deadly diseases. And to make sure you've got affordable and available health care here in New Mexico, we need medical liability reform. These frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of health care, and they're running good docs out of business. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice: I am for medical liability reform.

We have more to do to make this economy stronger. Listen, we've been through a lot in this economy. Think about it. We went through a recession. The stock market declined. We've been through attacks. We've had corporate scandals. But we've overcome these obstacles. We've overcome them because the American workers are the best in the world. We've overcome it because our farmers and ranchers know what they're doing. We've overcome it—we've overcome these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong and the small-business sector of our economy is vibrant. I also think we've overcome it because of well-timed tax cuts.

When you're talking to your friends and neighbors, remember to tell them we've helped American families by raising the child credit. We've helped America's families by reducing the marriage penalty. By the way, the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We helped small businesses. And this time the check actually was in the mail.

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, we've created about 1.5 million new jobs over the past 12 months. Because we acted, the national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. Because we acted, the unemployment rate in

your great State is 5.3 percent. Because we acted, the people of this country are working.

There's more work to be done. In order to make sure American jobs stay here in America, we need less regulations on our employers. You ask your small-business neighbor what it's like to fill out the paperwork. They'll say it's quite onerous. My problem is I can't promise anybody in Washington has ever read the paperwork.

We need tort reform to keep jobs here in America. To make sure people can find good work here at home, we need an energy policy. We need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. In order to keep jobs here at home, we've got to make sure other nations treat us in trade the way we treat them. Our markets are open for other—for products from other countries because it's good for consumers. And all we're saying is, "Just make sure you open up your markets." We can compete with anybody, anyplace, anywhere with fair rules.

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

The President. In order to make sure jobs stay here, we've got to make sure our workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I believe so strongly in our community college system, to make sure that there's money available, that the colleges are affordable for people all across America to be able to match their desire to work with the skills necessary to fill the new jobs.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here in America, we've got to keep your taxes low. And we've got to be wise about how we spend your money. I'm running against a fellow who has already made over $2.2 trillion worth of new promises. And we're just getting started. We're coming down the stretch. You know how tempting it is to get out in front of people and make promise after promise, but he hasn't told us how he's going to pay for it. Well, he said he's just going to tax the rich. You've heard that kind of language before, haven't you?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Yes. Just remember why we've got all those accountants and lawyers out there. There's not enough money to tax the rich to pay for all his promises. If he gets elected, he's going to tax you. But the good news is we're not going to let him get elected.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. We have more to do to keep this country secure. See, our future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up cells all around the world, including our own country. Today, because America acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Over 10 million people have registered to vote in that country. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Many young girls now go to school for the first time, because we acted. And America and the world are safer.

Before September 11th, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia didn't take Al Qaida seriously. Today, they are allies in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

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

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. You might remember, he was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He purchased and used weapons of mass destruction. He invaded his neighbors. He had harbored terrorists. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens.

Audience member. He's not doing it anymore!

The President. He was a source of great instability. I saw a threat. One of the lessons of September the 11th that we must always remember is that we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize. Remembering that lesson, I went to the United

States Congress. I said, "I see a threat." They looked at the intelligence. They looked at Saddam's history. They came to the same conclusion I did, including my opponent.

I went to the United Nations because this country must always try diplomacy first. I went to the U.N. I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence. They remembered the same history of Saddam Hussein. And as they had for over a decade, they demanded a full accounting, a disposal of his weapons and weapons programs, or face serious consequences. That's what they said. The world spoke.

As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the world. He said, "I don't care what you say." We then sent inspectors into his country. He systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make. Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust the word of a madman or take action to defend America. Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Even though we didn't find the stockpiles we expected to find, Saddam had the capability of making weapons. And he had the willingness to pass that capability—or he could have had the willingness to pass that capability on to our enemy. It's a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer.

Now, almost after—2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, my opponent now agrees with me that even though we've not found the stockpile of weapons we all thought were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein. I want to thanks the Senator for clearing that up. There's still a little over 60 days for him to change his mind again. [*Laughter*]

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

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We have put together a strong coalition to help us defeat terror. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq, 60 nations involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative. I'll continue to work to build alliances and work with our friends for the sake of freedom and peace. But I'll never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful, democratic societies. Those two nations are now governed by strong leaders, people committed to the aspirations of their people. We have a clear goal in those two countries, to help them develop a peaceful, democratic country that will be an ally in the war on terror. It's in our national interest that they become peaceful, free countries. And to help them meet that goal, we're training Afghan forces and Iraqi forces so they can do the hard work of securing their country, so they can fight the terrorists who want to stop—[*applause*].

Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary. The thing about our troops in these crucial times, our commitments are kept by the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. At bases across our country and around the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our security and defend our freedom. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of liberty is in great hands. I want to thank the veterans who are here today for setting such a great example for those who—[*applause*].

I made a commitment to our troops and to the families of our troops, that they will have the resources they need to fight and win the war on terror. Last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding

to support them in their mission. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts for our military. We received great bipartisan support for that important spending. Matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it. Two of them are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The Senator tried to explain his vote by saying this: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." Now, he's offering a different explanation. Recently, he said he was proud of the vote. And then when pressed, he said it was just a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq, a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a neighborhood that is desperate for liberty. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their own citizens.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading peace. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the values we hold dear to our heart. We understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every person in this world.

We have more to do to protect America. There are enemies out there that still are plotting to harm us. See, my opponent said something I thought was—showed the contrast between our visions. He said that the war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic is upside-down. I think it shows a misunderstanding of the nature of these people. See, during the 1990s, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us, long before we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. I think it's wrong to blame the actions of this country for the evil of the killers. You don't create terrorists by fighting back. You defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We have more work to do, as the 9/11 Commission report said. It said America—the actions we've taken have made America safer but not yet safe. I agree. And that's why we're pushing hard for reforms in Washington, DC—intelligence reforms. That's why we created the Department of Homeland Security, so agencies talk better, so that Washington now talks better with New Mexico, and New Mexico talks better with Las Cruces—the great first-responders here in this part of the world. We passed the PATRIOT Act, which is a vital tool for our law enforcement to disrupt terrorist cells before they attack in America.

There's a lot of good people working on your behalf to secure the homeland. I want to thank them—continually thank them for their hard work. We're working hard to achieve reform in Washington, but it's not easy over there in Washington to achieve reform. There's a lot of entrenched interests. There's a lot of people willing to defend the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform, you have to be able to get the job done.

When you're out there campaigning on my behalf, remember, when it comes to reforming schools to provide excellent education for every child, we're getting the job done. When it comes for health care reforms to give our families and our seniors more access and more choices, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing our homeland, fighting the forces of terror, and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. Remind your friends and neighbors that when it comes time to elect a President, put somebody in there who can get the job done.

This is a time of rapid change for our country, and it's an exciting time to be an American. Change can sometimes create instability, and Government ought to recognize that and stand side by side with workers and families. The role of Government is not to give you orders. The role of Government is to help you have the tools necessary to be able to realize your dreams. And one way to do that is to continue to promote an ownership society in America. We want workers

to be able to own their own health care accounts, so they can take them from job to job if they change jobs.

Listen, I see a lot of younger folks here. I want to thank you all for coming. You ought to be listening very carefully to the debate on Social Security. Baby boomers like me are just fine when it comes to Social Security. Younger workers need to be concerned about the fiscal sanity of—fiscal stability of Social Security. I believe younger workers ought to be able to own a personal retirement account they call their own, so they can pass it on from one generation to the next.

We want to create the conditions so more people own their own business. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. I intend to keep it that way. Listen, one of the great statistics of the modern era is more people—the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. We want to encourage—we want more people owning their own home. There's nothing better when somebody opens the door and says, "Welcome to my home." I believe in encouraging ownership because I know if you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

In this changing world, there are some things that will not change, our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. I believe in the individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity, hard work and duty. I believe in the institutions that give us purpose and direction, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

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

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. The culture of this country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion which exist all across our country. I'm running because I understand the role of Government is limited. See, Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That's done when a loving soul puts their arm around somebody that hurts and says, "I love you. How can I help you?" See, I believe strongly American society can change one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time, by rallying the true strength of America, which is the hearts and souls of the American people.

For all Americans, these years in our history will 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 where we need firm resolve, strong belief in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, with Rudy by my side, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." A fellow just came out of the rubble. He had bloodshot eyes. He looked at me right in the eye and said, "Do not let me down." He took that day personally. Everybody—I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through much together. The last years, we have come through a lot. We have done a lot of hard work. There's more to be done. We will spread opportunity and ownership to every corner of America. We will pass enduring values of our country to

another generation. We will lead the cause of peace and freedom. And we will prevail.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State and our country, when I was asking for the vote. I made a pledge to our fellow Americans that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help—and with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Pan American Center at New Mexico State University. In his remarks, he referred to Rudolph W. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City; Nancy Domenici, wife of Senator Pete Domenici; Cynthia Pearce, wife of Representative Steve Pearce; Mayor William Michael Mattiace of Las Cruces, NM; entertainers Ted Scanlon and the Desperados, and Mariachi Espuelas de Plata; and Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya.

Remarks in Farmington, New Mexico

August 26, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. I appreciate—It's good to be here in Farmington, New Mexico, in the Four Corners area of our country. I appreciate you all coming out. I told Rudy, I said, "I can't wait to get to Farmington. You're going to meet some really fine people here. It's a part of the country where the boots outnumber the suits."

The other day, my opponent said he thinks he can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I think you find it right here in Farmington, New Mexico. I appreciate your hospitality. Rudy and I love being here. I want thank you all for coming out. It's such a beautiful day. I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm traveling with this great leader around New Mexico to tell the people I've got more to do to make this country safer, stronger, and better.

I also want to thank those of you who are involved with grassroots politics. Those are the people who put up the signs. Those are the people who make the phone calls. Those are the people who help register the voters, people like Bill Redmond, people who run the county here. These are the people who do their duty. See, I think we have a duty in America to vote.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I think we have an obligation. I think we have an obligation in this society to go to the polls, and so therefore, I'm asking for your help. I hope you will register people to vote—register Republicans, register independents. I see a man here, he says, "Navajo Democrats for Bush." Register Democrats to vote. And when you get them headed to the polls, tell them we're ready to lead for 4 more years. Tell them we're ready to make this country a safer place and a better place.

I regret that Laura's not with me.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. No, I know, she's fabulous. I met the Vice President of the Navajo Nation out at the airport and met his beautiful wife, and the first thing she asked me, she said, "Where's Laura?" [*Laughter*] She's working. [*Laughter*]

I kissed her goodbye today in Crawford and headed west. I'm really proud of her. She's a great mom and a wonderful wife. She's a fabulous First Lady. Today I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm running with a good man for Vice President, Dick Cheney. He is a—I know there's a State rep named Dick Cheney from this part of the world. I hope he's as good a man as the Dick Cheney I call runningmate. I bet he is. Dick Cheney is solid as a rock. I picked him because he knows what he's doing. I picked him because he can get the job done. That's why I'm running with Dick Cheney.

Listen, I enjoy working with your Senator, Pete Domenici. He's a good man. He and Nancy are taking a vacation. I don't blame them. He's been working hard for the people of New Mexico. But in his stead, we've got another great United States Senator with us today, and that's my friend Ben Nighthorse Campbell and his wife, Linda, from the State