

Remarks in Miami

August 27, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. *Vamos a ganar en Noviembre.* Thanks for coming. I like a line of work where you get introduced by your wife. I love her dearly. She's a great wife, a wonderful mother, and she is a terrific First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you need 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.

Listen, Laura and I are thrilled to be here with our friend Zell Miller from Georgia. He is—I've asked him to give a big speech next week. He's the keynote speaker for our convention. I asked him because he puts his country above partisan politics. I asked him because he's a man of—he's got a great heart, and he cares about people from all walks of life. I picked the right guy to give a big speech for us next Wednesday night.

I'm sorry my brother is not here, *mi hermanito*. He's working. He's doing what the people of Florida expect him to do, and that is to do his job. I just saw him, and we were talking about the damage done by Hurricane Charley and the response by the Federal Government and the State government, which has been swift and sure. We're helping the people that need help on the west coast and throughout the interior of your State. We're doing our jobs as public servants.

I was just talking to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee. He was with us. He happens to be from Florida as well, Chairman Young, and we both agreed we'll provide the money necessary to help people with their housing and small-business loans and Government assistance as well to help the citrus growers and vegetable growers and nursery men and women who've been hurt by this storm. I want to thank them for their hard work.

I appreciate Congressman Mark Foley who's with us today—Congressman Foley. I want to thank my friend Mario Diaz-Balart, who's with us today. Mario—*bienvenidos*, Mario.

I want to appreciate David Dermer, who happens to be the mayor of Miami Beach. I appreciate him being here. Mr. Mayor,

gracias por su apoyo. Su apoyo es muy importante.

I appreciate my friend Lynn Swann. He's the head of the President's Council on Physical Fitness, and he is an—he sets an important message: Exercise. [Laughter] Take care of your bodies. Get out and move around. He just warned me, he forgot to tell me what it means to fall off a mountain bike. [Laughter] But I'm proud of my friendship with Lynn. I want to thank him.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here, the people who are participating in the political process. We have a duty in this country to vote. See, we have a duty in a free country to go to the polls. I'm asking you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. See, reach out to people from all walks of life. You can find Republicans who need to register. You'll find some discerning independents who need to register. You can find some Democrats just like Zell who need to register. And get them to the poll and remind them that if they're interested in this country being safer, stronger, and better, put Dick Cheney and me back in office.

Now, I want to thank you for what you have done. I want to thank you for what you're going to do, which is to turn out that vote. When we're coming down the stretch, get your friends and neighbors to the polls and remind them that we've been through a lot together during the past years and we've accomplished a lot. But there's only one reason to look backward, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. I'm here to tell you, I'm ready to lead this country for 4 more years. I've got an agenda.

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

The President. We have more to do. We have more to do to make sure our public schools are the centers of excellence we know they all can be. You might remember what it was like 3½ years ago. We had a system that just shuffled the children through, grade after grade, year after year, without them learning the basics. We came to Washington to challenge that system. Listen, we provided more Federal funding to help the schools down here, but we now expect results. We're

challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising the bar. We believe in accountability. We're helping kids early, before it's too late.

We're making progress. And at my speech next week, I'm going to talk about how to continue to build on the foundation of excellence we laid. We want more high school kids taking math and sciences so they can compete in the 21st century. We're going to have problems—we'll be solving problems early so every child has a chance to succeed. We want to make sure a high school diploma means something. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, a rising generation will have the skills and confidence necessary to compete in the 21st century.

There's more work to be done to make sure health care is available and affordable. I know some seniors in this State have heard that old Medicare debate campaign after campaign after campaign, and nothing ever got done. The system needed to be changed to help our seniors. I went to Washington with an idea and a plan to strengthen Medicare for our seniors, and we got the job done.

We've not only helped our seniors, we've helped low-income Americans by expanding community health centers all across our country. We provided health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. But there's more to be done. Listen, I fully understand most new jobs in this country are created by small businesses. Most small businesses are having trouble—many small businesses are having trouble affording health insurance for their employees. It seems to make sense to me to allow small businesses to join together to purchase insurance at the rate, the discounts that big companies are able to do.

There is more work to be done in order to make sure health care is available and affordable here in south Florida. We need to stop those junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine.

Audience member. Kerry won't do it.

The President. Right. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice. He put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm standing with the patients and docs and hospitals for medical liability reform. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made by patients and doctors, and not by Government bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We've got more to do to keep this economy growing. Remind your friends and neighbors what this—what we've been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through an attack. We've been through corporate scandals. And yet, we've overcome these obstacles. You know why? We've got the best workers in the world. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got great entrepreneurs in America. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. The small-business sector of our economy is doing well. We've overcome these obstacles because of our farmers and ranchers. We've also overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

You might remember that we—our theory was, if you pay taxes, you get relief. We didn't try to pick or choose winners. We reduced the rates of everybody. We also increased the child credit. If you're a mom or dad, we wanted to help you out. We reduced the marriage penalty. See, we believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not discourage marriage. We helped our small businesses.

Because we acted, our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added about 1.5 million new jobs over the last 12 months. Because we acted, the national unemployment rate is down to 5.5 percent, below the national average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Because we acted, the unemployment rate in the State of Florida is 4.4 percent.

Listen, there's more work to be done to keep this economy growing. To keep jobs here in America, we need to reduce the regulatory burden on the employers of America. We need tort reform so that small businesses are able to keep their doors open. We need to make sure that trade around the world is fair. We just want countries to treat us like we treat them, because we can compete with

anybody, anytime, anywhere when the rules are fair.

Audience members. U.S.A! U.S.A! U.S.A!

The President. In order to make sure we have jobs here in America and the economy continues to grow, we need an energy plan. I submitted a plan to the Congress 2 years ago. It's a plan that encourages conservation and encourages renewable sources of energy. It encourages exploration for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. It encourages clean coal technology. What it says is in order to grow this economy, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure this economy continues to grow and people can find work here at home, we need to be wise about how we spend your money and we need to keep your taxes low. I'm running against a fellow—he's already made over \$2 trillion worth of promises. [Laughter] And we're just coming down the stretch. We have 2 more months to go. Imagine what it's going to be like. And so they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he put out that same old, tired slogan, "Oh, I'm going to pay for it by taxing the rich."

Audience members. [Inaudible]

The President. Yes. But you've heard that before, haven't you?

Audience members. [Inaudible]

The President. Yes. You know how the system works. They say they're going to tax the rich, but they hire lawyers and accountants, and then you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him tax you because I'm going to win.

We have more to do. We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty or 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've changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers in cells around the world, including the United States. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy.

Over 10 million people in that country have registered to vote. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, many young girls now go to school for the first time in their lives. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has 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. He was firing weapons at pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was the source of great instability in a world's volatile region, and so, I saw a threat.

One of the lessons of September the 11th that we must never forget is that this Nation must deal with threats before they fully materialize. It's an important lesson. So with that in mind, I went to the United States Congress—I went to the Congress. I said, "I see a threat. My administration sees a threat." They looked at the same intelligence I did. They remembered the same history of the dictator, and they saw a threat, including my opponent. He saw a threat. He saw a threat and, along with many, authorized the use of force.

Committing our troops into combat is the last choice of a President—it must be the last choice, so I went to the United Nations. And I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the intelligence. They remembered the history, and they saw a threat. Remember, they passed a resolution 15 to nothing that said, "Saddam Hussein, disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

But as he had for over a decade, he refused to comply with the demands of the free world. He chose defiance once again. As a matter of fact, when we tried to send inspectors into the country, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make. The choice was: Do I trust a madman

and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take actions to defend America? I will defend America every time.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles we expected to find, Saddam had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to others, including our enemy. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

I'm running because I understand we have more to do to defend this country. It's the most solemn duty of Government, is to defend the American people. So we'll continue to work with our friends and allies to aggressively pursue these terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world. You cannot talk sense to these people. You can't rationalize with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must aggressively pursue them and defeat them around the world so we do not face them here at home.

We will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. See, we put together a strong coalition. Nearly 40 nations are involved in Afghanistan. Some 30 nations are involved in Iraq. We will continue to work with our alliances and our friends for the sake of freedom and peace, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We will keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful democratic societies. That's what we're going to do. You see, these two nations are now governed by strong leaders. They're on the path to elections. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we've set a clear goal, peaceful and democratic countries that are allies in the war on terror. Our military forces will help them meet that goal by training Afghan and Iraqi forces so they can defend their own countries. Our military will complete—*un momento*—we will complete our mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

Our commitments are being kept by a fantastic military. I am so proud—

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. At bases across the country and around the world, I've seen the great decency and the unselfish courage of our service men and women. I want to thank the veterans who are here for setting such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I made a commitment to our troops and to the loved ones of our troops that they will have the resources they need to fight and win the war on terror. That's why last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. This was legislation that provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. This was necessary funding. We received great bipartisan support. In the Senate, matter of fact, the bipartisan support was so strong only 12 Members voted against it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He said—they asked him, they said, "Why did you do that?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the 87 billion, right before I voted against it." "*Voto si, y despues voto no.*" *Muy claro.* [Laughter]

And so they said, "Well, wait a minute." And they kept pressing. And he said, "Well, I was proud of the vote." And then finally he said, "It's 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 will work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in their neighborhood. See, we believe in America that free countries do not export terror; free countries do not stifle the dreams of their 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 the peace that we all long for. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of our national soul. Freedom is not America's gift to the world.

Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

And over the next 4 years, I will continue to work to ensure that gift of freedom reaches the men and women of Cuba. Last weekend, we're continuing to implement our strategy of *la verdad*, the truth. We took action to continue breaking the dictator's information blockade. We launched the first of what will be regular airborne broadcasts into Cuba. We will continue those broadcasts. The Cuban people are hearing the truth once again.

I believe and strongly believe the people of Cuba should be free from the tyrant. And I believe that enforcing the embargo is a necessary part of that strategy. My opponent has a different approach. Last year, after Castro launched a brutal crackdown on dissidents, my opponent responded by voting to reward the dictator by lifting the tourism travel ban.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He even criticized some of the dissidents. He said their efforts to promote democracy were counterproductive.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And he said they had brought down the hammer on themselves.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. *Sus palabra.* A few years earlier in 2000, he said the only reason we don't change the embargo is because of the politics of Florida.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now he's changing his tune. Earlier this year, he came down here, and he explained his position on the Helms-Burton law. It's a tough measure that has succeeded in denying hard currency into Cuba to the Castro regime so he can exploit the people. He said, and I quote, "I voted for the Helms-Burton legislation," end quote. That's what he said. But there's one problem. He voted against it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. To clear things up, his campaign said that while he did vote against final passage, he had voted for it months earlier.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In other words, he voted for it before he voted against it. "*Voto si, y despues voto no.*"

When I say something, I mean it. We will not rest until the Cuban people enjoy the same freedoms in Havana that they receive here in America.

There's more work to be done to protect the homeland. We've got more work to do. I just want you to know there's a lot of really good people who are working hard and long hours to protect you, people at the Federal level, people at the State level, first-responders here at the local level. We're spending a lot of time. I appreciate the firefighters and police officers and emergency teams that are here with us today.

There's more work to be done. You know, we created the Department of Homeland Security. We're now reforming our intelligence service so we can get better intelligence and share the intelligence better to disrupt terrorist plots. We've got to do better in our ports and on our borders. We've got a lot of work to do. But I just want to warn you, reform isn't easy in Washington. There's a lot of entrenched interests up there. A lot of people say they like the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform. You've got to be able to get the job done.

So when you go out and work on our behalf, you tell them that when it comes to reforming our schools and raising the standards and improving the lives of our children, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms that helps our seniors and our families, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy and creating quality jobs, we are getting the job done. When it comes to better securing our homeland and fighting the forces of terror and spreading peace and freedom, we're getting the job done. When it comes to a firm policy on Cuba, we're getting the job done. When it comes to electing a President, put somebody back in office who can get the job done.

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

The President. These are changing times we live in. These are changing times, and they're challenging times. They're exciting times as well. But in these changing times, there are—some things will never change: Our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity;

our belief in the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we will honor 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. Our culture is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," "You 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 are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. 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, clear vision, and deep belief in the values that make this country such a wonderful country.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. I was traveling with Rudy Giuliani yesterday in New Mexico, and I—it reminded me of the day we spent together, September the 14th, 2001, the day I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers, the day that, obviously, I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling, "Whatever it takes." I was walking down, thanking people, and a fellow looked me and said, "Do not let me down." This is one of these memories that have been indelibly etched in my mind. I wake up every day in this great job of mine

thinking about how best to protect America. I will never relent in defending our country, whatever it takes.

We have done a lot together. We have done a lot together, and we've done a lot of hard work. There's more work to be done. We will spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country—I mean every corner. I want everybody, no matter where they're from, where they were raised, to be able to realize the great potential, the great dream of America. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to another generation. During the next 4 years, we will continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace.

When I campaigned in your great State 4 years ago and around our Nation, I made a pledge to my fellow Americans, if you honored me with the great responsibility of being President, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. *Y con su apoyo*—and with your help, I will do so *por cuatro mas años*.

Thank you all for coming. *Vamos a ganar*. Thank you all. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:13 p.m. at the Miami Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; President Fidel Castro of Cuba; and Rudolph W. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

August 28, 2004

Good morning. In the 3 years since our country was attacked, America has remained on the offensive against terrorist enemies wherever they hide and plot. Part of that offensive has been to reorganize our Government so that all our intelligence and law enforcement agencies cooperate effectively to expose and disrupt threats against America.

The Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, also known as the 9/11 Commission, concluded that these efforts have made America safer. They also