

Koizumi of Japan; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; and Prime Minister Ayad al-Alawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

### Remarks in Perrysburg, Ohio

August 28, 2004

**The President.** Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for inviting me here to Perrysburg. It is an honor to be here. I appreciate you taking time out of your Saturday afternoon to come and say hello. I'm sorry we were running a little late; there was a slight weather condition. I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm traveling your State asking for the vote and asking for your help. I'll tell you what I think. From the crowds we've seen, there's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we'll carry Ohio and win a great victory in November.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. She's a fabulous mom, a great wife. She's a terrific First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate. I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. I picked him because he's got sound judgment, he's got great experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

I've been traveling all across your important State today with a really fine United States Senator in Mike DeWine. I'm proud to be calling Mike friend. And I hope you put old George Voinovich back in office. He's a great United States Senator. He's doing a fine job. I appreciate Congressman Mike Oxley joining us today. Larry Kaczala is running for the United States Congress next to this district. He's a fine guy.

I want to thank the members of the state-house who are here, Ken Blackwell and Betty Montgomery and Randy Gardner and Bob Latta. I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here.

I want to thank my friend Lee Ann Womack. I hope she did a good job for you. I can't tell you how much I appreciate her coming.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. I appreciate you. I appreciate

your hard work. See, I believe we have a duty in this country to vote. And therefore, I'm asking you to help register people to vote. See your friends and neighbors and say, "In a democracy, we've got to participate." And ask them to register, and reach out. And when you get them headed toward the polls come November, tell them if they want a safer country, a stronger country, a better country, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

In the past few years, Americans have been through a lot together—been through a lot. We have accomplished a lot. But there's only one reason to look back at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. I'm here to tell you, there is more to do to make this country a safer place. There is more to do to make this country a hopeful place. I'm here to tell you, I've got the energy, the vision, and the willingness to lead this Nation for 4 more years.

We have more to do to make sure our schools are the centers of excellence we know they can be. You might remember, when we first got up there to Washington, the school system was shuffling too many children through our schools, grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We raised the standards because we believe every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract. We increased Federal help for States and local districts. But we started to ask a simple question: Are you achieving results? Can our children read and write? And, if so, we'll praise the teachers. But if not, we have the courage and willingness to challenge the status quo. No child should be left behind in America.

There's more work to be done. We've got to insist upon science and math programs in our high schools to prepare our kids for the jobs of the 21st century. We've got to make sure the Internet is available in classrooms. We want a high school diploma to mean something. After 4 more years, a rising generation will have the skills and confidence necessary to compete in our global world.

I'm running because I understand we've got to work to make health care more affordable and more available. You might remember the old debates on Medicare. They used

to call it “Mediscare.” People were afraid to touch the issue, but the system needed to be strengthened for our seniors. I went to Washington for a reason. I wanted to fix problems. We had a problem in Medicare. But working with Republicans and Democrats, we got the job done. Now our Medicare system will provide preventative care for our seniors and provide prescription drugs for our seniors.

There is more work to be done when it comes to health care. We want to make sure that we continue to expand community health centers for our low-income citizens. We want to keep people out of the emergency rooms when it comes to primary care. We want to make sure we continue to work with our small businesses. Most people get their insurance small—through their employer, and most new jobs are created by small businesses. Yet, small businesses are having trouble with health care. We must allow small businesses to pool risk so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big businesses do.

In order to make sure your health care system is viable and in order to make sure there’s docs available, we’ve got to stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of your medicine. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-plaintiff-attorney 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’m standing with the docs, and I’m standing with the hospitals, and more importantly, I’m standing with the patients. I’m for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve health care in America, we’ll make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Washington, DC, bureaucrats.

We’ve got to do more to keep this economy growing. Listen, we have been through a lot. We’ve been through a recession. We’ve been through a stock market decline. We’ve been through corporate scandals, and of course, we’ve been through a horrible attack on our country, all of which affected ability for people to find work.

But we’ve overcome those obstacles. We’ve overcome them because the entrepreneurial spirit in this country is strong. We’ve overcome it because the small-business sec-

tor is alive and well. We’ve overcome it because we’ve got great farmers and ranchers. We’ve overcome it because we’ve got the best workers in the world. And I think we’ve overcome those obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

You might remember the tax relief plan. We said, “If you’re paying taxes, you ought to get relief.” We did it the fair way. We also raised the child credit to help families. We reduced the marriage penalty. Our Tax Code has got it backwards. We ought to be encouraging marriage, not penalizing marriage in the Tax Code.

We’re helping our small businesses, and it’s paying off. Because we acted, our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We’ve added 1.5 million new jobs over the past 12 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. That’s well below the national average in the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. Our economy is strong and is getting stronger. I fully understand there are places here in Ohio where people are still looking for work. And so long as anybody is looking for work, this administration will create the conditions for job growth.

We have more to do to make sure this economy remains strong. Congress needs to pass my energy plan. In order to keep jobs here in America, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep jobs in America, we need tort reform, tort reform so our small-business owners are not threatened by these junk lawsuits. In order to keep jobs in America, I will insist that countries treat us the way we treat them when it comes to trade. You see, our markets are open. They ought to open their markets. We can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here in America, we need to make sure there’s a lifetime of learning available for our workers. It’s a changing economy. There are new jobs available. But a lot of times, our workers don’t have the skills necessary to meet those jobs. And that’s why I’m such a strong backer in the community college system. We’ve got Federal monies available to help people get the skills necessary to realize their dreams. We will continue to work to make sure the

American worker has the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

In order to keep jobs here in America, in order to make sure this economy grows, in order to make sure people are able to realize their dreams, we need to be wise about how we spend your money, and we need to keep your taxes low.

This is an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has promised over \$2 trillion in new programs.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** We've still got 60 days to go. [Laughter] So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, I'll just tax the rich." Now, you've heard that before, haven't you? "All we're going to do is tax the rich." Well, the rich dodge, and you get stuck with the bill. But guess what? We're not going to let him get there. We're going to win in November.

We've got more to do to wage and win this war on terror. America's 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 isn't going to 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 around the world and in the United States. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, over 10 million citizens in Afghanistan have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. Because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first time in Afghanistan. Because we acted, we now have an ally in the war on terror. 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 sent a strong and easy-to-understand 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. You might remember, he was firing weapons at American pilots who

were enforcing the world's sanctions. 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 a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. And I saw a threat. I looked at his history, and I saw a threat. I looked at intelligence and saw a threat. I also remembered one of the most important lessons of September the 11th. It's a lesson this country must never forget. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize, before they come to hurt us.

So I went to the United States Congress and said, "I see a threat. What about you?" Members of both political parties looked at the intelligence, remembered his history, and voted overwhelmingly for the use of force if need be, including my opponent.

Because military action is the last option of the Commander in Chief, because the very last option ought to be the commitment of our youngsters into harm's way, I went to the United Nations and tried the diplomatic route. I said, "We see a threat. How about you?" They looked at the intelligence, and they voted overwhelmingly in the United Nations Security Council to say—to pass this resolution, "Disarm—disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." That's what the free world said.

As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the demands of the free world. They sent inspectors in there. He systematically deceived the inspectors. I had a choice to make, a choice that only comes to the Oval Office, whether I ignore 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 America every time.

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

**The President.** Thank you very much. Even though we did not find the stockpiles we thought we would find, Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons and could have passed that capability on to our enemies. After September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take. 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.

Now, almost 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 in Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, my opponent now agrees with me that even though we haven't found the stockpiles we thought we would find, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I appreciate him for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] However, I want to warn you, there's still a little over 60 days for him to change his mind.

I'm asking for your vote because I know there is more to do, more to do to continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere. See, you cannot talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. In this post-9/11 world, you cannot hope for the best with these killers. We must aggressively pursue them elsewhere so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat these terrorists, nearly 40 countries in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq, about 60 countries involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative. That's an initiative that we put together to hunt down people who might be transporting weapons of mass destruction materials and technology. No, the world is working together, and I'll continue to build our alliances. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq. We'll keep our commitments to help them become peaceful and democratic societies. It's in our interests that they become peaceful societies. It's in our short-term interests and it's in our long-term interests that peace and freedom prevail in those countries. We've given our word, and when

America gives its word, America must keep its word.

There are strong leaders now in those countries, strong leaders who believe in freedom and believe in the aspirations of their people. Our troops are there to help the political process move forward. And we're there to help train the Afghans and the Iraqis so they can defend their own freedom, so they can do the hard work that's needed for democracy. Our troops will complete this mission as quickly as possible so they do not have to stay a day longer than necessary.

We have got a fantastic United States military. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a good example for those who wear the uniform. I have made a commitment to our troops and the commitment to the loved ones of our troops that they will have the resources they need to fight and win the war against the terrorists. It's a solemn commitment by our Government. We are meeting that commitment.

We've had the largest defense increases since Ronald Reagan was the President. We've increased military pay by 21 percent since I've been the President. We got better housing, since I've been the President, for our troops. And last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. This legislation provided money for body armor, vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. It was necessary legislation. And the Congress responded in a very strong bipartisan fashion. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding for our troops, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** So they asked him. They said, "How can you not support our troops in combat?" He said, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." I don't think many people talk that way here in Ohio. [*Laughter*] And so they pressed him. And he said, well, he was proud of the vote. And then they pressed him even further, and

he said, "Well, the whole thing is 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. See, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a neighborhood which is desperate for freedom. Free societies do not export terror. Free societies listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. By serving the cause of liberty, we are bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the cause of liberty, we're bringing peace to the world. By serving the cause of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of the American soul and the American spirit. See, we know that freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I'm running because I want to help spread the peace. I'm running so these youngsters can grow up in a more secure America, in a more hopeful and peaceful world. I strongly believe in the power of liberty to transform lives.

You know, I was recently meeting with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. We were having a discussion about the peace. It's an amazing conversation, when you think about it. You know, it wasn't all that long ago in the course of history that my dad and your dad's were fighting an enemy called the Japanese in a tough and brutal war. Yet because we believed in liberty, because we believed in the transforming power of liberty to change an enemy into an ally, because we didn't waver in our belief in liberty, after World War II, we helped our enemy become a self-governing, democratic nation. And here I was talking to the leader of a former enemy about peace in the Korean Peninsula. Some day, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader from Iraq talking about keeping the peace.

We have more to do to protect our country. There are enemies out there that hate us. You know, we have a difference of opinion on this subject. My opponent says that

going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic is upside down. I think it shows the misunderstanding of the nature of these people. 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. See, you don't create terrorists by fighting back. You defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We've got work to do to continue to defend our homeland. I've been working hard to make sure our intelligence services gather the best intelligence so those of us in Government can make the best decisions to defend you. There's good cooperation between the Federal, State, and local levels now, good conversation going on. We've created the Department of Homeland Security, and it was tough reforms in Washington to get it done. We need to renew the PATRIOT Act so our law enforcement officials have the tools necessary to disrupt terror cells. We're working hard to better protect our borders and our ports. You just got to know there's a lot of really decent people working long hours on your behalf to do everything we can to protect our country.

I'll continue to push for reform in Washington, but it's hard. There's a lot of entrenched interests in Washington, DC. There's a lot of special interests in Washington, DC. There's a lot of people willing to defend the status quo in Washington, DC. See, it's not enough to advocate reform; you have to show the people you can get it done.

So when you're out there lining up the vote, remind them that when it comes to reforming our schools and raising the standards and expecting the best, we're getting the job done. Tell them, when it comes to improving this farm economy, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving the overall economy and creating jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms for our seniors and our families, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing the homeland and fighting the terrorists and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. And remind them, when it comes to choosing the President, put somebody in there who can get the job done.

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

**The President.** You know, we live in interesting times here in America. These are times of change. And change can be unsettling; I understand that. See, I think the role of Government is to help people during times of change, to provide people with the tools necessary to adapt to times of change. That's why I'm a strong supporter of flex-time and comp-time. I know a lot of moms are now working, and I think we need to have work rules that enable people to be flexible with their schedule so that they can spend time with their families. I know people are changing jobs and, therefore, that's why I support health savings accounts, so people can take their insurance with them from job to job and know they've got coverage for their families.

I see a lot of younger workers here today. Baby boomers like me are in good shape when it comes to Social Security. But you better be asking which candidate understands the fiscal dangers for young workers in Social Security. In order to make sure Social Security exists for future generations, I believe younger workers ought to have the option of taking some of their own money out of Social Security and setting up personal savings accounts. Those accounts will be yours that you can pass on from one generation to the next.

See, what I'm telling you is, in a changing world, it's important to promote ownership in America. Ownership will help. Ownership means Government is standing side by side with people, not dictating to people. That's why I want to create the conditions so more people can own their own small business. And that's why one of the greatest statistics, I think, in the American scene today is that the homeownership rate is at an alltime high.

We'll continue to press for homeownership in America. I think the idea of somebody opening up that door, saying, "Welcome to my home," is an important part of the American experience and the American future. This administration understands if you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the United States of America.

In this changing times, there are some things that won't change: the individual val-

ues we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; our beliefs in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. 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 our 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. You know, the culture is shifting from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and 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 this wonderful community, 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 a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion, those loving souls who have heard a call to help somebody who hurts. See, I know Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart, a sense of purpose in a person's life. We need to rally the strength of the country, which is the hearts and souls of our citizens. We can change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time, by encouraging loving souls to love their neighbor.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This is not one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, an unshakable belief in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that era—that week when one era ended and another

began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats shouting at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember working the line and a fellow looked at me with his bloodshot eyes, and he grabbed me by the arm and he said, "You don't let me down."

He took that day personally. Everybody there took it personally. You took it personally, and so do I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning trying to figure out how best to defend America. I will never relent in defending this great country, whatever it takes.

We've come through much together. We've come through much together, and we've done a lot of hard work. We're moving forward by extending freedom around the world and expanding opportunity in this country. And there's more to do. During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership and opportunity to every corner. We will pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. We will continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State. When I was asking for the vote, I said if you gave me the high honor of being your President, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of that office. With your help, with your support, I will do so for the next 4 years.

May God bless you. Thank you for coming. Thank you all for coming. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:17 p.m. at Fort Meigs State Memorial Park. In his remarks, he referred to country music entertainer Lee Ann Womack; Ohio Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell; Ohio Auditor of State Betty Montgomery; Ohio State Senator Randy Gardner; Ohio State Representative Bob Latta; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

## Remarks in Wheeling, West Virginia

August 29, 2004

**The President.** Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. And thanks for having me. I am thrilled to be back here in the Mountain State. You may have noticed I'm spending

some quality time here. You know why? Because we're going to carry West Virginia again.

I'm here to thank you for your help. I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm here to encourage you to go the extra mile to get people to show up at the polls. Most of all, I want to thank you for coming out on a Sunday afternoon. I appreciate you all coming out and taking time away—or bringing your families here. It means a lot to me. I really appreciate it.

You know, I was in your neighborhood a while ago. I was at the new Cabela's. The place has hired over a couple thousand jobs, creating a couple thousand jobs there. I'm there because I'm a hunter and I like to fish. I understand a lot of people in these parts like to fish. A couple of you like to hunt. I just don't get to do enough of it. I'm hunting for votes.

There's a lot of differences in this campaign. You know, one of the most notable differences came up the other day when my opponent said, "Well, you can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood."

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Yes. I think you find the heart and soul of America right here in Wheeling, West Virginia.

I gave Laura a kiss goodbye today and said, "I'm heading to Wheeling." She said, "Well, I'm working on my speech." [Laughter] I said, "Well, make it a good one, will you?" [Laughter] I didn't need to say that. Of course it's going to be a good one. Laura is a great First Lady, a wonderful mom, and a great wife. I'm really proud of her—I'm really proud of her. Today I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back into office. Perhaps the most important one of all is for Laura to be the First Lady for 4 more years.

Rick mentioned my runningmate. I'm real proud of Dick Cheney. He's a great, solid man. I admit he's not the prettiest face in the race. [Laughter] I picked him because of his judgment, his experience, and his ability to get the job done.

I thank Rick, Rick Casini, for being here. I'm proud of his leadership. As he told you, he's a union shop steward, he's a leader of men and women. He's—he represents the