

to help women in the greater Middle East realize a free society, talking about how others have a chance to realize the great benefits of democracy.

That's what's happened. These are historic times. The world is changing for the better. I told the people in my convention speech, we've done the hard work and climbed the mountain; we see the valley below. It's a valley of peace, based upon freedom and liberty. And make no mistake about it—make no mistake about it—if this country has the right leadership and the right determination and the will to succeed, we will. And future generations of Americans will be better off for it.

Thanks for coming. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:24 p.m. at the Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Marilyn Coors, wife of senatorial candidate Pete Coors; Gov. Bill Owens of Colorado and his wife, Frances; Jackie Tancredo, wife of Representative Tom Tancredo; Claudia Beauprez, wife of Representative Bob Beauprez; Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30.

Remarks in Morrison, Colorado

October 11, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for being here. Go ahead and be seated. Thanks for coming. It's nice to be in a part of the world where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties.

Tommy and I were both raised in Midland, Texas. He went to Alamo Junior High, and I went to San Jacinto Junior High. So we're standing here, and he says to me, "This doesn't look like where we were raised." [Laughter] What a beautiful part of the world. Thanks for coming out to say hello.

I've come back to this beautiful part of our country to ask for the vote, and I'm here to ask for your help as well. We're getting close to voting time here in America. And I'm asking you to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls. I'm asking you to find people from all walks of life to vote. As you get

people to go to the polls, don't overlook discerning Democrats. Like you, they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America. There is no doubt with your help, we'll carry Colorado again and win a great victory in November.

I wish Laura was here. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just as long as I never have to give a speech." [Laughter] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise. She's given a lot of speeches. The American people see a compassionate, warm, great First Lady in Laura Bush. She didn't make it, but Jenna did. I'm proud of our daughters, Barbara and Jenna.

I'm also proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He did a great job at his debate. You know, he didn't have the prettiest hair there at the debate. [Laughter] I didn't pick him for his hairdo. I picked him because of his judgment and his experience and his ability to get the job done for the American people.

I'm proud to be introduced by a great American, Tommy Franks. He'll go down in history as one of America's great generals. America is more secure and the world is better off because of the generalship of General Tommy Franks. And I'm proud his wife, Cathy, is with him too.

I want to thank my friend Mike Shanahan for being up on stage with me. I appreciate him taking the time. I said, "You got any suggestions?" He said, "Yes, stay on the offense." I appreciate Peggy coming. I want to thank all the Bronco players who are here today. Congratulations on a great victory this weekend.

I'm proud to call your Governor my friend, Bill Owens. He's doing a great job for Colorado. And I want to thank the fine first lady of Colorado, Frances, for being here as well.

Two Members of the United States Congress with us today, Bob Beauprez and Tom Tancredo. I appreciate their service. Thank you all for coming.

I'm proud to be with the next United States Senator from Colorado, Pete Coors.

Audience members. Pete! Pete! Pete!

The President. I want to thank my friend Gwyn Dieter. She's the Bush-Cheney W Stands for Women chairman.

Appreciate Collin Raye being here. I want to thank all the grassroots activists. Thank you for what you have done, and thank you for what you're going to do to turn out the vote.

I'm on my way to the third and final debate. We had a good debate last Friday. These debates have highlighted the clear differences between the Senator and me on issues ranging from jobs to taxes to health care to the war on terror. Much as he's strived to obscure it, on issue after issue my opponent has shown why he has earned his ranking as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Several statements he made the other night simply didn't pass the credibility test. With a straight face, he said he had had only one position on Iraq. [Laughter]

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. I could barely contain myself. [Laughter] He must think we've been on another planet. Spring of 2003, I ordered the invasion of Iraq. Senator Kerry said, "It was the right decision." Now he says, "It's the wrong war." In the same debate, he said Saddam was a threat. Then a few minutes later, he said there wasn't a threat in Iraq. And he tells us he's only had one position. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

With another straight face, he tried to tell Americans that when it comes to his health care plan, and I quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." [Laughter] The facts are that 8 out of 10 people who get health care under Senator Kerry's plan would be placed on a Government program.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He can run, but he cannot hide.

And then Senator Kerry was asked to look into the camera and promise he would not raise taxes for anyone who earns less than \$200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise he would have to break almost all of his other ones. His plan to raise taxes in the top two income brackets would raise about \$600 billion. But his spending plans will cost almost 4 times as much, more than

\$2.2 trillion. You cannot have it both ways. To pay for all the big spending programs he's outlined during his campaign, he will have to raise your taxes. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

You know, after listening to his litany of complaints and his dour pessimism, it took all I could do not to make a face. [Laughter]

I have a very different philosophy than him. I'm a compassionate conservative. I have worked to make America more hopeful and more secure. I've led our country with principle and resolve, and with your help, that is how I will lead our Nation for 4 more years.

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

The President. My plan for a hopeful America begins with a growing economy that creates good jobs. I believe in the energy and innovation and spirit of America's workers and small-business owners and farmers and ranchers. And that is why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out convincing people to vote our way, remind them what we've been through. The stock market was in serious decline 6 months prior to my arrival in Washington, DC. Then we had a recession. We had some corporate scandals which affected our economy. We passed tough laws to make it abundantly clear: We will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we had the attacks of September the 11th, which cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months afterwards.

But we acted. We put tax relief in place. The recession was one of the shallowest in American history, and our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years.

The past 13 months, we've added more than 1.9 million new jobs. The unemployment rate in America is at 5.4 percent, lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in your State is at 5.1 percent. Farm income is up. Home-ownership rate is at an alltime high. More of our minority citizens own their homes than ever before. America is moving forward, and there's much more to do.

To make sure jobs are here in America, to make sure you can find good paying jobs, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we need to reduce the burden of regulations on our job creators. We've got to end the junk lawsuits that are threatening small businesses that create most of the new jobs in America.

To create jobs, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. My plan encourages conservation. It encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It will help modernize the electricity grid. It encourages clean coal technology. It recognizes we can explore for hydrocarbons in environmentally friendly ways. In order to keep jobs here in America, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To create jobs, we need to reject economic isolationism and open up markets around the world for U.S. products. See, I know, with a level playing field, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is fair. And that's why I tell China, "You treat us the way we treat you." The best way to create jobs is to be selling our goods overseas.

To create jobs, we need to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. My opponent says oh, don't worry, he's going to pay for all his promises by taxing the rich. We've heard that before, haven't we?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason: to stick you with the bill. [*Laughter*] We're not going to let him tax you; we're going to win in November.

Speaking about the Tax Code, it's a complicated mess. It's full of special interest loopholes. In a new term, I'll lead a bipartisan effort to simplify the Tax Code and make it more fair for the American people.

Listen, to build a more hopeful America, we must have the best prepared and most highly skilled workforce in the world. This all starts with education. I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington, DC, to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I went to stop the practice of just simply shuffling the "hard-to-educate" through, grade after grade, year after year, without teaching the basics. We've

raised the standards. We're measuring early so we can solve problems before they're too late. We trust the local people to make the right decisions for their schools. We're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not going to go back to the days of mediocrity.

Most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet only one in four of our students gets there. So we'll fund early intervention programs in our high schools for at-risk students. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation from high school. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

One of the cornerstones of my plan to make sure our workers get the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century is to support the community college system here in Colorado and around our country.

To build a more hopeful America, we need to make health care more affordable and available. We need a safety net for those with the greatest needs. I believe in community health centers, places where the poor can get care. I believe every poor county in America should have a community health center. And we need to do more to make sure our poor children are fully subscribed in our program for low-income families so they can get the health care they need.

We must do more to make sure health care is affordable. Most of the uninsured are employees of small businesses. Small businesses have trouble affording health care. To help more workers get health care, we should allow small businesses to join together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts big companies get to do.

To make sure health care is affordable, we will expand health savings accounts. We will give small businesses tax credits to pay into health savings accounts for their employees. We want workers to own their own accounts so they can base their medical decisions on advice from a doctor, not somebody in an HMO.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we've got to do something about

these junk lawsuits that are running up the costs of health care and running good doctors out of practice. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors and the patients. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

In all we do to improve health care, this administration will make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Government officials in Washington, DC. I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. See, I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I saw a problem in Medicare. Medicine was modernizing, but Medicare wasn't.

For example, we paid thousands of dollars for heart surgery under Medicare but wouldn't pay a dime for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense for our seniors. It didn't make any sense for the taxpayers. So we called people together, and we modernized Medicare. And starting in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage. We're not going to go back to the days of not honoring our seniors when it comes to good health.

Let me talk about our retirement systems. We need to do something about Social Security. In 2000, when I ran, I remember those ads saying, "If George W. gets to be the President, our seniors won't get their checks." You might remember those ads. Well, our seniors got their checks, and the seniors will continue to get their Social Security checks. Baby boomers are in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. And that's why I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to set aside some of their own tax money in personal accounts to get a better rate of return, personal accounts they call their own.

No, we're living in changing times, but some things don't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we will support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And we stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

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

The President. Since that terrible morning, September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives our citizens are at stake.

Audience members. We love you, W!

The President. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. I will make sure the All-Volunteer Army remains the All-Volunteer Army. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We'll continue to work to spread freedom and peace. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world as it was 3½ years ago. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a dangerous place and a gathering threat, and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan held elections this weekend and is an ally in the war on terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is

making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew he hated America. We knew he had a long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. We know that after September the 11th, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. So I went to the United States Congress. Members of Congress looked at the very same intelligence I looked at and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence and came to the same conclusion and voted "yes" when it came time to authorize the use of force.

Before the United States ever commits troops into harm's way, we must try all means—all means—to deal with any threat. No President ever wants to have to send our sons and daughters into harm's way. And so that's why I went to the United Nations. I was hopeful that diplomacy would solve the threat. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence, debated the issue, and passed a resolution by a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council that said Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. Now, I believe when an international body speaks, it must mean what it says.

Saddam Hussein deceived the inspectors. He wasn't about to listen to the demands of the free world. He was used to ignoring the demands. After all, he'd ignored resolution after resolution after resolution. We gave him his final chance. He chose to deceive and evade. And so I have a choice to make: Do I take the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Now, we did not find the stockpiles that we all thought were there. But the Duelfer report that came out last week said that Sad-

dam Hussein retained the intent and the capability and the expertise to rebuild his weapons programs. It said he was gaming the system, using the Oil for Food Programme to try to influence officials in other nations to get rid of the sanctions. And why? Because he wanted the world to look the other way so he could restart his weapons programs. And that was a danger we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision.

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

The President. Because we acted in our self-interest, not only are we safer, but 50 million people now live in freedom. Think about what happened in Afghanistan. Think about what happened in that country that was once ruled by the Taliban. It wasn't all that long ago that many young girls were not even allowed to go to school, and their mothers were whipped in the public square, sometimes executed in a sports stadium because they wouldn't toe the line of these ideologues of hate. And just this weekend, people by the thousands voted for their President. The first—3½ years ago, nobody would have thought that was possible. The first person to vote in the Presidential elections in Afghanistan was a 19-year-old girl. Iraq is headed toward democracy. Iraq has a strong Prime Minister and a National Council, and elections will be held in January.

We're standing with the people in those countries because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. We're standing with them because a free Afghanistan and a free Iraq will make us all safer. You see, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight the terrorists instead of harboring them. And that helps us keep the peace.

Our mission is clear. We will help these countries train armies so their own people can do the hard work of defending democracy. We will help them get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

I'm proud to be the Commander in Chief of a such a great military. I want to thank

the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the military families who are here today for your sacrifice. And I assure you, we'll keep the commitment I've made to our troops. We'll make sure they have the resources they need to complete their missions.

And that's why I went to the United States Congress, September of 2003, and requested \$87 billion to support our troops in both Afghanistan and Iraq. It was essential funding. It was vital for their missions. We received great bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Even more startling is this statistic: There were only four Members of the United States Senate who voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding for our troops in harm's way, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember perhaps the most famous quote of this campaign: When asked to explain his vote, my opponent said, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. Now, he's given a lot of explanations since then for that vote. One of my favorites is when he just threw up his hands and said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." [Laughter] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

On national security, my opponent has a record. He has a record of voting against the weapons systems that helped our country win the cold war. He voted to cut America's intelligence budget by \$7.5 billion after 1993. He now says he wants a "global test" before taking action to defend America's security.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The problem is, the Senator can never pass his own test. In 1990, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution supporting action to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. The international

community was united. Countries throughout the world joined our coalition, yet in the United States Senate after the Security Council resolution, my opponent voted "no" when it came time to authorize the use of force.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. If driving Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait with the support of the international community does not meet his test, nothing will. [Laughter] And in this dangerous world, that's the wrong position to take.

We have a very different view on how to protect America and our role in confronting threats in the world. Just this weekend, we saw new evidence that my opponent fundamentally misunderstands the war against terror. Earlier, he questioned whether it's really a war at all, describing it as primarily a law enforcement and intelligence-gathering operation instead of a threat that demands the full use of American power. Now just this weekend, Senator Kerry talked of reducing terrorism to a, quote, "nuisance"—[laughter]—and compared it to prostitution and illegal gambling.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Our goal is not to reduce terror to some acceptable level of nuisance. Our goal is to defeat terror by staying on the offensive, destroying the terrorist networks, and spreading freedom and liberty around the world.

I will always work with our friends and allies. For the next 4 years, we'll continue to build on our strong coalition, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other nations.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. To make my point, I oftentimes talk about my friend Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I saw him at the United Nations meetings in early September. I said, "You know, I'm talking about you on the campaign trail. Is that okay?" He said, "Fine, go ahead and talk about me." I didn't ask permission, though, as to whether or not I could tell you that his favorite singer was Elvis. [Laughter]

What's interesting about my relationship is that it wasn't all that long ago that we were fighting Japan. Japan was the sworn enemy of the United States of America. My dad

fought against the Japanese. Your dads and granddads, husbands, loved ones fought against the Japanese as well. After we defeated the Japanese in World War II, we had a President named Harry S. Truman who believed in the transformational power of liberty to convert an enemy into an ally. He worked with others to help Japan develop a democracy.

And there was a lot of skepticism in our country at that time, about whether we wanted Japan to become a democracy, about whether Japan could become a democracy. And you could understand why there was skepticism. We had just fought them, and many families' lives had been turned upside-down because of the death in the World War II.

But my predecessor and other citizens held to that belief that liberty could transform nations. And today, I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan talking about the peace, talking about how do we make the world a more peaceful place for generations to come. We will succeed in Iraq. Iraq will become a democracy. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their freedom. I believe women want to grow up in a free society and raise their children in a free society. And I believe that if given the chance, the people in the Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

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 isn't one of those times. It's a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and the deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. 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 there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "What-

ever it takes." I remember a fellow coming out of the rubble, and I was trying to do my best to console them there at the site. And a guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Don't let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

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

The President. Four years ago, when I traveled your great State, I made a pledge that if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help—with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:55 p.m. at Red Rocks Park & Amphitheater. In his remarks, he referred to Cathy Franks, wife of Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Mike Shanahan, head coach, Denver Broncos, National Football League, and his wife, Peggy; Gov. Bill Owens of Colorado and his wife, Frances; Gwyneth Dieter, Colorado State chairperson, W Stands for Women, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; country music entertainer Collin Raye; Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Gen. Franks, who introduced the President.

Statement on the Death of Christopher Reeve

October 11, 2004

Laura and I are saddened by the death of Christopher Reeve. Mr. Reeve was an example of personal courage, optimism, and self-determination. He was brave in the face of adversity and was greatly admired by millions of Americans. He will be remembered