

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Reception in Greensboro, Georgia
June 20, 2003

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks a lot for coming out tonight. So I'm walking up on the stage, and Saxby says, "If you keep it short, we might be able to get a round of golf in." [Laughter]

I want to thank you all for being here. I came without my wife, unfortunately.

Audience members. Aw-w-w.

The President. I know it. There's a lot of good, discerning people out here in the crowd who understand who the real star of our family is. She was in Chattanooga today working. You drew the short straw. [Laughter] But I can't tell you how proud I am of the job she is doing. She is a fabulous First Lady for our country, and she sends her best and her thanks.

Standing up on the stage here with Sonny and Saxby reminded me about what it means to offer a hopeful and optimistic vision, because that's precisely what we did last fall. In this State, we said, "If you elect these good people, you'll get good government for everybody." And thanks to your hard work and your efforts, you elected the first Republican Governor in 130 years. And he's doing the job you expect him to do. He's a straight shooter. He does in office what he said he would do.

And that's the same with Saxby. I've got no stronger ally in the United States Senate than Saxby Chambliss, and I want to thank you

And thanks to your help, starting tonight, we're going to build on what you did last fall and deliver a strong nationwide victory next fall. And I'm getting loosened up. [Laughter] I'm getting ready, but I'm going to have to count on you all to energize the grassroots, to make the phone calls, to put the signs in the yard, and to spread our message, which is a positive and hopeful message for every single citizen who lives in this country.

The political season will come in its own time. But right now, I am focused on the people's business in Washington, DC. We've got a lot on the agenda. We've got a lot to do before the political season. But I can assure you that we will keep earning the confidence of Americans by keeping this Nation secure and strong and prosperous and free.

Along with Sonny, there's a lot of State officials here, and I want to thank you all for coming.

And along with Saxby came a—members of one of the finest congressional delegations in Washington, DC: Congressmen Jack Kingston, Johnny Isakson, Mac Collins, Charlie Norwood, Max Burns, and John Linder, and I want to thank you all for coming. I appreciate you being here.

I want to thank my close friend Mercer Reynolds for agreeing to be the national finance chairman of the Bush-Cheney campaign. I want to thank Jamie—that would be Jamie Reynolds—for hosting this event tonight. I want to thank all the cochairmen who have helped. I want to thank Harold Reynolds. I want to thank my friend Fred Cooper. But most of all, I want to thank you all. You put the wind at my back. You give me a lot of confidence to take on the task ahead. And I appreciate you coming.

In the last 2½ years, our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to the office of the Presidency to solve problems instead of passing them on to other Presidents or other generations. I came to seize opportunities instead of letting them slip away.

We are meeting the tests of our time. Terrorists declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. We have captured or killed many key Al Qaida leaders, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan

and in Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance, and those regimes are no more. Fifty million people in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and now they live in freedom.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. We've increased the defense budget to prepare for the threats of a new era. And today, no one in the world can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

Two-and-a-half years ago, we inherited an economy in recession. Then the attacks on our country occurred, and then scandals in corporate America and war affected the people's confidence. But we acted. We passed tough new laws to hold corporate criminals to account. And to get the economy going again, we have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people.

Here's what we believe, and here's what we know: When Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, and to invest, the whole economy goes, and people can find work.

We understand whose money we spend in Washington, DC. It's not the Government's money. It is the people's money. And we're returning more money to people who are trying to raise their families. We're reducing taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We're giving small businesses incentives to expand and to hire new people. With all these actions, we are laying the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs all across America so every person, every single person in this country, can have the chance to live the American Dream.

Two-and-a-half years ago, there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't much action. So I called for and Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education re-

forms in a generation. We're bringing high standards and strong accountability measures to every public school in America. Every child can learn the basics of reading and math. And we believe every school should teach those basics. We are challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations in American schools. The days of excuse-making are over. And now we can expect results in every single classroom so that not one child in America is left behind.

We reorganized the Government and created the Department of Homeland Security to safeguard the borders and ports and to protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for America's farmers and ranchers and manufacturers. We passed a budget agreement that is helping to maintain spending discipline in Washington, DC.

On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle, has kept its word, and has made progress for the American people. And the United States Congress has shared in these achievements, and I appreciate the hard work of the Members of the United States Congress. We will continue to work together. We will continue to work to change the tone in Washington, DC, by focusing on the people's business, by focusing on results.

And that's the nature of the people I've asked to serve America in my administration, people who are willing to set aside all the partisan bickering, people who are willing to serve the American people. I've put together a fabulous team. We've had no greater Vice President in the United States than Richard B. Cheney, although my mother may have a different view. [Laughter]

In 2½ years, we have come far—2½ years, we've come a long way. But our work is only beginning. We have great goals worthy of a great nation. First, America is committed to expanding the realm of freedom and peace for our own security and for the benefit of the world. And second, in

our own country, we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion so that every citizen has a chance to work and to succeed and to realize the great promise of America.

It has never been more clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home and freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we are keeping it.

On the war on terror, continues—the war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are we. This country will not rest; we will not tire; and we will not stop until this danger to civilization is removed.

Yet our national interest involves more than eliminating aggressive threats to our safety. Our greatest security comes from the advance of human liberty, because free nations do not support terror; free nations do not attack their neighbors; free nations do not threaten the world with weapons of mass terror. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart, and we believe that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation.

America also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. We have duties in the world. And when we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, we will not turn away. On the continent of Africa, America is now committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children now suffering with AIDS. This great land is leading the world in important work of human rescue.

I will continue to work on our economy until anybody who wants to work and is not working today can find a job.

And we have a duty at home to keep our commitment to America's seniors by strengthening and modernizing Medicare so that they have more choices and better access to prescription drugs. The time has arrived for the United States Congress to

pass Medicare reform. And that reform must give our seniors good options that meet their needs. Members of Congress and their staffs currently get choice of health care plans. And seniors ought to have the same kind of choices, including the choice to keep their Medicare coverage the way it is. If choice is good for the Members of the United States Congress, it is good for America's seniors.

And for the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine. People who have been harmed by a doctor deserve their day in court. Yet the system should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for a rich settlement. Because frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, medical liability is a national problem, and it requires a national solution. No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit. We need medical liability reform now.

I have a responsibility to make sure the judicial system runs well, and I have met that duty. I have nominated superb men and women to the Federal courts, people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. Some Members of the United States Senate are trying to keep my nominees off the bench by blocking up-or-down votes. Every judicial nominee deserves a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. It is time for some of the Members of the United States Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

The Congress needs to pass a comprehensive energy plan. Our Nation must promote energy efficiency and conservation, develop cleaner technology. But we need to produce more energy at home. We need to produce more natural gas. For the sake of economic security and for the sake of national security, we must make America less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Our strong and prosperous Nation must also be a compassionate nation. I will continue to advance our agenda of compassionate conservatism, applying the best and most innovative ideas to the tasks of helping our fellow citizens in need. There are still millions of men and women who want to end their dependency on Government and become independent through hard work. We must build on the success of welfare reform to bring work and dignity into the lives of more of our fellow citizens. Congress should complete the "Citizen Service Act" so that more Americans can serve their communities and their country. And both Houses should finally reach agreement on my Faith-Based Initiative to support the armies of compassion that are mentoring children and caring for the homeless and offering hope to the addicted.

A compassionate society must promote opportunity for all, including the independence and dignity that come from ownership. This administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more people owning their home. We want people to own their own retirement accounts. We want more small-business owners in America. We want people to have control and own their own health care plan. We understand that when a person owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future of this country.

In a compassionate society, people respect one another and take responsibility for the decisions they make. We're changing the culture of America 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 understand we're responsible for the decisions we make in life—that each of us are responsible, that if you're fortunate enough to be a mother or father, you're responsible for the well-being of that child. And if you're griping about the quality of education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it.

A responsibility society says to CEO America, loud and clear, "You're responsible to your shareholders, and you're responsible to your employees." And in our responsibility society, each of us are responsible for loving our neighbor, just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

We can see the culture of service and responsibility growing around us. I started what I call the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to a neighbor in need, and the response has been strong, just like the response is strong in America for faith-based charities that bring hope and healing to a fellow citizen.

Policemen and firefighters, people who wear our country's uniform, are reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than yourself. And once again, the children of America believe in heroes because they see them every day.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and courage of America. And I've been privileged to see the compassion and character of the American people. All the tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation. We're a strong country, and we use our strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves.

Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country and for our cause, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless you all, and may God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:33 p.m. at the driving range of the Oconee Course at the Ritz-Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Sonny Perdue of Georgia; Jamie and Harold Reynolds, co-owners, Reynolds Plantation; and

Fred Cooper, Georgia State finance chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.

The President's Radio Address

June 21, 2003

Good morning. Ten weeks have passed since the fall of the Iraqi regime. Since that time, our work in Iraq has focused on two goals. First, we are working to make Iraq secure for its citizens and our military. Second, we are working to improve the lives of the Iraqi people after three decades of tyranny and oppression.

Making Iraq secure is vitally important for both Iraqi citizens and our own forces. The men and women of our military face a continuing risk of danger and sacrifice in Iraq. Dangerous pockets of the old regime remain loyal to it, and they, along with their terrorist allies, are behind deadly attacks designed to kill and intimidate coalition forces and innocent Iraqis.

Our military is acting decisively against these threats. In Operation Peninsula Strike and Operation Desert Scorpion, our forces have targeted Ba'ath party loyalists and terrorist organizations. In Baghdad, more than 28,000 American combat forces and military police are enforcing the law and arresting criminals. We are also training Iraqis to begin policing their own cities.

As we establish order and justice in Iraq, we also continue to pursue Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction. Military and intelligence officials are interviewing scientists with knowledge of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs and are poring over hundreds of thousands of documents.

For more than a decade, Saddam Hussein went to great lengths to hide his weapons from the world. And in the regime's final days, documents and suspected weapons sites were looted and burned. Yet all who know the dictator's history agree

that he possessed chemical and biological weapons and that he used chemical weapons in the past. The intelligence services of many nations concluded that he had illegal weapons, and the regime refused to provide evidence they had been destroyed. We are determined to discover the true extent of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs, no matter how long it takes.

To date, the United States has provided Iraq with more than \$700 million in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. This month, the World Food Program is distributing food rations to about 25 million Iraqis. America and our partners are also repairing water treatment plants to provide more clean water. Each week, through our efforts, more electricity is made available to more people throughout the country. And after years of neglect, Iraq's 4.2 million children under the age of 5 are receiving vaccinations against diseases such as polio, measles, and tuberculosis.

Iraq's long-term success also depends on economic development. Our administrator in Iraq has announced a \$100 million fund to pay Iraqis to repair buildings and utilities. Billions of dollars taken from Iraqis by a corrupt regime have been recovered and will be spent on reconstruction projects. Iraq is already in the process of selling oil on world markets, which will bring in much-needed revenue to help the Iraqi people. This week, the port at Umm Qasr opened to commercial traffic, and Baghdad International Airport is expected to reopen next month.

For the first time in over a decade, Iraq will soon be open to the world. And the influence of progress in Iraq will be felt