

I also appreciate the fact that the leader of the house and the senate from Utah have joined us today.

I selected Mike Leavitt because he is a trusted friend, a capable executive, and a man who understands the obligations of environmental stewardship. With the Senate's approval, Mike Leavitt will lead an agency with 18,000 dedicated employees in offices all across our country. The work of the EPA is vital and reflects a national consensus on the importance of good stewardship.

During the last three decades, we've seen extraordinary progress in cleaning our air and protecting our land and making our water more pure. The quality of our air is far better than it was in the 1970s. Many more of our lakes and rivers are safe for fishing and swimming. Toxic emissions have declined, and we're bringing new resources and programs to reduce runoff and erosion. We're making real progress protecting endangered species and helping them recover.

Mike Leavitt will come to the EPA with a strong environmental record and a strong desire to improve on what has taken place during the last three decades. He served for over a decade as Governor of an important State. As cochair of the Western Regional Air Partnership, Governor Leavitt has been a leader in applying high standards in air quality, and he understands the importance of clear standards in every environmental policy. He respects the ability of State and local governments to meet those standards, rejects the old ways of command and control from above. He was twice reelected by the people of Utah, in

part because he leads by consensus and focuses on results instead of process.

In Utah and beyond, he has gained wide respect for handling environmental issues in a spirit of openness and bipartisanship. These qualities and his experience will make Mike Leavitt a fine addition to my administration. I will count on him to continue the good work begun by former Administrator Whitman and Acting Administrator Horinko.

He will join my Cabinet with a full agenda and with my full confidence. Mike, I appreciate your willingness to serve. I thank the people of Utah as you leave office to take on this incredibly important assignment in our Nation's Capital.

[At this point, Governor Leavitt made brief remarks.]

The President. Great job. Thank you. Thank you all. Good job, Michael.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:34 p.m. at the Marriott Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former President Charles Taylor of Liberia; President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria; President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana; President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa; President Joaquim Alberto Chissano of Mozambique; Jacalyn S. Leavitt, wife of Gov. Leavitt, and their children Michael, Taylor, Anne Marie, Westin, and Chase; Martin R. Stephens, speaker, Utah State House of Representatives; and L. Alma "Al" Mansell, president, Utah State Senate. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Gov. Leavitt.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Dinner in Denver, Colorado August 11, 2003

The President. Thank you all very much. I appreciate you coming. Thanks for the

warm welcome. There is nothing like heading west.

I spent a little time on our ranch in Crawford—get to see more cows than I do the press corps. [Laughter] Seems like the cows are handling the heat a little better too. [Laughter]

But I want to thank you all very much for your help. I appreciate your strong support. I want to thank all those who made this fundraiser a record-setting fundraiser. I appreciate what you're doing. You're laying the foundation for what is going to be a great victory in November of '04.

I'm here to not only thank you; I'm here to tell you I'm going to need your support in energizing the grassroots of the great State of Colorado. I need your help in putting up signs. I need you to make the phone calls. I need you to mail the letters. I need you to remind people of this State—Republican, Democrat, independent, don't care—that our message is one that is hopeful for every single citizen who lives in this State.

I'm loosening up. I'm getting ready—[laughter]—cutting a lot of cedar—[laughter]—running a lot of miles, getting ready for the contest. But the political season will come in its own time. For me, now is not the time for politics. You see, I've got a job to do. I'm staying focused on the people's business. I'm doing what you expect me to do in Washington, DC, and I'll continue to work to earn the confidence of every American by keeping this Nation secure and strong and prosperous and free.

I want to thank my friend the Governor of the great State of Colorado. He is—he's done a fabulous job as your Governor. He does what he says he's going to do, which is nice, to have somebody in public office—[laughter]—who says something and means it. And like me, he married above himself. I'm honored to be here with the First Lady of the State of Colorado as well.

I just called Laura and said that I'm fixing to go see a lot of our friends from the State of Colorado. I said, "How's—what's it like down there?" She said, "It's only 103." [Laughter] I said, "Well, if that's

the case, it feels like winter here." [Laughter]

I can't tell you how great it is to be married to such a fine woman as Laura Bush. She is a great First Lady for our country.

I appreciate the two Senators from the State of Colorado. Senator Wayne Allard, who's—turns out to be my State cochair, along with working with the Governor here. He's a great Senator, and so is Ben Nighthorse Campbell. I'm going to tell you, it's important to put this man back into the United States Senate. And if you've got a little something left in the wallet after tonight—[laughter]—and looking for a good man to help, somebody who can use your help, it's Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell. He's a fine representative of the great State of Colorado, and I'm proud to call him friend.

Two members of the U.S. congressional delegation are with us. First, Bob Beauprez; Congressman Beauprez, thank you for coming. We didn't exactly landslide them last time—[laughter]—but neither did I. [Laughter] I know you're back home working hard in your district to tell the people of that district they made the right choice in putting Bob Beauprez in the U.S. Congress. He's a fine man. And I appreciate Tom Tancredo being here as well. Thank you, Congressman, for coming. I'm honored you're here.

I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor, Jane Norton, for being here tonight. I want to thank the treasurer for the great State of Colorado, Mike Coffman, for being here tonight. I appreciate the president of the State senate and the speaker of the house, Senator John Andrews and Lola Spradley, for coming as well. Governor, I know it's a pretty good deal to be working with a Republican speaker and a senate leader. I kind of like it myself. [Laughter]

I want to thank very much our party chairman, Ted Halaby. I want to thank Bruce Benson for putting this event on and for being the finance chairman. I want to

thank all those who helped raise the money. I thank my friend Mercer Reynolds, who is the national finance chairman. But most of all, I want to thank you all for your friendship, for your prayers, for your support, for getting ready to get to work on behalf of this reelection campaign.

You know, in the last 2½ years, our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to this office to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future 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've captured or killed many of the leaders of Al Qaida, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance, and those regimes are no more. Fifty million people—50 million people—in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and now they live in freedom. And the world is better off for it.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. We 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 happened on our country, and scandals in corporate America, as well as the war—it all affected the people's confidence. People began to lose confidence, but we acted. We passed tough new laws to hold corporate criminals to account.

To get the economy going, I have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people. Here's what I believe, and here's what we know, that when Americans have more take-home money to spend or to save, to

invest, the whole economy begins to grow, and people are more likely to find a job. And I understand whose money we spend in Washington, DC. It is not the Government's money we spend in Washington; it is the people's money.

Now we're returning more money to the American people to help them raise their families, reducing taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We're giving small businesses proper incentives to encourage them to expand and to hire new people. With all these actions, we're laying the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs across America so every one of our citizens can realize the great promise of our country.

I want you to remember, 2½ years ago there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't much action in Washington, DC. So I called for and our Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education reforms in a generation.

We're bringing high standards and strong accountability measures to every public school in America. See, we believe every child can learn the basics of reading and math. And we expect every school to teach the basics of reading and math. I am challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. The days of excuse-making are over. In return for Federal money, we expect results so that not one single child in America is left behind.

We've done a lot in 2½ years. We reorganized the Government and created the Department of Homeland Security to better strengthen our borders to protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for Colorado's entrepreneurs and farmers and ranchers. We passed budget agreements that helps maintain spending discipline in Washington, DC. On issue after issue, I want you to remind the skeptics and the undecideds that this administration has acted on principle, has kept its word,

and has made progress on behalf of all the American people.

Of course, we didn't do this alone. A lot of the credit goes to Members of the United States Congress. We've got a fabulous Speaker of the House, Denny Hastert, a great majority leader of the United States Senate, Bill Frist. I appreciate so very much working with them and the folks from the great State of Colorado.

And the difference now in Washington is, is that we're focusing on results, not process. We're working to change the tone in Washington so we can get the people's business done. And by the way, those are the kind of people I've asked to serve in my administration. I put together a strong team to work on behalf of the American people.

Our country has had no finer Vice President than Dick Cheney. Mother may have a second opinion. *[Laughter]*

Audience member. I agree with you. *[Laughter]*

The President. Thank you.

In 2½ years, we have come far, but you know, we're only just beginning. We've great goals worthy of this great Nation. The job of the President is to set our sights high. A great nation requires great goals.

And here are the goals I've set: First, America is committed to expanding the realm of freedom and peace for our own security and for the benefit of the world; and secondly, in our own country, we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion so that every citizen—every single citizen—has a chance to work and to succeed and realize the American Dream.

It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home; it is freedom's defender. And this Nation welcomes this charge of history, and we are keeping this charge of history. The war on terror continues. See, 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 develop weapons of mass terror. Our country believes that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. And we believe that freedom is the right of every person. And we believe that freedom is the future of every single nation.

America also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. We have duties in the world. When we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, we will not turn away. On the continent of Africa, this great Nation is committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children who are now suffering with AIDS. This great land, this land for which I am so proud, is leading the world in the incredibly important work of human rescue.

We face big challenges abroad, and we won't shirk from those challenges. And we face big challenges here at home. I will continue to work on our economy. I'll continue to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. I will continue to try to lay the conditions for capital formation, so that anybody who wants to work and can't find a job today will be able to do so.

I will continue to work to make sure we meet our commitments to America's seniors by modernizing Medicare. A few weeks ago, the United States Congress took historic action to improve the lives of older Americans. I want you to remember this: For the first time—first time—since the creation of Medicare, the House and Senate have passed reforms to modernize the system, to give seniors more choices, and to provide coverage for prescription drugs for our seniors. The next step is for both bodies to iron out their differences and to

get a bill to my desk so I can sign it on behalf of the elderly of the United States of America. We have a solemn obligation, an obligation which I will continue to call upon the Congress to keep.

For the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on the frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine all across our country. I fully understand that people who have been harmed by a bad doctor deserve their day in court. Yet, the system should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for rich settlements. Because frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, they affect the Federal budget. They affect the Medicare budget, the Medicaid budget, the veterans budgets. I view medical liability reform as a national issue which requires a national solution. The House of Representatives passed a good bill to reform medical liability. It's stuck in the Senate. The Senate must act. No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit. We need medical liability reform now.

I have a responsibility as President to make sure the judicial system runs well, and I have met that duty. I have nominated superb men and women to the Federal bench, people who interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. Yet, 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 complete work on a comprehensive energy plan. Our Nation has got to promote energy conservation and efficiency and develop cleaner technology so we can explore in more environmentally sensitive areas. Yet, for the sake of our economic security and for the sake of our national security, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Our strong and prosperous Nation must also be a compassionate nation. I will continue to advance the agenda of compassionate conservatism, which really means applying the best and most innovative ideas to helping our fellow citizens who hurt and who are in need.

See, there are still millions of men and women in this land who want the independence and dignity that come from work. We must build on the success of welfare reform to bring work to the lives of more of our fellow citizens. Congress ought to complete the "Citizen Service Act" so more Americans can serve their community and their country. Both Houses should finally reach agreement on the Faith-Based Initiative to support the armies of compassion that are mentoring our children and caring for the homeless, healing hearts, and helping the addicted.

A compassionate society must also be a society which promotes 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 to own their homes. I'm troubled by the fact we have a minority homeownership gap in America, and I put forth policies—constructive, smart policies to encourage more homeownership all across America.

We want people to own and manage their own health care plan. We want people to own and manage their own retirement accounts. We want the entrepreneurial spirit to be strong in America so that people feel confident in investing in their own small business.

Now, I understand an ownership society is one in which people have more hope for the future. In a compassionate society, people respect one another, and they take responsibility for the decisions they make in life. We're changing the culture of America, slowly but surely, 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 that we are responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you’re fortunate enough to be a mother or father, you’re responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you’re concerned about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you’re responsible for doing something about it. If you happen to be a CEO in corporate America, you’re responsible for telling the truth to your employees and your shareholders. And in the new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we’d like to be loved ourself.

We can see that culture of respect, the culture of change and service growing around us here in America today. You know, I started what they call the USA Freedom Corps. It’s an opportunity for Americans to help neighbors in need, and the response has been fantastic. Got people signing up for all kinds of ways to help in their community, and I’m grateful.

Our faith-based charities are strong, and they’re vibrant, which is important to bring hope to those who hurt. Our policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation’s uniform are reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than themselves in life—sacrifice for peace,

sacrifice for freedom, sacrifice for safe streets. And once again, the children of America believe in heroes because they see them every day in America.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. I’ve been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. The tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation. We’re a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We’re an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves. Abroad, we seek to lift up whole nations by spreading freedom. And at home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of our country. This is the work that history has set before us, and we welcome it. And we know that for our country and for our cause, the best days lie ahead.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:44 p.m. at Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bill Owens of Colorado and his wife, Frances; Ted Halaby, chairman, and Bruce Benson, former chairman, Colorado Republican Party; and Mercer Reynolds, national finance chairman, Bush-Cheney ’04, Inc.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Economic Advisers and an Exchange With Reporters in Crawford, Texas *August 13, 2003*

The President. Good morning. As you can see, my economic team came down. We’ve had some great briefings. Let me summarize by saying that this administration is optimistic about job creation. We believe strongly that the tax relief plan that was approved by Congress in ’01 and most recently in ’03 is going to have a very posi-

tive effect on economic growth and vitality. We believe it is more likely in the upcoming year that people are going to be able to find a job, and that’s exactly what—where we focused our policy.

But I also know there’s more that can be done. I think one thing is certain, and we’ve spent a lot of time discussing this: