

United States Senators are willfully obstructing the process, many of my nominees have been forced to wait months, years, for an up-or-down vote. The needless delays in the system are harming the administration of justice, and they are deeply unfair to the nominees themselves. It is time for liberal Senators to stop playing politics with American justice.

The culture of this country is changing. It is changing 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 understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you are fortunate enough to be a mother or father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you are a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in the responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

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. These aren't one of those times. You and I are living in a period when the stakes are high, the challenges are difficult, a time when firm resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It is a day

that I will never forget. There were firefighters and policemen in the crowd shouting, "Whatever it takes." A guy in a hardhat looked at me and said, "Don't let me down." As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of America, whatever it takes.

In these times, I've also been witness to the character of this Nation. Not so long ago, some had their doubts about the American character, our capacity to meet serious challenges or to serve a cause greater than self-interest. But Americans have given their answer. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. And we've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most.

We will need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every corner of this country. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it, and we know that for our blessed land, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:05 p.m. at the J.W. Marriott Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. James S. Gilmore III of Virginia.

Remarks at a Victory 2004 Luncheon in Bridgeton, Missouri May 14, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Please be seated. As Kimmy Brauer said, we have

done extremely well with a few people. [Laughter] This is the way we like to do

it in politics. I want to thank you all for your generosity. I want to thank you for helping to make sure that our ground game in the great State of Missouri is as good as it can possibly be.

We won the State in 2000, and there's no doubt in my mind we're going to carry it in 2004, and one of the reasons why is because of your generosity. And another reason why is because we're going to be really well-organized. And finally, a reason why is because our message is so positive and hopeful for all the citizens of this State. I mean, when the campaign is all said and done, people will realize we've got a plan to make the country safer and stronger and better.

I think there's a lot of reasons to put me back in office for 4 more years. But perhaps the most important reason to send me back up there is so that Laura can be the First Lady for 4 more years. She is really, really a great soul and a wonderful wife, a fantastic mother, and is really making a difference in a lot of people's lives. Both of us have come to realize that the President and the First Lady have got a fantastic opportunity to affect people's lives in positive ways.

I'm going to Concordia University Wisconsin after this, to give the graduation speech. My speech is on compassion. My speech will be an attempt to remind the graduates that they can change our society with good hearts. And Laura and I have come to realize that by asking people to serve and by calling on people to teach children to read or, in her case, making sure that literacy is spread throughout the country through the library—a vibrant library system, for example, that we can make a positive difference. And she's making a heck of a good difference for the country, and I'm really proud of her. And she sends her love, by the way.

And the Vice President sends his best. We have got a great Vice President. He's a steady—as we say in west Texas, he's a steady hand. *[Laughter]* He's a good man,

and I'm proud to serve with him, and I look forward to serving with him for 4 more years.

I also have got to tell you the Attorney General, from the great State of Missouri, is doing a fabulous job—John Ashcroft. I'm proud of his service.

And I appreciate Foxy and Marilyn. I call him “Foxy.” I hope that's all right. Turn the cameras off. *[Laughter]* I appreciate Sam and Marilyn for their friendship, and I want to thank you for your help here. I appreciate the Ambassador and Kimmy for opening up this garage. *[Laughter]* I'm glad you polished the vehicles for us today. *[Laughter]* But thanks for doing that.

I love being with my family, and as you've heard me say before, I lucked out when it came to uncles, particularly with Bucky Bush and Patty—thank you all for coming—and cousins Scott and Lindsey, as well as George Walker is with us. I appreciate all of my family members for hanging in there with me.

I appreciate Ann Wagner, who is the co-chairman of the entire Republican Party, and she is doing a great job. My friend Mercer Reynolds is here. He is the national finance chairman of the Victory Committee. He was chairman of the Bush-Cheney Committee, and then we finished that task, and then we gave him another task. He did such a good job that we said, “Stay involved,” and he is. Where are you, Merce? There you are, right there. Thanks for coming, great to see you. And of course, I'm proud to be here with Rosemary's little boy, Jack. *[Laughter]* That would be Jack Oliver. He's doing a great job. And he's the national finance vice-chairman, which means Mercer tells him what to do, and then he goes and does it—*[laughter]*—or he tells Mercer what to do. *[Laughter]*

I'm so honored members of the congressional delegation are here. I remember campaigning hard with Jim Talent, feeling very comfortable that he would make a great Senator, and he is making a great

United States Senator. I'm proud you're here, Senator. Thanks for coming. And wife, Brenda, is with us here as well. Thank you, Brenda.

Todd Akin is the Congressman—are you the Congressman from this particular spot? You are? This is your district?

Representative W. Todd Akin. Technically, the line was redrawn a little bit. We're just south, but we're very close. [Laughter]

The President. We're close to Congressman Akin's district. [Laughter] I appreciate you coming, Todd. You're doing a great job, and his wife, Lulli, is with us. Thanks for coming.

And finally, Kenny Hulshof is with us, along with Renee. Kenny, thanks for coming. I'm proud you're here. Thanks for coming to the big city.

Finally, Ann Dickinson is the national committeewoman, is with us. Ann, thanks for your leadership. It's important to point out the grassroots activists because they're the people who are going to turn out the vote. My job is to carry the message. Your job is to turn out the vote, and we're counting on you. As I said, we did a great job here in Missouri last time. There's no doubt in my mind we will carry this State again.

I intend to spend time here, working here. I have done so in the past. As you might remember, I fired a slider at them the other day at Busch Stadium. A little disappointed they jerked me out of the game early—[laughter]—but I enjoyed it. And I love coming to the State. I think as we campaign, it's important to spend a little time looking back—but not much. The only time a candidate should look backwards is to remind people about the seriousness of the intentions when you move forward. In other words, you look back to say to people, "I can handle challenges." On the other hand, you say that to say, "And here's what I intend to do." And since you've done what you said you

were going to do in the past, it adds credibility to the message.

And we've done some things in the past 3 years that I think it's important for you to remind your friends about. First, the President has got to put together an administration that can handle the good and the bad. In other words, the ability to react to the uncertain is an important part of the Presidency. I put together a fabulous team, really capable, honorable, decent people, people from all walks of life. We've got some of the—I think I've empowered more women than any President, at least empowered women in high positions, than any President. That may be a somewhat of exaggeration, but I'm telling you, when you listen to the Condi Rices of the world or the Margaret Spellings of the world or the Harriet Miers of the world—these are all senior members of my team who give me good advice. And the team I brought together are there to serve the country first and only. And that's important for the American people to understand.

And thankfully, we had a good team, because we had to face some very difficult challenges. We faced a recession. When we came into office, the country was headed into recession, and the stock market had been declining since March of 2000. And so we acted. I mean, instead of kind of wringing our hands trying to figure out what to do, we acted. We went to the Congress, delivered historic tax relief. The recession was one of the shallowest in economic history, and as result of the tax relief, our economy is strong.

And then we found corporate crimes. And I know everybody here agrees with me that the actions of a few of the corporate citizens just needed to be taken care of in a firm way. And we passed laws—we worked with both Republicans and Democrats to pass corporate reforms, good, strong corporate reforms. The message is clear that we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

The corporate decisionmaking that was not up to standards, up to high standards that we expect in America, affected us. It affected our economic growth, and it affected the country in a negative way. It just did. But we're recovering from that period because we took action.

Obviously, September the 11th was a defining moment in this administration, just like it was a defining moment in the country. We saw war and grief arrive on one day, in one moment. And—but we took action. I realized we were at war. And we called countries together and put our own military in action and have taken down a lot of the Al Qaida network. And we're after them to this day, and we'll stay after them so long as I'm the President.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror. We saw threats to our national security, and as a result of the action we took, two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on the face of the Earth have been removed. Fifty million people have been liberated. I mean, this country is not only protecting ourselves, but we are proudly the armies of liberation, so people can live in freedom around the world.

When we got to Washington, the military was underfunded, and it wasn't—it was underappreciated. It was a problem that I recognized, and we acted again. We worked with Congress, and I want to thank the Members of Congress here who recognized the need for us to provide for defense budgets that would make sure our military had the resources they deserved and needed. And today, no one can doubt the skill or the strength or the spirit of the United States military.

So what I'm telling you is, is that we—I've made decisions. We've dealt with problems. I will argue the world is better off because of decisionmaking that I have made. But it's important for the American people to realize that whoever holds the Oval Office will deal with problems that we may never foresee. And you must be prepared to deal with those problems, and

I have shown the American people I'm capable of dealing with them.

See, I believe the President's job is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. That's the job of a leader. That's how I have led, and that's how I will continue to lead. Now, we've got a tough race, and it's an important race, because the person who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and will make decisions about the direction of our economy. In other words, the way I like to put it is, the security and prosperity of America are at stake in this election.

And I'm running against a person who has been in Washington a long time, which means he's experienced. It also means he's taken positions on issues. He's been there long enough to take both sides of just about every issue—[laughter]—had there been a third side—[laughter]—kind of the ultimate triangulation. [Laughter]

You know, I was—we had an interesting debate the other day—or not a debate, a discussion about the role of foreign leaders in the campaign. I don't know if you remember that. He claimed he had gotten some endorsements from foreign leaders, and he just wouldn't tell us who they were. Now, he was quoted about this on a TV show the other day or a news show, and here's what he said. He said, "You know, what I said is true. I mean, you can go to New York City, and you can be in a restaurant, and you can meet a foreign leader." [Laughter] I think this is a case of mistaken identity. [Laughter] I mean, just because somebody has an accent—[laughter]—or a nice suit or a fancy table does not make him a foreign leader. [Laughter]

The good news is, foreign leaders—or mistaken foreign leaders—won't be deciding the election. The people of this country will decide this election. I look forward to taking our message to the people. I've got a message that is confident and optimistic and positive, and that's what I'm going to

be talking about. And there will be a clear choice. There will be a choice, for example, between keeping the tax relief that is working or taxing the American people. It will be a choice between an America that leads the world with strength and confidence or an America that is uncertain in the face of danger.

And this is a campaign that is going to require a—candidates to lay out the strategy to win the war on terror and a strategy to make sure our economy is the best place in the world to do business so people can find work. And yet, thus far in the debate, all we've heard is angry partisan rhetoric. And my opponent will find out that anger is not an agenda for the future of the country. The American people want to know what you stand for, not what you stand against.

And so people learned what I stood for when it came time to dealing with an economy that was slowing down. See, I understand a big issue for every family is the Federal tax burden. And because we left more money in the hands that earned it, the economy is strong, and it's getting stronger. The way I like to put it is, by spending and investing and to—helping create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Federal Government would have.

It's an important part of our philosophy to trust people with their own money. And the results are good, and they're getting better. I mean, last month, we created—America added 288,000 new jobs. These were jobs that were not—these jobs were created because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. People have got confidence in the future. After all, manufacturing jobs, which had been declining, are now increasing. The economy grew at 4.2 percent, and over the past year, economic growth has been the fastest in nearly two decades. That's strong growth.

I'll tell you another statistic that I love is the fact that homeownership rates in America are the highest ever. It is a fan-

tastic statistic, when you think about it. I mean, we want people owning their own home. We want people owning their own business. We want people owning their own—and managing their own retirement accounts. I mean, we want ownership that's good for the country.

The economy is strong. It is getting stronger. The tax relief we passed is working, and the fundamental question is, how are you going to keep the economy strong? What are you going to do about it? This is going to be a good debate for the country to hear, because the truth of the matter is, I'm running against a fellow who has got a record on taxes. First of all, he voted against every one of the tax decreases I proposed. He voted against raising the child credit, which helps families. He voted against lowering the marriage penalty. He voted against creating the new 10-percent tax rate. He voted against getting rid of the death tax. He voted against small-business incentives. He has voted against every single tax decrease that helped the economy grow. Yet, when it came time to voting for taxes, he's got a record there too. He voted for increasing taxes 350 times as a United States Senator.

And here we are in the campaign, and we're beginning to tote up the amount of money he's promising the American people. See, it's easy to get in the campaign and say, "I promise you I'm going to spend money here, and I promise you I'm spending money there." We've submitted our budget. The Congress has got my budget. They've got my promises, which shows we can cut the deficit in half by 5 years. He hasn't submitted a budget yet, but we're helping him submit one because we're watching every promise. He's promised over \$1.9 trillion of new spending thus far. And we've got 6 months to go. *[Laughter]* We're just getting started.

And he says he's going to pay for it by taxing the rich. Now, we've heard that rhetoric before. You can't raise even close to \$1.9 trillion by taxing the rich. So I will

continue to remind the people that there's a difference between what he has promised and what he can raise by taxing the rich—it's called a tax gap. And given his record of voting for tax increases 350 times for the American people, he's going to fill the tax gap by taxing the working people of this country, and it's an issue.

The good news is, the American people understand that if we raise taxes now, it will wreck the economic growth and make it hard to find work. The good news is, he's not going to have a chance to raise taxes on the American people because we're not going to give him the chance.

I mentioned to you that the task of a President is to make sure that economic growth is vibrant and strong not only this year but in years to come. The role of our Government is to create an environment in which small businesses can grow to be big businesses, in which people feel comfortable risking capital. It's not—the role of the Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which people are comfortable about risking capital to realize their dreams.

And so I look forward to the debate about how to make sure that the economic growth we have today is sustainable. One is, we've got to have fiscal discipline in Washington, and I look forward to working with the Members of Congress to see that that's the case. Secondly, we need tort reform. We need tort reform at the Federal level, and we need tort reform at the State levels as well. I have been pushing for tort reform in the Halls of Congress. I will continue to push for tort reform in the Halls of Congress. We need asbestos litigation reform. We need class action reform, and we need medical liability reform as part of a cost containment strategy for health care costs.

The practice of defensive medicine costs our Government billions of dollars a year. In other words, when you have frivolous and junk lawsuits, it causes people to say, "Gosh, in order not to get sued, I will

have defensive medicine practices." It not only costs us billions of dollars at the Federal level and, therefore, the taxpayers billions of dollars; it makes it very difficult for small businesses to grow to be big businesses and large businesses to feel comfortable about hiring new people.

As well I appreciate Senator Talent leading the charge on association health care plans, which will enable small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries to make sure that the small-business employee can have affordable health care. I'm also a strong proponent of what's called health savings accounts. I truly believe they're going to help change the marketplace for health care. On the one hand, they make sure that the patient-doctor relationship is the cornerstone of health care decisionmaking, not the Federal Government. On the other hand, it provides good incentive for people to reduce the cost of health care. So we've got a strategy to make sure that America is the best place in the world to do business by containing the cost of health care.

Listen, when you go to the gasoline pumps here in America, it makes you realize we need a—that Congress needs to implement the plan I submitted, an energy plan. We've laid out a strategy to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy; yet it can't get out of the Congress. I'm not blaming the Members of Congress here or Senator Talent, but it's stuck. We need an energy bill on my desk that will do a couple of things. We need to encourage conservation. We need alternative sources of energy.

Listen, I would love to be in a position to be able to say, "The corn harvest in Missouri is up and, therefore, we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy. Soybeans are plentiful this year. We're less dependent on foreign sources of energy because of biodiesel." And this is all very possible. In the meantime, while we wait for technologies to come on line that are

cost effective, we need to use our coal resources wisely. Therefore, we need clean coal technology to be expanded. We need to be exploring for natural gas, which I'm confident we can do in our hemisphere, in our country in environmentally friendly ways.

It seems like to me we ought to be using technology to make sure that our nuclear power industry can build safe nuclear powerplants. But it makes sense to me to be expanding nuclear power, which is clean and reliable and doesn't—it makes us less dependent on foreign—what I'm telling you is, in order to be competitive, not only this year but for decades to come, the Congress needs to pass an energy bill, and this country needs to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Finally, an issue is the trade issue. It's very important for the President to be confident about America's capacity and ability to compete overseas. The tendency is to isolate us from the world. When people say, "Oh, gosh, we've got—you know, trade is tough; therefore, let's build up walls and barriers," that, to me, would make it very difficult for people to find good jobs. In order to expand the job base, we've got to be opening up markets rather than shutting down markets.

Listen, Presidents before me have made the decision to open up our country's markets to foreign goods because it's good for consumers. If you're an American consumer, you've got more to choose from; you're probably going to get a better product at a better price. If that's the case, why don't we get countries to treat us the same? That's the policy of this administration. We're vigorously opening up other markets so our Missouri farmers—and by the way, the farm economy is really strong right now. And one of the reasons why it's strong is because we're selling Missouri products overseas.

We've got to be confident in our ability to compete. We must not be pessimistic about our approach in the world. And so

good trade policy, in my judgment, will mean good, high-paying jobs for America. What I'm telling you is, is that this campaign is going to be one that requires—will be competing visions about how to make sure that the job base is strong by making sure America is the best place in the world to do business.

The future also depends on our leadership in the world, and this is going to be an important part of the campaign, a discussion about how best America should lead. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. And it's very important for the American people to know that. There are terrorists who test our will in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are regimes in North Korea and Iran that are challenging the peace. If this country shows weakness and uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch. The—I think the Nation is strong and confident in the cause of freedom, and I intend to keep it that way.

An essential part of the foreign policy of this country is that we understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world, that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. And as a responsible citizen of the world, we have the responsibility to help people live free lives. I believe freedom changes the world. I know free societies are peaceful societies.

The other thing that's important is for the President to speak clearly and mean what he says. Today, nobody, friend or enemy, doubts the word of the United States of America. We gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Afghanistan. They defied the ultimatum, and now they're no longer in power. The world is better off for it. America is more secure, and as importantly, the people of Afghanistan are more free.

Remember what conditions were like prior to my decision. We had young girls in that country who had no education at all because the Taliban refused to let them

go to school. It's hard for the American people to understand that people could be so barbaric in their behavior, that this is the way these people were. And for the good of those young girls and for the good of people who have dreams and aspirations, just like we have dreams and aspirations in the country—in this country, the Taliban are gone.

And so are the training camps and safe havens. I laid out the Bush doctrine, which said, "If you harbor a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist," and we enforced that doctrine for the sake of peace and freedom.

We also gave an ultimatum to the dictator in Iraq. And he chose defiance. Of course, he had a chance to make the decision; the decision was his to make. And now, he sits in a prison cell.

It is very important for the country never to forget the lessons of September the 11th: One, there's an enemy which hates us that must be pursued at all costs. And two, that we must confront threats before they fully materialize. That's what—one of the things that changed on September the 11th as far as policy goes. In the past, we could take a look and see a problem and maybe hope it would go away, because we were protected by oceans. Or it could be a problem, and maybe just—it wouldn't affect us. It might affect somebody else but not America. That changed on that day.

In Iraq, we looked at intelligence and saw a threat. The Congress looked at the intelligence—both Republicans and Democrats in Congress looked at the intelligence; they saw the threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence; it saw a threat. And so, in 2002, the U.N. Security Council said, once again, to Saddam Hussein, "a full accounting of your weapons programs."

The reason the world acted—because not only did we look at intelligence, we remembered the nature of the man. We knew that he had attacked his neighborhood. We knew had paid suiciders to go in and kill

innocent Israelis. We knew he had terrorist ties. The person responsible for the Berg death, Zarqawi, was in and out of Baghdad prior to our arrival, for example. But we also remembered vividly the fact that he used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. We—it was just not the United States who remembered the fact. The United Nations Security Council, in a 15-to-nothing vote, remembered that.

And so they said to Saddam Hussein, "Give us a full accounting of what you've got," and he defied the world again. This wasn't the first time that he defied the world. He had defied the world over and over. So I have a choice to make: Trust him, hope he changes his habits, or defend the country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted, we showed a watching world that America means what it says. And I believe, therefore, the world will be more peaceful. Because we acted, Saddam's torture chambers are closed. It's important for the American people to remember that. Because we acted, the weapons programs—Iraq's weapons programs are ended forever. That's important for peace and stability in the Middle East. It's important for our own security. Because we acted, countries like Libya got the message and have renounced their weapons programs. Because we acted, democracy is rising in the heart of the very Middle East. What I'm telling you is, because we acted, America is more secure and the world is more peaceful.

We have tough work in Iraq. And there's a reason why. There are elements of Saddam's crowd and foreign fighters who fear a free society. They can't stand the thought of living in a—they can't stand the thought of Iraq being free. It would dash their hopes. It would make it impossible for them to realize their grand ambition of dominating through hate and murder. They—and they're tough fighters, but so are we. And so are a lot of Iraqis.

The Iraqi people want to be free. They're glad to get rid of Saddam, and

they obviously want to run their own country. If I were them, I would want to run my own country too. And that's why June 30th transfer date is a solemn date. We will transfer sovereignty on June the 30th. We'll help the Iraqis, of course. In the meantime, these killers are trying to shake our will. That's what you're seeing. They want us to be intimidated by their barbaric behavior. They want us to leave. They want us to break a promise. That's just not the way I think, and it's not the way Americans think. We're not going to be intimidated by these thugs and assassins. We will follow our strategy of a free Iraq.

America will be more secure when Iraq is free. These are historic times. It's an historic opportunity. I tell the story about—to make my point there—about a dinner I had with Prime Minister Koizumi, the Prime Minister of Japan, who is a good friend and a good fellow. He and I were talking about how to keep the peace in the Far East, how to make sure that the Korean Peninsula is nuclear-weapons free. It's an interesting conversation, isn't it, when you're talking about—when the President's father fought the Japanese as a young torpedo bomber, and here I am, talking to the leader of a former enemy about how to make the world more peaceful, what we can do together to help convince Kim Chong-il to get rid of his nuclear weapons program. And during that conversation I realized that someday an American President is going to be talking to a duly elected official from Iraq about how to deal with the threats of that moment, of that era.

These are historic times. Iraq will be free. The world will be different when Iraq is free. People say, "Can you win the war on terror?" Of course we can. We can win the war on terror by being strong and never yielding to the enemy. But we can also win the war on terror by spreading freedom. Free societies are peaceful societies. Free societies are societies that are able to defeat hopelessness and despair.

There's a difference in this election about decisionmaking when it comes to national security matters. I'm running against a fellow who said he approves of bold action in the world but only if other countries do not object. My opponent says that. I believe in united action. And we have put together strong coalitions for Afghanistan and Iraq—over 30 nations in Iraq right now. I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

An issue in this race will be an understanding of the nature of the war we face. My opponent said, "The war on terror is far less of a military operation and far more of an intelligence gathering, law enforcement operation." That's his point of view. I disagree—I disagree. We followed that approach after the World Trade Center was bombed in 1993. That's how the world viewed the bombing, and the matter was handled in the courts and thought by some to be settled. However, the enemy was still planning and plotting. They were drawing up ambitious plans. After the chaos and carnage of September the 11th, it's not enough to serve enemies with legal papers.

The terrorists and their allies declared war on the country on September the 11th, 2001, and war is what they got. We will use every asset at our disposal—every asset—to defend the security of this country.

And that includes the United States military. We've got a great United States military. The conduct of a few inside the Iraqi prisons was disgraceful, and it does not represent the true character of the American military or the American people. I have had the honor of traveling to bases around the country. I have seen a lot of our troops. I have seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. And I assure you that the hands of—that the cause of freedom and our Nation's security is in really good hands.

Finally, it is very important for the President to understand that even though we're

strong and prosperous—and I'll keep us strong, and I'll do everything I can to keep us prosperous—the strength of the country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. It is very important for people to—a President to understand that Government can hand out money, but it can't cause people to love one another. And yet, many of the problems of society require love and compassion. I mean, amongst our plenty, there are people who are hurt—who hurt, who've got broken hearts, who are addicted to drugs or alcohol, who wonder whether or not anybody loves them at all. And the best way to solve those problems is to rally the spirit of this country and ask people to love their neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves, is to call upon people to serve their country by helping save lives with love.

No, the strength—if you understand the strength of the country is in the hearts and souls of the people, then you don't rely upon Government alone to help save lives. You rally the armies of compassion, which I have done and will continue to do as the President. I think one of the biggest responsibilities of the Presidency is to capture the American spirit, capture that strength of the country, and ask it to serve.

Today in the speech I'm giving—my speech is on compassion, saying to young kids getting out of college, "Here's your chance to serve the country by saving one soul." See, societies change one heart, one soul at a time. And while one graduate can't do everything, one graduate can do something to be the person that makes a difference in somebody's life.

The country's culture is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and, "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to one in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life. I like to call it the responsibility era. See, if you are fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart. It's your responsibility. If you're

worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it.

Oftentimes, people say, "Oh, the Federal Government will fix it." No, you're responsible. If you're a corporate CEO, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. It's part of the responsibility society. And as I mentioned, a responsible society is one in which each of us serves our country by loving our neighbor. And it's happening in the country. You know, one of the things you see when you're the President, you see the character of America. And I'm constantly thrilled at the millions of acts of kindness that take place on a daily basis that changes the nature of the country and provides such hope.

I want to be your President. I'm here to thank you for your help. I have a reason to run. We have a war to win. We have a responsibility to spread peace and freedom around the world. I'm going to take this message to the American people across our great country. I'm going to take the message of a vision that says, "Everybody has a shot at the American Dream, not just some but every person," a vision that is strong on education, strong on economic opportunity, a vision that says the ownership society is the cornerstone of a hopeful America.

And finally, I look forward to being the President for 4 more years to continue to tap into the great strength of the country, and that is the—our fellow citizens, the hearts and souls of our citizens. I'm looking forward to this. I'm looking forward to the campaign. I look forward to all aspects of it, and I'm confident, with your help, I'm going to win.

Thank you for coming, and may God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the auditorium at the Hunter Engineering Co. Research and Training Center. In his remarks, he referred to Camilla "Kimmy"

Brauer, wife of Hunter Engineering Co. president and former U.S. Ambassador to Belgium Stephen F. Brauer; Sam Fox, Missouri State finance chair, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc., and his wife, Marilyn; Ann Wagner, chairman, and Ann Dickinson, national com-

mitteewoman, Missouri Republican Party; American hostage Nicholas Berg, who was killed in Iraq in early May by senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarkawi; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Commencement Address at Concordia University Wisconsin in Mequon,
Wisconsin
May 14, 2004

Thank you all very much. Dr. Ferry, members of the faculty, trustees, and families, distinguished guests, most importantly, members of the Class of 2004, I appreciate the warm welcome to this fine university and to this great State. Thank you for such a wonderful welcome. I am honored to be with you on graduation day as you become proud alumni of CUW.

I thank you as well for the honorary degree. I kind of like the sound, "Dr. Bush." [Laughter] I don't think Laura is going to call me that. [Laughter]

My congratulations to my fellow honorees today, especially General Vessey, a fine officer who served our country with distinction and honor.

I'm here today with one of your alumni, the Class of 2000. He can't rise for applause because he's working. But I want his parents to know he's doing a really fine job. And everyone at Concordia can be very proud of Officer Scott Eichstaedt of the United States Secret Service.

I am told that when the name of your commencement speaker was announced on April the 1st—[laughter]—a lot of students thought it might be an April Fool's Day joke. [Laughter] And some of you may still have doubts. I saw a person when I walked in, said, "Is it him, or is it the guy on 'Saturday Night Live'?" [Laughter]

All of you have worked hard and have come far, and you can always be proud of the achievement we mark today.

Through it all, you've had a lot of fine people standing with you. This graduating class is a credit to the superb and caring teachers at Concordia. And today we also honor the people who believed in you and prayed for you and paid for you—[laughter]—the parents of the Class of 2004.

Many of today's graduates are on your way to full-time ministry, and that commitment is one of the greatest that a man or woman can make. All of the graduates leave Concordia with a commission and a calling. In the Lutheran tradition, all work—in an office, on a farm, in the home, or in the halls of government—should be done in the glory of God. And that is accomplished by doing our work with excellence and care and an awareness of the needs around us.

We find our examples in great lives. Important work in this world can be done by towering figures like Martin Luther, who changed history and your own lives with an act of conscience. Work of lasting value can also be done by a solitary soul, condemned and stripped of all power, like Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Every life holds the possibility of serving God. And in every great life, that possibility is realized in service. After all, Bonhoeffer said, "The Church is the Church only when it exists for others."

This teaching of faith is confirmed in our daily experience. Many of us find that there is much more to life than getting