

Remarks in Seattle, Washington, on the Death of Paul Johnson *June 18, 2004*

I want to express my deepest condolences to the family of Paul Johnson. We send our prayers and sympathies to them during this very troubling time.

The murder of Paul shows the evil nature of the enemy we face. These are barbaric people. There's no justification whatsoever for his murder, and yet they killed him in cold blood. And it should remind us that we must pursue these people and bring them to justice before they hurt other Americans. See, they're trying to intimidate America. They're trying to shake our will. They're trying to get us to retreat from

the world. America will not retreat. America will not be intimidated by these kinds of extremist thugs.

May God bless Paul Johnson. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:54 p.m. at Boeing Field/King County International Airport prior to his departure for Reno, NV. In his remarks, he referred to Paul Johnson, a U.S. citizen employed in Saudi Arabia who was killed by members of the Al Qaida terrorist organization earlier in the day. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in Reno, Nevada *June 18, 2004*

The President. Thank you all very much. Thank you all. Go ahead and be seated. Please be seated, unless, of course, you don't have a seat. [*Laughter*] It's great to be here in Nevada. Thanks for coming. Thank you all for coming. You didn't think I'd get it right, did you? [*Laughter*] I appreciate your warm welcome.

I appreciate the kind words of Senator John McCain. Both candidates in this race are honored to be the friend of John McCain. Only one of us gets his vote, and I am proud that it is me. John McCain has lived a life of true service to this country. He is a man of honor. He is a man of integrity. He's a man of personal courage and political courage, and I thank him for his friendship and his support.

It's good to be here in Reno. It's a town known for its good people and its good times. I always like being in a place where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties.

Vice President Cheney and I were proud to carry Nevada last time, and we're going

to carry it this time. And I'm here to thank you for your help. I'm here to thank you for what you have done, what you will do to turn out that vote. Thanks for coming.

I am sorry that First Lady Laura Bush isn't here. You drew the short straw. [*Laughter*] She is a fabulous woman. She is a great First Lady. If there's any reason to put me back in there for 4 more years, it's to make sure Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm also proud to be running with Dick Cheney. He's the finest Vice President our country has ever had. Mother heard me say that one time, and said, "Now wait a minute, buster." [*Laughter*]

I appreciate your Governor, Kenny Guinn. He's a fine, honest, honorable, great Governor of this State. And like me, he married well—[*laughter*—when he married Dema.

Today John McCain and I had the honor of traveling from Fort Lewis, Washington, with a great United States Senator from

Nevada, and that is Senator John Ensign. And old Jim Gibbons stumped on the plane too. He's doing a fabulous job for this part of the country. I'm proud to call him friend. It's great to be with his wife, Dawn.

You know, Senator Ensign and Congressman Gibbons and I worked on a project that's very important for your part of the world. It's a project that concerns the health of Lake Tahoe. For years you've been hearing that the Federal Government would help maintain this national treasure. For years you've been hearing excuses about why it hadn't happened. Well, I'm here to tell you it's happened. I signed a bill, working with this good Senator and this good Congressman, to make \$300 million available for the restoration of that lake so that generations of our fellow countrymen can enjoy its beauty.

I appreciate the Lieutenant Governor being here, Lorraine Hunt. Thanks for coming. I want to thank your very fine attorney general, my close friend Brian Sandoval, for being here. State Treasurer Brian Krolicki is with us today. Thanks for coming, Brian. I mean, we're about—we've got them all here, the secretary of state, Dean Heller, is with us today. Mother? Yes, we've got Mom right here on the first row, Dean. [Laughter] She's watching you like a hawk—[laughter]—probably like my mother, still telling you what to do. [Laughter]

We've got the State comptroller, Kathy Augustine, is with us today. We've got Bob Cashell, the mayor of this great city, is with us today. Mr. Mayor, all I can tell you is just fill the potholes, and the people will love you. [Laughter]

We've got local officials. We've got State officials, and we've got grassroots activists. Thanks for coming. And if you want to figure out how to help, get on the Internet at georgewbush.com. If you want to volunteer, if you want to figure out how to help turn out the vote, get on your Internet and call it up. And we want—and we will help you help us, because, you see, we're

counting on you. We're counting on you to turn out the vote. We're counting on you to talk to both Republicans and Democrats and independents.

And when you're talking to them, tell them this: The last 3½ years have brought serious challenges, and we have given serious answers. We came to office with a stock market in decline and an economy headed into recession. We delivered historic tax relief. And since last summer, America has had the fastest growing economy in the industrialized world.

We uncovered corporate crimes that cost people their jobs and their savings. So we acted. We passed strong corporate reforms. We brought wrongdoers to account, and we made it clear that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning. So we pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We've captured or killed many of the key leaders of the Al Qaida network, and the rest will know there is no cave or hole deep enough to hide from American justice.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. So we ended two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We liberated over 50 million people. Once again, America is proud to stand against tyranny and to set nations free.

When Dick Cheney and I came to Washington, the military was underfunded and underappreciated. So we gave our Armed Forces the resources and respect they deserve. And today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

No, we've confronted problems head on. It is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. That is how I have led our country, and that is how I will continue to lead our country for 4 more years.

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

The President. Great events will turn on this election. The man who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. The security and prosperity of America are at stake.

This is going to be a tough race. That is why I'm here to ask for your help. I'm running against an experienced United States Senator who has built up quite a record. My opponent has been in Washington long enough to take both sides on just about every issue. He voted for the PATRIOT Act, for NAFTA, for the No Child Left Behind Act, and for the use of force in Iraq. Now he opposes the PATRIOT Act and NAFTA and the No Child Left Behind Act and the liberation of Iraq. His position on these issues reminds me of a saying we have in Texas about the weather: If you don't like it, just wait a few minutes and it will change.

We had another example recently. Last December I had the honor of signing the Healthy Forests Act. I appreciate Senators McCain and Ensign and Congressman Gibbons' help on this vital piece of legislation, a vital piece of legislation by thinning the underbrush, that helps thin the underbrush, that allows thinning the underbrush, to restore these national treasures of ours. As we're talking—debating the bill in Washington, my opponent opposed the law, saying we were taking a chainsaw to public forests.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Well, now he's packing his bags, and he's getting ready to head out West, and he says he now likes parts of the law. [*Laughter*] Says he wants to stop—he wants there to be a strong logging industry. You know something? It's not only the wildfires that shift with the wind. [*Laughter*]

The voters will have an unmistakable choice this year. It is a choice between keeping the tax relief that is moving the economy forward or putting the burden of higher taxes back on the American people.

It is a choice between an America that leads the world with strength and confidence or an America that is uncertain in the face of danger.

The other side has not offered much in the ways of strategies to win the war or policies to expand our economy. We're well into the campaign, and all we have heard is old bitterness and partisan anger. They will soon learn that anger is not an agenda for the future of America. I will take on the big issues with optimism and resolve and determination, and I will make it clear that we stand ready to lead this Nation for 4 more years.

A big issue for every family in America is the Federal tax burden. With the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was President, we have left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and helping create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Federal Government would have.

Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. The economy is growing at its fastest 4-quarter rate in nearly 20 years. We added 248,000 jobs last month and nearly a million jobs in the last 100 days. The unemployment rate has fallen from 6.3 percent last summer to 5.6 percent last month. State unemployment rates have fallen in 46 out of the 50 States over the past year. Here in Nevada, you have added 3,800 new jobs last month. You've added 50,000 new jobs in the last year.

Homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. Business investment is growing. The stock market is improving. Consumer confidence is increasing. Personal incomes are on the rise. The tax relief we passed is working.

There are people in Washington who are pessimistic about the future of our economy, and that includes my opponent. Lately, he's dusted off an old term called the Misery Index. The only problem is, when you actually apply the index he came up with, it tells you the economy was better

in the late 1970s than it was in the 1980s. [Laughter] I guess he is nostalgic for the days of malaise. [Laughter] But that's not where we're headed. America is on the path of progress and opportunity, and we're not going backwards.

And the challenge is to make sure this economy continues to grow and remain strong. My plan starts with keeping taxes low and maintaining spending discipline in Washington, DC. And the first way to make sure people understand the need for discipline is to remind them that Government does not spend its own money. Government spends your money, and we should be wise about how we spend it.

In order to make sure this economy continues to grow, we must protect our small-business owners from frivolous and junk lawsuits and needless regulation. To make sure the economy grows, we must control the cost of health care by giving people better access through association health plans and tax-free health savings accounts. And we need to pass medical liability reform at the Federal level. The Senate up there must choose between small business and trial lawyers. I have made my choice. I stand squarely on the side of the small-business owners.

In order to make sure our economy is competitive and continues to grow, we need sound energy legislation. We need to encourage conservation. We need to encourage alternative sources of energy. But we need to use the energy we have so we become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure people can find work and our economy continues to grow, we need to knock down trade barriers and open up new markets for American products. Listen, we're good at things in America. We're good at growing things. We're good at raising things. We're great entrepreneurs. Rather than fall prey to the empty logic of economic isolationism, we ought to say to countries, "We treat you fairly. You treat us fairly." We can compete

anyplace, any time, anywhere with a level playing field.

In order to make sure the economy grows, we must have certainty in the Tax Code. It's hard if you're a businessperson to be making decisions if you're wondering whether the Tax Code is going to remain the same or not. And see, parts of the tax relief we passed is going to expire.

Today I met with Joe and Tammy Barkowski and their three children. The reason I bring them up is I want people to fully understand what I talk about when it comes to tax relief and its importance to make sure that it is stable. The Barkowski family saved about \$2,200 on their taxes last year. And they'll save about the same on their taxes this year because of the tax relief we passed. Oh, that doesn't sound like a lot to some in Washington. It's a lot to the Barkowskis. As a matter of fact, Joe and Tammy said they're going to use some of their money to remodel their kitchen, just as soon as she decides the color of the paint. [Laughter]

If Congress does not act, if Congress does not make sure that the tax relief we have passed stays in place, their tax bill is going to go up by \$1,000 next year. I don't think it's right. I don't think that makes sense.

Here's what he had to say, "If they give us our own money, we can do a better job with it." And he's right. Higher taxes would undermine growth and destroy jobs. Just as our economy is getting better, we should not be taking money out of the pockets of our consumers and small-business owners. Congress needs to make the tax relief permanent and not raise taxes on the American people.

Our future also depends on America's leadership in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists are testing our will in Afghanistan and in Iraq.

Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness and uncertainty 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. Thank you all. This Nation is strong and confident in the cause of freedom. We know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman who lives in this world.

And today, no friend or enemy doubts the word of the United States of America. America and our allies gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Afghanistan. The Taliban chose defiance, and the Taliban are no longer in power. And there are thousands of Afghan citizens grateful for the sacrifice of U.S. soldiers on their soil. There are thousands of Afghan moms who are grateful to America because, for the first time, many young girls now get to go to school.

America and our allies gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Iraq. The dictator chose defiance, and now the dictator sits in a prison cell.

September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson I will never forget. America must confront threats before they fully materialize. In Iraq, my administration looked at the intelligence and looked at the history of Saddam Hussein, and we saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress from both political parties looked at the intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. As a matter of fact, the previous administration and Congress looked at the intelligence and made regime change in Iraq the policy of our country.

In 2002, the U.N. Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. The world spoke with common voice when it said, "Disclose. Get rid of your weapons,

or face serious consequences." What I believe is that when you say something, you better mean it. As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein refused to comply. He ignored the demands of the free world. So I had a choice to make: Either take the word of a madman, or defend America. And given that choice, I will defend America every time.

We showed the dictator and the watching world that America means what it says. Because we acted, Iraq's weapons programs are ended forever. Because we acted, nations like Libya have gotten the message and renounced their own weapons programs. Because we acted, an example of democracy is rising at the very heart of the Middle East. Because we acted, the world is more free. Because we acted, America is more secure.

Tough times in Iraq right now—I know it, and you know it. But we're making progress. We're headed toward a free country. An interim government is in place. And in less than 2 weeks, the Iraqi people will have their sovereignty. In the days ahead, we'll see more bombings, more suiciders, more killings of the innocent, because the terrorists' greatest fear is an Iraqi government of, by, and for the people. They know there is no future for them in a free society. You see, they're trying to shake our will. They're killing to try to get us to leave, to break our word, to break our bond. They do not understand the United States of America. We will not be intimidated by thugs and assassins.

We're living in historic times. The world is changing for the better. A free Iraq in the heart of the Middle East will show others the hope of a free society, a society in which moms and dads are able to raise their children in peace. And a society in which their children can strive to realize their own dreams, not the dreams of a tyrant, will be a powerful change in a world desperate—desperate—for hope.

Terrorists are recruited because they hate and recruited because they're hopeless. Free societies inspire. Free societies are peaceful societies. We believe firmly that a free Iraq will help the world become more peaceful and America more secure.

These aren't easy tasks for America. We've done hard things before. I like to remind people that right after World War II, there was a lot of doubters and cynics and pessimists as to whether or not a free Germany could arise or a free Japan could arise. But just recently, I hosted the G-8 summit in Sea Island, and we were talking about a free Iraq. As I looked around the table, I saw the Chancellor of Germany, the Prime Minister of Japan talking about how to make the world more peaceful and secure. I was thankful that my predecessors didn't fall prey to pessimism and cynicism. I was thankful that my predecessors had faith in the desire for people from all walks of life to be free. Because right after World War II we didn't lose faith in the values of America, the United States President today is working with the leaders of former enemies as to how to make the world a more peaceful and free place.

No, this is hard work. But we've done this kind of work before, and someday an American President will be working with a duly elected leader from Iraq as to how to make sure America is more secure and our children have a chance to grow up in a more peaceful world.

On national security, Americans have a very clear choice. My opponent says he approves of bold action in the world, but only if other countries do not object. I'm for—I'm all for united action, and so are the more than 30 coalition partners we have in Iraq right now. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Some are skeptical that the war on terror is really a war at all. They think it's a matter only of law enforcement and intelligence. I strongly disagree. Our Nation followed this approach after the World Trade

Center was bombed in 1993. The matter was handled in the courts and thought by some to be settled, but the terrorists were still training in Afghanistan. They were still plotting in other nations. They were still drawing up more ambitious plans.

After the chaos and carnage of September the 11th, it is not enough to serve our enemies with legal papers. With those attacks, the terrorists and their supporters declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. And winning this war requires us to give our troops the best equipment, the best training, the best possible support. That is the commitment I have made. That is the commitment that Senator McCain and Ensign have made and a commitment Congressman Gibbons has made.

And that is why I proposed an \$87 billion supplemental last fall. Most of that money was going to our troops. Someone recently asked my opponent why he voted against that bill. Here's what he said. He said, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." The American President must speak clearly and mean what he says.

Our men and women in the military are taking great risks on our behalf. At bases across the country and the world, I have had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and unselfish courage, and I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in very good hands.

This Nation is prosperous and strong. Yet we need to remember that our greatest strength is the hearts and souls of our citizens. We're strong because of the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We're strong because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for the fair treatment of faith-based groups, so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing. We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every person matters. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law.

And we stand for a culture of responsibility in America. This culture of our country 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 a 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're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

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. You and I are living in a period when the stakes are high, 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. I will never

forget that day. There were workers in hardhats shouting, "Whatever it takes." Working the ropeline with tired firefighters and police and rescue workers, they said, "Don't let us 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 our country, whatever it takes.

In these times, I have 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, our willingness to serve a cause greater than self-interest. Americans have given their answer. I have 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. 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 part of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it, and we know that for our great land, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:47 p.m. at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Kenny C. Guinn of Nevada and his wife, Dema; Dawn Gibbons, wife of Representative Jim Gibbons; Mayor Robert Cashell of Reno, NV; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Statement on the Death of Ray Charles

June 18, 2004

Ray Charles Robinson was a hero—the child who faced down adversity and worked hard to become one of the greatest examples of the American Dream. His songs have lifted us in times of sorrow and helped us celebrate in times of joy.

His music and his optimism touched the lives and hearts of millions and spanned

generations, cultures, races, and backgrounds. People from all walks of life would come together and tap their feet as one when Ray Charles played.

Laura and I send our prayers and condolences to his family and friends.

Message on the Observance of Juneteenth, 2004

June 18, 2004

I send greetings to those celebrating Juneteenth.

On June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger and his Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, bringing word of the Emancipation Proclamation which had been issued more than 2 years earlier. On hearing the news that “all persons held as slaves” in the rebellious States were “thenceforward, and forever free,” former slaves celebrated their new freedom.

Today, African Americans in Texas and other parts of the country observe June 19, also known as Juneteenth, with cookouts, family gatherings, parades, and other com-

munity events. Juneteenth celebrates the truth that freedom is God’s gift to every man and woman. This day also recognizes the progress America has made in ensuring that our Nation lives up to our founding principles of liberty, equality, and justice, and represents an occasion to reaffirm our commitment to these principles.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

The President’s Radio Address

June 19, 2004

Good morning. This week, we received more good news showing that our economy is gaining momentum. The Department of Labor reported State-by-State job gains for the month of May. In every region of our Nation and across many growing industries, more Americans are finding work. The State of Arizona added 8,400 new jobs in May. New Jersey gained 9,500 new jobs.

Pennsylvania added 10,700 new jobs. And North Carolina picked up 13,400 new jobs.

The unemployment rate has fallen in 46 out of the 50 States over the last year. And many of the new jobs are being created in industries that pay above average wages, such as construction and education and manufacturing.