

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in a 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 where 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. I'm never going to forget that moment. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember looking in the eyes of either a policeman or firefighter, and he said, "Do not let me down."

Like—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 the American people, whatever it takes.

I've also been witness to the great character of this country. 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 part of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our blessed country, the best days lie ahead.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. at the Waukesha County Exposition Center. In his remarks, he referred to James R. Klausner, chair, Wisconsin Leadership Team, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Mary F. Buestrin, national committeewoman, Republican Party of Wisconsin; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Exchange With Reporters in West Bend, Wisconsin July 14, 2004

Purchase at Mick's Candyman

The President. This is spectacular, thanks.

Q. What are you getting there?

The President. I'm just getting, you know, about 400 calories a pop.

Q. I thought you gave up on the sweets, sir.

The President. Well, I'm confronted with excellent sweets. I'll be biking this weekend, in other words. Are you a biker these days?

Q. I'm ready to go.

The President. You are? Record that.
[Laughter]

Employee Dot Bradley. You will enjoy these thoroughly. They're wonderful. Just for the President.

The President. I'm looking forward to it. How much do I owe you?

Owner Davey Bartlett. They are free.

The President. No, they're not free.

Mr. Bartlett. Okay, \$5.28 with tax.

The President. How's your business doing?

Ms. Bradley. Wonderful.

Mr. Bartlett. Seventy-two cents is your change.

Ms. Bradley. So good to meet you.

Mr. Bartlett. Nice to meet you.

The President. Appreciate you, candy man, great to see you all. Thanks for saying hi. Good to meet you.

All right, listen, buy something here. [Laughter] Here's how the economy works. You're overpaid. My tax relief has left more money in your pockets to spend here.

Q. Can you spot me \$5? [Laughter]

The President. Thank you all. Hey, Tommy—you remember Tommy.

Ms. Bradley. Yes. Hi, Tommy.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson. It's always good to see you.

The President. Thank you all. Is anybody going to buy anything here? I'm trying to drum up a little business. [Laughter]

Q. As long as you don't leave us behind.

The President. Leave no reporter behind. [Laughter]

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:12 a.m. in the Mick's Candyman store. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks in a Discussion at Mid-States Aluminum Corporation in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

July 14, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. I appreciate you. Please be seated. Thanks. Thanks for coming to say hi. Thanks for having me. It's great to be here in Fond du Lac. We're here—I'm going to talk about how I intend to make sure America is a safer and stronger and better country. That's what I want to talk about today. Tell you why we're here at a business, it's because this is a business that is successful. And I'm going to talk about why I think it is successful.

But I also want to answer some of your questions, too. So I'll try to keep my remarks relatively short—which is kind of hard to do. [Laughter] First, I regret that Laura is not traveling with me.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know it; yes, most people react that way. [Laughter] It's kind of like, why didn't you stay home and let her come instead? [Laughter] I'm a lucky man that—you know, she was a public school librarian in Midland, Texas. And I asked her to—when I asked her to marry me, fortunately, she said yes. And she's a great First Lady. She's done a terrific job. You

know, I like to tell people that perhaps the best reason to put me back in there is so she'll have 4 more years as the First Lady. I'm sorry she's not with me. I love to campaign with her, but, fortunately, one of our daughters, Barbara, is traveling with me today. I want to thank you for coming, Barbara. Thanks for coming. Go ahead and stand up. Thank you. It's truly a lot of fun to travel your beautiful State on a bus and have Barbara by my side.

I also want to thank my friend Tommy Thompson for serving our country so well. Thank you, T. [Applause] They still remember you. [Laughter] He's done a great job. I've given him a tough assignment—I mean a really tough assignment—and he has done it with a lot of class and dignity. I like to say the people of Wisconsin trained him well. [Laughter] But thanks for your service, T. I appreciate it very much.

I want to thank the Colwins and all the folks here at Mid-States for inviting me. It's kind of a pain to have the President come. [Laughter] The entourages seem to be a little bigger as time goes on, and I know it's hard to accommodate the crowd.