

Success in the Olympics is not defined on the medal stand alone. For our athletes, a place on America's team is the culmination of years spent training and competing. They are proving that persistence and teamwork can help meet high goals. They are performing with honor, conducting themselves with humility, and serving as ambassadors of peace and good will to the entire world. By showing respect for every competitor, they are showing America's respect for the world, and they are inspiring us all.

In Greece, the Olympics are returning to their ancient birthplace and also to the birthplace of democracy. These games arrive at a challenging hour for the world, yet we have cause for great hope. At the opening ceremony, Team USA marched alongside men and women from Afghanistan and Iraq, nations that 4 years ago knew only tyranny and repression. Today, because the world acted with courage and moral clarity, those nations are free, and their athletes are competing in the Olympic Games.

The rise of freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq is transforming life in those nations, and its effect will spread far beyond their borders. For the first time in history, people everywhere will see women competitors wearing the uniform of Afghanistan. For the first time in decades, the world will see Iraqi Olympians free from the brutal punishment of the dictator's son. Twenty-nine athletes from Iraq are competing in Athens including the Iraqi soccer team, which thrilled the world by winning its first

game. One woman on the Iraqi track team described her outlook this way: "Someone who represents only herself has accomplished nothing. I want to represent my country."

That same spirit motivates athletes from nations around the world. By coming together in friendly competition, all Olympians are sending the message that freedom and hope are more powerful than terror and despair. As we watch our athletes compete in Athens, we also think about the many Americans deployed overseas to defend our Nation. In Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond, our men and women in uniform are serving with great skill and compassion. They are making America more secure, and America is grateful to all of them and to their families.

I look forward to following the Olympics over the next 2 weeks. I congratulate the coaches and athletes and families of Team USA and also the brave Paralympic athletes preparing to compete in Athens next month. I wish them all good luck in the games.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:40 p.m. on August 13 at the Regent Beverly Wilshire in Los Angeles, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 13 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Sioux City, Iowa August 14, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. I've got an interesting line of work, don't I. Yes, it's a line of work where you get introduced

by your wife. [*Laughter*] Thankfully, she said yes when I said, "Will you marry me?" What a great First Lady she is, a fabulous mom, and a wonderful wife. I'm going to

give you some reasons today why I think you ought to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

We're glad to be in Sioux land, and we thank you all for coming. I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm here traveling this important State to say, there's more to do to make this country a safer, stronger, and better nation for all of our citizens. And I'd like your help. I'd like you to register your friends and neighbors. See, we have an obligation in this free land to vote. And I'd like my supporters to encourage all your citizens to register to vote and to do our duty. And when you get them headed to the polls, you might just tell them, for the sake of a better nation, George Bush and Dick Cheney are ready to lead for 4 more years.

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

The President. We're coming off a swing around the West. It's been a great trip. The crowds are large. The enthusiasm is strong. And there's no doubt in my mind with your help, we will carry Iowa, and we will win a great national victory in 2004.

Tomorrow I'm going to travel down to Florida to visit with those whose lives have been hurt by Hurricane Charley. I just want them to know that our Federal Government is responding quickly. We have got aid stations in place. FEMA Federal officials are on the ground working with State and local officials. Many lives have been affected by this hurricane. And I know you join me in sending our prayers to those people who look for solace and help.

I'm running with a really good man in Vice President Cheney. Look, I didn't pick him because he's the prettiest guy in—[laughter]—I picked him because he can do the job. I picked him for his advice and his sound judgment. And we're ready to go. I'm looking forward to it. There are big differences, and I'm looking forward to

making those differences clear to the American people.

I want to thank my friend Congressman Steve King. I appreciate his leadership. I look forward to working with him for 4 more years for the good of this country.

I know the State auditor, David Vaudt, is here. I know the speaker is with us today, Christopher Rants. And I want to thank Ralph Klemme for coming. I want to thank all the State officials who are serving the State of Iowa and those from Nebraska. Those good souls from South Dakota who have come down here. Let me make something clear about South Dakota: John Thune needs to be the United States Senator.

I want to thank the mayor, Dave Ferris, here from Sioux City. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming. Fill the potholes. [Laughter] I want to thank my friend Dave Roederer, who is the State campaign chairman for Iowa. He knows what I know; we're going to carry this State.

Backstage, I had the honor of meeting Jeff Fortenberry. He's running for the United States Congress for Nebraska. I want to thank the Blue County band for being here. I appreciate you lending your talents. I thank the All-American Concert Band for being here. Most of all, I want to thank you all for being here. Thanks for taking time out of your weekend to come.

You know, in the past few years, Americans have been through a lot together. These have been hard times. We've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backwards, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. See, that's the only reason to look backwards, is who best to get the job done for the American people.

I'm asking for the vote, and I'm working hard to ask for the vote because so much is at stake in this election. We have much more to do to move this country forward. I'm running again because I want to work to continue to create jobs and improve our

schools. I'm running again because I know we've got to continue to fight the terrorists to secure our homeland. I'm running again to spread the peace. I'm running again—what I'm here to tell you is, we have made much progress, and there is more work to be done.

We have more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that no child is left behind in America. You might remember, 3½ years ago, there was—when we came to office, too many of our children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. We have challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We have raised the bar. We believe in accountability because we want to know whether or not our children are learning to read and write and add and subtract. We believe in local control of schools. When we find schools that will not teach and will not change, we are bold enough to challenge the status quo.

There's more work to be done. We want our high school diplomas to mean something. We want to intervene early, before it's too late. We want to make sure that technology is in the classrooms so that we can bring high-level training to our kids. We want to emphasize math and science. What I'm telling you is after 4 more years, a rising generation will have skills and confidence necessary to compete in the 21st century.

We have more to do to make quality health care affordable and available. You might remember those Medicare debates. You might remember campaign after campaign, people would travel this State saying, "Don't worry. We'll strengthen Medicare." We got the job done. Drug discount cards that provide real savings are available for our seniors. Beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

I was working with—I remember campaigning in this State in 2002. There were

a lot of skeptics. People would say, "Well, you know, they talk a good game in Washington." Do you remember what was happening to the rural hospitals of Iowa? Do you remember what it was like when the reimbursement levels didn't support health care in this important State? I stood up for Charles Grassley, the fine United States Senator from Iowa. I said, "We're going to work together to get the job done," and we got the job done for the people of this State.

We're helping low-income seniors by expanding community health centers. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. We're getting the job done in America for health care, and there's more to do. We want our small businesses to be able to pool across jurisdictional boundaries so they can afford insurance just like big companies are able to do.

In order to make sure you've got health care available and affordable in Iowa and Nebraska and South Dakota, we need medical liability reform now. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [Laughter] I made my choice. We need medical liability reform now.

We will expand research and seek cures for diseases. We will harness technology to reduce costs. And in all we do to improve health care in America, I'll make sure that the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Washington, DC, bureaucrats.

Listen, there's more work to be done to keep our economy strong. We've been through a lot. Think about what this economy has been through. We've been through a recession, corporate scandals, a terror attack; yet we've overcome those obstacles. We've overcome them because our workers are great. We've overcome them because our farmers and ranchers are really good

at what they do. We've overcome them because the entrepreneurial spirit of this country is really strong. We've overcome it because small businesses are vibrant and healthy and expanding. And we've overcome it because of well-timed tax cuts.

When it came time for providing tax relief, when it came time—which really means just letting you keep more of your own money. Sometimes you hear them in Washington say, “Well, we’re going to give them some Government money.” [*Laughter*] That’s not Government money. No, that’s the people’s money. That’s whose money it is. We said, “If you pay tax, you ought to get relief.” It seems like to be the fair way to do things, instead of trying to pick winners and losers. If you’re a mom or a dad, you got relief. We increased the child credit. We provided relief from the marriage penalty. I never quite understood a Tax Code that penalizes marriage. It seems like policy ought to encourage marriage in America. We helped our small businesses, and this time, the check actually was in the mail. [*Laughter*]

Because we acted, our economy, since last summer, has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. This economy is strong. It’s getting stronger. We’ve added about 1.5 million new jobs. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent, and right here in the State of Iowa, your unemployment rate is 4.3 percent.

And there’s more work to be done. I’m running because I understand that we’ve got to continue with a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-agricultural policy in order to make sure this economy stays strong and people can find work. You know, when I campaigned before, I said, “Give me a chance, and I’ll stay focused on the agricultural economy of America.” See, I understand, good agricultural policy is good economic policy for this country.

We passed a good farm bill, and it’s working. Farm income is up. Property values are up. Our farmers and ranchers are making a good living, and that’s good for

the American economy. And we also did something else to help our farm economy, put the death tax on its way to extinction. The problem is, unless you have a President and Congress who understands how devastating the death tax is to our agricultural economy and our small-business economy, it’s going to come back to life in 2011. It’s going to make it kind of strange in 2010. I believe we ought to get rid of the death tax forever.

In order to make sure jobs stay here in America and people can find work, we need an energy policy which makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. That’s why I am a strong supporter of alternative sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. Someday my hope is that somebody walks in the Oval Office and plops a report right in front of the President and says, “The corn crop is up, and we’re less dependent on foreign sources of energy.”

In order to make sure we’ve got jobs here, we must have wise trade policy. See, I believe in free trade, and I believe in fair trade. I believe the job of this administration is to reject economic isolationism and open up markets. One reason the farm economy is high is because not only are our farmers feeding Americans; they’re feeding people all around the world.

In order to make sure we’ve got jobs here, we need less regulations and less lawsuits against our employers. In order to make sure we’ve got jobs here, we must not overspend your money, and we must keep your taxes low. And that’s an issue in this campaign.

We’ve still got about 80 days to go in this campaign, and the fellow I’m running against has already made over \$2.2 trillion of new promises. And so I said, “Well, how are you going to pay for it?” He said, “Oh, don’t worry, we’ll tax the rich.” You’ve heard that rhetoric before, haven’t you? It’s why the rich have got accountants—[*laughter*]*—figure out how he can’t tax them.* In order to make sure he fulfills all his promises, guess who is going to pay? You are.

But the good news is we're not going to let him get in office in the first place.

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

The President. I'm running because I know we need to continue with a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-farmer economic agenda to make sure people can find a decent wage in this country and to make sure this country is the strongest economy in the industrialized world.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. Our future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. See, if America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on that terrible September morning. And since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terrorist cells around the world, including our own country. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, many young girls now go to school for the first time. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, the terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Government, the Saudi Government, is after Al Qaida. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies sent a clear and strong message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He had harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

We looked at intelligence. Not only did we look at the facts, we looked at intelligence as we had it and saw a threat. I knew it was important to bring the Congress in, so I called on Congress to give me its judgment. The Congress remembered the facts and looked at the intelligence and saw a threat. You see, both of us saw a threat—me and the Congress saw a threat—because we remembered one of the lessons of September the 11th was, is that when we saw a threat we must deal with it before it fully materializes. It's a different world we're in. So Members of Congress—like me—saw that lesson and voted overwhelmingly to use force, if necessary, to protect America. Members of both political parties looked at the intelligence and made that declaration. My opponent looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion I did.

I then went to the United Nations. See, I do think it's important always to have war as the last resort and that we must try diplomacy as first resort in order to bring the peace. So I went to the U.N. They agreed with our assessment that Saddam Hussein was a threat. You might remember they voted overwhelmingly in the U.N. Security Council to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose. Disarm, or face serious consequences."

As he had for over a decade—he didn't care what the free world said. Remember, he defied the world, resolution after resolution after resolution. He did so again. As a matter of fact, when we sent inspectors

in to find out the facts, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice to make: Either forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust the word of a madman, or take action to defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we thought we would find, you need to remember that Saddam Hussein had the capability to make weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemies. And that's not a risk, after September the 11th, that we could afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same action. America and the world are safer because Saddam is in a prison cell.

Now—and now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and about 220 days after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. [*Laughter*] He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. See, after months of questioning my motives and my credibility, the Senator from Massachusetts now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpile of weapons we all believed were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. And I want to thank Senator Kerry for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] Although, I caution you, there are still 80 days left where he could change his mind again.

I'm running because I know we must continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. In this post-9/11 world, we cannot simply hope for the best. We must aggressively pursue them and defeat them in foreign lands so we do not have to face them here at home.

During the next 4 years, America will continue to lead the world with confidence

and moral clarity. We have put together a strong coalition to help us in the pursuit of the terrorists and to spread peace. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, and some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I really appreciate the moms and dads in those countries who share the same sacrifices that the moms and dads and husbands and wives in our country share, knowing a loved one is serving a noble cause during historic times. I will continue to build alliances and strengthen alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

These are crucial time. They're crucial times, and we're doing the hard work to secure our country and to spread peace. And our commitments are being kept by our men and women of the military. I want to thank the veterans who are here for setting such a good example to those who wear the uniform today. I appreciate you all coming.

I've had the privilege of traveling to bases in our country and around the world. I've met those—with those who defend our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And those who wear our uniform deserve the full support of our Government. Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, spare parts. I appreciated the bipartisan support my request received in the House and the Senate. It was a strong support in the United States Senate. As a matter of fact, only a small, what I would call, out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 voted against the funding, and 2 of those 12 are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember his initial explanation. He said, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." [Laughter] That doesn't sound like the way people in Sioux land talk. The pressure got on a little bit about that vote. Then he said, well, he's proud of the vote, and he went on to say the whole thing is a complicated matter. [Laughter] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. These are historic times. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. See, Americans believe that peaceful societies emerge when governments listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. In Iraq and Afghanistan, there are strong leaders who have emerged who believe in the hopes and aspirations of their people.

Success in Iraq will be achieved when more Iraqis are trained to defeat those who want to stop the advance of freedom. Our job is to stand with the Government that is heading toward elections and preparing the Iraqis for a day of security and freedom. That's what we're doing in Iraq.

And it's important work. It's important work because by serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and we're making our own country more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading peace. Free countries are peaceful countries. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving our deepest ideals as Americans. We believe that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Let me share a story with you right quick, tell you what I'm talking about. Laura and I were having dinner with Prime Minister of Japan, and—Prime Minister

Koizumi—in Tokyo. And we're talking, and during the course of the conversation, it dawned on me that it's really interesting that I was having a meeting with the leader of a former enemy. My dad fought in World War II. Many of your dads fought against the Japanese, and here we were sitting down to dinner. What was remarkable about the conversation is, we were talking about how to keep the peace.

Fortunately, my predecessor and others in our Government after World War II believed in the power of liberty to transform enemies into allies and friends. They believed that liberty had the capacity to take a former enemy and help them become a peaceful advocate for freedom, and that's what happened. And fortunately, they defied the pessimists. They didn't listen to the doubters. They didn't listen to the naysayers. They held deep in their hearts this conviction that we hold in America that freedom is a right of people all around the world, and freedom is an amazingly powerful, transforming philosophy.

And so we were talking about the peace. We were talking about how to deal with North Korea, as allies in peace. Someday, when we complete our mission, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, saying to himself or herself, thank God America didn't forget its values, and they'll be talking about how to keep the peace.

We have more work to do. We have more work to do to protect our country. There's enemies who hate us. They still plot to harm us. You know, there's a debate about the course of action I've taken. They say—he says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I strongly disagree with that. There's obviously a clear difference of opinion. I think it shows a misunderstanding of the nature of the enemy. I want you to remember, during the 1990s, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us long before we went to war with them. I don't think they need an excuse

for their hatred and their evil hearts. You do not create terrorists by fighting back; you defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We're reforming how we protect our homeland. It's hard work to reform how you protect your homeland. It's hard work to reform at all in Washington—a lot of entrenched interests there. But we're making progress. You just need to know there's a lot of really good people working hard on your behalf to find terrorists before they can hurt us. We've created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act. Listen, the PATRIOT Act is a vital piece of legislation which gives our law enforcement the tools necessary to crack these terrorist networks. And they do so without compromising your constitutional rights as an American. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than ever before. We're taking action on a large majority of the 9/11 Commission recommendations, which I found to be a very helpful report and a good report.

We've got more to do to secure our ports and borders and to train our first-responders and dramatically improve intelligence gathering capability. When Congress comes back in, we'll continue to work with them on the National Intelligence Director, so one person is in charge of coordinating intelligence overseas and at home. We're working hard. A lot of people are working hard, and I'm proud to be associated with great people at the Federal level and at the State level and the first-responders here at the local level who are doing their duty to the American citizens—for the American citizens.

I told you reform is hard. It's easy to advocate it in Washington, but you have to get the job done. When you're out campaigning and rounding up the voters, remind them, when it comes to reforming public schools and improving education for every child, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms and giving families more access and more choices in health care, we're getting the

job done. When it comes to a strong agricultural economy, we're getting the job done. When it comes to growing our economy and creating quality jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to securing our Nation and spreading the peace, we're getting the job done. When it comes to electing a President, put a man in there who can get the job done.

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

The President. These are exciting times we live in, and they're a time of change. And I think one of the ways that Government can help people during a time of change is to encourage an ownership society. We want more people owning their own health care accounts, so that if they change jobs, they can take the health care accounts with them. We want—look, I've got to tell you, I'm concerned about Social Security. For old guys like me, Social Security is fine. [Laughter] It's for the younger workers, those who are just starting to work, we've got to worry about the fiscal solvency of the Social Security system. That's why I believe we ought to allow younger workers to own their own personal retirement account in Social Security.

I love the fact, in a changing world, more people own their own home. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. There's nothing better than thinking about somebody opening a door, say, "Welcome to my home. Come into my piece of property." You know, the entrepreneurial sector of America is strong and vibrant. More people are owning their own business. The reason I believe in an ownership society is not only to provide stability during changing times, I also understand that if you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

During changing times, though, there are some things that won't change, our belief in liberty, opportunity, and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. Individual values we try to live by won't change, courage, compassion, reverence,

and integrity; the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. By the way, these institutions are fundamental to our lives. They deserve the respect of Government.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life, in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. The culture of this country is changing from one that has said, you know, "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. Listen, if you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in Sioux City, Iowa, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

No, I understand the strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. Government can hand out money, but Government cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. Compassion^{*} happens when a loving neighbor puts their arm around somebody who hurts and says, "I love you," and "Can I help you?" I will continue to rally the armies of compassion so that we change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet

times in the life of nations when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is the times where we need firm resolve and clear vision, strong belief in the values that make us such a wonderful country.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It's a day that I'll never forget. Amidst all the scenes in my memory that day, a couple stand out—the workers in hardhats that were chanting, "Whatever it takes." I was working the ropeline. A guy grabs me. His eyes were bloodshot. He says, "Do not let me down." I remember meeting with the victims' families who had this great hope of all hopes that somehow a loved one who had rushed in the rubble to save life would still be alive. All of us there took that day personally. I took it personally. I know you took it personally.

I have a duty that goes on. Every day that I wake up, I think of best how to defend our country. I will never relent. I will stay firm in my desire to bring justice to the enemies, to keep America safe and secure, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot. We've come through a lot together, and we've done hard work and important work. But there's more to be done. During the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of America. We will pass the enduring values of our country on to a young generation. We'll stay focused and firm in our resolve to secure America and to spread the peace.

You know, when I campaigned through your State in 2004, I said that if I had the high honor of holding this office, I would pledge to you that I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office of the Presidency. And with your help, during the next 4 years, I will continue to do so.

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

^{*} White House correction.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:15 p.m. at the Tyson Events Center. In his remarks, he referred to Iowa State Auditor David A. Vaudt; Speaker Christopher Rants and State Representative Ralph Klemme, Iowa State House of Representatives; former Representative John R. Thune, senatorial candidate in South Dakota; Mayor Dave Fer-

ris of Sioux City, IA; Jeff Fortenberry, candidate for Nebraska's First Congressional District; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks on the Devastation of Hurricane Charley and an Exchange With Reporters in Punta Gorda, Florida *August 15, 2004*

The President. The job of the Federal Government and the State government is to surge resources as quickly as possible to disaster areas. And that's exactly what's happening now. We choppered over and saw the devastation of this area. A lot of people's lives are turned upside down. We've got ice and water moving in, trailers for people to live in are moving in. State is providing security so that people can have peace of mind that their neighborhoods will be safe. There's a lot of compassion moving in the area. The Red Cross is here.

What I'm telling is that there's a lot of help moving into this part of the world. It's going to take a while to rebuild it. But the Government's job is to help people help rebuild their lives, and that's what's happening.

The coordination between the Federal Government and the State government and the local government is really important. I think it's excellent now. The Governor can speak to that, if you like. But it's really important that when we say we're going to do something, that it actually happens. And that's what we're following through on now.

I'll answer some questions, if you've got some.

Community Response

Q. Can you tell us about some of the people who you spoke with and what they told you?

The President. Well, I've got—you know, these good folks here—this is this man's house here. His parents were uprooted from where they were living. They came here to spend the night. And that's what you're beginning to see. You're beginning to see neighbors helping neighbors. A lot of people who have been dislocated are staying with a friend or a neighbor. You know, out of these catastrophes the spirit of America really shines, and that spirit is neighbor helping neighbor. So that's the lesson here.

The fellow down the street came out okay; he had taken precautions necessary. Nearly everybody here that I've talked to had evacuated, as the State asked them to do, and therefore, the loss of life was minimized. Still, too many people lost their lives, but nevertheless, it was not as significant as it could have been. We're here, now, obviously, in a residential neighborhood where people's lives have been destroyed. They're beginning to worry about insurance claims, and the State is organized to handle insurance claims. The key is just to make sure that they expedite the services which are available as quickly as possible.