

Remarks at a Florida Victory 2006 Rally in Pensacola, Florida
November 6, 2006

The President. Thank you all very much. He just yelled, “Happy birthday,” to Laura—and happy anniversary. Imagine, in a short period of time, a birthday and anniversary and Republican victory on Tuesday.

I appreciate you recognizing Laura. No doubt about it, she is the A Team in my family, and she’s a great First Lady for the United States. And Jeb Bush has been a great Governor for Florida, and I want to thank you for standing with him during 8 years in which he worked hard to improve the lives of every single citizen in this State, regardless of their political party. Jeb is the kind of fellow who did in office what he said he was going to do, and he’s going to go down as one of the great Governors in your State’s history.

I’m proud to be here with Senator Mel Martinez, one of the fine United States Senators. Tomorrow you get to vote for a new Governor, and I strongly suggest you vote for Charlie Crist to be Governor of the State of Florida. He’s experienced; he’s compassionate; and he’ll work hard on behalf of all the citizens of this important State. And while you’re in there voting for Charlie, vote for Katherine Harris for the United States Senate and Bill McCollum to be the attorney general; Tom Lee to be the chief financial officer. And if you know anything about agriculture, you’re going to want Charlie Bronson to be your secretary of agriculture.

I’m proud to be here in the district of a fine United States Congressman, Congressman Jeff Miller. I want to thank you and Vicki for being here. Miller always talks about the good folks in this district. Every time I see him he’s saying, “Don’t you forget the people in the panhandle.” And I say, “Congressman, how could I forget them; I wouldn’t be President without them.”

We’re 24 hours away from voting. Some of the folks in Washington already think they figured out the results.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That’s what happened in 2004. [*Laughter*] Some of them up there started listening to the prognosticators and started picking out their offices in the West Wing. [*Laughter*] Then the people in Florida voted, and the people around the country voted, and the movers weren’t needed. The same thing is going to happen tomorrow. Republicans are going to turn out. It’s going to be a great victory on November the 7th.

And I thank you all for coming out today. I thank you for your interest. I thank you for what you have done to help these candidates, and I thank you for what you’re going to do for the next 24 hours. You’re going to pick up the phone; you’re going to make the phone calls; you’re going to turn out your friends and neighbors; and we’re going to win.

We’re also going to win because over the past 5 years, we have accomplished great things. Together, we have taken an economy from recession to strong and lasting growth. Together, we have risen to the test of September the 11th and have taken the fight to the terrorists all across the world. Together, we found a calling for a generation of Americans, a freedom agenda to replace tyranny with liberty, oppression with democracy, and an ideology of hate with an ideology of hope.

History has called upon our generation to lead, and we have led. We’re also going to win this election because Republicans understand the values and the priorities of the American people. We don’t need an opinion poll to tell us what we believe. Our principles are rock solid. We’re going to win because we have a hopeful, optimistic agenda.

I knew we were going to finish strong because I knew that when the American people paid attention to the two most important issues, they would understand we stand with them. And the two most important issues is, how much money are you going to have in your pocket—in other words, the size of the taxes—and which group of folks can best win the war on terror.

Let me start with taxes. See, our philosophy says, you can spend your money better than the Federal Government can. Our philosophy says when you have more money in your pocket to save, invest, or spend, the entire economy benefits. The Democrat philosophy is, they can spend your money better than you can, and that's why they want more of it.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Oh, you might remember the debates that we had in Washington. They said the tax cuts—the Democrats said the tax cuts wouldn't increase job growth; it wouldn't increase wages; it would cause the deficit to explode. Well, the facts are in. Our economy is strong. Americans are working. The national unemployment rate is down to 4.4 percent. The unemployment rate in this great State is 3.2 percent. Real wages are going up, and we cut the deficit in half 3 years ahead of schedule.

People are beginning to pay attention to this election, and they understand that if the Democrats win, they're going to raise your taxes.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Oh, I know they don't want you to know that. See, they're going to say everything they can to make sure you don't understand that reality. Matter of fact, I want you to listen to the words of the top Democrat leader in the House of Representatives. They asked her about tax cuts; she said, "We love tax cuts." Well, given her record, she must be a secret admirer. Every tax cut we passed—and by the way, they're the largest tax cuts since Ronald Reagan was the President. Every

tax cut we passed, whether it be increasing the child tax credit, or reducing the marriage penalty, or putting the death tax on the road to extinction, or cutting taxes on capital gains or dividends, or reducing all income taxes for people who pay taxes, she was against. And so were the Democrats in Washington. If that's their idea of love, I'd hate to see what hate looks like.

Now here's the way this works. See, if the tax cuts we passed are not made permanent or are not extended, your taxes are going up. And so they asked the man who thinks he is going to be the head of the tax writing committee—he's not, but he thinks he's going to be—they said, "Can you think of one of the tax cuts that you would extend?" He said he couldn't think of one. See, rather than saying, "I'm looking forward to raising the taxes on the American people," this Democrat shows a different way of saying he's going to raise taxes on—he just said, "I can't think of one of the tax cuts that I would extend." So, for example, the child tax credit will go from \$1,000 a child to \$500 a child.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And if you've got four kids—right there. I'm going to use you as an example, if that's all right. So when you get to dinner tonight and you're sitting around the table, you go, one, two, three, four, and multiply that by \$500 a child. That's \$2,000. You'll be paying \$2,000 more in taxes if people across this country vote Democrat. The best way for you to keep your taxes low is to vote Republican.

There are clear differences on this important issue. The Democrats want to raise taxes when you're born, when you're working, when you're retired, and when you die. [Laughter] In other words, the Democrats' philosophy is this: If it breathes, tax it. [Laughter] And if it stops breathing, find their children and tax them. [Laughter] Our philosophy is, we want you to have more of your own money because we know the tax cuts have worked to keep this economy strong.

These are historic times. When our children and grandchildren look back on this period, there will be one overriding question; one question will overwhelm all the rest: Did the United States do everything in our power to win the war on terror? I wish I could tell you we weren't at war, but we are. We face a brutal enemy that has an ideology, an ideology so backwards that many of our citizens can't possibly comprehend it. See, we believe in basic freedoms; they don't. We believe in the freedom to worship; they don't. We believe in freedom to dissent; they don't. We believe in freedom of a press; they don't.

And because we stand in the way of their ambitions, which is to spread their vision as far and wide as possible, they want to hurt us. And so my most important job—when it all boils down to Washington, DC, my most important job, and any of us in Washington's most important job, is to protect you. You can't negotiate with these people. You cannot hope for the best with these people. The best way to protect you is to find them and bring them to justice before they have a chance to hurt us.

And we've got to make sure we're doing everything at home to protect you. The enemy has got to be right one time, and we've got to be right 100 percent of the time to do our job to secure this country. And so that is why I worked with the Congress to tear down walls that prevented our intelligence services from talking to law enforcement. It probably didn't make any sense to you that's what happened, but that's the case. And so I asked Congress to pass the PATRIOT Act. And they did. But when it came time to be renewed, the overwhelming majority of the Democrats in the House and in the United States Senate voted no.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And the reason I'm bringing this up to you is that there is a different mindset in Washington, DC, than what I believe. See, I believe our professionals have all the tools necessary to protect you;

Democrats don't. There's an attitude up there that says, "Well, we'll respond after we're attacked." My attitude is, we're going to respond before we're attacked.

I felt it was important if Al Qaida or an Al Qaida affiliate was making a phone call into the United States that we knew why. In this different kind of war, we must understand what the enemy is thinking, if our job is to prevent an attack. When that bill came up in front of the United States House of Representatives, the vast majority of Democrats voted against it.

I felt it was important that when we picked somebody up off the battlefield that we had an opportunity to question that person. See, we picked up Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who our intelligence services think was the mastermind of September the 11th. Here's my way of thinking: If he knew about one attack, he might know about another attack. When this bill came up in front of the House and the Senate, the overwhelming majority of Democrats voted no. If the people of this country expect their Government to do its most important job, you better elect people who will give our professionals the tools necessary to protect you, and those people are Republicans.

We're involved in a global struggle, and we will face the enemy where we find them, no matter what the theater of war is. The most important theater, however, is Iraq. See, one of the lessons of September the 11th is that when we see a threat, we have got to take that threat seriously. I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein; Members of the United States Congress in both political parties saw the same threat; the United Nations saw the threat. My decision to get rid of Saddam Hussein was the right decision, and the world is better off for it.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. On Sunday, we witnessed a landmark event in the history of Iraq.

Saddam Hussein was convicted and sentenced to death. We congratulate the Iraqi people. We appreciate the fact that they're converting their country from a rule of a tyrant to rule of law. And as we congratulate the Iraqi people, we've got to remember that there was a lot of brave men and women who wear our uniform that made sacrifices necessary so that Iraq got to that position in the first place.

In our efforts to protect you, Iraq is now the central front. Oh, you hear them all the time in Washington say, "Well, Iraq isn't the central front in the war on terror," or, "Iraq is a distraction from the war on terror." I don't think it is, our troops don't think it is, and neither does Usama bin Laden. He has said that the fight in Iraq is the third world war. He has said that victory for the terrorists in Iraq will mean America's defeat and disgrace forever. That's what he said.

Oh, you hear them in Washington say, the Democrats say, that because we're fighting them in Iraq, we're creating more enemies. Well, Iraq is not the reason that the terrorists are at war with us. We weren't in Iraq when they bombed the World Trade Center in 1993. We weren't in Iraq when they attacked our Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. We weren't in Iraq when they attacked the USS *Cole*. And we were not in Iraq on September the 11th, 2001. You do not create terrorists by fighting the terrorists. The best way to protect you is to stay on the offense and defeat the enemy overseas so we do not have to face them again here at home.

Our goal in Iraq is victory, and victory means a country that can sustain itself and defend itself and govern itself and a country which will be an ally in the war on terror against these extremists and radicals. And we've got a lot going for us. First of all, we have a plan for victory. I have given our commanders on the ground all the flexibility and all the tools they need to be able to stay ahead of the enemy. And we got a fighting force equal to none.

We got the finest United States military ever.

I understand a lot of citizens don't agree that Iraq is important for your security, but our troops understand it. Morale is high. They understand what's going on in this combat zone. They understand the stakes. And therefore, those of us in government have the full responsibility to give them all the tools they need to do the jobs that I've asked them to do. And you don't have to worry about Martinez and Miller. They understand that when we've got a man or woman in harm's way, he or she deserves all the full support of the Federal Government.

We've got something else going for us, and those are brave Iraqis. These folks have suffered unspeakable violence, and yet they're still committed to a government of, by, and for the people. You know, when they went to the polls and defied the car bombers and assassins, I was pleased, but I wasn't surprised. And the reason I wasn't surprised is because I believe in an Almighty, and I believe a great gift of the Almighty in each man and woman's soul is the desire to be free. I believe in the universality of freedom. It shouldn't surprise you when people say, "I'd rather be free than live under the hand of a tyrant."

So we'll help the Iraqis. We'll help them politically; we'll help economically; and we will continue to train their security forces so they get to take the fight to the enemy. And I want you to know, if you've got a loved one in uniform, if you've got a loved one in Iraq, I would not have your loved one there if I didn't believe that the cause was noble and just and that victory was attainable. As a matter of fact, the only way we will not win is if we leave before the job is done.

This is an important part of this campaign. It's an important part for your future. And if you listen for the plan of the Democrats, there isn't one. Oh, they've got some ideas. Some of them say, "Get out right now." Some of them say, "Get out

at a fixed date,” even though the job hasn’t been done. One of them said, “Let’s move our troops to an island some 5,000 miles away.”

Audience members. Boo!

The President. They don’t have a plan, but they’ve got a principle around which they’re organized, which is: It’s too tough; get out before the job is done. That’s what they believe. I’m not saying they’re unpatriotic; I’m saying they’re wrong. They have taken a calculated gamble. They believe the only way they can win this election is to criticize and offer no plan. It’s a huge election issue, and they don’t have a plan. So if you happen to bump into a Democrat candidate, you might want to ask this question: What is your plan? If they say they want to protect the homeland but opposed the PATRIOT Act, ask them this question: What’s your plan? If they say they want to uncover terrorist plots but opposed listening in on terrorist conversations, ask them this question: What’s your plan?

Audience members. What’s your plan?

The President. If they say they want to stop new attacks on our country but opposed letting the CIA detain and question the terrorists who might know what those plots are, ask them this question: What’s your plan?

Audience members. What’s your plan?

The President. If they say they want to win the war on terror but call for America to pull out from what Al Qaida says is the central front in the war on terror, ask them a simple question—

Audience members. What’s your plan?

The President. They don’t have one. [Laughter] I want you to remind your fellow citizens when you ask them to go vote, harsh criticism is not a plan for victory. Second-guessing is not a strategy. We have a plan for victory, and part of that plan is to make sure Republicans control the House and the Senate.

Retreat from Iraq before the job is done would embolden the enemy and would make this country less secure. In this war,

if we were to leave before the job is done, the enemy would follow us here to America. If we leave before the job is done, it would enable these radicals and extremists to be able to recruit. If we leave before the job is done, it would dash the hopes of millions upon millions of people in the Middle East who simply want to live a peaceful existence. It would condemn them to the violent ideology of these haters. And if we were to leave before the job was done, it would dishonor the sacrifice of the men and women who have worn our uniform.

The stakes in this fight in Iraq are important, not only for today’s generation but for future generations. See, the enemy has made it abundantly clear that they believe we’ll leave because we’re soft. They believe if they can put enough unspeakable violence on the TV screens that America will lose its nerve. They don’t understand; we don’t run from thugs and assassins. They believe it’s a matter of time for us to leave, and they want us to so they can have safe haven from which to launch further attacks. This is what they have said. They have said that they want us to leave so they can have room to topple moderate governments, to begin to expand their ideological vision.

Can you imagine a world in the Middle East in which they controlled oil resources? And then they would say to the West, “Abandon your alliance with Israel, abandon your alliance with moderate governments, withdraw; otherwise, we’ll bring you to your knees, economically.” And you couple that with a country with a nuclear weapon that doesn’t like us, and people will look at this period of time and say, “What happened to them in 2006? How come they couldn’t see the impending danger? What clouded their vision?” I want to assure you, I see the danger. That is why we will stay in Iraq, fight in Iraq, and win in Iraq.

One of my favorite stories that I like to share with our fellow citizens is the story about the time when Laura and I went

to Elvis's place with sitting Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. People say, "What the heck did you go there for?" [Laughter] I said, "Well, I hadn't taken Laura on a vacation for a while." [Laughter] Koizumi himself wanted to go because he was an Elvis fan. [Laughter] But it also tells an interesting story about the power of liberty, about the capacity of liberty to change for the better.

See, the Japanese attacked us, and thousands of young Americans, like your relatives and our dad, said, "I volunteer. I volunteer to fight for the country." It's happening today, by the way. Thousands are doing the same thing. And he went, and thousands went, and thousands died in a bloody war. And yet his son is on Air Force One flying down to Memphis, Tennessee, talking about the peace, talking about peace on the Korean Peninsula, talking about the fact that Japan had 1,000 troops in Iraq. The Prime Minister and I understand we're in an ideological struggle between extremists and people who want a better life than what they offer. And the best way to defeat the ideology of hate is with an ideology of hope. We were talking about the admonition, to whom much is given, much is required, and that's why we'll continue to lead the fight against the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. We were talking about our global responsibilities to foster peace.

Isn't that interesting? Our dad fought the Japanese, and one of his sons is talking about keeping the peace. Something hap-

pened. Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy. The lesson is that liberty has got the capacity to transform an enemy into an ally; liberty has got the capacity to transform a region of the world that is resentful and full of hate to a region of the world full of hope. Someday, an elected leader from the United States will be sitting down with elected leaders from the Middle East talking about the peace, and a generation of Americans will be better off for it.

And those are the stakes in this election. I urge our fellow citizens to go to the polls. I urge you to do your duty in this great democracy, and that is to exercise your right as an individual to determine the course of this Nation. And as you're going into those polls, remember, if you want your taxes low, vote Republican. And as you go to the polls, remember, we're at war. And if you want this country to do everything in its power to protect you and, at the same time, lay the foundation of peace for generations to come, vote Republican.

Laura and I are so pleased you're here. Thank you for coming out. Thank you for your interest. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:24 p.m. at the Pensacola Civic Center. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

Remarks at an Arkansas Victory 2006 Rally in Bentonville, Arkansas November 6, 2006

The President. Thank you all for coming. You know, Asa, I remember landing at this airport in 2000, on the next to last event of my quest for the Presidency. I was then here to ask for your vote for me. I'm com-

ing back, asking for you to vote and work for Asa Hutchinson.

I want to thank you for the interest in his campaign. I appreciate those of you who are putting up the signs and making the phone calls and turning out the vote.