

all hurt. Each of them remains in the thoughts and prayers of the American people.

The terrorist attacks on September the 11th were a turning point for our Nation. We saw the goals of a determined enemy, to expand the scale of their murder and force America to retreat from the world. And our Nation accepted a mission: We will defeat this enemy.

The United States of America is determined to guard our homeland against future attacks. As the September the 11th Commission concluded, our country is safer than we were 3 years ago, but we are not yet safe.

So every day, many thousands of dedicated men and women are on duty—as air marshals, airport screeners, cargo inspectors, border patrol officers, and first-responders. At the same time, Americans serving in the FBI and CIA are performing their daily work with professionalism, while we reform those agencies to see the dangers around the next corner. Our country is grateful to all our fellow citizens who watch for the enemy and answer the alarms and guard America by their vigilance.

The United States is determined to stay on the offensive and to pursue the terrorists wherever they train or sleep or attempt to set down roots. We have conducted this campaign from the mountains of Afghanistan to the heart of the Middle East to the horn of Africa to the islands of the Philippines to hidden cells within our own country. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We know that there is still a danger to America. So we will not relent until the terrorists who plot murder against our people are found and dealt with.

The United States is also determined to advance democracy in the broader Middle East, because freedom will bring the peace and security we all want. When the peoples of that region are given new hope and lives of dignity, they will let go of old hatreds and resentments, and the terrorists will find fewer recruits. And as governments of that region join in the fight against terror instead of harboring terrorists, America and the world will be more secure. Our present work in Iraq and Afghanistan is difficult. It is also

historic and essential. By our commitment and sacrifice today, we will help transform the Middle East and increase the safety of our children and grandchildren.

Since September the 11th, the sacrifices in the war on terror have fallen most heavily on members of our military and their families. Our Nation is grateful to the brave men and women who are taking risks on our behalf at this hour. And America will never forget the ones who have fallen, men and women last seen doing their duty, whose names we will honor forever.

The war on terror goes on. The resolve of our Nation is still being tested. And in the face of danger, we are showing our character. Three years after the attack on our country, Americans remain strong and resolute, patient in a just cause, and confident of the victory to come.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on the Terrorist Attacks in Russia

September 12, 2004

Mr. Ambassador, thank you for receiving Laura and me. I'm here to express my country's heartfelt sympathies for the victims and the families who suffered at the hands of the evil terrorists. The United States stands side by side with Russia as we fight off terrorism, as we stand shoulder to shoulder to make the world a more peaceful place and a free place.

The atrocities that took place in the school were beyond comprehension. Many in America and, I know, many in Russia simply cannot conceive the hearts of a person that would mow down innocent children. And the killers, once again, reminded us—remind us of the duties we have as free people to work in concert, to work in unity, to make this world a better place.

And so, Mr. Ambassador, I'm honored. Please pass on my very best wishes to President Vladimir Putin, a man who I admire.

I talked with Vladimir right after the incident. We had a very good discussion about the need for us to continue to work together. I pledged our Government would continue to work with the Russian Government and the Russian people.

And may God bless the people of Russia, and may God bless those who suffer. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:49 p.m. at the Russian Embassy. In his remarks, he referred to Yuriy Viktorovich Ushakov, Russia's Ambassador to the United States; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion on Health Care in Muskegon, Michigan

September 13, 2004

The President. Listen, thank you all for coming. Thanks for coming. Please be seated. So Hoekstra said, "Get over here." He said, "Come to Muskegon." I said, "Okay. See if you can get some people to show up."

Listen, thanks for coming. I'm here asking for the vote. I'm here to tell you I have a reason to ask for the vote, and we're going to do it a little differently today. I'm going to talk to some of our fellow citizens about health care. That's what I really want to spend some time on. I'm also going to talk about making America a safer place, making the world a safer place.

Before we get started on issues that matter to the future of everybody in this country, there's an issue that matters to me, and that is, I hope I can also count on your help in order to win this election. That means registering people to vote. Step one is to remind your friends and neighbors that we have an obligation in a free society to participate. So anybody who is 18 years old here who hasn't registered—register. You have an obligation. And step two is once we register people to vote, is to get them to vote. And step three is when you get them headed into the polls, remind them America will be a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place when you put Dick Cheney and me back into office.

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

The President. Okay. Thank you all. Perhaps the most—I'm ready for 4 more years, and perhaps the most important reason to give us 4 more years is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years. So I said, "Will you marry me?" She said, "Fine." She was a public school librarian in Texas. She said, "Yes, I'll marry you, just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [Laughter] Well, fortunately, it's a promise she didn't hold me to. People got to see her in New York City. She gave a fabulous speech. And the reason why is because she's a genuine, kind, compassionate person who is a great mom, a great wife. I love her dearly. And she sends her very best. She's out campaigning today.

I want to thank my friend Peter Hoekstra. He is a solid citizen and a very fine Member of the United States Congress. He is—and Diane, thanks for coming—he is a highly respected Member of Congress. He is now going to be in charge of the House Select Committee on Intelligence. I look forward to working with him to strengthen our intelligence-gathering capabilities so that we can do as good a job as possible about protecting our fellow citizens. Peter understands that the world changed on September the 11th. He understands we have a solemn duty in America to do everything we can to protect you. And I look forward to working with you, Pete. It's a great honor that you've been selected.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists. Those are the unsung heroes who put up the signs and make the phone calls and do all the hard work. I want to thank you for what you have done. I want to thank you for what you're going to do—[laughter]—over the next couple of weeks. You know, there's just no doubt in my mind that with your help, we're going to carry Michigan and win the country.

Listen, most people in America agree with my philosophy that the role of Government is to help people realize their dreams, not to try to run their lives. The role of Government is to say, "What can we do to help you,"