

And here's why I'm talking about him. He and I are friends, and Laura and the Prime Minister are friends as well. He's been to our ranch. We sat down at the—talking about different issues facing the world. Think about that for a minute, in the context of World War II. Really, 60 years ago, Japan was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. A lot of people lost their life in fighting against the Japanese in World War II. They had attacked our country, of course, the last major attack on our country since September—prior to September the 11th.

And after the end of World War II, Harry Truman, my predecessor, and other Americans believed that Japan could self-govern; it could be a democracy. That's what they believed. And they believed that because they believe every person desires to be free. And they believed that because—and they hoped that because they knew free societies would be peaceful societies. And there were skeptics, of course, just like there are in any society. People said, "Well, gosh, you can't do that. How can you possibly believe that our enemy could become a friend? How could you possibly believe Japan could become a democracy?" But they believed, and they worked hard, and Japan did become a democracy.

And today, as a result of Japan becoming a democracy—today, as a result of liberty being spread to parts of the world where there was hatred—I sit down with the Prime Minister of Japan talking about keeping the peace we all want. And that's going to happen, so long as we're resolute and steadfast in our belief in liberty. It's going to happen in our day. It's going to make the lives of these folks a lot more peaceful, because someday an American President is going to be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about peace in the greater Middle East, talking about how to make this world a peaceful place.

These are historic times. I'm driven by my desire to protect the American people. I'll be steadfast in my resolve to do everything I can to make you secure. But I'm also driven by my deep belief that every soul yearns for liberty. Listen, freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I want to thank you all for coming out. Thank you for your vote. Thank you for your support. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. at the Valley Forge Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Melissa Brown, candidate for Congress in Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District; Jean Craige Pepper, candidate for Pennsylvania State treasurer; Karen A. Stout, president, Montgomery County Community College; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; 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 Recovery Efforts in Millvale, Pennsylvania

September 22, 2004

Listen, thank you all for coming. I have just flown over Allegheny County. I have seen the devastation that took place. The storm and the floods were lethal, and they cause a lot of heartache and damage. I know there are people in this part of our country who are grieving for lost ones, and we send our prayers to all who grieve.

I know there are people here who are concerned as to whether or not they'll ever get their life back together. I hope my visit here with the Senators and Congressmen say as clearly as we can that we care about the devastation that took place, that we understand the Federal Government has an obligation to help, and we will.

Most of all, I'm here to thank the people of this community who have risen up to deal with the hardship. My message not only is to the people of the Millvale but is to Etna and Carnegie as well, communities in this part of the world that were hard hit. You know, the volunteer firefighters here, I was honored to be able to shake hands with some. I looked in the guy's eyes and said, "You got flood eyes"—obviously, he had no sleep. He's doing all he could do to help save lives and help begin to heal the hurt.

The first thing I want to do is thank all the first-responders, firefighters and the police and the EMS teams. I want to thank Dave Sanko, of the State of Pennsylvania for—he's the FEMA—he's the emergency management director who has been on top of the situation ever since the flood started to come. I'm absolutely convinced that as a result of the coordination between the Federal Government, the State government, and local governments, loss of life had been minimized. Dave has done a terrific job, and I appreciate your service to your State.

Mike Brown is with me. He's the head of the FEMA. I'm down here to let people know that FEMA is going to move quickly. The best way to make sure people understand FEMA is going to move quickly is bring the main guy with me and let the mayor, Mayor Burn, talk to him and county executive of Allegheny County. I wanted him to hear firsthand what the people in these communities and this county have been through. And I want Brown to know that he's going to respond as quickly as he can, and that's what I want the people to know.

I want to thank the local officials who are working hard to help the people in this community. You know, what happens when these disasters hit: The real character of a community comes out; people show up; neighbors love neighbors; firefighters help save lives. You met the storm—this storm with compassion and courage. You showed the true spirit of the American people by how you've responded and are responding to this—these floods.

I want to thank the National Guard and Coast Guardsmen who worked hard all across the State of Pennsylvania to save lives and do their duty. I want to thank the power workers, people that—and the telephone crews—for getting electricity back up and running for the people of this part of the world. I know there are some homes that still don't have their electricity hooked up, but I've been assured that the power company is working as hard as they can to get electricity up. I know there's some people without natural gas. I know they're working hard to get the natural gas lines fixed so people can have power in their homes.

I appreciate the men and women of the Red Cross. The Red Cross has been tested during the last months. I've seen Red Cross workers all across our country. They're out there providing compassion and care. The Red Cross is a great organization, mainly because it's got great workers, people who care a lot.

I want to thank the faith-based communities who have been responding to this disaster. You know, the concept of neighbor loving neighbor is a powerful concept. It helps lift people's spirits. I met the lady who runs the food bank here. She's working overtime to make sure people have got something to eat. I want to appreciate all those who are working at the food banks. I asked her, I said, "Do you have enough food to make sure the good people of this part of the world got something on the table to eat?" She said, "Absolutely." People are responding to the crisis, and out of the harm is coming some good.

I want to let you know that we're dedicated to responding as quickly as we possibly can. I've been told that those who have registered with FEMA have started to receive checks. I urge people to find out the facts, to get 800 numbers that are available, and to sign up for help. We can't help you unless you sign up for the help.

Again, I want to reassure the people of western Pennsylvania that a lot of people are praying for you. You know, I saw the look in the people's eyes when I was driving through the town here—small-business owners and entrepreneurs whose businesses were destroyed, their stuff piled up in front of their business, wondering whether or not there's a future. There is a future. I predict to you, Mr. Mayor, that within a reasonable period of time this town is going to be back on its feet, better than ever, more hopeful than ever.

We ask God's blessings on everybody who lives here. And may God continue to bless our country. Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:19 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to David M. Sanko, director, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency; Mayor James Burn of Millvale, PA; and Dan Onorato, Allegheny County Chief Executive.

Remarks in Latrobe, Pennsylvania*September 22, 2004*

The President. Thank you all very much for coming. I'm proud you all are here. Thanks for coming out to say hello.

How good does it get to be introduced by Arnold Palmer? What a fantastic citizen of our country. I'm proud to be here in his hometown. He said, "Have you ever heard of Rolling Rock?" I said, "I quit drinking." [Laughter]

But thank you all for coming out today. I'm asking for the vote, is what I'm doing here today in Pennsylvania. I like getting out amongst the people and letting them know I've got a reason for running—to serve you for 4 more years.

I'm here to tell you what my plans are for the future of our country. I'm also here to ask for your help. I'd like for you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. We have a duty in this country to vote. Call upon your friends and neighbors to exercise their responsibility. And when you're out registering people to vote, don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. And when you get them headed toward the polls, tell them that if they want this to be a safer, stronger, better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

I'm sorry Laura is not with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know it. I don't blame you. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech." I said, "Okay, fine, you'll never have to give a speech." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to my word. [Laughter] The people of this country got to see her in New York City giving a speech. They saw how compassionate, strong, and decent she is. She's a great mom, a great wife, a wonderful First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. He's a good man. Now look, I admit it. I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [Laughter] I didn't pick him for his hair. I picked him because he's a man of great judgment, sound experience, and he

can get the job done on behalf of the American people.

Listen, you did a good job of training Tom Ridge. And I did a smart thing by picking him to run the new Department of Homeland Security.

I want to thank the United States Senators who are with me today. I'm here to ask you to put Arlen Specter back in the United States Senate for 6 more years. I'm proud to be traveling with the other Senator, Rick Santorum. I want to thank Congressman Tim Murphy, the Congressman from this district. I call him Murph. I want to thank Congresswoman Melissa Hart from the great State of Pennsylvania for joining us.

I want to thank all the candidates who are here and local and State officials. Thanks for serving Pennsylvania and your communities.

I want to thank my friend Lynn Swann. He and I worked together to try to promote physical fitness. You need to walk. [Laughter] You want to stay healthy, get some exercise. And I appreciate my friend Lynn Swann for supporting my candidacy.

I want to thank John Michael Montgomery for singing here today.

I just came from Millvale, where I saw the devastation caused by the floods of Ivan. I assure you that we're helping as much as we possibly can to help people restore their lives, and that the prayers of the people of this country are with those who suffer.

I'm looking forward to this campaign. I like to campaign, because I like to be with people. I'm looking forward to telling people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation for the next 4 years.

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

The President. I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I saw a problem with Medicare. See, Medicare was—is a very important program, but it wasn't changing with medicine. There was a problem. For example, Medicare would pay \$100,000 to—for heart surgery for a senior but wouldn't pay for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That's a problem. It's a problem for our seniors, who deserve modern medicine in Medicare. It's a problem