

threats in the world, the intelligence on which the President and Members of Congress base their decisions must be better, and it will be. I look forward to the intelligence reform commission's recommendations, and we will act on them to improve our intelligence, especially our intelligence about weapons of mass destruction.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:24 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence; David Kay, former CIA Special Advisor for Strategy Regarding Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. He also referred to the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, chaired by former Senator Chuck Robb and Judge Laurence Silberman. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The report of September 30 was entitled "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD."

## Remarks in Wausau, Wisconsin

October 7, 2004

**The President.** Thank you all for coming out. It's great to be back in Wisconsin. Listen, thanks for coming. It's great to be back in Wausau. It's an honor that so many came out to say hello. I'm so thankful you're here. Next time I come back I'd like to do some hunting and fishing.

I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm here to ask for your help. We're getting close to the stretch run here in this campaign, and I'd like to encourage you to get your friends and neighbors to register to vote and then go to the polls. And remind them when they head to the polls, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, a better America, to put Dick Cheney and me back in office.

Laura sends her very best. Last time I saw her, I was watching the Jay Leno rerun this morning. [Laughter] I am—you know, when I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech." [Laughter] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. The American people have gotten to see

what I know: She is a strong, compassionate, great First Lady for this country.

I was proud of the job my Vice President did the other night.

I appreciate Tommy Thompson. He's a great leader. He's in my Cabinet, as you recall. And I appreciate you training him so well.

I'm glad to be here on the stage with the next United States Senator from Wisconsin, Tim Michels. You got a good one in Tim, and I hope you put him in office. It's important. And make no mistake about it, with your help, he's going to win.

I want to thank Jack Voight, who is the State treasurer. I want to thank the assembly speaker, John Gard, who is with us, Scott Walker is over here from Milwaukee County. I appreciate him coming. We call him Scott W. [Laughter] I want to thank the mayor of Wausau for being here, Mayor Tipple. Mr. Mayor, I'm proud you're here. My only advice, and I know you didn't ask for any—[laughter]—but my only advice is to fill the potholes. [Laughter]

I want to thank Scott Klug for emceeding this event, and I appreciate my friend Stan Orr. I want to thank John Conlee, the singer who was here. I appreciate you coming, John, and thanks for entertaining everybody.

I particularly want to thank the grassroots activists who are here. Those are the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls and do all the hard work. You never hardly get thanked. I'm here to thank you for what you're going to do. I know with your hard work, I know when we turn out the vote, we will carry Wisconsin this year and win a great victory in November.

I have a strong, positive message. As your President, I have worked hard to make America more hopeful and more secure. I have led our country with principle and resolve, and that's how I'll lead this Nation for 4 more years.

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

**The President.** When I took office—I want you to remind your friends and neighbors about what we have been through as a country. When I took office, the bubble of the 1990s had burst, and our economy was

heading into recession. Because of the attacks of September the 11th, nearly a million jobs were lost in 3 months. It was a dangerous time for our economy. You might remember there were people warning of potential deflation and depression.

But we acted. To stimulate the economy, I called on the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief, which it did. And that tax relief was the fuel that got our economy growing again, thanks to the effort of our citizens and the right policies in the right place at the right time. That recession is behind us, and we're creating jobs again.

In the past year, the United States has added about 1.7 million new jobs, more than Germany, Japan, Great Britain, Canada, and France combined. Real after-tax income—the money you keep in your pocket—is up more than 10 percent since I took office. Homeownership is at an alltime high in America today. Small businesses are flourishing. Today we learned that America's welfare rolls are the lowest in 34 years. Math and reading scores are increasing in our public schools. Ten million students will get record levels of grants and loans to help with college. We have modernized Medicare so our seniors will get a prescription drug coverage in 2006.

And this farm economy is strong. I understand farming is a priority in Wisconsin, and I made it a priority in my administration. My opponent has taken a different view. In the Senate career he's consistently voted against the interests of your dairy farmers.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** He supported the Northeast Dairy Compact.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** That puts your farmers at a distinct disadvantage. I believe farm policy should treat all farmers fairly. That's why I was proud to sign a good farm bill. We've opened up foreign markets for your products. We've increased funding for ethanol and biodiesel. Farm income is at an alltime high.

I know that the Milk Income Lost Contract program is important to the dairy farmers here in Wisconsin. The milk program is set to expire next fall. I look forward to working with Congress to reauthorize the program so Wisconsin dairy farmers and dairy farmers

all across this country can count on the support they need.

We have made America stronger, and we're just getting started. Listen, we live in a time of change. It's a changing economy. People are changing jobs and careers often. Women are working inside the home and outside the home. And yet the fundamental systems of our Government haven't changed. They're stuck in the past.

I understand a hopeful society is one in which we challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations in our public schools and raise the standards and trust the local people to make sure they make the right decisions for the schools. We have an achievement gap in America that's closing, thanks to our education reforms, and we're not going to turn back.

We're going to invest in our Nation's fine community colleges so they prepare workers for the jobs of the 21st century. In a time of change, because people are changing jobs often, we'll expand health savings accounts so people can pay health expenses tax-free and keep the savings if they change jobs.

We'll improve Social Security. Listen, if you're—I remember the 2000 campaign here in Wisconsin. You might remember it too. They said, "If old George W. gets elected, he's going to take away your Social Security check." You remember those ads? Well, you got your check, didn't you? And you're going to get it again.

Nobody is going to take away the check of those who are on Social Security, and the baby boomers are in good shape. But we better worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. In order to make sure Social Security is available for them, younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and set up a personal savings account that they can call their own, that the Government will not take away.

To keep our economy strong and competitive, we got to make sure America is the best place in the world to do business. That means we've got to have that tax relief we passed permanent. That means we got to do something about these needless regulations on small businesses. This country needs an energy plan if we want to keep jobs here in

America. I submitted a plan to the Congress over 2 years ago. It's a plan that calls for more conservation, the use of renewable fuels like ethanol and biodiesel. It's a plan that says we can use our coal and natural gas wisely without hurting the environment. It's a plan that says if we want jobs here in America, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We got to do something about the frivolous and junk lawsuits here in America that hurt our employers and make it hard to get jobs. We've got—my opponent and I have got different views on all these issues. We've got some fundamental differences on issues like taxes. See, I have a record of reducing them. He's got a record of raising them.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** He voted in the United States Senate 98 times to raise taxes.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** That sounds like he's developing a habit. [Laughter] He voted for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** He voted for the 1997 formula that helped cause the increases in Medicare.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** He's against all the tax relief we've passed. You might remember that tax relief. We raised the child credit. We reduced the penalty on marriage. We created a 10-percent bracket for low-income Americans. He voted against them all.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** My opponent is one of the few candidates in history to campaign on a pledge to raise taxes.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** And unfortunately, that's the kind of promise more politicians keep. [Laughter] He says the tax relief—the tax increase is only for the rich. Now, you've heard that before. The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason: to stick you with the bill. [Laughter] The good news is we're not going to let him tax us this year. We're going to carry Wisconsin and win a great victory in November.

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

**The President.** The Senator and I have different views on health care, fundamentally different views on health care. I believe that we ought to make health care available and affordable. We'll make it available by making sure low-income Americans can go to a community health center to get good preventative care and good primary care. We'll make it available to make sure our children's health programs for low-income Americans are expanded to every corner of this country. We'll make it affordable by doing something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running good doctors out of business and running your costs up. We'll make it affordable by promoting technologies which will help wring out excessive costs in health care.

We'll make it affordable by allowing small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discounts big companies can buy insurance. We'll make it affordable by expanding health savings accounts, and that stands in stark contrast to my opponent's plan. Under his plan, 8 million Americans would lose the private insurance they get at work and would end up on a Government program.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Under his plan, 8 out of 10 people who'd get new insurance would get it from the Federal Government.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** My opponent's proposal would be the largest expansion of Government-run health care ever.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** And you know something, when the Government pays the bills, it makes the rules. His plan would put bureaucrats in charge of dictating coverage, which could ration your care and limit your choice of doctors. What I'm telling you is he's putting us on the path to "Hillary-care."

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** I've got a different idea. In all we do to improve health care, we will make sure the decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by bureaucrats in our Nation's Capital.

During his 20 years as a Senator, my opponent hasn't had many accomplishments. Of the hundreds of bills he submitted, only five became law. That's in 20 years of service.

One of them was ceremonial. But to be fair, he has earned a special distinction in the Congress. The nonpartisan National Journal analyzed his record and named John Kerry the most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Now, that's saying something when the competition is people like Ted Kennedy. [*Laughter*] It wasn't easy for him to be the single most liberal Member of the Senate. You might say it took hard work. [*Laughter*] But he earned that title by voting for higher taxes and more regulation and more junk lawsuits and more Government control of your life. And that's one of the real differences of this campaign. My opponent is a tax-and-spend liberal. I'm a compassionate conservative. My opponent wants to empower Government. I want to use Government to empower our citizens. My opponent seems to think all the wisdom is found in Washington, DC. I trust the wisdom of the American people.

You know, I say this, we're living in a changing world, and we do. There's some things that won't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And I stand for appointing judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

Our differences are also clear on issues like national security. When I took office in 2001, threats to America had been gathering for years. Then, on one terrible morning, the terrorists took more lives than America lost at Pearl Harbor.

Since that day, we have waged a global campaign to protect the American people and bring our enemies to account. Our Government has trained over a half a million first-responders. We've tripled the spending for homeland security. Law enforcement and intelligence have better tools to stop the terrorists, thanks to the PATRIOT Act, which my opponent voted for but now wants to weaken.

The Taliban regime that sheltered Al Qaida is gone from power. And in 2 days' time, 10 million people, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in a Presidential election that will take place in 2 days' time. Think about that. Think about what's going on there. The black market network that weapons materials to North Korea and Libya and Iran is now out of business. Libya has given up its weapons of mass destruction programs. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have joined the fight, and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led, many have followed, and America and the world are safer.

After September the 11th, America had to assess every potential threat in a new light. Our Nation awakened to even a greater danger, the prospect that terrorists who killed thousands with hijacked airplanes would kill many more with weapons of mass murder. That's the threat we face. And so we had to take a hard look at every place where terrorists might get those weapons.

And one regime stood out, the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. We knew the dictator had a history of using weapons of mass destruction, a long aggression and hatred for America, and was listed by Republican and Democratic administrations as a state sponsor of terror. There was a risk that Saddam would pass weapons or materials or information on to terrorist networks. And that was a risk, after September the 11th, this Nation could not afford to take. After 12 years of United Nations Security Council resolutions, we gave him a final chance to come clean and to listen to the demands of the free world. He chose defiance and he chose war, and the world is better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Last week in our debate, Senator Kerry once again came down firmly on every side of the Iraq war. He stated that Saddam Hussein was a threat and that America had no business removing that threat. Senator Kerry said our soldiers and marines are not fighting for a "mistake" but also called the liberation of Iraq a "colossal error." He said we need to do more to train Iraqis but also said we shouldn't be spending so much money over there. He said he wants to hold a summit

meeting so he can invite other countries to join what he calls the “wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** You hear all that, and you can understand why somebody would make a face. [*Laughter*]

Just a short time ago, my opponent held a little press conference and continued his pattern of overheated rhetoric. He accused me of deception. He’s claiming I misled America about weapons when he, himself, cited the very same intelligence about Saddam’s weapons programs as the reason he voted to go to war. Two years ago this Saturday, back when he was for the war—[*laughter*—my opponent said on the floor of the United States Senate, and I quote, “Saddam Hussein sitting in Baghdad, with an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction is a different matter. In the wake of September the 11th, who among us can say with any certainty to anybody that those weapons might not be used against our troops or against allies in the region.” John Kerry went on: “Who can say that this master of miscalculation will not develop a weapon of mass destruction even greater, a nuclear weapon, then re-invade Kuwait or push the Kurds out, attack Israel, any numbers of scenarios to try to further his ambitions. Can we afford to ignore that possibility that Saddam Hussein might accidentally as well as purposely allow those weapons to slide off to one group or another in a region where weapons are the currency or the trade.” End quote.

Now today my opponent tries to say I made up reasons to go to war. Just who is the one trying to mislead the American people?

We have many victories in this war on terror so far, and the war goes on. Our Nation is safer but not yet safe. To win this war, we must fight it on every front. We will stay on the offensive against the terrorist networks. We will defeat them overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will confront governments that support terrorists and could arm them because they’re equally guilty of terrorist murder. And our long-term victory requires confronting the ideology of hate with freedom and hope, changing the conditions that

produce radicalism and suicide bombers, and finding new democratic allies in a troubled region of the world. You see, America is always more secure when freedom is on the march.

And freedom is on the march in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and elsewhere. There will be good days and there will be bad days in the war on terror. But every day, we will show our resolve, and we will do our duty. This Nation is determined. We will stay in the fight until the fight is won.

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

**The President.** My opponent and I have very different views on conducting the war on terror. Senator Kerry approaches the world with a September-the-10th mindset. Think about this. He declared at his convention speech that any attack will be met with a swift and certain response. That was the mindset of the 1990s, while Al Qaida was planning the attacks on America. After September the 11th, our object in the war on terror is not to wait for the next attack and respond but to prevent attacks by taking the fight to the enemy.

In our debate, Senator Kerry said that removing Saddam Hussein was a mistake because a threat was not imminent. Think about that. The problem with his approach is obvious. If America waits until a threat is at our doorstep, it might be too late to save lives. You see, terrorists and tyrants will not give us polite notice before they launch an attack on our country. I refuse to stand by while dangers gather.

My opponent also announced the Kerry doctrine, declaring that Americans’ actions in the war on terror must pass a “global test.”

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Under this test, America would not be able to act quickly against threats because we’d be sitting around waiting for a grade from other nations. I have a different view. America will always work with our allies for security and peace, but the President’s job is not to pass an international test. The President’s job is to protect the American people.

When my opponent first ran for Congress, he argued that American troops should be

deployed only at the directive of the United Nations.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** You probably think I'm making that up. [Laughter] I thought it was wrong when I first read it. [Laughter] Now, to be fair, he's changed his mind, but it is a window into his thinking. [Laughter] Over the years, Senator Kerry has looked for every excuse to constrain America's action in the world. These days he praises America's broad coalition in the Persian Gulf war. But in 1991—I want to remind you what he said—he criticized coalition members as, quote, “shadow battlefield allies who barely carry a burden.” That sounds familiar, doesn't it? And that time he voted against the war. If that coalition didn't pass his “global test,” nothing will pass his “global test.” [Laughter]

The Kerry doctrine has other consequences, especially for our men and women in uniform. The Senator from Massachusetts supports the International Criminal Court —

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** —which would allow unaccountable foreign prosecutors and foreign judges to put American soldiers on trial.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** You probably think I'm making that up. See, that would be a legal nightmare for our troops. My fellow citizens, as long as I'm your President, Americans in uniform will answer to the officers and law of the United States, not to the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

We have a different point of view on how to build alliances. The Senator speaks about his plan to strengthen America's alliances, but he's got an odd way of going about it. In the middle of the war, he's chosen to insult our fighting allies by calling them “window dressing” and “a coalition of the coerced and the bribed.”

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Well, the Italians who died in Nasiriyah were not window dressing. They're heroes in the war on terror, as far as we're concerned. The British and the Poles at the head of the multinational divisions in Iraq were not coerced or bribed. They fought and some have died in the cause of freedom and peace. These good allies and

dozens of others deserve the respect of all Americans, not the scorn of a politician. Instead, the Senator would have America bend over backwards to satisfy a handful of governments with different agendas. This is my opponent's alliance-building strategy: Brush off your best friend and fawn over your critics. And that's no way to gain respect in this world.

My opponent says he has a plan for Iraq, and part of it should sound pretty familiar because it's already known as the Bush plan. [Laughter] Senator Kerry suggests we train Iraqi troops. That's what we've been doing for months. [Laughter] He's proposing that Iraq have elections. That's what's going to happen in January. He says the U.N. ought to be involved in the elections. Well, the U.N. is already there. [Laughter]

There was one new element of Senator Kerry's plan. He talks about artificial time-tables to pull our forces out of Iraq. You see, he sent a signal that America's overriding goal in Iraq would be to leave, even if the job isn't done.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** That may satisfy his political needs, but his words complicate the essential work we're doing in Iraq. See, the Iraqi people need to know that America will not cut and run when their freedom is at stake. Our soldiers and marines need to know that America will honor their service and sacrifice by completing the mission. Our enemies in Iraq need to know that they can never outlast the will of America. Senator Kerry assures us that he's the one to win a war he calls a “mistake,” a “diversion,” an “error.” But you can't win a war you do not believe in fighting for. On Iraq, Senator Kerry has a strategy for retreat, and I have a strategy for victory.

We returned the sovereignty to the Iraqi people ahead of schedule. We have trained and equipped about 100,000 Iraqi soldiers, police officers, and other security personnel, and the total will rise to 125,000 by the end of the year. See, the strategy ought to be clear. The Iraqi people must stand up and fight for their freedom. They must be the ones that take the hard risk. We've allocated about \$7 billion for reconstruction efforts so more Iraqis can see the benefit of freedom.

We're working with the coalition of some 30 nations to provide security. Other nations are helping with debt relief. And although the terrorists will try to stop them, Iraq will hold free elections in January.

I believe in the power of liberty to transform nations. I believe that freedom can bring peace. You know, I talk to Prime Minister Koizumi quite often—he's the Prime Minister of Japan. I know we've got some veterans here—first of all, I want to say thanks to all the veterans who set such a great example. I suspect we may have some veterans of World War II with us. My dad was such a veteran. There's a veteran right there. The reason I bring that up is because it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history we were fighting Japan. My dad was there; others were there as well. They were the sworn enemy of America.

After World War II, Harry Truman believed that liberty could transform an enemy into a friend. So we worked hard to help Iraq with democracy—I mean, Japan with democracy. And as a result, I sit down at the table today talking with the leader of a former enemy about how to keep the peace we all want. Think about that. That's what's happening in the world today. A free Iraq will help us keep the peace. A free Iraq will be an ally in the war against terror. And someday, an American President will be sitting down at the table with a duly elected leader from Iraq, talking about how to keep the peace. And our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

These are important times. It is important we complete the mission successfully. I know some of the citizens of our country have concerns over Iraq. I respect that. We ought to take this issue seriously because it's a serious matter.

I assure them we're in Iraq because I believe it is necessary for the—to get a positive outcome in this war on terror. That's what I believe. If another terror regime were allowed to emerge in Iraq, the terrorists would find a home and a new source of funding. They would correctly conclude that free nations do not have the will to defend themselves. If Iraq becomes a free society in the heart of the Middle East, we'll have an ally and a model for other nations to look at.

That's why Democratic Senator Joe Lieberman calls Iraq “a crucial battle in the global war on terrorism.” That's why Prime Minister Tony Blair called the struggle in Iraq “the crucible in which the future of global terrorism will be determined.” That's why the terrorists are fighting with desperate cruelty, because they know their own future is at stake. Iraq is no diversion. It is a place where civilization is taking a decisive stand against chaos and terror, and we must not waver.

Unfortunately, my opponent has been known to waver. [Laughter] His well-chosen words and his rationalizations cannot explain why he voted to authorize force against Saddam Hussein and then voted against money to support our troops in combat.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** He actually tried to clear it up initially by issuing the famous quote, “I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it.” [Laughter] I've been in politics for some time. I've never heard one of them put it that way before. [Laughter] He now says he made a mistake in how he talked about his vote. The mistake is not what Senator Kerry said. The mistake is what he did in voting against funding for our troops in harm's way. That is the kind of wavering a nation at war can never afford.

On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It helped shape my thinking about my duty to protect you. I'll never forget that day. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, “Whatever it takes.” I was doing my best to console those who were coming out of that rubble. They had grime and dirt all over them. I looked a guy right in the eye—he had bloodshot eyes—and he said, “Don't let me down.”

I wake up every morning since that day thinking about how to better protect America. I will never relent in doing what is necessary to secure this country and to protect you, whatever it takes.

A race for President is a contest for the future, and you know where I stand. I'm running for President to keep this Nation on the offensive against terrorists with the goal of total victory and peace for our children and our grandchildren. I'm running for President

to keep this economy moving so every worker has a good job and quality health care and a secure retirement. I'm running for President to make our strong Nation a more compassionate society where no one is left out, because I believe everybody counts and everybody matters.

I have a hopeful vision—I have a optimistic vision about this country. You would have one too if you've seen what I've seen. I've seen the spirit of America under good times and bad times. I've seen the great character of this Nation rise up to help a fellow citizen who hurts. I've seen strangers put their arms around another person and say, "I love you, brother." "I love you, sister. What can I do to help you?"

I believe this young century will be liberty's century. We'll promote liberty abroad to protect our country and build a better world beyond terror. We'll encourage liberty here at home to spread prosperity and opportunity to every part of this land. I'm going to carry this message to my fellow citizens in these closing days of this campaign. I'm looking forward to it, and with your help, we'll carry Wisconsin and win a great victory on November the 2d.

Thank you all for coming. I'm glad you're here. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:19 at Marathon Park. In his remarks, he referred to television talk show host Jay Leno; John Gard, speaker, Wisconsin State Assembly; Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker; Mayor James E. Tipple of Wausau, WI; former Representative Scott L. Klug of Wisconsin; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

### **Proclamation 7828—Leif Erikson Day, 2004**

*October 7, 2004*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

More than 1,000 years ago, Leif Erikson led his crew on a journey across the Atlantic, becoming the first European known to have set foot on North American soil. Every October, we honor this courageous Viking ex-

plorer, his historic voyage, and the rich heritage of Nordic Americans.

Immigrants from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden and their descendants have made great contributions to our Nation in the fields of business, politics, the arts, education, agriculture, and other areas. Nordic Americans have also made a significant mark on our country's society and culture, and have helped to establish and define America's most cherished principles. Their energy and spirit have inspired others, and their courage, skill, and determination have played an important role in the development of our country. Today, millions of people in the United States trace their origins to these Nordic countries, and their contributions to America make our country stronger and better.

On this day, we also recognize our long-standing ties to these nations that were home to the ancestors of many Americans. Together, we continue to work to advance prosperity, expand freedom, and increase stability and security in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

To honor Leif Erikson, the courageous son of Iceland and grandson of Norway, and to celebrate our citizens of Nordic-American heritage, the Congress, by joint resolution (Public Law 88-566) approved on September 2, 1964, has authorized and requested the President to proclaim October 9 of each year as "Leif Erikson Day."

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 9, 2004, as Leif Erikson Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs to honor our rich Nordic-American heritage.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:40 a.m., October 8, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 12.