



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

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Iraq Must Disarm Says President in South Dakota Speech

Remarks by the President in South Dakota Welcome
Sioux Falls Convention Center
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

7:25 P.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks for that warm welcome. It just seems like the other day I was here in South Dakota. (Laughter and applause.) You know, your governor is a good buddy of mine, he's got pretty good judgment. He said, if you think it was good in Aberdeen, if you think the crowd was great in Aberdeen, if you think the enthusiasm was high in Aberdeen -- wait until you get to Sioux Falls. (Applause.)

We did have a great crowd in Aberdeen, about 300 or 400 people couldn't get in the hall. (Laughter.) A lot of them came down from Aberdeen tonight -- (applause) -- to be at this rally, and I want to thank you all for coming down. I want to thank you for your work. And right after I finish speaking, you get home and turn out the vote. (Applause.)

Laura and I are here because the people of this important state have got some big decisions to make. You've got some decisions to make that will affect not only your state, but our nation. You've got some decisions that will make the future of this state and the future of our nation different. And we've got some suggestions on what you ought to do when you get inside that voting booth. (Applause.)

We believe -- we believe it's in the best interests of South Dakota and the best interests of America to elect John Thune to the United States Senate. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE: John Thune! John Thune! John Thune!

THE PRESIDENT: John is a wise man. He had Laura campaigning with him all day. (Applause.) And so the second reason I've come here is because I thought it would be wise to hook up with Laura the day before her birthday. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE: (Singing "Happy Birthday") (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: And, Honey, that's your birthday gift. (Applause.)

I'm also here because I'm seeking some allies, some people I can count on, some people who represent the good folks of this state. You've got a man running for the United States Congress who I call friend, because he is one; a man who understands this state well; a man who's served with distinction as your governor; a man who will be a great United States Congressman. I hope you work hard and put Bill Janklow in the House of Representatives. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE: We want Bill! We want Bill! We want Bill!

THE PRESIDENT: I one time in this state described him as a "piece of work." (Laughter.) But he's your piece of work. (Applause.)

I'm also proud to be here with a man who will be good for the South Dakota taxpayers, the South Dakota school children, a man who's going to do a great job as your governor, Mr. Mike Rounds. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE: We like Mike! We like Mike! We like Mike!

THE PRESIDENT: I'm also here to thank you for what you have done on behalf of these candidates, but, more importantly, what you're going to do. See, over the next two days they're counting on you to turn out the vote.

They're counting on you starting tomorrow morning when you go to your coffee shops -- and they've got some coffee shops here in South Dakota, I'm certain of that. (Laughter.) Sit around those tables and remind the people they have a duty in America to vote. You have an obligation as a citizen of this country -- (applause) -- to go to the polls. And as grassroots activists and as concerned citizens, remind them that with Thune and Janklow and Rounds, you've got some fine, fine people. (Applause.) That it's in the interests of this state -- and just don't talk to Republicans, either. Run across an independent, they care about low taxes and good government. And so do discerning Democrats. (Applause.)

No, they're counting on you. They've worked hard to earn your respect and your support, and you can make a difference come Tuesday. You can make a difference by getting people to the polls. You can make a difference by getting on those telephones. Everybody counts in this election and we're counting on you to pull them across the finished line. (Applause.)

No, we're here because we want to, for this good state, to send people to Washington with whom I can work, people whose vote I can count on for the good of the country. But I'm also here because I believe in John Thune, the person. I believe in those South Dakota values which are deeply ingrained in his heart. I know how he was raised. He was raised by folks who loved him, and they brought some common sense to him.

Most importantly, he's never forgot where he came from. See, he was raised to believe in the value of family. He understands the importance of family. (Applause.)

He's got a great family -- Kimberley and Brittany and Larissa. When they came up to the White House to talk about making this race, John talked about his family with passion. See, he's not one of these types that puts politics ahead of his family. He keeps his priorities straight. I like that in the future United States Senator. (Applause.)

He was raised with that important South Dakota value that says education is important. You believe that in this state, and he does in his heart. Thanks to his hard work, he helped secure \$185 million coming to the federal schools this year -- federal money coming to your schools this year.

But also thanks to his hard work and his belief in education, we worked together to pass a really fine piece of reform, education reform, that says everybody can learn; it says we've got to raise the standards and raise the bar; it says we trust the people of South Dakota to chart the path for excellence for the children who live in South Dakota, we believe in local control of schools.

But it also says for the first time, in return for that money, show us whether or not our children can read and write and add and subtract. If you believe every child can read and write and add and subtract, you need to ask that question. And when you find children in schools that are learning, we'll praise the teachers. But when you find children trapped in schools which will not teach and will not change, you need to demand something other than the status quo. No child should be left behind in the state of South Dakota. (Applause.)

John Thune understands and was raised with the value that you're supposed to keep your word. And we've given our word to the seniors in America that Medicare will work. And yet it's not working, because medicine has changed and Medicare hasn't. Medicine is modern; Medicare is stuck in the past. I look forward to working with soon-to-be Senator John Thune -- (applause) -- to modernize Medicare, which means prescription drugs for our seniors. (Applause.)

John Thune was raised to understand the value of the land. He understands farmers. He understands ranchers. He understands for the farmer and rancher every day is Earth Day. (Applause.) He understands -- he was raised on the value of hard work and that if you work hard, you should be able to get ahead in life. And that's why he was one of the strong supporters of mine in the United States Congress to reduce the taxes on the working people. (Applause.)

He knows what I know. He knows what I know, if people are having trouble finding work, the best way to increase jobs in America is to cut the taxes on the people who pay the bills. (Applause.) The more money you have in your pocket, the more you're going to demand something. And when you demand it, somebody is going to provide it, and when somebody provides it, somebody is more likely to find work.

The tax relief came at the right time. And you better have you a United States Senator who is willing to join President Bush and make the tax cuts permanent. (Applause.)

John also was raised by folks who said a person gets -- has a grievance, they ought to have a fair chance in the courts, that justice is important in America.

But the Senate is doing a lousy job with my federal judicial nominees, to the point where there is a vacancy problem in America. Too many of our benches have got vacancies. Not enough of my federal judges are getting through the United States Senate. They're playing politics with the nominees. In some cases, they're distorting the records. They don't like the fact that I named good, honorable people whose job it is not to write law, but to strictly interpret the United States Constitution. (Applause.)

There's no question in my mind that when it comes to making sure our benches are full of good and decent people, I can count on the support of Senator John Thune. (Applause.) And there should be no question in your mind the judges I name will represent the values of the majority of citizens from South Dakota. (Applause.)

And, finally, one of the values that I know John holds dear to his heart is the value that his World War II fighter pilot daddy taught him. And that is, sometimes you have to sacrifice for freedom; sometimes it's important to serve something greater than yourself to secure the freedom. And that means in the 21st century that we've got to sacrifice here in America to protect ourselves.

The most important responsibility John and I will have will be to work together to protect the homeland, to protect you from further attack; to prevent an enemy which hates America because we love freedom from hurting innocent life ever again.

There's a lot of good people working for you right now. The federal level and the state level and the local level, a lot of really decent people are running down any hint. Any time anybody kind of whispers that they may be thinking about doing something to America, you need to know we're moving on it. We're going to disrupt them and deny them any chance they have to hurt the American people. (Applause.)

But in order to make our job go better -- and, by the way, this isn't just something that's going to take place next year. We've been protecting the homeland for a while. They're out there, and it's going to take a while for us to rout them out. And therefore, I thought that it would be best to have a Department of Homeland Security so we could better coordinate the agencies involved with your protection, so we could change cultures if need be, so people got the message, their number one job in Washington is to protect you.

And I got a good bill out of the House of Representatives, thanks to John Thune. However, it is stuck in the United States Senate. And let me describe to you why it's stuck in the Senate. Because some senators --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Tom Daschle.

THE PRESIDENT: Some senators -- (laughter and applause) -- because some senators are trying to take power away from the President -- a power that every President has had since John F. Kennedy was the President. And that is the capacity to suspend collective bargaining rules in any department of the federal government when national security is at stake.

In other words, if there are some work rules that stand in the way of us being able to protect the American people, for the sake of national security, I now have the right to suspend those rules, for your protection. But because of special interests in Washington, some senators are trying to take away this power. And I'm not going to let them. I refuse to stand for a lousy bill. (Applause.)

But the best way to secure our homeland is to chase these killers down one person at a time and bring them to justice. It's a different kind of war we fight. It's important for you to understand that. John understands that. You see, in the old days, if you destroyed tanks and airplanes, you knew you were making progress. These killers are hiding in caves. They send youngsters to their suicidal deaths. The only way to deal with them is to treat them like they are, international criminals, and hunt them down one person at a time.

I went to the Congress and said, why don't you give me a defense bill that shows our mettle, that speaks clearly about our intentions. Thankfully, they did. They passed the largest increase since Ronald Reagan was the President. And here's the message, the message that John Thune was taught by his daddy: any time you put our troops into harm's way, they deserve the best pay, the best training and the best possible equipment. (Applause.)

And the other message is this: it doesn't matter how long it takes to secure our freedom; it doesn't matter how long it takes to secure the homeland, we're staying the course. There's no quit in America. There's not a calendar on my desk that says on such and such a date, bring them home. That's not how we think. That's not the lesson that John Thune learned from his dad or I learned from my dad or any of us learned from previous generations of people who sacrificed for our freedom.

No, we've been called into action. And we're making progress. Slowly but surely, we're dismantling the terrorist network which attacked America. Slowly but surely, we're hauling them in. See, that doctrine that says, either you're with us or you're with the enemy, it still stands. And there's a lot of people joining us in this international manhunt to bring them to justice.

What's important for us as we work to secure the homeland is to remember the stakes have changed. After September the 11th, world changed. It changed for a lot of reasons. Perhaps the most profound reason on a foreign policy perspective, or from a homeland security perspective, is that we're no longer protected by two big oceans. Used to be if there was a threat overseas we could deal with it if we chose to do so, but we didn't have to worry about something happening here at home. It used to be oceans could protect us from conflict and from threats.

But that's changed, and it's important to have people in the Senate who are clear-eyed realists. It's important to have people who see the world the way it is, not the way we hope it is. And the world is a dangerous place, particularly with people like Saddam Hussein in power.

Saddam Hussein is a man who told the world he wouldn't have weapons of mass destruction, but he's got them. He's a man who a while ago who was close to having a nuclear weapon. Imagine if this madman had a nuclear weapon. It's a man who not only has chemical weapons, but he's used chemical weapons against some of his neighbors. He used chemical weapons, incredibly enough, against his own people. He can't stand America. He can't stand some of our closest friends.

And, not only that, he is -- would like nothing better than to hook-up with one of these shadowy terrorist networks like al Qaeda, provide some weapons and training to them, let them come and do his dirty work, and we wouldn't be able to see his fingerprints on his action.

No, he's a threat. And that's why I went to the United Nations. I went to the United Nations because, I said to that august body, you need to hold this man to account. For 11 years, in resolution after resolution after resolution he's defied you. For the sake of keeping the peace, we want you to be effective. For the sake of keeping the world free, we want you to be an effective body. It's up to you, however. You can show the world whether you've got the backbone necessary to enforce your edicts or whether you're going to turn out to be just like the League of Nations, your choice to make.

And my message to Saddam Hussein is that, for the sake of peace, for the sake of freedom, you must disarm like you said you would do. But my message to you all and to the country is this: for the sake of our future freedoms, and for the sake of world peace, if the United Nations can't act, and if Saddam Hussein won't act, the United States will lead a coalition of nations to disarm Saddam Hussein. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE: USA! USA! USA!

THE PRESIDENT: And that's the lesson John learned from his daddy, that this country sometimes must act and act decisively in the name of freedom and peace, in order to keep the peace. That when we see a gathering threat, we shouldn't shirk our duty and responsibility, but we must deal with it.

I want you to know that out of the evil done to America is going to come some great good. I truly believe that. I believe by being firm and strong, we can keep the peace. I know that if we remember our values, remember that freedom is not America's gift to the world, freedom is a God-given gift to the world -- if we remember that value -- (applause) -- we remember our uniqueness and the values we hold dear, we can bring peace, and that's going to happen. And here at home, we'll have a better America, too. A better America.

Out of the evil done to this country is going to come a society which is more hopeful. See, you and I know that amongst our plenty, there are people who hurt, people who are hopeless, addicted, people who wonder if there is such a thing as love. People when you say, gosh, the American Dream applies to you, they don't have any idea what you're talking about. My attitude is -- and I know John shares this with me -- any time any of hurt, we all hurt. Any time somebody suffers, society suffers.

And government can help. We'll work on Medicare and health issues and education issues. But we've got to remember the limitations of government. While government can hand out money, it can't put hope in people's hearts, it can't put a sense of purpose in people's lives.

The best way to help people who hurt is to encourage our fellow American to put their arm around somebody in need and say, I love you, brother, I love you, sister. (Applause.) We can help in all kinds of ways.

Today, Rick Huffman came out to the airport. Rick, stand up. I know -- (applause). I appreciate you coming.

Let me tell you why I'm introducing Rick. Because he understands society can change one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time. See, Rick is a mentor with Big Brothers and Big Sisters right here in Sioux Falls. Rick is doing his part. (Applause.) Rick is -- and there's his little brother. Yes, sir. (Applause.)

There is a young man who is headed for college. I can see it, as sure as I'm standing here. (Applause.) Rick is going to help him work hard, and he's going to go to college and realize the greatness of this country.

And Rick is what I'm talking about. See, all of us can be a soldier in the army of compassion here in America. Many of you are, and I want to thank you for what you're doing.

No, out of the evil done to this country is going to come some great good. And the American spirit is strong and alive. It's a spirit that says, when it comes to the defense of our freedoms, we'll defend them. It also says that being a patriot means you serve something greater than yourself.

Flight 93 comes to mind when I'm thinking about the American spirit. Citizens were flying across the country on that fateful day. They heard the airplane was going to be used as a weapon. They realized this plane was going to crash into the ground and kill. They told their loved ones goodbye, they said a prayer; a guy said, let's roll. They took the plane into the ground to serve something greater than themselves in life. The American spirit is strong and alive in America today. (Applause.)

It is alive and well because of values such as those South Dakota values. It is alive and well. It allows me to boldly predict that, out of the evil done to America will come peace in the world and a better, more hopeful America here at home.

And I can say that with certainty, because this is the greatest nation, full of the finest people on the face of this earth. I'm honored you'd be here tonight. Thank you for supporting John. May God bless you and may God bless America. (Applause.)

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