

of United States persons and by depriving them of access to the U.S. market and financial system.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on Medicare Reform

October 20, 2006

Medicare Reform

The President. Secretary Leavitt and I are pleased to be here at this counter where seniors come to buy prescription drugs. And one of the interesting things that happens at this counter is that these decent folks are constantly reminding seniors that there is a cost-saving benefit, Plan D in Medicare, available for them. It's a new plan; it just started last year. The Health and Human Services helped implement the plan, and millions of seniors are benefiting. Our seniors are saving money. They're getting better coverage. It's a plan that I'm real proud of.

We will continue to work to make it as good as it possibly can be. I really do want to thank these kind-hearted souls who say to a senior that you no longer—poor seniors, particularly—you no longer have to choose between food and medicine because there's a new way forward. Our compassionate approach to health care is working for America's seniors. And I want to thank you.

You want to say anything about the enrollment process?

Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt. On November 15th, people can go through an open enrollment period. Eighty percent of seniors who are on this plan are satisfied with their plan, and if they're satisfied, they don't need to do anything. But over 80 percent will be able to find a plan that's cheaper, if they want to, or that may, in fact, fit their particular situation.

We'll have people available at 1-800-MEDICARE. There will be people at pharmacies and at senior centers—and others that can help them around the country. This has been a big success, and we're going to get better at it. We're getting better at it every year. It'll be better this year than it was last, and it will be better the year after that, just like Medicare was in 1965. This is a very important American success story that we'll now build upon.

The President. Thank you all very much. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke to reporters at 11:04 a.m. at a CVS Pharmacy.

Remarks at a National Republican Senatorial Committee Reception

October 20, 2006

Thanks for coming. Please be seated. I appreciate you being here. On the way

down, Mr. McConnell said, "Keep it short; they haven't had their food yet." [Laughter]

But I want to thank you all for coming. As you well know, we're heading down the stretch here in this important political season. I want to thank you for helping our Senate candidates. It means a lot. I don't know about you, but I am absolutely confident that Mitch McConnell will be the leader of the United States Senate in 2007.

I appreciate Mitch's leadership, and I appreciate the leadership of Elizabeth Dole as well. These are two of the finest United States Senators we have.

Laura sends her best. She is a patient woman. *[Laughter]* She is doing just fine. I'm real proud of her. She is a fabulous First Lady.

Oh, there's going to be a lot of noise here at the end of the campaign. There always is. And sometimes it's all meant to obscure the main issues. Sometimes folks don't really want to talk about the core issues that will affect the future of this country. I think there are two big issues that we need to stay focused on and I know our candidates are talking about, and they're issues in which there are big differences of opinion. And the first issue is taxes.

There is a difference of opinion between what we ought to be doing with your money, see. There are people in the Democrat Party who think they can spend your money far better than you can. And we believe that you're plenty capable of spending your own money. As a matter of fact, we believe that when you have more of your own money in your pocket to save, invest, or spend, all of us benefit; that the economy grows; that hope expands; that the entrepreneurial spirit is invigorated.

And so in times of economic difficulty, I worked with Members of the United States Senate and the United States House to pass the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was President of the United States. We didn't think the Tax Code ought to penalize marriage, so we reduced the marriage penalty. We cut taxes for small businesses. There's a reason why we cut taxes

for small businesses: Because we understand that 70 percent of new jobs in America are created by small-business owners.

We cut the taxes on capital gains and dividends, because we wanted to encourage investment. We understand that when people invest, it means that someone is more likely to be able to find a job. We cut the taxes on—we doubled the child tax credit. In other words, we cut the taxes on families with children. We put the death tax on the road to extinction. We don't think it's fair to tax you twice, once while you're living and once after you're dead. As a matter of fact, we cut taxes on everybody who pays taxes. *[Laughter]* We don't believe in this selective tax cutting. We said, if you're going to pay income taxes, you ought to get relief.

And we had a spirited debate about whether or not the tax cuts made sense. A lot of the Democrats in the United States Senate said, "These tax cuts are going to make the economy worse." They went around the United States saying tax cuts don't make any sense, but they did make sense.

We've created 6.6 million new jobs since August of 2003. This week, a new report showed that real wages grew 2.2 percent over the past 12 months. That's faster than the average for the 1990s. Because of our progrowth economic policies, this economy is strong. People are working. The entrepreneurial spirit is up. People are buying homes. Our plan works, and our candidates have something to run on coming this November.

There's a difference of opinion here in Washington, and I'm going to continue reminding people of the clear difference of opinion in this campaign. Let me tell you what the recent—the top leader, the Democrat leader in the House of Representatives said recently. This is a person who aspires to be the Speaker of the House. She said, "We love tax cuts." She actually said that. Given her record, she must be a secret admirer. *[Laughter]* Over

the past 5 years, she and her Democrat colleagues voted against every major tax cut that we passed. Time and time again, when she had her opportunity to show her love for tax cuts, she voted no. If this is the Democrats' idea of love, I wouldn't want to see what hate looks like. *[Laughter]*

Now they're trotting out their old lines. I'm sure Elizabeth and Mitch will tell you what they're hearing out there. They're saying, "Listen, we're just going to tax the rich." It is the same old, tired excuse for raising taxes. It sounds good, but that's not what they believe. Look at the record. In 1992, when they took over the White House and they campaigned on middle class tax cuts, when they got the capacity to deliver on their promises, they passed one of the largest tax increases in American history.

Raising taxes is what the Democrats want to do; make no mistake about it. If they take over the Senate, they will run up your taxes. Raising your taxes would hurt our economy. Raising our taxes would diminish the entrepreneurial spirit. Raising taxes would be bad for small-business owners. Raising taxes is a Democrat idea of growing the economy, and it won't work. The best way to keep this economy strong is to make the tax cuts we passed permanent.

The other issue in this campaign is which party, which group of leaders can keep America safe. We are at war, and it's a tough war, but it's a war that is necessary to protect you. Our most important job, the solemn responsibility of those of us who are honored to serve you in Washington, DC, is to do everything in our power to protect the American people from further attack.

There is an enemy which—*[applause]*—we face a coldblooded enemy. You can't negotiate with these people. You cannot hope for the best, because they are ideologues bound by the desire to inflict damage on nations which love freedom. They will murder the innocent. They have no conscience. And they murder to achieve

an objective, and that's what's important for our fellow citizens to understand. It may sound farfetched to some Americans out there, but this group of ideologues wants to establish a caliphate, a governing body, a—they want to spread their ideology of hate from Indonesia to Spain. That's what they have so declared. And they recognize in order to do that, they must inflict serious damage on America, to the point where we're willing to retreat from the Middle East, so they can topple moderate governments.

Imagine a world in which radical extremists not only topple moderate governments so they can have territory from which to plan, plot, and attack America and our allies, but they have the capacity to control oil resources, which they would be more than willing to use in order to blackmail America and our allies into further retreat. You can imagine a circumstance in which these radicals say, "We'll run up the price of oil by denying oil on the markets unless you abandon your allies such as Israel, or unless you further withdraw from the world." And compound that with a nuclear Iran, and the world 20 or 30 years from now is going to say, "What happened to them in 2006? How come they couldn't see the threat? What blinded these people in order that they did not do their job?"

One of the key issues in this election is who best sees the future and who best has the plan to deal with it? I firmly see the threats we face, and the best way for America to protect ourselves is to go on the offense and to stay on the offense. *[Applause]* Thank you all.

However, going on the offense is not going to be enough to protect you. It's a part of a comprehensive strategy. You know, we've got to be right 100 percent of the time in protecting this homeland from those who still want to attack, and the enemy has got to be right one time. And therefore, I felt it was vital that our professionals who are in charge of protecting you have all the tools necessary to

do so. And so right after September the 11th, we worked with Congress, in some cases—and in some cases, we felt like we didn't need to—to put tools in the hands of professionals.

One such tool was to tear down a wall that prevented law enforcement from talking to intelligence. I know that's hard to believe, but that's the reality of what had happened in our country; that's what grew up to be the case. How can you protect our country when you've got people gathering intelligence and they can't tell the law enforcement who are in charge of protecting you what they know?

And so after September the 11th, I went to the United States Congress and said, "Let's pass what we call the PATRIOT Act." It was a chance to make sure that we gave our folks on the frontlines of protecting you all the tools necessary to do so. Right after September the 11th, both the House and the Senate overwhelmingly passed the bill, but the bill needed to be reauthorized some years later. And when it came up for reauthorization, Democrat Members of the United States Senate tried to kill the bill—they, what we call here in Washington, filibustered. They didn't want to give that tool necessary to those who protect you.

There's just a difference of opinion. We believe we're at war and we should give all the folks protecting you the tools necessary to do so. Evidently, Democrats don't. As a matter of fact, the Democrat leader, the person who aspires to be the majority leader in the United States Senate, when asked about his filibuster, he said—he proudly proclaimed he killed the bill. And a reporter gave him a chance to recant; he said, "No, I'm proud of that."

I don't think that's the kind of attitude that is necessary—we can afford if the biggest job we have in Washington, DC, is to protect you. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed, and I was able to sign the reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act, thanks to

people like Mitch McConnell and Elizabeth Dole.

I felt it was important that our professionals at the Central Intelligence Agency questioned people we picked up on the battlefield, in order to find out what they know, see. If you're at war, you need to make sure that you get as much information as possible, in order to protect you. It's a different kind of war. We can't measure the size of an infantry against these people. We don't go out and count the number of airplanes they have. This is a war that requires precise intelligence, good information, if the task is to protect you before an attack comes.

And so yes, sir, I set up a program that gave our CIA professionals the opportunity to question people like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the person our intelligence officials think is responsible for the killings on September the 11th—the mastermind. You could imagine my thought processes—they tell me they captured Khalid Sheikh Mohammed; my first question was, "What does he know? Does he know anything else that we need to know?"

And so as a result of a Supreme Court ruling, I took this bill to the United States Senate. The Court said, work with the Senate to set up a military tribunal. I felt it was important for us to give these killers the justice that they had denied others. But as a result of that bill, we also worked with the Senate to put legislation in place that would make it clear to our professionals that they could interrogate.

I view this as a clarifying moment for the country, a chance for Republicans, Democrats, and independents to learn first-hand the differences of opinion we have in Washington, DC, because 70 percent of the people in the United States Senate who call themselves Democrat voted against giving our professionals the tools necessary to question people so we can prevent attacks. These are fine people; they're patriotic people; but they're wrong. They don't understand the stakes in the war on terror. In

order to protect America, we must stay on the offense against the enemy and give our professionals the tools necessary to protect you.

It is interesting what's happened to the Democrat Party. I'm reading a lot of history these days, and I read about Franklin Roosevelt, who was strong in his confrontation of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. His strength of character, his vision helped set the course for victory in World War II—strong wartime leader. It was a Democrat, President Harry Truman, who confronted the rise of Soviet communism, and he set the course for victory in the cold war. John F. Kennedy declared America's commitment to, in his words, "pay any price and bear any burden" in the defense of freedom. These Presidents understood the challenges of their time and were willing to confront those challenges with strong leadership. And at the same time, they had great faith in the power of liberty and freedom.

And then something began to change. In 1972, the Democrats nominated a Presidential candidate who declared, "I don't like communism, but I don't think we have any great obligation to save the world from it." It was a—it began a slow shift of philosophy in the Democrat Party. A few years later, at the height of the cold war, a Democrat President told the country that America had gotten over, quote, "inordinate fear of communism." In the mid-1980s, a Senator from Massachusetts, whom Democrats would later choose as their Presidential nominee, declared that Americans should, quote, "abandon the kind of thinking that suggests we can gain a meaningful advantage over the Soviet Union in the nuclear arms race."

In other words, this is a different attitude. The philosophy of that party began to shift. Fortunately, in the 1980s, America had a Republican President who saw things differently. Ronald Reagan declared, "My theory of the cold war is that we win and they lose."

By this time, the Democrat Party did not share his optimism or his strategy for victory. See, they'd gotten to the point where they didn't think that we could win. Many of their leaders fought the Reagan defense buildup; they fought his strategic defense initiative; they opposed the liberation of Grenada; they didn't like America's support for freedom fighters resisting Soviet puppet regimes; they heaped scorn on him; they mocked him when he called the Soviet Union an "evil empire." Despite all the opposition that the President faced from the Democrats, he didn't waver. He stood for what he believed, and history will remember Ronald Reagan as the man who brought down the Soviet Union and won the cold war.

And now we're involved in what I have called the great ideological struggle of the 21st century. It's a struggle between the forces of liberty and the forces of a tyrannical vision that does not believe in freedom. It's a struggle between moderates who want to live in peace in the Middle East and extremists and radicals who will use murder to achieve their objective.

This is going to be a long struggle, but in order to prevail, it requires perseverance and determination and a strong belief in the power of liberty to conquer the ideology of hate. The Democrat Party that has evolved from one that was confident in its capacity to help deal with the problems of the world to one that is doubting today still has an approach of doubt and defeat. They believe that the war in Iraq is a diversion from the war on terror. I believe the war in Iraq is a central part in defeating the terrorists, in order that we protect ourselves.

If you don't believe me and if the citizens of our country don't believe me, then they ought to at least listen to Usama bin Laden—[laughter]—and the number-two man in Al Qaida, Mr. Zawahiri, both of whom have made it perfectly clear that Iraq is a central part of their strategy to establish their caliphate. They believe America

is weak, and it's just a matter of time before we will lose our nerve and abandon that young democracy in the heart of the Middle East. That's what they firmly believe, and they have said so and stated it clearly.

The same Democrats that doubt and don't believe this is a part of the war on terror also argue that we should pull out our troops before the job is done. The person I ran against for President said there ought to be a date certain for withdrawal. That means it doesn't matter what's happening on the ground; it just means, get out. You've had a leader in the House say, "Well, the best way to deal with this is to put our troops on an island some 5,000 miles away from Iraq." There's all kinds of difference of opinions, but none of them are, "Let's do the hard work necessary to secure America."

We have a difference of opinion. And that's why I have said that the Democrat Party, the party that—where some leaders have said we shouldn't spend another dime on Iraq; others have said, get out now; others said, get out in a couple of months. That's why they are the party of cut-and-run.

It's a difference of opinion, but it's a fundamental issue in this campaign. The voters out there need to ask the question, which political party will support the brave men and women who wear our uniform when they do their job of protecting America? Which political party is willing to give our professionals the tools necessary to protect the American people? Which political party has a strategy for victory in this war on terror?

Listen, I fully understand it's a tough fight in Iraq. I know it, you know it, and our troops know it. Last week—or earlier this week, I spoke with the Prime Minister of Iraq, Prime Minister Maliki, and we discussed the violence in his country. I told him I was amazed at how tough the Iraqis are when it comes to violence. Think about that. They haven't abandoned their hopes

for a government of, by, and for the people; 12 million people voted; they still long to live in a free society. Yet they're putting up with unspeakable violence.

There's a reason why the violence is increasing. One reason is that our forces, coalition and Iraqi forces, are focused on operations to bring security in Baghdad. In other words, we're on the move. We're confronting those who would like to sow sectarian violence. We're confronting the criminals who are taking advantage of the situation. We're confronting the militias who are harming innocent people. We're operating in some of the city's most violent neighborhoods to disrupt and bring to justice Al Qaida and IED makers and death squad leaders. We're engaging the enemies, and they're putting up a tough fight.

Another reason why is the terrorists are trying to influence public opinion around the world and right here in the United States. They carry video cameras, film their atrocities, e-mail images and video clips to Middle Eastern cable networks like Al Jazeera and opinion leaders throughout the West. They operate web sites where they say their goal is to, quote, "carry out a media war that is parallel to the military war."

Our goal in Iraq is clear, and it's unchanging: a country that can sustain itself, a country that can govern itself, a country that can defend itself, and a country which will be an ally in the war against these extremists. Our strategy is threefold: to help rebuild that country, to help the political process move forward, and to help the Iraqis stand up security forces that are capable of defeating the enemy themselves.

Our tactics are constantly changing. I talk to our generals who are in charge of these operations, and my message to them is, whatever you need, we'll give you; and whatever tactics you think work on the ground, you put in place. Our goal hasn't changed, but the tactics are constantly adjusting to an enemy which is brutal and violent.

My message to the United States of America is, victory in Iraq is vital for the security of a generation of Americans who are coming up. And so we will stay in Iraq, we will fight in Iraq, and we will win in Iraq. *[Applause]*

All right. Thank you. Sit down now. Thank you. I'm not through yet. *[Laughter]* I'm almost through. *[Laughter]* The waiter is signaling to me, you know, giving me one of these things. *[Laughter]*

I want to tell you one other thing we believe in, and I believe it's a difference between the philosophies of our parties—is that I believe in the power of liberty to transform regions and countries and yield the peace we want. That's what I believe. I believe this is an ideological struggle, and the way you defeat an ideology of hate is with an ideology of hope. I believe in the universality of freedom. I believe there's an Almighty, and I believe a great gift of that Almighty to every man, woman, and child on the Earth is freedom.

I believe people—I believe America should never condemn anybody to a society that does not embrace freedom. I believe in freedom so much that I wasn't surprised when 12 million people defied car bombers and said, "I want to be free." And I believe free societies yield the peace we want.

A story that I share all the time with people is the story about my relationship with the Prime Minister of Japan—former Prime Minister now, Prime Minister Koizumi. You might remember, the Prime Minister and I went down to Elvis's place—*[laughter]*—in Memphis, Tennessee. I went down there because I'd never been. *[Laughter]* He went down there—and asked me to take him down there because he liked Elvis. *[Laughter]*

But I wanted to tell a story to the American people. You see, my dad fought the Japanese. They were the sworn enemy of the United States. And many of your relatives did the same thing. They attacked us; we responded with the full force and might of the United States. Kids signed

up; many didn't come home. They volunteered to fight for our freedom, just like the kids are doing today, volunteering to fight for our freedom.

One of them was an 18-year-old Navy fighter pilot. I find it really interesting that his son was on Air Force One with the Prime Minister of the former enemy talking about the peace. See, going down to Memphis from Washington, we didn't spend a lot of time analyzing Elvis's songs. *[Laughter]* We talked about North Korea and how Japan and the United States could work together to convince the leader of North Korea to give up his nuclear weapons ambitions. We talked about the fact that Japan had 1,000 troops in Iraq.

See, Prime Minister Koizumi knows what I know, that when you find a young democracy that's battling against extremists, it's in our interests to help that young democracy succeed. It's in the interests of not only this generation, who has got the charge of protecting ourselves from terrorists, but from future generations, to help democracies flourish. He understands what I know, that the reason we're talking about the peace is because something happened between World War II, when Japan was the sworn enemy of the United States, and 2006, when they're flying from Washington to Memphis on Air Force One. And what happened was, Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy.

The lesson is, liberty has the capacity to change an enemy into an ally. And someday American Presidents will be sitting down with duly elected leaders from the Middle East talking about keeping the peace, and a generation of Americans will be better off for it.

Thank you for your help. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:53 a.m. at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Organizations That Support the United States Military in Iraq and Afghanistan

October 20, 2006

I've had an uplifting and heartwarming conversation with fellow citizens of all ages from across our country who are supporting our troops. These folks don't really care about politics. What they care about is how best to send a strong message to the men and women who wear our uniform that America supports them.

And so we've had examples of people who started web pages to get different supplies to send to troops who are—who need a care package; to a woman who started a group of people to sew garments to help the wounded recover faster; to a guy who helped start video conferencing capabilities so that loved ones can share big moments in their lives together, even though one is in combat; to a child who started treasure hunts to raise money to help kids go to

school. It's a remarkable country when we have people who decide to step up and help men and women who are serving their country in a time of need.

And I want to thank you all for coming, and I appreciate what you're doing. Americasupportsyou.mil is a web site where our fellow citizens can volunteer to help. You can become a part of a group and find out ways that you can support our men and women in uniform. These are brave, courageous people who deserve the full support of the American citizenry.

So I want to thank you all for coming. I appreciate you being here. Thanks very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Remarks at a National Italian American Foundation Dinner

October 20, 2006

Ian [Ken],* thank you for that kind introduction. But what you forgot to tell the people was that my mother said, "Listen, son, I know you're going to be going over there this evening. Remember your father has already spoken, so keep your remarks short." [Laughter]

I thank you for your kind words about my mother and father. I am real proud they're with you today. He is a remarkable guy and—[applause]. The only mistake you made was not to insist that Laura spoke instead of me. [Laughter] She's doing great. She said, "Look, you keep it short too, because the food is on the table." [Laughter]

But thanks for letting me come by to say hello. I'm honored to be with you. I love to pay homage to the Italian Americans that have made our country so great. And that's precisely what you do. The National Italian American Foundation is an important organization because it reminds people of the great Italian heritage of many of our citizens. It also heralds the great diversity of our country. So thanks for what you're doing. Thanks for letting me come by to say hello.

I'm honored to be here with the Ambassador from the great country of Italy. Mr. Ambassador, it's good to see you, sir. I am proud to say that Italy is a strong ally of the United States of America.

* White House correction.