

Liberty has got the capacity to transform an enemy into an ally. Liberty has got the capacity to transform regions of hopelessness to regions of light and hope.

Someday an American President will be sitting down with duly elected leaders from the Middle East talking about keeping the peace, and our children and grandchildren will be better off for it.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:03 p.m. at the Mabry Banquet and Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Saulius Anuzis, chairman, and Holly Hughes, national committeewoman, Michigan Republican Party; former Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea.

Remarks Following Discussions With Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert
“Jaap” de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and an
Exchange With Reporters
October 27, 2006

President Bush. I’m proud to welcome the Secretary General of NATO here to the Oval Office. We’ve just had a fascinating discussion.

First, Mr. Secretary General, you’ve been a very strong leader. As a matter of fact, you’ve made NATO a values-based organization that is capable of dealing with the true threats of the 21st century. I appreciate your leadership. I particularly appreciate the fact that you have led the 26 nations of NATO into Afghanistan to help this young democracy. You know what I know, that the real challenge for the future is to help people of moderation and young democracies succeed in the face of threats and attacks by radicals and extremists who do not share our ideology, have kind of a dark vision of the world.

I appreciate the fact that you’re reaching out to global partners, nations which share our value but have not been considered a—necessarily considered a part of NATO. I want to thank your view of making sure NATO continues to provide the opportunity for other nations to join NATO.

I’m looking forward to Riga. The Riga summit is a time for us to celebrate the great successes of this partnership. Mr. Secretary General and I will be there remind-

ing our partners that we have a lot of work to be done in the noble cause of peace.

So welcome.

Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer. Mr. President, thank you very much, and thank you for giving me your time. I can echo your words. NATO is delivering security in the 21st century. And that means defending values, and that means defending values not only in Europe but far away from NATO’s traditional area. And the case in point, of course, is Afghanistan, where there was a regime which was grossly violating human rights, no women’s rights, public executions. There we are trying to assist the Afghan Government to establish democracy, to establish human rights, to establish those values.

And let me say that when, in those actions of NATO, of those brave NATO soldiers, civilians are killed, as happened 2 days ago, that’s always a tragedy. That’s a tragedy.

But let me convince you to look at the broader picture. They are against democracy. Girls did not go to school when the Taliban was running Afghanistan. Now they go to school. Now there is a precedence. Now there is a government. Civilian victims are a tragedy, but we are there in favor

of democracy. They are there to destroy democracy, and they are there to destroy our values.

Mr. President, I'm looking forward to the Riga summit, where we'll see a 21st century NATO delivering security in many, many places of the world with 50,000 soldiers, including many Americans, on three continents. That is the challenge, but I can tell you that NATO is up to the challenge. NATO is delivering security, and NATO will continue to do this, indeed, with its presence, but also with global partners, because terrorism, proliferation, failed states, and failing states are global threats we have to face and to counter on a global scale.

Mr. President, once again, thank you very much for being here.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

I'll answer a couple of questions this morning. Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

Iran

Q. Thank you, sir. What does it say to you that Iran is doubling its enrichment capacity?

President Bush. It says to me that we must double our effort to work with the international community to persuade the Iranians that there is only isolation from the world if they continue working forward on such a program. And I've read the speculation about that that's what they may be doing, but whether they've doubled it or not, the idea of Iran having a nuclear weapon is unacceptable. And it's unacceptable to the United States, and it's unacceptable to nations we're working with in the United Nations to send a common message.

Caren [Caren Bohan, Reuters].

Interrogation of Terrorists

Q. Sir, do you agree with the Vice President that a dunk in the water is a "no brainer" when it comes to interrogating a terror suspect?

President Bush. This country doesn't torture. We're not going to torture. We will

interrogate people we pick up off the battlefield to determine whether or not they've got information that will be helpful to protect the country.

Keil [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News].

2006 Midterm Elections

Q. Mr. President, with the elections just about 10 days away, polls show that voters are more disenchanted with the Republican-led Congress than at any time since 1994, when the Democrats lost power. What explanation or answer do you have for people who feel that way?

President Bush. Keil, I understand people here in Washington have already determined the outcome of the elections. As I said in my press conference the other day, I've seen it before, where people start measuring the drapes in their new offices before the vote has been counted—in other words, they're taking the people's vote for granted.

This election is going to be determined by how our candidates run locally. And I believe if they continue to emphasize the big issues—keeping taxes low and protecting the American people—we'll win. And so we'll see how the outcome comes. I know there's a lot of speculation here in Washington, DC, and there's a lot of fascination about listening to these pundits and people who are giving their opinions.

All I can tell you is what I see: I see enthusiasm amongst Republicans; I see candidates who are saying, "Vote for me. I will work to make sure America doesn't get attacked again." And I'm seeing candidates saying, "I understand that if we run up your taxes like the Democrats do, it's going to hurt this economy, and so we'll keep your taxes low."

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

The President's Radio Address *October 28, 2006*

Good morning. Election day is around the corner, and one of the biggest issues at stake in this campaign is your taxes. Here is my philosophy: I believe that our economy grows and the American Dream reaches more citizens when you keep more of what you earn. With more money in your pocket, it is easier for families to afford a good education, it is easier for young people to afford the downpayment on a home of their own, and it's easier for small-business owners to go out and invest and create jobs.

So my administration and the Republican Congress enacted the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was in the White House. We cut taxes for every American who pays income taxes. We doubled the child tax credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. We cut taxes on small business. We cut taxes on capital gains and dividends to promote investment and jobs. And to reward family businesses and farmers for a lifetime of hard work and savings, we put the death tax on the path to extinction.

Now the results of these tax cuts are in. The tax cuts we passed have left more than a trillion dollars in the hands of American workers, families, and small businesses, and you have used that money to fuel a strong and growing economy. Last year, our economy grew faster than any other major industrialized nation. This week, we learned that our economy grew by 1.6 percent during the third quarter of this year. As we expected, this rate is slower than in previous quarters. Yet the evidence still points to a vibrant economy that is providing more jobs and better wages for our workers and helping reduce the Federal deficit.

Since August 2003, the American economy has created more than 6.6 million new jobs, including over 1.7 million jobs in the past 12 months alone. Real take-home wages are up by 2.2 percent over the past

year, which means an extra \$1,300 for the typical family of four with two wage earners. And the economic growth spurred by tax cuts has helped reduce the deficit. Tax revenues have soared as the economy has grown, allowing us to meet our goal of cutting the Federal deficit in half, 3 years ahead of schedule.

All these signs point to one conclusion: Cutting your taxes worked. Unfortunately, the Democrats are still determined to raise your taxes, and if they gain control of the Congress, they can do so without lifting a finger. Under current law, many of the tax cuts we passed have to be renewed by Congress, or they will expire. In other words, if Congress fails to act, your taxes will automatically go up. If Democrats take control of the House, the committee in charge of all tax legislation would be chaired by a Democrat who recently said he cannot think of one of our tax cuts that he would extend. And if there's no legislation to renew and extend the tax cuts, every tax rate will go back up to its old, higher level.

Take just one example: If Democrats have their way, the child tax credit will be cut in half, from \$1,000 per child to just \$500 per child. And think of what that means for your family. Next time you're having dinner at home, look around the table and multiply the number of children you have by \$500. That's how much more you will be sending to Washington in taxes if Democrats take control of the Congress. If you have two children, that is an extra \$1,000 the Democrats will add to your tax bill every year. If you have three children, that's an extra \$1,500. If you have four children, that's an extra \$2,000. That may not seem like a lot to Democrats in Washington, but for working families across America, that is real money.