

colleagues selected her to lead the House Republican Conference—the highest leadership post ever held by a Republican woman. She will be missed when she departs the Congress.

I look forward to continuing to work with her throughout the remainder of her service. Laura and I appreciate Deb's friendship and wish her and her family all the best.

Statement on Representative J. Dennis Hastert's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

August 17, 2007

It has been a great pleasure forging a close friendship and working relationship with Denny Hastert. He is a good and decent man, and he was a strong and effective Speaker. After teaching government and history at Yorkville High School in Illinois, Denny began making history serving in the Illinois House of Representatives and the United States House of Representatives. During his two decades in Congress, Denny rose through the ranks as a hard-working Member whom colleagues on both sides came to admire, trust, and respect and became the longest serving Republican Speaker in history. Drawing on lessons he learned as a coach, he successfully guided

Members of Congress to work together to enact legislation that has improved the lives of Americans. He led Congress to reduce taxes, improve education, strengthen Medicare, bolster our national defense, and support our troops. Our Nation is stronger because of his service.

I am indebted to Denny for his candid advice and strong support, and I look forward to working with him throughout the remainder of the 110th Congress. As my good friend prepares to move on to the next phase of his life, he has my gratitude for his distinguished service. Laura and I wish Denny, Jean, and their entire family all the best.

The President's Radio Address

August 18, 2007

Good morning. In recent months, American and Iraqi forces have struck powerful blows against Al Qaida terrorists and violent extremists in Anbar and other Provinces. In recent days, our troops and Iraqi allies launched a new offensive called Phantom Strike. In this offensive, we are carrying out targeted operations against terrorists and extremists fleeing Baghdad and other key cities to prevent them from returning or setting up new bases of operation. The terrorists remain dangerous and brutal, as we saw this week when they massacred

more than 200 innocent Yazidis, a small religious minority in northwestern Iraq. Our hearts go out to the families of those killed, and our troops are going to go after the murderers behind this horrific attack.

As we surge combat operations to capture and kill the enemy, we are also surging Provincial Reconstruction Teams to promote political and economic progress. Since January, we have doubled the number of these teams, known as PRTs. They bring together military, civilian, and diplomatic