

Remarks Following a Meeting With NCAA Football Head Coaches May 26, 2008

The President. I just welcomed five of our Nation's university coaches to the Oval Office to thank them for going overseas to boost the morale of our troops. It was very interesting listening to them. Charlie Weis is going to say a few comments about what they saw and heard. But I wanted them to know how much I appreciate—and the—of going to say to these young men and women, “Thanks for what you're doing.”

This is Memorial Day. It's a day to honor not only those who have died in combat, but it's to honor those who continue to serve. And these men make a living motivating young men on the football field, and I am absolutely confident that when our soldiers and sailors and marine and airmen and Coast Guard men and women met them, that they inspired them.

And most importantly, I'm confident what they heard was America appreciates what they do. We can't thank our troops enough for the sacrifices they're making on behalf of the Nation. And so I want to—I'm so grateful for you all for going, and I'm really grateful that you expressed the gratitude of the American people.

Now, Charlie, you may want to say a few things.

Charlie Weis. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Notre Dame man.

Mr. Weis. I think that Mr. President definitely had the inspired part right, but that inspire part definitely worked both ways. Now, we went over there to help motivate the morale of the troops, but I think we came home probably more inspired than even they were. I mean, it was just an unbelievable experience to watch the enthusiasm and the pride and the teamwork over there.

And I mean, I can't—we saw thousands and thousands of troops, and when they heard that we were coming to the White

House on Monday, to a man and to a woman, almost everyone said, “Could you just pass on one message to the President,” and asked us to thank him for them—for him supporting them. I mean, think about it. They're there for 4 months, 6 months, a year—it was just unbelievable—from Germany, you watch—you know, seeing guys and girls that had gotten injured in battle and the—you know, their framework, their psyche—it was just an unbelievable experience.

And I think all five of us said we just wish we could have brought our players over there, you know, the 18-to-23-year-olds that we deal with, so they could see what maturity looks like at a young age and teamwork at its utmost. And I tell you what, on behalf of all five coaches—I can tell—it was just an invigorating experience, one that we'll always treasure the rest of our lives.

And we got something special going on over there, because there wasn't one person, of the thousands and thousands of soldiers we met, that had one negative thing to say. And that's almost overwhelming to think about it—not one. And there were a couple at the end of their year tours that were very much looking forward to getting their call to go home. But I'll tell you what, it was great. And what a perfect way to end up our trip, to end up at the White House on Memorial Day.

Thank you.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. Participating in the meeting were Tommy Tuberville, head coach, Auburn University

football team; Mark Richt, head coach, University of Georgia football team; Randy Shannon, head coach, University of Miami football team; Charlie Weis, head coach, Univer-

sity of Notre Dame football team; and Jack Siedlecki, head coach, Yale University football team.

Remarks Following a Tour of Silverado Cable Company in Mesa, Arizona May 27, 2008

The President. I've come to Silverado for a couple of reasons: one, to remind our fellow citizens how important small businesses are to the backbone of our economy. These two brothers started this company with five employees.

Robert Simpson. Five employees.

The President. How many you got now?

Robert Simpson. We have 70.

The President. Seventy. One of the things that's important in law is to encourage certain behavior, and the stimulus package we passed encouraged investment. And so the—these guys were showing me a new laser machine they purchased this year. And they purchased it this year because the stimulus package provided a tax incentive to do that. And the reason why that's important is when the economy slowed down, we wanted to stimulate activity.

And so the fact that they purchased the machine meant somebody had to make the machine. And when somebody makes a machine, it means there's jobs at the machine-making place. Plus, their employees are more productive; they're more competitive. It makes it more likely they're going to keep their business and expand their business.

And so the first thing I want to do is, one, thank you for being entrepreneurs, and two, remind our citizens that this stimulus package that we passed in Congress is just beginning to kick in. And it's going to make a positive contribution to economic growth.

The other thing that's important to remember is that a company such as these—

as this one pays taxes at the individual income tax rate. So when you hear these politicians campaign and say, "We're going to raise taxes, oh, just on the rich people," they're raising taxes on companies like Silverado.

What you don't want to do is take money out of the treasuries of these small businesses across America. If you're interested in economic vitality and growth, you want these—owners of these small businesses to have more money to invest. It's good for their employees, it's good for their growth, and it's good for our Nation.

And so I strongly urge the United States Congress to make the tax relief we passed permanent so that companies such as Silverado don't have to worry about what their tax burden is going to be in 2 years come. See, we're in—we have times of economic uncertainty right now, and what creates more uncertainty for owners of businesses like these is whether or not their taxes are going to go up.

And Congress ought to just declare once and for all: We're going to make the tax cuts we passed permanent. It will be—add peace of mind for these business leaders. It'll make it easier for their employees to keep a job. It'll make it easier for them to do what they want to do and take care of their—people that work here.

And so I'm thrilled to be with you. Congratulations on—

Robert Simpson. It's our pleasure. Thank you so much, Mr. President.

The President. Congratulations on being dreamers and doers.