

I can stand here today, as President of the United States, and say without exception or equivocation that we do not torture, and that we will vigorously protect our people while forging a strong and durable framework that allows us to fight terrorism while abiding by the rule of law. Make no mistake: If we fail to turn the page on the approach that was taken over the past several years, then I will not be able to say that as President. And if we cannot stand for our core values, then we are not keeping faith with the documents that are enshrined in this hall.

The Framers who drafted the Constitution could not have foreseen the challenges that have unfolded over the last 222 years. But our Constitution has endured through secession and civil rights, through world war and cold war, because it provides a foundation of principles that can be applied pragmatically; it provides a compass that can help us find our way. It hasn't always been easy. We are an imperfect people. Every now and then, there are those who think that America's safety and success requires us to walk away from the sacred principles enshrined in this building. And we hear such voices today. But over the long haul, the American people have resisted that temptation. And though we've made our share of mistakes, required some course corrections, ultimately, we have held fast to the principles that have been the source of our strength and a beacon to the world.

Now this generation faces a great test in the specter of terrorism. And unlike the Civil War or World War II, we can't count on a surrender ceremony to bring this journey to an end.

Right now, in distant training camps and in crowded cities, there are people plotting to take American lives. That will be the case a year from now, 5 years from now, and in all probability, 10 years from now. Neither I nor anyone can stand here today and say that there will not be another terrorist attack that takes American lives. But I can say with certainty that my administration, along with our extraordinary troops and the patriotic men and women who defend our national security, will do everything in our power to keep the American people safe. And I do know with certainty that we can and will defeat Al Qaida. Because the terrorists can only succeed if they swell their ranks and alienate America from our allies, and they will never be able to do that if we stay true to who we are, if we forge tough and durable approaches to fighting terrorism that are anchored in our timeless ideals. This must be our common purpose.

I ran for President because I believe that we cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together. We will not be safe if we see national security as a wedge that divides America. It can and must be a cause that unites us as one people and as one nation. We've done so before in times that were more perilous than ours; we will do so once again.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:28 a.m. in the Rotunda. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

Remarks Honoring the 2009 Super Bowl Champion Pittsburgh Steelers May 21, 2009

Hello, everybody. I first of all want to just acknowledge a few people that are here. First of all, some of my Cabinet members: Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, who grew up as a maniacal Pittsburgh Steeler fan, he is here; Secretary of the Veterans Administration, Eric Shinseki, a war hero and somebody that is do-

ing an outstanding job on behalf of our veterans; we have the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Mullen—Mike Mullen, as well as his lovely wife are here. Please give them a big round of applause. We've got some Pennsylvania folks around here: Senator Bob Casey; Senator Arlen Specter; Teresa Heinz Kerry;

Representatives Tim Murphy, Mike Doyle, Glenn Thompson, Tom Rooney, and Charlie Wilson. Give them all a big round of applause.

Welcome to the White House, everybody. Before we begin, I want to offer a special welcome to the wounded warriors who have joined us today from Walter Reed and from the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda. Thank you for your service.

And welcome back Dan Rooney and the entire Rooney family. For nearly five decades, Dan has been a tremendous ambassador for pro football and for the city of Pittsburgh. And in the years to come, all Americans will be fortunate to have his service as our United States Ambassador to Ireland.

Just a personal note: I had occasion of meeting a lot of people during the course of my campaign for the Presidency. I can tell you that I don't know anybody who is more of a gentleman, who is more loyal, who is more committed to excellence than Mr. Rooney. And he and his family have just been such an extraordinary pillar for the city of Pittsburgh. I'd like everybody to give them a big round of applause one more time. And he's humble. *[Laughter]* This kind of attention embarrasses him, but he has no choice.

Congratulations to the Super Bowl champion Pittsburgh Steelers for the NFL-record, sixth Lombardi Trophy. Some are calling it "Sixburgh" these days. *[Laughter]* Congratulations to all the fans of the Steeler Nation, who wave that Terrible Towel every Sunday.

Now, I already told these guys, no matter how big they are, I am a Bears fan. *[Laughter]* But it's no secret that I was pulling for the Steelers during the Super Bowl last year, and that's part of the reason why this is so much fun for me. This isn't me trying to have it both ways. Everybody knows I'm pretty serious about my sports teams, but growing up in Hawaii when I was a kid, we didn't have a local football team. And when I started playing, and I started paying attention to football, it was guys like Terry Bradshaw and Franco Harris and the Steel Curtain and Mean Joe Greene, who is here. Where's Mean Joe? There he is, right there. Those were the guys that were playing, and so I became a Steelers fan.

And last March, I actually got to hang out with Franco and "The Bus," Jerome Bettis, at an event in Pittsburgh. And Jerome even joined me when we went to meet some steelworkers on a shift change. And I got my own Terrible Towel.

But this is a new team for a new era. And that's embodied by Coach Tomlin, who's here with his lovely wife. And I want everybody to give Coach Tomlin a huge round of applause. He didn't just win the Super Bowl; he also happened to be NFL Coach of the Year, the youngest coach ever to win a Super Bowl.

And then there's the new Steel Curtain, the NFL's best defense last year, thanks to Dick LeBeau, who I think everybody acknowledges is one of the greatest defensive coordinators of all time—so where's Dick? There he is over there.

We've got the team captains up here: Big Ben Roethlisberger—give him—come on, give Big Ben a round of applause here; James Farrior, a Pro Bowler who made 133 tackles this season; Jeff Reed, who was clutch in the Super Bowl; Hines Ward, who was the Super Bowl MVP 4 years ago, who's always the happiest man in football. Hines is always happy.

And we've got this year's Super Bowl MVP, Santonio Holmes, who made one of the greatest touchdown catches I've ever seen. That means two of the last four Super Bowl MVPs hail from the Pittsburgh wide-receiving corps.

Now, I pointed out that that was a heck of a pass that Ben threw. But then one of the linemen pointed out that was some blocking on that play. *[Laughter]* So that just reminds you, that's what Steeler football is all about, it's a team effort. And this is a team that entered the season facing the most difficult schedule in the league. But guys like these thrive on that. They plowed through the regular season; they won every game in the AFC North; they took down the Chargers and the Ravens in the playoffs.

And I can't remember a more exciting Super Bowl. Arizona took the lead with 3 minutes left; Pittsburgh comes back with just 2 with that winning touchdown. Santonio had 73 of those yards on that drive, including the incredible game-winning, touchdown catch. And now they're champs. So obviously, these are guys who take

their responsibilities on the football field seriously. But they take them just as seriously off the field. They're generous with their time for charity and for their communities. So that explains why we're doing something a little bit different here today than when sports champions usually come to visit the White House. These guys have agreed to stick around for a while, and we're going to team them up, not to run some plays, but to serve others.

I often say that the beauty of serving others is that anyone can do it. You don't have to be President, and you don't have to be a pro football player. All you need to do is to have a desire to make a difference, to give back to your community, and to contribute to your nation. And that's what we're going to do right here. We're going to work with the USO to put together 3,000 care packages for our troops serving in harm's way.

We're going to give back to those who've given so much for us. And I find that fitting and proper, a good way to kick off a weekend that serves to honor all the men and women who have worn the proud uniform of this country that we love.

So congratulations, again, Steelers, for an extraordinary season. Good luck next year, and

thank you again for your willingness to go above and beyond and not just come here for a photo op, but to join the men and women who protect this country to make sure that we are safe.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:49 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Deborah Mullen, wife of Adm. Michael G. Mullen, USN, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Teresa Heinz Kerry, chairman, Heinz Family Philanthropies and Heinz Endowments; Rep. Thomas J. Rooney; Rep. Glenn Thompson; Daniel M. Rooney, U.S. Ambassador-designate to Ireland and chairman, Pittsburgh Steelers; Terry Bradshaw, former quarterback, Franco Harris, former running back, Joe Greene, former defensive tackle, Jerome Bettis, former running back, Ben Roethlisberger, quarterback, James Farrior, linebacker, Jeff Reed, placekicker, Hines Ward, wide receiver, and Santonio Holmes, wide receiver, Pittsburgh Steelers; and Kiyah Winston Tomlin, wife of Coach Mike P. Tomlin of the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Statement on Energy and Commerce Committee Action on Energy and Climate Legislation

May 21, 2009

I commend Chairman Waxman and the members of the Energy and Commerce Committee for a successful effort to pass a comprehensive energy and climate bill out of their committee today. We are now one step closer to delivering on the promise of a new, clean energy economy that will make America less dependent on foreign oil, crack down on polluters, and create millions of new jobs all across America. The bill is historic for what it

achieves, providing clean energy incentives that encourage innovation while recognizing the concerns of sensitive industries and regions in this country. And this achievement is all the more historic for bringing together many who have in the past opposed a common effort, from labor unions to corporate CEOs, and environmentalists to energy companies. I applaud the committee for its action and look forward to signing comprehensive legislation.