

hard choices were put aside for somebody else, for some other time. It's a time when easy distractions became the norm and the trivial has been taken too seriously.

The men and women who have served since 9/11 tell us a different story. While so many were reaching for the quick buck, they were heading out on patrol. While our discourse often produced more heat than light, especially here in Washington, they have put their very lives on the line for America. They have borne the responsibility of war. And now, with this policy, we are making it clear that the United States of America must reward responsibility and not irresponsibility. Now, with this policy, we are letting those who have borne the heaviest burden lead us into the 21st century.

And so today we honor the service of an extraordinary generation and look to America that

they will help build tomorrow. With the post-9/11 GI bill, we can give our veterans the chance to live their dreams, and we can help unleash their talents and tap their creativity and be guided by their sense of responsibility to their fellow citizens and to this country that we all love so much.

And may God bless our troops and our veterans, and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to S. Sgt. James L. Miller, USMC, who introduced the President; Alan G. Merten, president, George Mason University; and former Sen. John W. Warner and Sen. Mark R. Warner.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Amir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah of Kuwait

August 3, 2009

President Obama. I want to extend my welcome to the Amir of Kuwait. We are grateful for his visit. When I was traveling in the region, the Amir showed me great hospitality, so I'm glad to be able to return the gesture. Although, I have to confess that I think the meal that we're preparing is much smaller than the one he prepared for me.

Kuwait and the United States enjoy very strong bilateral relations. We are looking to make those relations even stronger. Kuwait has been an outstanding host for the United States Armed Forces during its operations in Iraq. And as we transition our operations in Iraq, it's important for us to emphasize not only our gratitude to Kuwait, but also our ongoing commitment to Kuwait's security.

We're also discussing important regional issues ranging from the importance of moving the Arab-Israeli peace process forward, to the situation in Afghanistan, our joint counterterrorism efforts, and our need to emphasize Iran meeting its international obligations. And I'm confident that, based on this conversation and ongoing work between our two countries, that

we can strengthen not only Kuwaiti-U.S. relationships, but also create a more stable region of peace and security in the region.

Amir Sabah. Thank you very much, Mr. President, Your Excellency, for this kind welcome. And I would like to affirm to the American people that Kuwait shall remain a partner of the United States; Kuwait shall remain an ally and a partner of the United States.

At the same token, I'm very delighted to be here with my colleagues during this visit. I also am very delighted to congratulate President Obama on his birthday tomorrow. And I also would like to congratulate him on the finding of the remains of the pilot, the U.S. pilot Speicher, that was lost back during the first war of Iraq.

I also would like to congratulate President Obama on his Presidency. We have also discussed various issues of Afghanistan, the issue of Iran, and the issue of the Israeli-Arab relations. I affirmed to President Obama that we are interested in bringing about peace to the Middle East. It is in our interest that peace be brought about. And the indicator is that there is an Arab peace initiative that was agreed upon

by all other Arab parties and states, and we implement this peace initiative when Israel implements and fulfills its obligations.

President Obama. Okay. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Amir Sabah

referred to Capt. Michael S. “Scott” Speicher, USN, who was lost in action on January 17, 1991, and whose remains were recovered in Iraq’s Anbar Province in July. Amir Sabah spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks on the Release of American Journalists by North Korea

August 5, 2009

Good morning, everybody. I want to just make a brief comment about the fact that the two young journalists, Euna Lee and Laura Ling, are safely back with their families. We are, obviously, extraordinarily relieved. I had an opportunity to speak with the families yesterday once we knew that they were on the plane. The reunion that we’ve all seen on television, I think, is a source of happiness not only for the families but for the entire country.

I want to thank President Bill Clinton—I had a chance to talk to him—for the extraordinary humanitarian effort that resulted in the release of the two journalists. I want to thank Vice President Al Gore, who worked tirelessly in order to achieve a positive outcome.

I think that not only is this White House, obviously, extraordinarily happy, but all Americans should be grateful to both former Presi-

dent Clinton and Vice President Gore for their extraordinary work. And my hope is, is that the families that have been reunited can enjoy the next several days and weeks, understanding that because of the efforts of President Clinton and Gore, they are able to be with each other once again.

So we are very pleased with the outcome, and I’m hopeful that the families are going to be able to get some good time together in the next few days.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:37 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to American journalists Euna Lee and Laura Ling, who had been held by North Korean authorities since March 17.

Remarks at Monaco RV, LLC, in Wakarusa, Indiana

August 5, 2009

The President. Thank you. Please, everybody, have a seat. Thank you so much. Well, it is wonderful to be in Wakarusa. Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome. Herman, thanks for the great introduction. It is great to be back in Indiana. This is as close as I’ve gotten to home in a while. *[Laughter]*

And I flew out here with somebody who I think the people of Indiana have known for a long time, have trusted for a long time because he’s fighting for working families in Indiana each and every day, and that is our great Senator, Evan Bayh. Please give Evan a big round of applause.

And it’s nice to get out of Washington and spend some time with people who actually sent me to Washington. Too often, there are those in Washington who focus on the ups and downs of politics. But my concern is the ups and downs in the lives of the American people: the families feeling the pain of this recession; the folks I’ve met across this country who’ve lost jobs and savings and health insurance but haven’t lost hope; the men and women who still believe in the capacity, the ability of this Nation to meet the challenges of our times.

Now, these are challenges you know all too well here in Wakarusa and in Elkhart County.