

part to continue to call this Nation to responsible dialog and remind the United States Congress, we need to get a comprehensive bill passed.

The state of play right now is, the Senate reached an important compromise, I thought, and it was—they had a chance to get a bill; it just got caught up in, in my judgment, needless politics. One of the problems we face in Washington is we've got too much needless politics. We got people who aren't willing to—they want to play—they want to make the other person look bad, as opposed to make the country look good. And I'm going to continue to call people, whether it be on Social Security reform or immigration reform, to think about the country first and put our political parties aside. And I'm confident, if we can do that, we'll come up with a rational plan that will make the country proud.

I'd like to stay here all day, but I got to go to Vegas. [*Laughter*] Something about what goes on there, stays there—or something like that. God bless you. Thanks for letting me come.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:14 a.m. at the Hyatt Regency Irvine. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas Phelps, chairman of the board, and Lucetta Dunn, president, chief executive officer, and secretary, Orange County Business Council; Catherine Campbell, wife of Representative John Campbell; Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa of Los Angeles, CA; Mayor Beverly O'Neill of Long Beach, CA; Mayor Curt Pringle of Anaheim, CA; Rick Warren, pastor, Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, CA; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; President Jalal Talabani, Speaker of Parliament Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, and Prime Minister-designate Jawad al-Maliki of Iraq; former California State Senator James L. Brulte; Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; President Hu Jintao of China; President Fidel Castro of Cuba; and Gov. Arnold A. Schwarzenegger of California. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Congressional Candidate Jon Porter in Las Vegas, Nevada

April 24, 2006

Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thank you, Jon, for your kind introduction. First of all, I want to thank you all for supporting Jon Porter. I've gotten to know him well. He's the kind of person who does in office that which he says he's going to do on the campaign trail. He's a straight shooter, plain talker, who is getting the job done for the people of Nevada, and you need to send him back to the United States Congress.

You know, when you find somebody who can get the job done, somebody who focuses on results, somebody who doesn't play that Washington, DC, game of empty rhetoric and harsh talk and severe condemnation, it seems like it makes sense to give him a chance to continue to serve you in the United States Congress. This is a man who has performed while in office. And there's no doubt in my mind, he's one of the rising stars in the United States Congress. Jon Porter deserves to be reelected.

I not only feel that way, but Laura feels that way. She sends her very best. The truth of the matter is Porter said, "Why don't we invite Laura and leave you at home, George W.?" [*Laughter*] The guy has got good taste. But Laura is doing great. She sends her very best to our friends here in Nevada. I'm a lucky man to have her by my side during these incredibly important times. And I'm lucky to have a fellow like Jon Porter in the United States Congress to work together to make this country more secure, more prosperous, and more hopeful for all our citizens.

So, I appreciate the elected officials from this great State being here, starting with your Governor. Governor, it's great to see you. Thanks for serving. Kenny Guinn, good buddy, good friend, who's done a fine job for this important State. I also am proud to be here with the United States Senator John Ensign. Senator Ensign, I appreciate you being here. Thanks for bringing Darlene. Appreciate you coming, Darlene. Ensign is a straight shooter too. He's a really good man. He deserves to be reelected to the United States Senate from this important State.

Congressman Jim Gibbons from up north—good to see you, Jimmy. Thanks for coming. Proud you're here. The Lieutenant Governor Lorraine Hunt is with us. Madam Lieutenant Governor, thank you. The secretary of state, Dean Heller—it's good to see you, Mr. Secretary. Thanks for coming. Former Governor Bob List and his son Robert is here. Governor, thanks for coming. Party Chairman Paul Adams—I'm glad you're here, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. You're the people who are going to be putting up the signs and making the phone calls and turning out the vote. See, what matters in these elections is, obviously, ability to get yourself on TV, but equally important is the need to make sure people go to the polls. And it's really important to rally those at the grassroots. And I want to thank you for the work that you have done, and I thank you for the work you're going to do to make sure this good man gets reelected to the United States Congress.

I also thank you all very much for contributing to Jon's campaign. Those of us who have run for office know full well that you can't possibly win without the support of people. And I've been blessed to have a lot of good folks here in the State of Nevada support my candidacies, for which I am most grateful. As I look around the room, I see many of you who have been to some of these fundraisers before on my behalf, and I thank you for keeping coming back for Jon's sake. But I really appreciate you helping him. It's not easy to serve in public office these days, but it makes it a lot easier when good folks such as yourself are willing to stand by good people who are willing to run for office. And so thanks for coming. Thanks for supporting Jon.

We've got some things to do. I appreciate a person who runs for office because he wants to get some things done. The most important thing we've got to do is to protect the American people. Our most important job—[*applause*]*—as we learned firsthand on September the 11th, there's an enemy that lurks, that would like to destroy America because of what we stand for. And they're tough, and they are vicious. There's no need to try to ration with them or sit down and*

have discussions with them. The only way to deal with this enemy is to stay on the offense and bring them to justice, which is precisely why I need Congressmen like Jon Porter by my side.

Today we saw again that the terrorists are willing to try to define the world the way they want to see it. There was bombings today in Egypt. I strongly condemn the killings that took place, the innocent life lost in Egypt. It was a heinous act against innocent civilians. The United States sends our condolences to the families of those who were killed. We keep those who were injured in our thoughts and prayers. And I assure the enemy this: We will stay on the offense; we will not waver; we will not tire; we will bring you to justice for the sake of peace and humanity.

I need people in Congress who understand the nature of this enemy. There are some that kind of feel like maybe these folks are just kind of angry citizens of the world who occasionally lash out. No, these folks are bound by a common ideology. They're totalitarian in nature. They've usurped a great religion to justify their acts of murder. They have territorial ambitions. They have designs. They believe that those of us in free societies are weak, and it's just a matter of time before we lose our nerve and withdraw. I am not going to lose my nerve. I'm going to stay on the offense. I will protect the American people. And I need people like Jon Porter who understand the stakes and stands by my side.

The central front on the war on terror is now Iraq. It is the place that the enemy has decided to fight the forces of freedom and liberty and peace. It's really important for those of us who represent you to take seriously the words of the enemy. The enemy has made it clear that it's just a matter of time before the United States leaves Iraq so that they're able to achieve their objective, which is to have a safe haven from which to launch attacks against moderate Muslim nations, and from which to launch attacks against the United States of America and our allies. That's what they have said.

The bad news for the enemy is that there are thousands and thousands and thousands of Iraqis who want to be free, who want to live in a unified society free of violence so

their children can grow up in a hopeful world. I happen to believe—and a lot of my foreign policy is driven by my strong belief that liberty is universal, that all people desire to be free, and that when you free people it is the best way to defeat an ideology of hate and hopelessness. Free societies will be peaceful societies. Free societies will listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. And one of the most amazing things that's happening now is that a country that was under the thumb of a brutal tyrant is now emerging as a young, strong democracy. And the United States of America stands with them.

When I was in Palm Springs, I had the opportunity and the privilege to speak to the President of Iraq, the new Speaker of the Iraqi Assembly, and the Prime Minister-designate. One is a Kurd, one is a Sunni, and one is a Shi'a—all three of whom expressed their great appreciation for America and the sacrifices this country has made. All three of them talked about unifying their country to achieve a grand objective, and all three of them talked about the responsibility they have to make sure that the 12 million people who went to the polls are represented by a government of, by, and for the Iraqi people.

We're on our way to victory. The only way that we will lose in this central front on the war on terror is if we lose our nerve, is if we don't understand the great values that can help transform the world. It's important for me to have people in the United States Congress who don't listen to polls and focus groups but stand strong for what they think we're doing right. What we have done in Iraq is right, and we will achieve victory in Iraq, and Jon Porter understands that.

And finally, it's really important to have people in Congress who understand that when we put a man or a woman in harm's way, they deserve the full support of the United States Government. I want to thank Congressman Porter for standing strong for those who wear our uniform. We will make sure our troops have got the best training, the best pay, the best possible equipment so they can achieve their mission. The people of the 3d Congressional District of Nevada must make sure you have a Congressman like Jon Porter who understands the obligations

of the Government to support the United States military.

We've not only had some big challenges abroad, challenges that we will continue to confront head on, but we've had challenges here at home too. You might remember, although it may seem like a long time ago, but this country's economy has been through a lot. We went through a recession, a stock market correction, corporate scandals, a terrorist attack on our country, a war in Afghanistan and Iraq, major natural disasters. But we acted. Some of them like to talk in Washington, but we acted. We cut the taxes on the American people. We cut the taxes on small-business owners. We understand most jobs are created by small-business owners and that when somebody has more money in their pocket to save, invest, and spend, this economy grows. Our progrowth economic policies are working.

Today, the United States of America is growing faster than any major industrialized nation in the world. Our unemployment rate nationwide is 4.7 percent; the unemployment rate in the State of Nevada is 3.8 percent; 5.1 million new jobs have been added since August 2003. Real after-tax income, the income in the working people's pockets, is up over 8 percent for Americans since 2001. Productivity is high. Small businesses are growing. More people own a home than ever before in our Nation's history. This economy is strong, and we intend to keep it that way.

Oh, you're going to hear all kinds of talk out of Washington, DC, in this campaign—"Oh, don't worry, all we're going to do is just tax the rich." We've heard that kind of rhetoric before. Here's what I think we ought to do to keep this economy growing: I think we need to make the tax cuts we passed permanent, and Jon Porter understands that. You wait till these campaigns get going here around the country—"Well, we need to balance the budget by raising your taxes." That's not the way it works in Washington, DC. Yes, they'll raise the taxes all right, but they'll figure out new ways to spend your money. The best way to balance this budget is to keep progrowth economic policies in place and be wise about how we spend your money, and Jon Porter understands that.

I also want to thank you for helping on the line-item veto. That makes a lot of sense, doesn't it, to give the President the chance to make sure that the taxpayers are well represented in Washington, DC. I need fiscally sound people in our Nation's Capital, and Jon Porter is just such a Congressman.

Let me talk about another issue right quick. I spent a little time in California, which, by the way, was a fantastic experience. One of the problems that I'm concerned about is a nation that loses our nerve—that we become isolationist and protectionist, that we don't want to have any competition with anybody else, that we begin to wall ourselves off. That's not what I think. I think it's really important that we remain the economic leader in the world, for the sake of our folks, that we want to be preeminent when it comes to economic policy.

And so I was spending time talking about two issues that I think you'll find interesting. I know Jon is a strong supporter. One is to make sure that we're the technology country of the world, that we're on the leading edge of change. The Federal Government needs to double its commitment to basic research—research in the basic sciences, so that we're continuing to be the innovative—innovators of the world. We've got to be technologically competent. We've got to continue to lead.

We need to make the research and development tax credit a permanent part of the Tax Code. And we got to make sure that our kids have got the basics in math and science, so that the jobs of the 21st century stay right here in America. And Jon Porter understands the call.

We also got to do something about oil. You know, I know gas prices are high. There's no magic wand to wave. We'll make sure that the energy companies are pricing their product fairly. If we catch them gouging, if we catch them—unfair trade practices, we'll deal with them at the Federal Government. That's what you expect the Federal Government to do. But it's a sign for the American people to understand that we got to do something about our dependence upon oil.

Now, I appreciate Jon supporting the energy bill that we passed, which is a good, comprehensive approach. But there's more to do. I'm absolutely convinced that we're

on the breakthrough of major technologies that will enable us to have plug-in batteries and hybrid vehicles that will enable you to drive your first 40 miles without using a drop of gasoline; that we'll be fueling our cars as a result of fuels made from switch grass—we're already doing it from corn—but from other raw materials; that we'll have hydrogen-powered fuel cells within a 10-year period of time. I need people in the United States Congress who are farsighted, who understand the power of technology to make sure we become less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

Finally, let me talk right quick about health care, and then I'll liberate you. There's a stark choice in Washington, DC, amongst the elected officials there. There's a group of folks up there who believe that the Federal Government ought to make all the decisions for health care. They ought to tell you who the—what doctor you see and what procedures you can get. And they'll pay for it, of course. And that sounds really attractive, but I strongly reject that federalizing medicine will make our health care system better. And Jon joins me in that. The best health care system is one that takes care of the elderly and the poor and leaves the decisions in health care between the patients and the doctors. And that's the kind of health care system we strongly support.

Now, I understand hospitals being crowded, emergency rooms being crowded with people, and that's not a good use of our health care system. And that's why Jon and I are strong supporters of community health care centers. These are really important facilities where the poor and the indigent can get primary care without straining the emergency rooms of the hospitals.

We also understand we got a commitment to our seniors. Listen, the Medicare system was really an important system, but it needed reform; it needed a change. We'd pay \$28,000 for ulcer surgery but not a dime for the pharmaceuticals that would prevent the ulcer surgery from being needed in the first place. It made no sense to have a health care system that was stuck in the past when medicine was becoming so modern.

I joined with people like Jon and the other Senators and Congressmen here to modernize the system. And thanks to our leadership, seniors now have got prescription drug coverage in Medicare.

But there are some other—there are practical things we need to do to deal with the cost of health care. One of them is to make sure that information technology becomes a crucial part of our medical systems all across our country. Jon Porter is one of the leaders in helping to modernize medicine. They say that we can probably trim the costs of health care by 30 percent when we bring information tech—now, think about this, we got doctors writing down their words on paper—they don't write very well to begin with—[laughter]—and they're passing the paper from one file to the next. Things get lost. Things are illegible. It's a very inefficient system, and we need to introduce information technology, starting at the Federal Government. And we're doing that, and Jon Porter is leading the way.

Secondly, health savings accounts work. Health savings accounts are a way for small-business companies to be able to afford health care. The uninsured—I remember the debate, Jon, when we were proposing health savings accounts, which are tax-free savings accounts coupled with catastrophic health care—with low-premium catastrophic health care. And they were saying, "This is only good for the rich." It's typical rhetoric out of Washington, of course, you know. It's just everything is kind of trivialized. They said, "Well, this is only good for the rich." Well, as a result of reforming health care, we now have got 3 million people who are now owners of health savings accounts, most of whom have got incomes of \$50,000 or less, about a third of those who've signed up. The uninsured are finding a good product and a good way to insure themselves at affordable costs.

Thirdly, we've got to make sure small businesses, many of whom are having trouble paying—getting health care for their employees, have the capacity to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discount big companies get to do. We're strong supporters of association health plans.

And finally, if you want to have a medical system that is affordable and available, we have got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are running good doctors out of business and running the prices of medicine up.

We got ideas about how to solve our Nation's problems. We do more than just think, though; we act. We get things done. We see problems, and we solve them. And I need people in the United States Congress who get rid of all the silliness in Washington, DC, and focus on solving our Nation's problems, and John Porter is such a man.

Thank you for coming, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:42 p.m. at the Venetian Resort Hotel Casino. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Kenny C. Guinn of Nevada; Darlene Ensign, wife of Sen. John Ensign of Nevada; President Jalal Talabani, Speaker of Parliament Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, and Prime Minister-designate Jawad al-Maliki of Iraq.

Message on Armenian Remembrance Day

April 24, 2006

Today, we remember one of the horrible tragedies of the 20th century—the mass killings and forced exile of as many as 1.5 million Armenians in the final days of the Ottoman Empire in 1915. This was a tragedy for all humanity and one that we and the world must never forget.

We mourn this terrible chapter of history and recognize that it remains a source of pain for people in Armenia and for all those who believe in freedom, tolerance, and the dignity and value of every human life. It is a credit to the human spirit and generations of Armenians who live in Armenia, America, and around the globe that they have overcome this suffering and proudly preserved their centuries-old culture, traditions, and religion.

We praise the individuals in Armenia and Turkey who have sought to examine the historical events of this time with honesty and sensitivity. The analysis by the International Center for Transitional Justice, while not the final word, has made a significant contribution toward deepening our understanding of