

Cooperation With Congress/President's Decisionmaking

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—*thank you, Mr. President—*[inaudible]*—Lancaster.

The President. Okay.

Q. What do you see as your goal as leader of the country in depolarizing Congress and getting more win-wins out of Congress and less vetoes from you?

The President. Yes. You know, probably the most disappointing thing about my experience in Washington is the harshness of the discourse, is the zero-sum attitude. And I've tried to do my part by holding people with respect and to—you know, talking about people in such a way that it doesn't degrade the process. I want this little guy to look at Washington and say, "Wow, this is something I may aspire to."

First of all, I'm not so sure there's much that we can do at this point in time. The war has been divisive; I understand that. The politics is coming around the corner here in 2008, and people are going to be posturing a lot. Maybe it's—part of it's, I guess, my stubbornness over taxes. I'm just not going to raise your taxes, I just want to make that clear. And so therefore, if the definition of "common ground" is, raise taxes, there are just some redlines for me—no, I'm not suggesting you suggested that.

I'll still try to do my best to treat people with respect. It's the best thing a President can do, it seems like to me. And the other leaders ought to be doing the same thing. If you disagree with a person, don't make it personal. Don't feel like you have to tear the other person down in order to make a political point.

And I got to go, I hate to tell you. You're paying me too much money to be sitting here talking. [*Laughter*]

I want to conclude by, one, thanking you for coming. I hope you get a better sense of why I made the decisions I make and who I am as a person. You know, it's a—oh, I don't know what people think when they're looking on the TV screen. The only thing I can do is just to tell you what's in my heart and to let you know the principles by which I decide things, my great optimism about the future. I'm an optimistic guy. And the reason I'm optimistic is because I believe in the

greatness of the country, and I believe the values of America are so real.

I told somebody behind stage, this has been a joyous experience, being the President. My buddies in Texas just simply don't think I'm telling them the truth. [*Laughter*] But it is. It is a joyous experience to try to solve problems. It's a joyous experience to represent a country full of decent and honorable and caring people.

And I thank you for giving me a chance to come. And I ask for God's blessings on you and our country. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. at Jay Group, Inc. headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Marion McGowan, chairman, Tom Baldrige, president, and Jim Smucker, chairman-elect, Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Jay Chryst, founder, and Dana Chryst, chief executive officer, Jay Group, Inc.; Krist Blank, Amish church leader; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea; and President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran. The President also referred to H.R. 976, the "Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007." An audience member referred to Mayor Louis J. Barletta of Hazelton, PA.

Statement on the Agreement Announced at the Six-Party Talks in Beijing

October 3, 2007

I welcome the agreement announced today at the six-party talks in Beijing. Today's announcement reflects the common commitment of the participants in the six-party talks to realize a Korean Peninsula that is free of nuclear weapons.

In September 2005, we agreed on a joint statement that charted the way forward toward achieving a nuclear weapons-free peninsula. In February 2007, the participants in the six-party talks announced a set of first steps toward implementing that agreement. Today's announcement maps out additional steps toward our ultimate goal of full and verifiable denuclearization.

Under the agreement reached today, North Korea has committed that by the end

of 2007, it will provide a complete and correct declaration of all its nuclear programs, nuclear weapons programs, materials, and any proliferation activity. North Korea will get started on its commitment to disable all its existing nuclear facilities by disabling the core nuclear facilities at Yongbyon by the end of the year. North Korea also committed not to transfer nuclear materials, technology, or know-how beyond its borders.

The other parties—including the United States—are providing economic and energy assistance to North Korea. Such assistance is being provided as North Korea carries out its commitments.

I commend Secretary Rice, Ambassador Hill, and our negotiating team for their hard work and dedication to this important effort, which will help secure the future peace and prosperity of the Northeast Asian region.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the “Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007”

October 3, 2007

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 976, the “Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007,” because this legislation would move health care in this country in the wrong direction.

The original purpose of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was to help children whose families cannot afford private health insurance, but do not qualify for Medicaid, to get the coverage they need. My Administration strongly supports reauthorization of SCHIP. That is why I proposed last February a 20 percent increase in funding for the program over 5 years.

This bill would shift SCHIP away from its original purpose and turn it into a program that would cover children from some families of four earning almost \$83,000 a year. In addition, under this bill, government coverage would displace private health insurance for many children. If this bill were enacted, one out of every three children moving onto gov-

ernment coverage would be moving from private coverage. The bill also does not fully fund all its new spending, obscuring the true cost of the bill’s expansion of SCHIP, and it raises taxes on working Americans.

Because the Congress has chosen to send me a bill that moves our health care system in the wrong direction, I must veto it. I hope we can now work together to produce a good bill that puts poorer children first, that moves adults out of a program meant for children, and that does not abandon the bipartisan tradition that marked the enactment of SCHIP. Our goal should be to move children who have no health insurance to private coverage, not to move children who already have private health insurance to government coverage.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 3, 2007.

Remarks Following Discussions With Parliament Member Sa’ad Hariri of Lebanon

October 4, 2007

President Bush. It is my honor to welcome the honorable Sa’ad Hariri here to the Oval Office. Sa’ad is the majority leader in the Lebanese Parliament.

I told this courageous leader that the United States strongly supports the success of democracy in Lebanon; that we respect your country, and that we understand the obstacles that you face. First, I was very impressed by the response of the Government and Prime Minister Siniora in dealing with the extremists and radicals, impressed by his willingness to have the Lebanese forces work for security in Lebanon, and so impressed that I asked Admiral Fallon to go to Lebanon to assess how we can further help the Government and the forces protect themselves from radical elements who are willing to use violence and terror to achieve objectives.

We talked about the upcoming Presidential election, and I am deeply concerned about foreign interference in your elections. It is—the message has been sent to nations, such as Syria, that they should not interfere