

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, University 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 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.

Mitch Simpson. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you.

The President. Yes, sir. I loved meeting your employees too.

Robert Simpson. Well, if you have just a minute, I have a few more back there.

The President. All right, good. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:07 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Robert Simpson, president, and Mitch Simpson, vice president, Silverado Cable Company.

Statement on the Situation in Burma

May 27, 2008

I am deeply troubled by the Burmese regime's extension of National League for Democracy general secretary and Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest on May 27. Aung San Suu Kyi's current house arrest dates back to May 2003, when she was detained following the murderous assault by regime-sponsored thugs on her motorcade in Depayin. The United States calls upon the regime to release all political prisoners in Burma and begin a genuine dialog with Aung San Suu Kyi, the National League for Democracy, and other democratic and ethnic minority groups on a transition to democracy.

The United States will continue to help the people of Burma recover from the devastation of Cyclone Nargis and will continue to support the Burmese people's long-term struggle for freedom. Laura and I look forward to the day when the people of Burma know true liberty and democracy.

Commencement Address at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado

May 28, 2008

Thank you. Mr. Secretary, thank you for the kind introduction. General Moseley, General Regni, Mr. Congressman, thank you. Academy staff and faculty, distinguished guests, and proud family members: I am so pleased to stand before the future leaders of the United States Air Force.

I have something I'd like to say to the Cadet Wing: class of 2008! [Applause] Yes, that's good. I was a little worried you we're going to yell, "Give him the Bird!" [Laughter]

You're the 50th graduating class in the history of the Air Force Academy. Each of you has worked hard to reach this moment. You survived "Beast," "Terrazzo sailing," "fatty bags" at Mitch's. [Laughter] You earned your "prop and wings" at Pinnacle. And today you will receive your degree and commission as Air Force officers. Your teachers are proud of you; your parents are proud of you; and

so is your Commander in Chief. Job well done.

The superintendent informs me that some of you are still on restriction. [Laughter] It might be because you were caught running from the "lightning van." [Laughter] Or it might be because of "Jimmy Chad's apple." [Laughter] Whatever the reason you got your form 10, help has arrived. [Laughter] In keeping with a longstanding tradition, I hereby absolve all cadets who are on restriction for minor conduct offenses. As for your grades, well, some things are even beyond the powers of the President. [Laughter]

In becoming officers of the United States Air Force, you have chosen a vocation that is both hazardous and rewarding. As a former F-102 pilot, I know the exhilaration of flight. As the son of an aviator who was shot down in combat, I know its perils. Whether you serve in the skies above or on the ground below, each of you has stepped forward to defend your country. You've chosen to face danger in foreign lands so your fellow citizens do not have to face danger in our own land. And I want to thank you for making this courageous choice. And all of America is grateful to the class of 2008.

When you put on your second lieutenant bars in a few moments, you will become part of a great history, a history that is still only beginning to unfold. By any standard, air power is still a relatively new phenomena. Men have been fighting on land and at sea for thousands of years, yet there are still Americans among us who were born before man ever flew. In the lifetime of one generation, our Nation has seen aviation progress from that first tentative lift-off at Kitty Hawk to an age of supersonic flight and space exploration.

And as flight has progressed, it changed the face of war. In the 20th century, air power helped make possible freedom's victory in great ideological struggles with fascism and communism. In those struggles, our Nation faced evil men with territorial ambitions and totalitarian aims who murdered the innocent to achieve their political objectives. Through a combination of military strength and national resolve and faith in the power of freedom, we defeated these adversaries