

I've listened a lot to Members of Congress. I've listened carefully to their suggestions. And I have picked the plan that I think is most likely to succeed, because I understand, like many in Congress understand, success is very important for the security of the country.

Let's see, Steven [Steve Holland, Reuters]. Yes, sir.

Iraq/Iran

Q. Yes, sir. This policy of going after the Iranians inside Iraq: Are you concerned that that could be a provocative act in the region?

The President. I made it very clear, as did the Secretary, that our policy is going to be to protect our troops in Iraq. It just makes sense that if somebody is trying to harm our troops or stop us from achieving our goal or killing innocent citizens in Iraq, that we will stop them. That's an obligation we all have, is to protect our folks and achieve our goal.

Now, some are trying to say that because we're enforcing—helping ourselves in Iraq by stopping outside influence from killing our soldiers or hurting Iraqi people, that we want to expand this beyond the borders. That's a presumption that simply is not accurate. We believe that we can solve our problems with Iran diplomatically and are working to do that. As a matter of fact, we're making pretty good progress on that front. As you know, the Iranians, for example, think they want to have a nuclear

weapon. And we've convinced other nations to join us to send a clear message, through the United Nations, that that's unacceptable behavior.

And so yes, we're going to continue to protect ourselves in Iraq and, at the same time, work to solve our problems with Iran diplomatically. And I believe we can succeed. The choice is the Iranian Government's choice, see. And one of the things that the Iranian Government has done is, they've begun to isolate their nation to the harm of the Iranian people. And the Iranian people are proud people, and they've got a great history and a great tradition.

Our struggle is not with the Iranian people. As a matter of fact, we want them to flourish, and we want their economy to be strong. And we want their mothers to be able to raise their children in a hopeful society. My problem is with a government that takes actions that end up isolating their people and ends up denying the Iranian people their true place in the world. And so we'll work diplomatically, and I believe we can solve our problems peacefully.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the meeting were Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Gen. David H. Petraeus, incoming commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley.

Remarks to the House Republican Conference in Cambridge, Maryland *January 26, 2007*

Thank you. I appreciate the warm applause. Thank you very much. It's good to be with you again; twice in 1 week, and I'm better off for it. [Laughter] Laura sends her very best to those of you who've run and won and to your families. I want to

say something about the families. I know how hard it is to be in a political family, and I know the sacrifices that the spouse and children make. And so on behalf of a grateful nation, I thank you for standing by your loved one as he or she serves a

noble cause, and that is the cause of democracy here in the greatest country on the face of the Earth: the United States.

I am glad to be among friends. I count a lot of you as personal friends. I particularly count the leadership as friends. I've gotten to know John Boehner and Roy Blunt over the past 6 years. I value their friendship; I look forward to working with them. And I know that the Republican Party is in good hands in the House of Representatives with these fine leaders.

I, of course, have known Kay a long time. She and I were blessed, like old Judge Carter, to be raised in Texas. For those of you from Texas, you know what I'm talking about, being blessed to be raised there; for the rest of you, come on down and visit us sometime. [*Laughter*]

I've come to admire Adam Putnam. You call him Adam; I call him "Red." [*Laughter*] But, nevertheless, he is a strong leader and a good friend. I appreciate Tom Cole and Thaddeus McCotter as well. These two gentlemen are new to the leadership, but I'm confident they'll be able to provide a lot of good direction to the caucus. And so I'm looking forward to working with you all, and I appreciate you taking on big responsibilities.

I want to spend a little time talking about the state of the Union. I want to remind you that as a result of our philosophy, this economy of ours is strong. I said to the country the other night, we're a country with low inflation, low unemployment, and increasing wages. We've got people working, and they're putting more money in their pocket. And one of the reasons this economy is strong is because we had the wisdom to cut the taxes on the working people. And we need to keep them low.

I'm looking forward to working with you on balancing the budget. Your old colleague Rob Portman, who is now the head of the OMB, will be submitting a budget that shows we can balance this budget within the next 5 years without raising taxes on the American people.

I want to work with you on earmarks. I know many of you are concerned about these spending items that just show up in bills that you didn't vote on and you didn't discuss. I want to work with you on entitlement reform. There's a lot of discussion about the budget, and there ought to be. There's focus on whether or not we can balance the budget in the short term, but the truth of the matter is, the bigger problem we've got is unfunded liabilities inherent in programs like Medicare and Social Security. And in my judgment, now is the time to fix this problem and not pass them on to future Congresses and future Presidents.

I know it sounds counterintuitive for a Texan to say that we're too dependent on oil, but we are. And we need to do something about it. And the amazing thing is, we're on the verge of technological breakthrough that will enable us to power our cars in different ways, starting with ethanol derived from corn and, eventually, ethanol derived from wood chips, cornstalks, all kinds of stuff. It's called cellulosic ethanol. And I ask you to join me in continuing to spend taxpayers' money on research that will be necessary to develop new technology so we become less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

I want to work with you on health. I'm a big believer in No Child Left Behind. I think it needs to be reauthorized. I want to work with you on immigration reform, and I want to work with you on health care reform. These are big ideas, and it's going to require us working together to get the job done on behalf of the American people.

And I also appreciate your understanding that we're still a nation at war. You know, when I talked to the country the other night, I wish I could have reported differently. But it's not the truth, and it's not the reality. There's an enemy out there that would still like to strike us. And as I said—and I know most of you believe—the best way to defend this country is to stay on

the offense and bring the enemy to justice before they hurt us again.

I talked about the progress and the advance that democracy was making around the Middle East, and then the fact that the enemy struck back. And they struck back against these young democracies, because they cannot stand the thought of freedom. You see, the best way to defeat totalitarianism in the long run is to offer a more hopeful ideology. And that's what we offer through the ideology based on human rights and human dignity, the central theme of which is all people desire to be free. And it's in the interests of the United States to not only defend ourselves against the enemy in the short term, but it's in the interests of our children and grandchildren to spread freedom so that we can live in peace in the long term.

I've spent time talking about Iraq, and I'll talk with you a little bit later on. But my message to the American people was, I thought about all kinds of ideas about Iraq. And I told the American people, I fully understand there are differences of opinion. But one of the things I have discovered is, in Washington, DC, most people understand the consequences of failure. And if failure is not an option, then it's up to the President to come up with a plan that is more likely to succeed. And I spent a lot of time on the subject, because I understand how serious the issue is. And the plan I outlined to the American people is one that I believe can succeed.

Today I had the honor of welcoming David Petraeus to the Oval Office. He had just been confirmed by the United States Senate without one dissenting vote. And as I looked at that general, who is willing to go back into the war zone to represent our country, it reminded me, as the President, I must make sure he has everything he needs—that he thinks he needs to succeed in the mission that we have sent him on. And I look forward to working with you to make sure that our generals and our troops that we put into harm's way

have the support of the United States Congress.

I talked about the need to have a foreign policy that's more than just military, a foreign policy that's got active diplomacy, which we do all around the world. I mentioned in my speech that the United States does not stand alone. As a matter of fact, our troops are in Iraq based upon a United Nations mandate. We're working with the countries in the neighborhood to support this young democracy, and making it clear the stakes of the ideological struggle we're in.

I talked about the fact that we've encouraged and worked with NATO to be an active participant in Afghanistan—it's the first time that alliance has deployed outside of Europe in the history of its existence. I talked about the fact that we will never forget the importance of freedom, whether it be in our hemisphere, in Cuba, or in Burma, or in Belarus. And when we call a human tragedy "genocide," like in Darfur, we'll continue to rally the world to solve the problem.

I want to thank Members of the Congress for supporting the HIV/AIDS initiative on the continent of Africa. It gave me great pleasure to tell the American citizens that because your actions—because you acted, 50,000 people—what was once 50,000 people receiving lifesaving drugs has increased to 800,000 people in 3 short years. I firmly believe what I said: "To whom much is given, much is required." A lot has been given to the United States, and it's in our interests to help people who suffer from disease and hunger. And I thank you for your support. And the next great initiative is to eliminate malaria in countries on the continent of Africa, and I ask you to join me.

I said, finally, introducing the people that were there, something I believe: I believe the state of this Union is strong, and it's strong because the character and decency of the American people remain strong.

And so I'm looking forward to serving with you this year and next year. I thank you for your sacrifices. I have confidence in the future of this country, because we're a country full of such decent and courageous and loving people.

Thanks for having me.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:26 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, incoming commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

Statement on the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust

January 26, 2007

On the second International Day of Commemoration, we remember and mourn the victims of the Holocaust.

Sixty-two years after the liberation of Auschwitz, we must continue to educate ourselves about the lessons of the Holocaust and honor those whose lives were taken as a result of a racist ideology that embraced a national policy of violent hatred and bigotry. It is also our responsibility to honor the survivors and those courageous souls who refused to be bystanders and instead risked their lives to try and save the Nazis' intended victims.

Remembering the victims, heroes, and lessons of the Holocaust is particularly important today as Holocaust denial continues, urged on by the Iranian regime, which perversely seeks to call into question the historical fact of the Nazis' campaign of mass murder. We must continue to condemn the resurgence of anti-Semitism, that same virulent intolerance that led to the Holocaust, and we must combat bigotry and hatred in all their forms, in America and abroad.

May God bless the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. And may we never forget.

The President's Radio Address

January 27, 2007

Good morning. This week, I appeared before Congress to report on the state of our Union. I asked Members of the House and Senate from both sides of the aisle to join me in confronting the great challenges before us, so we can build a future of hope and opportunity for all Americans.

Two key challenges we face are reducing our dependence on oil and expanding access to affordable health care. I have asked Congress to take several vital steps to address these issues. And while some Mem-

bers gave a reflexive partisan response, I was encouraged that others welcomed this opportunity to reach across the aisle. One Democratic Senator said the initiatives I put forward were "serious proposals" and encouraged his fellow Democrats to "respond in a constructive way." Another Senate Democrat pledged to work toward these goals "through sincere bipartisan efforts." This is a good start, and I look forward