

colleagues selected her to lead the House Republican Conference—the highest leadership post ever held by a Republican woman. She will be missed when she departs the Congress.

I look forward to continuing to work with her throughout the remainder of her service. Laura and I appreciate Deb's friendship and wish her and her family all the best.

## Statement on Representative J. Dennis Hastert's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

*August 17, 2007*

It has been a great pleasure forging a close friendship and working relationship with Denny Hastert. He is a good and decent man, and he was a strong and effective Speaker. After teaching government and history at Yorkville High School in Illinois, Denny began making history serving in the Illinois House of Representatives and the United States House of Representatives. During his two decades in Congress, Denny rose through the ranks as a hard-working Member whom colleagues on both sides came to admire, trust, and respect and became the longest serving Republican Speaker in history. Drawing on lessons he learned as a coach, he successfully guided

Members of Congress to work together to enact legislation that has improved the lives of Americans. He led Congress to reduce taxes, improve education, strengthen Medicare, bolster our national defense, and support our troops. Our Nation is stronger because of his service.

I am indebted to Denny for his candid advice and strong support, and I look forward to working with him throughout the remainder of the 110th Congress. As my good friend prepares to move on to the next phase of his life, he has my gratitude for his distinguished service. Laura and I wish Denny, Jean, and their entire family all the best.

## The President's Radio Address

*August 18, 2007*

Good morning. In recent months, American and Iraqi forces have struck powerful blows against Al Qaida terrorists and violent extremists in Anbar and other Provinces. In recent days, our troops and Iraqi allies launched a new offensive called Phantom Strike. In this offensive, we are carrying out targeted operations against terrorists and extremists fleeing Baghdad and other key cities to prevent them from returning or setting up new bases of operation. The terrorists remain dangerous and brutal, as we saw this week when they massacred

more than 200 innocent Yazidis, a small religious minority in northwestern Iraq. Our hearts go out to the families of those killed, and our troops are going to go after the murderers behind this horrific attack.

As we surge combat operations to capture and kill the enemy, we are also surging Provincial Reconstruction Teams to promote political and economic progress. Since January, we have doubled the number of these teams, known as PRTs. They bring together military, civilian, and diplomatic

personnel to help Iraqi communities rebuild infrastructure, create jobs, and encourage reconciliation from the ground up. These teams are now deployed throughout the country, and they are helping Iraqis make political gains, especially at the local level.

In Anbar Province at this time last year, the terrorists were in control of many areas and brutalizing the local population. Then local sheikhs joined with American forces to drive the terrorists out of Ramadi and other cities. Residents began to provide critical intelligence, and tribesmen joined the Iraqi police and security forces. Today, the Provincial council in Ramadi is back, and last month, Provincial officials reopened parts of the war-damaged government center with the help of one of our PRTs. Thirty-five local council members were present as the chairman called the body to order for its inaugural session.

Similar scenes are taking place in other parts of Anbar. Virtually every city and town in the Province now has a mayor and a functioning municipal council. The rule of law is being restored. And last month, some 40 judges held a conference in Anbar to restart major criminal trials. In the far west town of Al Qaim, tribal leaders turned against the terrorists. Today, those tribal leaders head the regional mayor's office and the local police force. Our PRT leader on the ground reports that Al Qaim is seeing new construction, growing commercial activity, and an increasing number of young men volunteering for the Iraqi Army and police.

In other Provinces, there are also signs of progress from the bottom up. In Muthanna, an overwhelmingly Shi'a Province, the local council held a public meeting to hear from citizens on how to spend their budget and rebuild their neighborhoods. In Diyala Province, the city of Baqubah reopened six of its banks, providing residents with much-needed capital for the local economy. And in Ninawa

Province, local officials have established a commission to investigate corruption, with a local judge empowered to pursue charges of fraud and racketeering.

Unfortunately, political progress at the national level has not matched the pace of progress at the local level. The Iraqi Government in Baghdad has many important measures left to address, such as reforming the de-Ba'athification laws, organizing Provincial elections, and passing a law to formalize the sharing of oil revenues. Yet the Iraqi Parliament has passed about 60 pieces of legislation.

And despite the lack of oil revenue law on the books, oil revenue sharing is taking place. The Iraqi Parliament has allocated more than \$2 billion in oil revenue for the Provinces. And the Shi'a-led Government in Baghdad is sharing a significant portion of these oil revenues with Sunni Provincial leaders in places like Anbar.

America will continue to urge Iraq's leaders to meet the benchmarks they have set. Yet Americans can be encouraged by the progress and reconciliation that are taking place at the local level. An American politician once observed that "all politics is local." In a democracy, over time, national politics reflects local realities. And as reconciliation occurs in local communities across Iraq, it will help create the conditions for reconciliation in Baghdad as well.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:20 a.m. on August 17 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 18. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 17, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada and President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico in Montebello, Canada

August 21, 2007

*Prime Minister Harper.* Might I, first and foremost, thank all the people here and the citizens of Montebello for giving such a warm Quebec welcome. You are quite right to be proud of your beautiful Montebello manoir and the area.

As the leaders of the three countries, between—and our discussions between President Bush and myself were very cordial, constructive. Our three countries maintain peaceful, productive relations and give great contributions to our people. It is part and parcel of our commitment to democracy, free market, NAFTA, and the equality of chances to all citizens.

This is a unique moment to look at the individual aspects that we could look at and the challenges that we have to face. We agreed to discuss the protection of the consumer and looking at the nonsecure products entering the nations, in particular those going to our children.

We also recognize the fact that to find practical, pragmatic solutions to our mutual environmental challenges, our countries are working to find our own sustainable energy and to find national standards on energy efficiency.

Finally—and this is particularly important for Canada—we realize that border security must not threaten the friendly relations that we have. We undertook agreements on cooperation, standards, regulations, pandemic, intellectual property, and research in the energy field. In the framework of this summit, we met the North American Competitiveness Council. Their leaders provided us with valuable information on how we could exploit our partnership in the field of security and prosperity to strengthen our economies and to create good jobs here in North America.

Our discussions did not merely deal with North America. We also discussed a number of other international and hemispheric questions: climate change and too the next meeting of the Middle East discussions, where our countries are defending democracy and freedom and protecting the have-nots.

This summit enabled us to discuss our singular bilateral discussions. President Bush and myself met yesterday afternoon. We discussed a number of subjects, in particular our joint commitment to have a secure border that shall remain open to goods and services and to the interaction between our respective citizens.

President Calderon and myself also had a meeting yesterday evening, and I would like to thank President Calderon and his wife Margarita and their children Maria, Felipe, for having passed a wonderful time with us last weekend. We understand that you have had to shorten your stay due to the consequences of Hurricane Dean on your country. I sincerely regret the terrible aspect of this Hurricane Dean on Mexico, but I understand the concern, that the Mexican authorities have assisted in evacuating a Canadian citizen.

We have been—also been able to arrange our agenda yesterday to discuss important matters for our respective nations. We were able to discuss a number of different matters and the flourishing development of trade between our two countries, and that we shall pursue in the future.

Canada, United States, and Mexico, are good neighbors and good friends. As sovereign nations in our modern world, we