

Nations Security Council. And first, I want to thank you all very much for serving your respective countries. And thank you for being voices for peace and freedom.

We've had a really good discussion. We talked about a U.N. Security Council role for Darfur and Burma. We talked a little bit about Iran and how the United Nations Security Council is sending a focused message that the world really offers Iran a better way forward than isolation if they will verifiably suspend their enrichment programs.

And then we talked about Zimbabwe. Friday's elections, you know, appear to be a sham. You can't have free elections if a candidate is not allowed to campaign freely and his supporters aren't allowed to campaign without fear of intimidation. Yet the Mugabe Government has been intimidating the people on the ground in Zimbabwe, and this is an incredibly sad development.

I hope that the EU—I call—AU will, at their meeting this weekend, continue to highlight the illegitimacy of the elections, continue to remind the world that this election is not free and is not fair.

I want to thank very much the leaders in the region, those who have stepped up and spoke clearly. I appreciate them doing their—taking their responsibility seriously. And I want to thank the members here around the table of the United Nations Security Council for your strong Presidential statement. It was a powerful statement for fairness and decency and human dignity. And I suspect you'll still be dealing with this issue. And as you do, I hope you continue to speak with the same clarity that you spoke with last Monday.

People of Zimbabwe deserve better than what they're receiving now. People there want to express themselves at the ballot box, yet the Mugabe Government has refused to allow them to do so. This is not just, and it is wrong.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:31 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations; and President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

Remarks at the Max M. Fisher National Republican Leadership Award Dinner in Livonia, Michigan

June 25, 2008

The President. Thank you. Please be seated. Thanks for the—

Audience member. We love you! [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you for the warm welcome. I'm fresh in from Washington, bringing greetings from First Lady Laura Bush, who's done a fabulous job. And I'm so pleased to be back in Michigan. I've spent some quality time in your State. I've enjoyed it every time I've come. I remember—you know, we've got a lot of fond memories here, such as the time when the

Republican Party nominated a really good guy to be the Vice Presidential candidate with Ronald Reagan. That would be the first President George Bush.

You might remember, that was in Detroit. And I remember the night—the time that Ronald Reagan reminisced about that evening. As he told the story, a friend of his was watching the convention proceedings in a hotel lounge in California. And he was on the stage and my dad was on the stage and all the supporters were on the stage. And then he heard someone

ask this question: “Who are all those people up on the podium with Max Fisher?” [Laughter]

Everybody who knew Max Fisher loved Max Fisher. He was a man of uncommon grace. He was a person that could speak to the folks on the assembly line as well as to Presidents. He is a generous soul who gave to his community, his country, and the city of Detroit. He was a man of great courage. After all, he lived some 40 miles from Ann Arbor, but always reminded people he went to Ohio State. [Laughter]

I’m proud to join you in honoring Max Fisher’s legacy. And if he were with us today, here’s what he would say. He’d say, “Stop talking about me and getting to work.” And our message is, is that we’re going to get to work. We will return the Republican Party to the majority of the Michigan House of Representatives. We will take control of the Senate, and we—House, and we will elect John McCain the next President.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for leading the party. And I believe, with your hard work, John McCain is going to carry Michigan.

Today I had the privilege of flying down on Air Force One with Thaddeus McCotter, United States Congressman. This is the town in which he was raised. This is the district he represents. He is a smart, capable Member of the House of Representatives. And you—those of you who live here are lucky to have him as your Congressman.

I’m proud to be here with Attorney General Michael Cox; Mike Cox, who happened to marry a woman named Laura. [Laughter] Thanks for serving, Mike. I appreciate your leadership.

I’m proud to be here with Sheriff Mike Bouchard. Mike’s been a friend of mine for a long time. And I know—the folks he represents through law enforcement really appreciate his dedication and hard work.

I appreciate State Representative Jack Hoogendyk and wife Erin. And I wish Jack all the best in his run for the United States Senate. Thanks for running; appreciate—wish you all the very best.

I thank my friend Chuck Yob, who’s the Republican national committeeman from Michigan. And thank you all for coming.

The last time I attended this dinner, I was the Governor of Texas, running for President of the United States. Maybe some of you are old enough to remember that. [Laughter] Since then, some things have changed: My daughter got married, my hair is grayer, the entourage is bigger, and I haven’t seen a traffic jam in 8 years. [Laughter] But some things that haven’t changed: the principles that are etched in my soul and my faith in the American people.

Over the past 8 years, we’ve endured a lot together. When you think about what has taken place, it’s been a challenging time for the American people. We’ve had a recession, high energy prices, housing downturn, unprecedented attack on our homeland, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and devastating natural disasters. The reason I bring that up is because you can’t know what the future will bring, but you can bet there’s going to be some unexpected challenges facing our country. And that is why the United States must elect a leader who has the experience and judgment necessary to handle those challenges.

I know a lot about the Oval Office—the daily intelligence briefings, the unexpected challenges, and the tough decisions that can only be made at the President’s desk. In trying times, America needs a President who has been tested and will not flinch. We need a President who will do what is right, even when it’s not easy. And we need to elect a President who knows what it takes to defeat our enemies. And this year, there is only one man who has shown those kind of leadership qualities, and that man is John McCain.

And a President McCain is going to need allies on Capitol Hill. That means we need to put the House and the Senate back where they belong, in Republican hands. And a President McCain will need people he can work with in this State on behalf of the people of Michigan, and that needs—means we need to put the Michigan House of Representatives where it belongs, back into Republican hands.

And I want to thank you all for helping make that reality come true. Thanks for your hard work that you're going to do, and thanks for your contributions that will help make this party vibrant and competitive coming down the stretch. After all, the campaign season really hasn't begun. It may seem like it's begun to you, but it really hasn't, because the main campaign is going to be in the fall. And that's the time most Americans are going to take measures of the candidates, and they're going to be wondering about what they believe for the future. And when the people start paying attention, and when they start looking at the philosophical differences, they're going to find that there's a wide chasm. There really are fundamental differences between what Republicans believe and what Democrats believe.

On the issues that matter most, from taxes and spending to confirming good judges and building a culture of life to protecting our people and winning the war on terror, the American people are going to have a very clear choice. When they get in that voting booth on election day, when they think about what really matters to them, they're going to vote Republican. They're going to vote Republican for Congress, they're going to vote Republican for the Michigan statehouse, and they're going to vote Republican for President of the United States.

This November, the American people are going to have a clear choice when it comes to taxes and spending. Republicans believe that American families can spend their own money far better than the government can.

We've worked hard to restrain spending in Washington. We delivered the largest tax cuts since Ronald Reagan was the President. We cut taxes for married couples. We don't think you ought to penalize marriage in the Tax Code. We cut taxes for families with children. We cut taxes for small businesses. We cut taxes for capital gains and dividends. We put the death tax on the road to extinction. We eliminated income taxes to nearly 5 million families in the lowest tax bracket, and as a result, the American people have more of their own money in their pocket, and that is the way it should be.

Now, our opponents have a different view on taxes, as you well know here in Michigan. After all, you've seen the Democrats propose and pass millions of dollars in new taxes. And if they increase their numbers in Lansing, we all know that that tax burden is likely to continue to grow.

And in Washington, the Democratically controlled Congress refuses to make the tax relief we passed permanent. When the tax relief expires, every income tax rate in America will grow—go up. The marriage penalty will return in full force. The child tax credit will be cut in half, and taxes on capital gains and dividends will increase significantly. The death tax will return to life. A typical family of four with an income of \$40,000 will face a tax crease [increase]* of more than \$2,000. At a time when our citizens are struggling with high food prices and high gas prices and economic uncertainty, the last thing we need is a tax increase. That is why we must elect Republicans to the Congress and John McCain to the Presidency to make the tax relief permanent.

Now, there's a reason why the Democrats want to raise taxes. It's because they need more of your money to increase—to pay for all the new spending they have in mind. This is a well-thought-out plan

* White House correction.

on their part. You've seen this on the Federal level. When the Democrats campaigned for Congress in 2006, they promised fiscal responsibility. And since they took office, they've been acting like teenagers with a new credit card. [Laughter]

When those bills to increase spending and raise taxes reach my desk, I answer them with my favorite veto pen, and the famous words of Elvis Presley: "Return to Sender." [Laughter]

And one area where the Democrats in Congress has failed to lead is on energy policy, and that's becoming more and more apparent to the American people. You know, I know that you're concerned about rising gasoline prices, and so am I. I've repeatedly proposed ways to boost America's domestic oil supply, and the Democrats have rejected virtually all of them.

It puts them in an interesting position. They say they want lower prices at the pump, but they're against measures that would actually do that. You might say, when it comes to energy policy, the Democrats in Congress are running on empty.

This November, the American people have a clear choice when it comes to confirming good judges and building a culture of life. Republicans aspire to build a society where every human being is welcomed in life and protected in law. We funded crisis pregnancy centers and supported parental notification laws. We outlawed the cruel practice of partial-birth abortion, and we defended this good law all the way to the Supreme Court, and we won.

And that victory shows how important it is to put good judges on the bench. Republicans have made it—they made it clear what our view is about the judiciary, the role of our courts in our democracy. We believe that judges should strictly interpret the law and not legislate from the bench. We need more judges like Justice Sam Alito and Chief Justice John Roberts.

Our opponents see things differently. There's no clearer illustration of the differences than this: The Democrats' chosen

candidate for President voted against both these good men. And our candidate for President, John McCain, voted for them.

And we recently received a fresh reminder of the importance of the courts. A bare majority of five Supreme Court Justices overturned a bipartisan law that Congress passed and I signed to deliver justice to the detainees at Guantanamo Bay. With this decision, hardened terrorists now enjoy the same legal rights previously reserved for Americans.

This is precisely the kind of judicial activism that frustrates the American people. And the best way to change it is to put Republicans back in charge of the United States Senate and John McCain in the White House.

And the best way to keep judges in Michigan from substituting their own political views for the clear principles of the Constitution is to elect more judges like Cliff Taylor on the Michigan Supreme Court.

This November, the American people are going to have a clear choice when it comes to protecting our country and winning the war on terror. Republicans believe that our most solemn duty is to protect the American people. And since September the 11th, 2001, we have worked day and night to stop another attack on our homeland.

At home, we've strengthened our defenses, we've reformed our intelligence community, and we've launched a new program to monitor terrorist communications. Around the world, we have gone on the offense against the terrorists and advanced freedom as the great alternative to their ideology of hatred and violence. In a time of war, we need a Commander in Chief who understands that we must defeat the enemy overseas so we do not have to face them here at home, and that man is John McCain.

In Afghanistan, we destroyed Al Qaida training camps and removed the Taliban from power. And today, we're helping a democratic society take root and ensuring

that Afghanistan will never again be a safe haven for terrorists planning an attack on America.

And in Iraq, we removed a dangerous regime run by Saddam Hussein. The decision to remove Saddam Hussein was the right decision at the time, and it is the right decision today.

Early last year, when the situation in Iraq was deteriorating, we launched what's called the surge. And since the surge, violence in Iraq has dropped, a lot. Civilian deaths and sectarian killings are down, and political and economic progress is taking place. A democracy is taking root where a tyrant once ruled.

In Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world, our men and women are performing with skill and honor. Some of these brave troops have come from Michigan. We honor their sacrifices. We are grateful to their families. And every single American should be proud of their noble work.

The war on terror is the great challenge of our time. The Democratic Party has repeatedly shown that it would take America in the wrong direction, starting with the fact that many don't consider this to be a war at all. In their view, this is a—primarily a matter of law enforcement. In the war on terror, our focus should not be on prosecuting criminals after they have committed a crime. Our job is to find the terrorists and stop new attacks before they happen.

To stop new attacks, we need to know what the terrorists are planning. And the best source of information about terrorist attacks is the terrorists themselves. After 9/11, we established a program at the CIA to detain and question key terrorist operatives and their leaders. This program has stopped new attacks on our country and has saved American lives. And despite these successes, Democratic leaders in Congress have tried to shut it down.

To stop new attacks, we also need to deny terrorists safe haven, including in Iraq. And that's why we launched the

surge. Yet the Democrats declared the surge a failure before it even began. And now that the surge has turned the situation around, they still call for retreat.

The other side talks a lot about hope, and that sums up their Iraq policy pretty well: They want to retreat from Iraq and hope nothing bad happens. But wistful thinking is no way to fight a war and to protect the American people. Leaving Iraq before the job is done would endanger our citizens and embolden the enemies who have vowed to attack us again. When it comes to the war on terror, our Democratic leaders should pay more attention to the warnings of terrorists like Usama bin Laden and spend less time heeding the demands of MoveOn.org and CODEPINK.

Over the next few months, you're going to hear a lot of talk about change. The Democrats say they're a party of change. Let me review the history of the Democratic Party. There was a time when they believed that low taxes were the path to growth and opportunity, but they've changed. There was a time when they believed in commonsense American values, but they have changed. There was a time when they believed that America should pay any price and bear any burden in the defense of liberty, but they have changed.

This isn't the kind of change the American people want. Americans want change that makes their lives better and their country safer. And that requires changing the party in control of the Congress. And that requires having a Commander in Chief who will support our military and will fight and win the war against those who would do us harm, and that Commander in Chief will be John McCain.

And so I thank you for coming tonight. I just want you to know that we've got a lot of work to do together. I don't know about you, but my energy is up and my spirits are high, and I'm going to finish my job with a sprint to the finish line.

So with confidence in our vision and faith in our values, let's go forward together. Let's put Republicans back in control of the Congress and the Senate. Let's make sure Republicans run the statehouse here in Michigan, and let's do all we can to put John McCain in the Oval Office. May God bless you, and may God bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5 p.m. at Laurel Manor. In his remarks, he referred to Saulius Anuzis, chairman, Michigan Republican Party; Michigan State Attorney General Michael Cox; Michael J. Bouchard, sheriff, Oakland County, MI; Democratic Presidential candidate Barack Obama; Chief Justice Clifford W. Taylor, Michigan State Supreme Court; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Judges for the United States Courts of Appeals and District Courts

June 25, 2008

Yesterday the Senate confirmed Raymond Kethledge and Helene White to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit and Stephen Murphy to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. I appreciate the Senate's work on filling these important seats, which had been declared judicial emergencies.

For the first time in my administration, the Sixth Circuit will now have a full court to address important issues facing the residents of Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee. Unfortunately, too many other

Federal judgeships across America remain vacant. This is unacceptable and inexcusable. Since the beginning of the 110th Congress, the Senate has confirmed only 10 circuit court nominees. In the last 2 years of the past three administrations, the Senate has confirmed an average of 17 circuit court judges. I strongly urge the Senate to hold hearings and votes on the 28 pending circuit and district court nominations to ensure that our Nation has a fully functioning judicial system.

Joint Statement by the United States of America and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

June 25, 2008

President George W. Bush welcomed Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to the United States of America and to the White House yesterday for the fourth bilateral meeting between leaders of our two countries in as many years. The President and the Prime Minister discussed the progress made since they last met in Vietnam in 2006 and committed to specific efforts to carry this increasingly robust bilateral rela-

tionship forward. The two leaders agreed the relationship is based on a positive, growing friendship, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to pursuing constructive and multifaceted cooperation on a wide range of issues that will contribute to the development of the depth of the relationship, which is in the long-term interests of both countries. They also shared their