

football team, and his wife, Faye; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack, who was arrested in Pakistan on March 1, 2003; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at George W. Bush Elementary School in Stockton

October 3, 2006

The President. I want to thank Sylvia Ulmer, the principal of George W. Bush Elementary School, for welcoming me. It's such an honor, Sylvia—and Jack, thank you, sir—it's such an honor to have a school named after me. When I pulled in the parking lot and I saw George W. Bush Elementary, I couldn't think of a higher tribute to a person, and I thank you all and the citizens of this community for this honor and tribute. Frankly, I was a little emotional when I pulled in—

Sylvia Ulmer. So am I. So am I.

The President. I want to thank the teachers and the faculty here. I can't wait to tell Laura that I went into the Laura Bush Library and saw teachers working hard to teach kids how to read. It's just a blessing to be there.

You know, being at this school reminds us, we have a special responsibility to protect our children. One of the most important jobs of those involved with schools and government is to make sure that children are safe. And Laura and I were saddened and deeply concerned, like a lot of other citizens around the country, about the school shootings that took place in Pennsylvania and Colorado and Wisconsin. We grieve with the parents, and we share the concerns of those who worry about safety in schools.

Yesterday I instructed Attorney General Gonzales and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings to convene a meeting next Tuesday, a meeting of leading experts and stakeholders to determine how best the Federal Government can help States and local governments improve school safety. Our schoolchildren should never fear their safety when they enter to a classroom. And, of

course, the superintendent and principal know that.

We also had a reminder of the need for people in positions of responsibility to uphold that responsibility when it comes to children, in the case of Congressman Mark Foley. I was dismayed and shocked to learn about Congressman Foley's unacceptable behavior. I was disgusted by the revelations and disappointed that he would violate the trust of the citizens who placed him in office.

Families have every right to expect that when they send their children to be a congressional page in Washington, that those children will be safe. We have every right as citizens to expect people who hold higher office behave responsibly in that office. I fully support Speaker Hastert's call for an investigation by law enforcement into this matter. This investigation should be thorough and any violations of the law should be prosecuted.

Now, I know Denny Hastert; I meet with him a lot. He is a father, teacher, coach, who cares about the children of this country. I know that he wants all the facts to come out, and he wants to ensure that these children up there on Capitol Hill are protected. I'm confident he will provide whatever leadership he can to law enforcement in this investigation.

Again, I want to thank you for your hospitality. It's an honor to be here. Appreciate your time. God bless. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:28 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Jack McLaughlin, superintendent, Stockton Unified School District.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate John T. Doolittle in El Dorado Hills, California

October 3, 2006

Thank you for coming. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's good to be in El Dorado County. [*Laughter*] I can see why you live here. It's a beautiful part of the world. And I'm honored to be standing here with a man who has done a fine job as a Member of the United States Congress, John Doolittle.

He was telling me on the way in, you did a pretty good job filling the hat—[laughter]—and I want to thank you for doing that. He deserves your support. He's a straightforward, honest, decent man with a lot of common sense. That's what we need in Washington, DC—a lot of common sense. And I'm proud to be standing with John Doolittle, and I appreciate Julie, and I appreciate his family.

I'm also proud to be here with the Congressman from the next district, and that would be Dan Lungren. Dan, thank you for coming, and I'm glad you brought Bobbi with you. I also appreciate Doug Ose, a former Congressman. Doug is with us, a good friend of mine—I'm proud to be with him.

The truth of the matter is, old John, when he's thinking about who could come and speak, really didn't want me first. [Laughter] He had somebody else in mind for this event—not Barbara—[laughter]—Laura. That shows good judgment. [Laughter] Laura sends her best to the Doolittles. She, like me, strongly believes John deserves to be reelected to the United States Congress. And we want to thank you for doing that.

By the way, I know I'm not very objective, but I think Laura is a fabulous First Lady. I know she's a great wife and a fabulous mother, and she's got to be the most patient woman in America. [Laughter]

I believe strongly that our philosophy represents the philosophy that is the most hopeful for all Americans. I believe our philosophy is one that works, because we've seen it work. Take, for example, the economy. I want you all to remember that the past 5 years, this economy has been through a lot. It's been through a recession, corporate scandals; it's been through a terrorist attack on the United States. The economy had to endure the fact that I decided to protect this country by going on the offense against the terrorists, and so we had a war in Afghanistan and a war in Iraq—and natural disasters we had to deal with, high energy prices. And yet, the economy of the United States is the envy of the industrialized world. People are working. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Our farmers and ranchers are doing well. Small businesses are growing. Productivity is up.

Something happened, and what happened was, we cut the taxes on the working people and the small-business owners. Our philosophy is that the more money you have in your pocket, the better off the economy is. We like it when you've got more money to save, spend, and invest. We know that when you save, spend, or invest, the economy grows.

That stands in stark contrast to our opponents, the Democrats. They believe they can spend your money better than you can. And make no mistake about it, one of the fundamental differences of this campaign is what will the tax rates look like. If you vote Republican, we're going to keep the taxes low. If the people vote Democrat, the Government is getting into your pocket and spend your money on your behalf.

Now, you might not—listen carefully to the rhetoric in this campaign. You see, we've got these tax cuts in place, and a lot of them are going to expire. So when you hear people say, "Well, we're not going to extend the tax cuts," that really means they're going to raise your taxes. It's like saying to somebody—just giving them a raise and say, "Well, I'm going to take the raise away from you." That's not a raise.

In order to make sure this economy continues to grow, in order to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit remains strong, in order to make sure our small-business sector continues to lead economic growth, we need to make the tax cuts permanent. And John Doolittle understands that. He knows it loud and clear. He stands on principle in Washington, DC. He trusts you with your own money.

You'll hear these—all kinds of excuses about why they want to raise your taxes. Perhaps the one you hear the most of is, well, we just need to raise your taxes to balance the budget. The problem is, that's not the way Washington, DC, works. I've been up there long enough to know how it works. They'll figure out new ways to spend your money when they raise your taxes. They'll have more money to spend on pet projects. The best way to balance the budget is to keep taxes low, grow the economy—which yields more tax revenues, set priorities with your

money, and be fiscally sound. And that's what we're going to continue to do.

And the single biggest priority to spend with your money is to make sure our troops have all the equipment, training, and support they need to do their job. And Congressman John Doolittle understands that. And I'm proud to say that by working with people in the Congress like Congressman Doolittle, our military is well-funded and the esprit de corps is high. I can't tell you how great it is to be the Commander in Chief of such wonderful people, men and women who, in the face of danger, said, "I volunteer to serve the United States of America to protect our freedoms." Our military is great, and we intend to keep it that way, for your sake.

I couldn't help but notice there's a lot of farmers and ranchers in this part of the world. I strongly suggest making sure you've got a Congressman in Washington, DC, who understands how important it is to have a strong agricultural sector. I personally believe that when the ag sector is strong, our economy is strong. And I know full well we've got to have a strong agricultural sector for national security reasons. John Doolittle understands farming, and he understands ranching, and he's representing you well in the United States Congress.

Speaking about national security, we got to make sure we become less dependent on foreign sources of oil. There's a complacency, I'm sure, that's going to start setting in here because gasoline prices are low. And I'm glad they're going down. I'm glad for the sake of the working people in the United States. I'm glad for the sake of the farmers and ranchers. I'm glad, for the sake of those who make a living on the highways, that the price of gasoline is going down. But that doesn't lessen the national security consequences of being dependent on foreign sources of oil.

And so I look forward to working with John Doolittle to fund research and development on technologies that will enable us to drive automobiles with ethanol or to be able to have new batteries that will enable you to drive the first 40 miles on electricity—and your car is not going to have to look like a golf cart—[laughter]—or eventually powering your automobiles by hydrogen. And this is coming. We're spending a lot of

your money on research to enable this country to become less dependent on foreign sources of oil, and in the meantime, we need to be exploring for oil and gas in environmentally friendly ways right here in the United States of America.

There's a lot of issues I look forward to working with Congressman Doolittle on: making sure our education system continues to hold people to account; making sure the health care system empowers patients and providers—and not the Federal Government when it comes to making decisions for you; making sure we get legal liability for our doctors. We got too many junk lawsuits that are running good doctors out of practice, which is running up the cost of your medicine.

And I look forward to working with John to make sure our faith-based and community-based initiative still has support in the United States Congress. Let me tell you something about this country. The great strength of America is not in our military or not in the size of our wallets but exists in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens. I am proud of and complimentary of the fact that thousands of our citizens volunteer on a daily basis to feed the hungry, find shelter for the homeless—without one single law. People hear that call to love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. And it's changing our country, and it's saving souls. And the Federal Government ought not to fear the influence of faith in our society, but we ought to welcome faith-based and community projects to help solve America's most intractable problems.

There's going to be a lot of domestic issues we will be working on. But by far the biggest issue of this campaign and the biggest issue confronting the Federal Government is this: the security of you, the security of the United States. Make no mistake about it, there's an enemy that still lurks, an enemy that still plans, an enemy that still plots, an enemy that still wants to hurt the United States of America. These are ideologues bound by a hateful ideology. They can't stand what America stands for.

We believe strongly in the right of people to worship any way they see fit. As a matter of fact, one of the great strengths of the United States of America is you're equally

American if you're a Muslim or a Jew or a Christian or a Hindu or an agnostic or atheist. You have a right to choose in the United States of America, and that right is a sacred right. But that's not the case with these ideologues. If you don't worship the way they want you to worship, there's penalty, and harsh penalties at that. They don't believe in the public square. They don't believe in people being able to dissent. They're bound by this ideology, and they've got objectives. And their objective is to drive the United States from parts of the world so they can spread their ideology throughout the Middle East in the form of a caliphate.

I like to remind people that we're in the ideological struggle of the 21st century. It's a struggle between good and evil. It's a struggle between moderate people and extremists. It's a struggle between those who believe in democracy and those who support tyranny. And the decisions that we make today will affect the security of the United States and affect the type of world your children and grandchildren live in.

These are historic times, and they're tough times, and they require steady leadership from the United States of America. And I need steady support in the United States Congress to protect this country. After 9/11, I came to these conclusions: One, that in order to protect you, in order to defeat this enemy of hatred, that we must stay on the offense. We must defeat the enemy overseas so we do not have to face them here at home. I concluded that where we find people harboring these terrorists, they should be judged equally as guilty as the terrorists. And the Taliban found out what the United States meant when they refused to turn over Al Qaida. And today, because of the actions of our coalition in Afghanistan, terrorist training camps and safe havens have been eliminated; 25 million people now live in freedom; and the world is better off for it.

And of course, the great debate is Iraq. The debate you'll hear a lot of talk about is, what should the United States of America do in Iraq? The first thing I would ask the Democrats is, do they truly believe the world would be better off with Saddam Hussein still in power? And if so, they need to say it loud and clear—because I know full well

that this state sponsor of terror, a person who had used weapons of mass destruction, a person who invaded his neighbors, the sworn enemy of the United States, someone who was shooting at U.S. pilots, someone who defied the United Nations resolution—removing him from power has made America safer and the world a better place.

The debate is active and alive, and that's good. You hear people in Washington, DC, say that Iraq is a distraction from the war on terror. I believe it is a central front in the war on terror, and I believe we must defeat the enemy and help that young democracy succeed in order to make sure this homeland is more secure. But don't believe me. Just listen to the words of Usama bin Laden or Zawahiri, the number two in Al Qaida. They have loudly proclaimed that Iraq is central to their ambitions. They have made it abundantly clear that they will continue their murderous ways to drive us out of Iraq so they can establish safe haven from which to launch further attacks.

They want a capacity to be able to topple moderate governments who do not subscribe to their view of the world. Imagine a world 20 or 30 years from now where moderate governments have been toppled, where extremists are battling for power in the Middle East, where these killers have got control of oil resources, which they would use to punish the free world economically if the free world didn't concede to their demands. Imagine that kind of world in the midst of which was a country with a nuclear weapon aiming to—and vowing to destroy our close friend Israel. If that world were ever to exist because the United States of America lost its nerve during this battle in Iraq, history would look back and say, what happened to them? How come they couldn't see the problem? How come they lost their nerve and left a generation of Americans to deal with a troubled world?

Now is the time to confront this group of killers and these extremists. Now is the time to defend the United States of America by defeating the enemy overseas. Now is the time to stand with the 12 million people who demanded their liberty. Now is the time to help young democracies and moderates around the world, so when history looks back, they can say they did their duty and they

laid the foundation of peace for a generation to come.

The challenge of defending you here at home is immense, because we've got to be right 100 percent of the time, and the enemy has only got to be right one time. And that's why, after 9/11, I called upon the Congress to make sure that those responsible for defending you have got all the tools necessary to do so. I worked with Congress to pass the PATRIOT Act to break down walls that prevented the intelligence services from talking to the criminal justice, the law enforcement personnel. I can't explain very well why that was the case. I'm sure you're wondering how come somebody who gathered intelligence in the United States couldn't share that same information with law enforcement, but nevertheless, that's the way it was.

You cannot defend this country unless all branches of government have the capacity to talk to each other, to share information. This is a different kind of war. This isn't a war measured by the number of platoons or size of a navy. This is a war in which we must find about the intentions of the enemy and take care of them before they come and hurt us.

And so therefore, our people need the tools necessary to protect you. And that's why I established the terrorist surveillance program to monitor terrorist communications coming into this country and out of this country. Listen, after 9/11, we created the program with the Central Intelligence Agency to detain and question key leaders that we picked up off the battlefield. When I said we're going to give these people tools, those are the kind of tools I was talking about.

On each of these programs—the PATRIOT Act and the terrorist surveillance program and the legislation to authorize aggressive interrogation of terrorists—the Democrats say they share our goals, but when it comes time to vote, they have consistently opposed giving our personnel the tools they need to protect us. And this is an issue in this campaign.

The issue in this campaign is which party, which group of individuals have got the will and the foresight necessary to give our professionals the tools necessary so they can do the most important job facing our Govern-

ment, and that is to protect you from further attack. Time and time again, the Democrats want to have it both ways. They talk tough on terror, but when it comes time—when their votes are counted, their softer side comes out. *[Laughter]*

You don't have to worry about Doolittle. *[Laughter]* He understands the stakes. He understands the cause.

If you've got a second, I'd like to review these three acts and the legislative history in the hopes of clarifying the differences between how we think and how the other people think. First, on the PATRIOT Act: In the weeks after 9/11, we passed this vital law, and in the 5 years since, it has proved invaluable to stopping further attacks. In other words, it's worked. The law enforcement community has used the law to break up terror cells or prosecute terrorist operatives and supporters in California and Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, North Carolina, Virginia, Ohio, New York, Oregon, and Florida.

In 2001, the vote in the United States Senate was 98 to 1. And then, 5 years later, when the bill came up for renewal, the Senate Democrats filibustered it. That's Washington-talk for trying to kill it. They didn't want it to go forward. As a matter of fact, the Senate Democrat leaders, when they were filibustering, said, "We killed the PATRIOT Act." And a reporter said whether that was something to celebrate—does that really make sense to celebrate that maneuver? And his answer was, "Of course it is."

See, there's a difference of opinion in Washington, DC. It's a difference of opinion in this campaign and campaigns around the country. As a matter of fact, saying they were for the PATRIOT Act and then working to kill the PATRIOT Act kind of reminds me of another campaign. *[Laughter]* We may be heading back to the old days. Finally, the filibuster died, and I signed the law, and the United States of America is safer because of it.

I know you're familiar with the program of the National Security Agency called the terrorism surveillance program that I installed. I did so to protect you. The philosophy behind the program is pretty clear, pretty simple to understand: If Al Qaida or an Al Qaida associate is calling into the

United States, we want to know why. We want to know their intentions. We want to be able to prevent an attack.

People say, “Well, how do you know they’re Al Qaida?” Well, a lot of times, we’re picking up information on the battlefield—say, one of these people we pick up has got a phone number on their possession, and it happens to be a U.S. phone number. I think it makes sense—I don’t care whether you’re Republican or Democrat or independent—for the United States—*[laughter]*—wondering why somebody would be calling that phone number. *[Laughter]*

Last week, when the legislation providing additional authority for the terrorist surveillance program came before the House of Representatives, 177 Democrats voted against listening in on terrorist communications. See, it’s a clear position. It’s a clear signal of how they view the world in which we live. I’m not saying these people are not patriotic; they are. I’m not saying they don’t love America; they do. They just see the world differently, and it’s an important issue in this campaign, as to how we see the world.

I see the world as a dangerous place. I see the world with enemies coming to try to hurt us. I see our most important job is to protect you. And therefore, we will give our folks on the frontline of terror the tools necessary to do so.

I want to spend a little time on this CIA program. I set up the program to detain and question key terrorist operatives and leaders who were captured on the battlefield. You see, a captured leader may have some information that will help protect you. You know, they may know plans; they may understand what plots are underway. And I know that our security depends on getting this kind of information.

In the past 5 years, the good and decent professionals of the CIA have worked tirelessly to get information from captured terrorists that enabled us to stop new attacks on the homeland. In other words, we were able to get vital information that we can act on to protect you. Every American has got to understand the importance of this program. Information from the terrorists questioned by the CIA helped break up a cell of Southeast Asian terrorist operatives that

had been groomed for an attack on the United States. The program helped us stop an Al Qaida cell from developing anthrax for attacks against the United States. It helped stop a planned strike on a U.S. Marine camp in Djibouti, prevent a planned attack on the U.S. Consulate in Karachi. It helped foil a plot to hijack airplanes and fly them into Heathrow or London’s Canary Wharf.

In other words, from this program, we got vital information that enabled us to act to protect you. Were it not for this information from the terrorists questioned by the CIA, our intelligence community believes that Al Qaida and its allies would have succeeded in launching another attack against the United States.

Last week, the Congress held a vote on the future of this program. The choice before every Member was clear: Should the CIA program continue or not? Congress voted to continue the program, thankfully, for the security of the country. I’m looking forward to signing this bill into law. And I thank John Doolittle for his strong support in helping getting that bill out of the United States House of Representatives.

In this campaign season, this vote tells us a great deal—the vote on this bill tells a great deal where the two parties stand. In other words, you can get rid of all the rhetoric and you can look where the parties stand. In the House of Representatives, 160 Democrats, including the entire Democrat leadership, voted against continuing this program. Eighty percent of House Democrats want to stop a program that has provided invaluable intelligence that has saved American lives.

In the Senate, 32 Democrats, including every member of their Senate leadership save one, voted to kill the program, which means that about three-quarters of the Democrats in the Senate, including both of the Senators from the State of California, voted to stop the men and women of the CIA from continuing a program to get information from terrorists like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed about planned attacks on the United States of America.

We just have a fundamental difference, and it’s a key difference for all Americans to look at and listen to. During the debate on the Senate floor, one senior Democrat,

their ranking member on the Judiciary Committee, compared the brave Americans who question the terrorists to the Taliban and Saddam Hussein. I believe this exposes a dangerous mindset on the part of Democrats in the United States Congress. You can't defend America if you can't tell the difference between brave CIA officers who protect their fellow citizens and brutal dictators who kill their citizens.

I'm not making any of this up. [Laughter] Another Senate Democrat said that allowing the CIA to go forward with its program to question the most dangerous terrorists we have captured would, in this person's words, "diminish the security and safety of Americans everywhere." We just have a different mindset, a different view of the world. If they feel safer without this program, the Democrats in the Senate need to explain to the American people which of the attacks that the CIA program stopped would they have been willing to let go forward.

Protecting your country is the number-one priority as far as I'm concerned, and it's the number-one priority as far as Congressman Doolittle is concerned. We must see the world the way it is and stay on the offense and bring these people to justice before they hurt any American citizen.

But there is a different point of view in Washington. The House Democratic Leader, right here from the State of California, summed up her party's approach to the mid-term elections this way: She said, "This election shouldn't be about national security." Well, I think it's about national security, and I think when the people take a good look about the dangers confronting the United States of America, they'll think it's about national security. Democrats take a law enforcement approach to terrorism that means America will wait until we're attacked again to respond. That's kind of a pre-9/11 mentality, and it's not going to make this country any safer.

We believe that we're in a war and that we must prevent attacks from happening in the first place by staying on the offense. If you want leaders in Washington who understand the enemy we face and will give our folks the tools necessary to protect you, if you want people in Washington who are not

going to sit back and wait to be attacked again, you make sure you send people like John Doolittle back to the United States Congress.

I'm an optimistic fellow. I believe strongly in my heart of hearts that not only will we secure this country, but we will do the hard work necessary to help moderates and reasonable people and people who long for peace in the Middle East achieve their dreams. When we find young democracies attacked by extremists, we'll help them survive. When we find liberty challenged in dark corners of the world, we'll stand with those reformers and those reasonable people who are anxious to see the extremists defeated and marginalized. This is the call of the 21st century. This is the challenge for our generation. And I'm confident, I'm confident, that our generation will rise to that challenge. And when history looks back, they will say, job well done.

Thanks for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:12 p.m. at the Serrano Country Club. In his remarks, he referred to Julia Harlow, wife of Representative John T. Doolittle; Bobbi Lungren, wife of Representative Daniel E. Lungren; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1, 2003.

Remarks on Arrival in Los Angeles, California

October 3, 2006

California Wildfires

Thank you all very much for talking on Air Force One. We had a briefing on the fires that have been ravaging country here in California. I was proud to be here with the U.S. Forest Service—as you can see, one of the yellow shirts. These are the people on the frontline of fighting these fires.

And they brought me up to date, particularly on the Day Fire. And that fire has been contained, which is good news for the people