

the sheriff's department readily sprung to his feet to say, "You can count on me."

The purpose has got to be more than just hoping somebody is listening to TV. The purpose has got to be—out of this—that we share information so that we can save lives, encourage parents, and help people respond.

And I want to thank you all very much for coming. I'm proud you're here. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:24 p.m. at the National 4-H Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida. Participating in the event was Marleen Wong, director, Crisis Counseling and Intervention Services, Los Angeles Unified School District, and director, Trauma Services Adaptation Center for Schools and Communities, Los Angeles, CA.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Mac Collins in Macon, Georgia

October 10, 2006

Thanks for coming. It's good to be in Macon. Thanks for coming out. One thing about old Mac is, you know where he stands. That's the kind of Congressman you need from this part of the world, and that's the kind of Congressman we need in Washington, DC—straightforward thinker, bringing common sense to the Nation's Capital.

I'm proud to stand here with Mac Collins. I know him well. I've worked with him; I've listened carefully to his ideas. No doubt in my mind he's the best person to represent the Eighth Congressional District from the State of Georgia.

I'm also for him because he married well. Of course, that's why he invited me, because I married well. *[Laughter]* And I want you to know, Julie and Mac, that Laura sends her very best to you both. I know she was your first choice for this fundraiser. *[Laughter]* She's got to be the most patient woman in America. I know we've got some Texans here, and they went to the same college as Laura did. And when she went there, she, frankly, wasn't interested in politics and, I think, didn't care for politicians. *[Laughter]* Now here she is as the Nation's First Lady, and

I firmly believe this country is better off with Laura as the First Lady.

I'm not only proud to be here with Mac Collins—and I want to thank you for supporting him, by the way. I cannot thank you enough for helping this good man. He not only needs to fill the hat in order to run a good campaign, he's going to need your work coming down the stretch. He's going to need you to help make the phone calls and put up the signs and turn out the vote. He's going to need the grassroots activists to step up and say to their fellow citizens, you've got a good man in Mac Collins. He knows what happens in Washington, DC. He's not a novice up there. When he gets back up there, he knows what he needs to do. And he's going to represent the will of the people of this district, see. That's the thing I like about Mac. And so I want to thank you for giving of your money, and thank you for giving of your time when we come down the stretch.

I also want to thank you for supporting one of the Nation's fine Governors, Governor Sonny Perdue. You know what—all Sonny is doing is—in office is what he said he's going to do. He said he's going to do this; he's going to do it; and he does. And I'm proud to be with Sonny, and I want to thank you for helping him.

I'm also proud to be able to work with a really fine United States Senator in Senator Saxby Chambliss, and I see sweet Julianne is with you. Thanks for coming, Julianne. Now, let me say this about Saxby—if you're interested in agriculture, you don't have to worry about your interests being represented in the United States Senate. The man has got some stroke up there in Washington—*[laughter]*—and he knows what he's talking about. And those of us in the White House listen to him. Senator, we're proud you're here.

Georgia has got a fine congressional delegation, and one of the Congressmen is with us today—Lynn Westmoreland. Congressman, thanks for coming. Good to see you. Appreciate your time. We've spent some quality time together, and I know he's a good one, and I know he's looking forward to getting Mac up there to work with him to do what's right for the country.

I want to thank Alec Poitevint—with us; he’s the chairman of—the national committeeman. It seems like I’ve been saying his name for two decades, or three decades. [Laughter] Thanks for coming, Alec. Perry McGuire—Perry McGuire is with us; he’s the candidate for the attorney general for the State of Georgia. Perry, thanks for coming. Good luck to you, Perry.

I want to thank all the local officials and State officials who are here. Appreciate you serving.

There are a lot of issues that I’ll be talking about. I know Mac will be talking about them. We’ve got issues such as making sure we become less dependent on foreign oil. It’s going to be helpful to have these Georgia farmers growing oil—growing the feedstock for oil—[laughter]—like soy diesel or ethanol. It’s coming. I look forward to working with Mac to spend some money to help new technologies evolve. We can’t be complacent just because the price of gasoline is going down. Being dependent on oil from overseas is still a national security concern. And I intend to push hard for technologies that will enable us to diversify.

I’m going to work with Mac to make sure health care costs are reasonable so people can have affordable insurance. There’s a lot of issues we can talk about, but one of the most important issues is taxes. It’s a big national issue. I want to spend a little time talking about it today because there’s a fundamental difference between the Republican and Democrat Parties on this important issue. And I’m going to discuss this issue and these differences between now and election day. And I’m going to spend some time right here in Macon, Georgia, talking about it.

Mac and I share a philosophy about taxes. We believe that the people who best know how to spend your money are the people who earn the money in the first place. And that’s you. So we worked to ensure that working families are able to keep more of their paycheck. And that—those weren’t just empty campaign words. Those are actually deliverables; that’s what we did. Mac stood squarely for cutting the taxes. My administration and the Congress have enacted the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was in the

White House. We cut the taxes for every American who pays taxes.

If you paid income taxes, we cut your taxes, see. We doubled the child tax credit; we reduced the marriage penalty; we cut taxes on small businesses; we cut taxes on capital gains and dividends to promote investment and jobs. And to reward family businesses and farmers for a lifetime of hard work and savings, we put the death tax on the road to extinction.

The Republican record on taxes is clear, and the Democrats in Washington have a clear record of their own. The trouble is, they don’t want you to know about it. Recently the top Democrat leader in the House made an interesting declaration. She said, “We love tax cuts.” Given her record, she must be a secret admirer. [Laughter] It’s not just the so-called tax cuts for the rich she opposes. When we cut taxes for everybody who pays income taxes, she voted against it. When we reduced the marriage penalty, she voted against it. When we cut taxes on small businesses, she voted against it. When we lowered the taxes for families with children, she voted against it. When we put the death tax on the road to extinction, she voted against it. Time and time again, she had an opportunity to show her love for tax cuts—[laughter]—and she voted no. [Laughter] If this is a Democrat’s idea of love—[laughter]—I wouldn’t want to see what hate looks like.

Now she and other Democrats are trotting out their old line about how they’re only going to raise taxes on the rich. We’ve heard that before. Sounds like a nice idea until you start doing the math. Let me just give you one example. Earlier this year, the Democrats put forward a budget alternative that called for \$177 billion in additional spending authority over the next 5 years—a number that does not include all the other spending they proposed. The problem is, even if they raise taxes on everyone making over \$200,000, they would bring in only \$108 billion of new revenues. And that means the Democrats would have to come up with \$69 billion for additional spending they proposed. And guess who’s going to have to pay?

When the Democrats find themselves short of money to pay for all their spending promises, it’s the middle class Americans

who get stuck with the bill. Recently the top Democrat on the House Ways and Means Committee—that's the committee that writes taxes—said he can't think of one of our tax cuts that should be extended. Think of that, not one—not the tax cuts for families with children, not the reduction in the marriage penalty, not the tax cuts on small businesses, not the tax cuts on dividend and capital gains, not the cut in the death tax. Even when asked to explain his remarks, he refused to commit to extending a single tax cut we passed. If he's not going to commit to extending these tax cuts now, think of what he would do if the Democrats gained control over the United States Congress and he became chairman of this important committee.

The difference between our parties could not be clearer, and so is your choice on election day. If you want to keep the tax cuts we passed, vote Republican on November the 7th.

What they don't seem to understand, what the national Democrats don't seem to understand, is that the economy grows when you control more of your own money. The tax cuts we passed put more than a trillion dollars in the hands of American workers and families and small businesses. And you've used that money to help fuel our strong and growing economy. The national unemployment rate is now 4.6 percent. People are working in the United States of America. Since August of 2003, our economy has added more than 6.6 million new jobs. Our progrowth economic policies work. They're making a difference for the people of America.

And this strong and growing economy has helped us reduce the Federal deficit. When I set a goal of cutting the deficit in half by 2009, Democrats said we couldn't get it done. Last year the ranking Democrat on the House Budget Committee said that my budget brought us nowhere near the goal of cutting the deficit in half. Here's what actually happened: A growing economy has helped produce record tax revenues, and in July, I announced that we were a year ahead of schedule in our plans to cut the deficit in half.

The Democrats' approach to cutting the deficit is taking more of your money to pay

for their spending. The Republican approach is to restrain spending and let you keep more of your own money so this economy grows. And there's a fundamental difference, and it's clear as night and day.

Next month, our Nation has got this choice to make: Do we keep taxes low so we can keep this economy growing, or do we let the Democrats in Washington raise taxes and hurt the economic vitality of this country? The decision is yours to make in the voting booth. This decision will have a huge impact on the working people all across the United States of America. Whether you're a worker worried about the size of your paycheck or a business owner who's thinking about hiring more workers or a family worried about gas prices or health care costs, the last thing you need is higher taxes. To keep this economy growing and delivering prosperity to more Americans, we need to make the tax relief we passed permanent. And the best man for the Eighth Congressional District from Georgia to do that is Mac Collins.

Now, there are a lot of issues we got to discuss on the campaign trail, lot of domestic issues. But there is no bigger issue facing the voters than who best to protect the United States of America. You know, when I was campaigning in Georgia in 2000, I didn't believe I'd be saying such a statement. I didn't want to be a war President. I don't remember a lot of discussion about war in the 2000 campaign. But war came to our shores, a war we didn't ask for and a war we must win for the sake of future generations.

People ask me, what's it like to be the President. I said, it's a decisionmaking experience. [*Laughter*] And I make a lot. And a lot of decisions I make are based upon the knowledge I learned from that attack on September the 11th, 2001. I learned we face an enemy that is ruthless, that will kill the innocent in order to achieve objectives. I learned we face an enemy that has got an ideology, an ideology that is hard for a lot of Americans to understand, an ideology that does not believe in the same freedoms we believe.

Let's talk about religion for a second. One of the great, great beliefs of America and the fundamental cornerstone of our liberty is the fact that in America, you can worship any way you so choose. If you're a Jew, Christian,

Muslim, Hindu, atheist, agnostic, you're equally American—equally American. That's a sacred right for all of our citizens. It's a right that we must never abandon in America. And it stands in stark contrast to what the enemies of freedom believe. They say if you don't worship the way they tell you to worship, you'll be held to account. They say that if you don't view religion the way they view religion, you'll be punished.

We're in the ideological struggle of the 21st century. It's a struggle between rational, reasonable people who believe in basic freedoms versus extremists and radicals who murder the innocent in order to achieve their objectives. Right after 9/11, I made it clear that if one were to harvest—harbor one of these extremists or radicals, they will be judged as equally as guilty as those who commit murder.

And that's why we went into Afghanistan. I said, "You've been harboring Al Qaida"—remember, they were providing safe haven for Al Qaida to train. I gave them time to turn over Al Qaida to us; they chose otherwise. And as a result of defending ourselves, which is the most important job of government, we liberated 25 million people from the clutches of that ideology.

This Nation cannot wait for threats to fully materialize. If we're to do our most important job, which is to protect the American people, we must make sure we deal with threats before they hurt us. That's one of the fundamental changes of September the 11th. And it's important to have people in Congress who understand that. It's important to have a person like Mac Collins who knows that we must deal with the threat overseas so we do not have to face that threat here at home. I saw a threat; the Congress saw a threat; the United Nations saw a threat in Saddam Hussein; and the world is better off without him in power.

And now the challenge is to do the hard work of helping the Iraqis defend their freedom, the hard work of helping this young democracy survive the onslaught of murder from those who would prevent democracy from taking root. It's in our interests that we do so, because, you see, we must defeat the enemy overseas so we don't have to face them here at home. And if we were to retreat

before the job is done, they would follow us straight to America.

And I understand it's hard on the American people, because the enemy is able to take innocent lives, and it gets on our TV screens. And it's hard. I know it's hard, because Americans are compassionate people. We care about innocent life. We care about the human condition. But it's necessary work. We'll continue to make sure our commanders have that which they need to do the job. We will be flexible in our tactics in order to help this young democracy survive. We will deploy the assets necessary to bring people to justice overseas so we don't have to face them here at home.

And I need people by my side in the United States Congress like Mac Collins, who will make sure our brave men and women who wear the uniform have all that's necessary to defend the United States of America. We will stay; we will fight; and we will win, for the security of the United States.

But we must do more than just stay on the offense against these killers. We pressure them every day. It's harder to plot and plan when you're on the run or you're hiding in a cave. But I recognized after 9/11, we must also deploy all assets to protect you. I think about my job of protecting you every day. It's the most fundamental of all requirements of government. And so after 9/11, I called upon Congress, and sometimes—and a week later called upon Congress to give our folks on the frontline of fighting terror the tools necessary to protect you.

There were walls set up between intelligence and criminal investigators that made it impossible for folks to share intelligence with those who are hired to protect you. It's hard for me to explain why that was the case—just take my word for it. *[Laughter]* It was there. You had somebody get some intelligence—they couldn't share it with the person charged with criminal justice matters. And it made us vulnerable to attack.

And so I asked Congress to pass the PATRIOT Act. Congressman Mac Collins didn't hesitate. He said it's the right thing to do, to give those on the frontline of fighting terror the tools necessary to protect you. As a matter of fact, right after 9/11, it wasn't hard

to get the bill passed. Five years later, however—or 4 years later, I came back and said, “We need to renew the bill,” and on the floor of the United States Senate, Democrats filibustered the bill. See, that’s Democrat-talk—I mean, Washington-talk for killing it, trying to kill it. They must think differently about this war on terror. It’s a fundamental issue in this campaign, the difference about how to defend America.

The Senate minority leader openly bragged about—“We killed the bill,” he said, killed the PATRIOT Act. To me, it speaks volumes in this campaign about which party clearly sees the enemy as it is and which party is willing to do the hard work necessary to protect the American people. I do not question the patriotism of anybody. I just know there’s a different mindset, when they fought the PATRIOT Act’s renewal.

As you know, I put in place a plan that said if Al Qaida is calling into the United States, we want to know why. We want to know why. In this war on terror, we’re capturing people. And sometimes, for example, we might find something in somebody’s pocket, and, say, it had a phone number of—an American phone number, and that phone number gets called from overseas—not with a call within the United States but from outside in. We need to know. If the most important job is to protect the American people, we need to know why that person, that Al Qaida and/or Al Qaida affiliate, is making a phone call.

So the United States Congress had a vote on this recently, out of the House of Representatives—166 Democrats voted against the bill, voted against giving our people the tools necessary to protect you. These are fine people; I know a lot of them. They’re decent citizens of our country. They just have a different view about the world in which we live. Perhaps one way to summarize it is, okay, we’ll get tough; we’ll respond after we’re attacked. My attitude is, we better give our folks the tools necessary to protect you before we get attacked, to protect the American people.

As you, I’m sure, read, we have been capturing people on the battlefield—I call it a battlefield because this is a war—and we have interrogated those people in order to

find out whether or not they know about attacks on the United States. In my discussion to the American people about this issue, I talked about some of the examples. For example, we have captured and interrogated a fellow named Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who our intelligence people believe was the mastermind of the September the 11th attacks.

This country is under threat. The enemy still wants to hurt us. And therefore, it seemed like it made sense to me that when we found the mastermind, or the presumed mastermind of the September the 11th attacks, that our professionals should find out what this fellow knows. If the most important job is to protect the American people, we must give our professionals the tools necessary to protect you.

This bill came up for a vote recently in the House and the Senate. The overwhelming majority of Democrats voted against giving our professionals the tools necessary to protect you. There’s a fundamental difference in this campaign, and it’s a clear difference. And the American people need to understand there’s a difference in this campaign. Our most important job is to protect you from attack, and the Republican Party will make sure our professionals have the tools necessary to defend you.

And the people of this congressional district don’t need to worry about where Mac Collins stands. I look forward to working with this good man to help protect you from the threats we face.

We’re in an ideological struggle. It’s the challenge of our time. It’s the call of our generation. We’ve got a great military. We’ve got wonderful professionals working hard to protect you. We’ve got one other fantastic way to defend America, a great asset, and that’s freedom. I believe in the universality of freedom. I believe there’s an Almighty. I believe one of the great gifts of the Almighty is the desire for people to be free. And I believe that the United States of America—it’s in our interest that we promote liberty. Oh, not every democracy is going to look like ours. Each democracy ought to represent their own history and traditions. But it’s in our interest that liberty flourish, because that’s how you ultimately win the ideological struggle

that pits reasonable people against extremists. That's how you win a struggle with those who want their children to grow up in a reasonable society, a hopeful society, against those who will create chaos so that they can't do so.

You know, I recently—you might remember, I just had an interesting experience recently when the Prime Minister of Japan and I went down to Elvis's place. [Laughter] Laura and I had never been there, and so—[laughter]—I thought that would be fun. [Laughter] Prime Minister Koizumi really wanted to go there—[laughter]—because he is a—he's an Elvis fan. He loves Elvis. But I also wanted to tell a story. I'm going to tell it right quick and then head back up—and have dinner with Laura. Here it is: I find it is a really interesting kind of twist of history, I guess you could put it, that I'm going to Elvis's place with the Prime Minister of Japan, and my dad fought the Japanese. Eighteen-year-old George H.W. Bush—I'm sure you've got relatives, the same thing happened to them—responded to the violent attack on the United States, and said, "I want to volunteer," like thousands of other kids.

And we fought the Japanese with all we had. And it was a bloody war—really bloody war. And yet 60 years later, I'm on Air Force One flying to Memphis—[laughter]—talking about the peace, working with Prime Minister Koizumi on issues like North Korea. And I will tell you, we're more likely to solve this issue peacefully when we've got people like Japan and China and South Korea and Russia saying the exact same thing as the United States is to the man in North Korea.

It helps to be able to sit down and talk ally to ally about the peace. We talked about the fact that the Japanese had 1,000 troops in Iraq helping this young democracy fight off the extremists that can't stand the thought of a free society in their midst. We talked about the strategic implications of abandoning those who long for liberty in the Middle East. He knows what I know, that there could be a world in which moderate governments get toppled, which is precisely what the enemy said they want to do, so that these extremists control energy resources in which they'd be able to blackmail the free world.

And combine that with a nuclear weapon in the hands of an Iran, and Koizumi and I understand that the world would look back and say, "What happened to them? How come they couldn't see the threat?" We're all flying on Air Force One with the former Prime Minister of Japan—he recently left office—talking about the peace. And I found that to be amazing. Something happened between when George H.W. Bush became a Navy pilot, and his son is talking about the peace. And what happened was, Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy. Liberty has got the capacity to change an enemy into an ally. Liberty has got the capacity to bring hope where hope is needed and light where there's darkness.

I believe if this generation does its duty to protect future generations of Americans, someday, an American President will be sitting down talking with the duly elected leaders of the Middle East and talking about the peace, and a generation of Americans will be better off.

Those are the stakes of the elections of 2006, the stakes of the world in which we live. And I'll be proud to work with Mac Collins to bring the peace we all want. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:35 p.m. at the Macon Centreplex. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea.

The President's News Conference

October 11, 2006

The President. Thank you. Before I take your questions, I'd like to discuss a couple subjects. First, I want to briefly mention that today we've released the actual budget numbers for the fiscal year that ended on September the 30th. These numbers show that we have now achieved our goal of cutting the Federal budget deficit in half, and we've done it 3 years ahead of schedule. The budget numbers are proof that progrowth economic policies work. By restraining spending in Washington and allowing Americans to keep more of what they earn, the economy is creating jobs and reducing the deficit and