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morning I spoke to Iraq's elected leaders. These leaders represent all the Iraqi communities. These leaders—Prime Minister Maliki, President Talabani, Vice President Hashimi, Vice President Abd Al-Mahdi, President Barzani—recognize the true and meaningful reconciliation that needs to take place, and they recognize this is a process. Yesterday's agreement reflects their commitment to work together for the benefit of all Iraqis to further the process.

The agreement begins to establish new power-sharing agreements, commits to supporting bottom-up security and political initiatives, and advances agreement among Iraq's leadership on several key legislative benchmarks.

While yesterday's agreement is an important step, I reminded them, and they understand, much more needs to be done. The Iraqi Parliament will convene again in early September, and it will need to act to codify this political progress.

It's in our interests that we help the Iraqi people succeed. Success in Iraq will be a major blow to the extremists and radicals who would like to attack America again. And that's why the United States will continue to support Iraq's leaders and all the Iraqi people in their efforts to overcome the forces of terror that seek to overthrow a nascent democracy.

In this regard, I welcome and accept the expressed desire of the Iraqi leadership to develop a long-term relationship with the United States based on common interests. The United States is committed to developing this relationship and to strengthening diplomatic, economic, and security ties with the Iraqi Government and its people.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, President Jalal Talabani, and Vice Presidents Tariq al-Hashimi and Adil Abd Al-Mahdi of Iraq; and Masoud Barzani, president, Kurdistan region in Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate David G. Reichert and the Washington State Republican Party in Bellevue, Washington

August 27, 2007

Thank you all. Thanks for coming. I appreciate it. Thanks for coming. How's your elbow, Dave? [*Laughter*] First of all, I thank you all for supporting an honest, decent, hard-working, fine American in Dave Reichert. You call him "the sheriff." I look at him as a sheriff. He's tough when he has to be; he's compassionate when he needs to be; and he's an independent thinker. He's the kind of person who has done a fabulous job in the United States House of Representatives, and he deserves to be reelected. And I thank you for supporting him. I particularly want to thank Julie for standing with Dave—and the family.

I know something about families and politics. Like Dave, I married above my head. [*Laughter*] And Laura sends her very best to the Reichert family. She's a—I left her on the ranch this morning. We're working our way back to Washington, DC. I'm going to Australia to represent the United States of America at what they call APEC. By the way, there's no greater honor than to represent the United States of America overseas. It is a fantastic experience. We're such a fabulous country of decent, honorable people.

I want to thank my friend, the former Senator of the State, Slade Gorton, and Sally, for joining us today. Senator, thank you for being here. Luke, I want to thank you for being here. Thanks for being the chairman. Use this—[*applause*]—yes. You need to put this money to good use and turn out the vote, get people to the polls.

We run for reasons. We've got a philosophy that works. We believe in strong defense. We need to protect this country. We believe in human rights and human dignity, and we believe in keeping your taxes low. That's what we believe.

I want to thank Matt Hasselbeck and Mack Strong. These are champs. These men are champs on the field, and they're champs off the field. And they set such a fine example for people who look at the Seattle Seahawks,

and they look at these players and say, "Gosh, I'd like to be like them." And I thank you for being such good family men, setting such a good example for the kids here. And I'm honored to have the jersey.

I want to talk about a couple of issues with you. We're a nation at war. I wish I didn't have to say that. No President should ever want to come to any community in our country and say, "We're at war," but we are. And the fundamental question facing this Nation is, how do we face this conflict? What do we do?

The most important priority of government—it's one of the reasons I'm such a strong believer in Dave—is to protect the homeland. That's our most important job. And Dave Reichert understands that. He understands that it's possible for government to balance the need to understand the enemy and civil liberties. And we're doing just that. He knows what I know, that we've got to use all assets at our power to protect you.

You know, I was deeply affected on September the 11th, 2001. I vowed that day that I would use all of our assets to keep the enemy from harming us again. And I'm proud to have an ally in Dave Reichert, who understands that as well. That's why you've got to send him back.

The stakes are high. There are some—I recognize there are some who hear we're at war and dismiss that as empty political talk. That's either disingenuous or naive—either case it is dangerous because we face an enemy that is ideologically bent, determined to achieve their objectives and murder the innocent. They are not religious people. They may have hijacked religion, but they're not religious. I don't believe you murder innocent people to achieve political objectives and be a religious person. I just don't believe that. As a matter of fact, I believe that's the definition of evil. And I think the United States must do everything we can to prevent them from harming us and others again.

And the stakes are high in this war. Our strategy is to stay on the offense. I would rather defeat them overseas than to face them here at home. And so every day, you've got really fine, decent people working hour after hour to find these killers and to bring them to justice. You can't negotiate with these kind of people; you can't talk sense to them. The only thing—the way to protect us in the short term is to find them before they hurt us again. And that's what's happening every single day.

Dave Reichert understands it. He is a strong supporter of law enforcement, of the intelligence community, and of the United States military. And I appreciate that, Dave.

In the long run, the best way to protect you is to win this ideological struggle by defeating what they believe with something that has worked throughout history, and that's liberty. I make my decisions based on just some fundamental principles—principles, by the way, I'm not going to change; principles that—you know, I think the thing that matters most in life is when you finish the task at hand, whatever that may be, that you can look in the mirror and say you stayed true to your principles; you stayed true to that which you believe. I'd rather be dealing with people who make decisions based upon what's right, not based upon the latest focus group or opinion poll. And that's exactly what we need to do to protect this country.

I believe there's an Almighty, and I believe a great gift of the Almighty to each man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth is freedom. And I believe it's in the interest of the United States to help people be free. Freedom yields the peace we want. Freedom yields the—lays that foundation for peace so our children can grow up in a peaceful world. And that's what you're seeing happening right now.

Iraq is the central front of this war. This war is being fought on a variety of fronts, and Iraq, obviously, is the central front. It's the front that's dominating the news. It's the front that appears on your TV screens. It's the front in which there's a lot of debate in a free society, and there should be debate. I happen to believe it's essential that we win this war in Iraq, that we do the job on this front.

We've done some remarkable things there. First of all, we removed a brutal dictator. Getting rid of Saddam Hussein made the world safer. It was the right decision. The Iraqis went to the polls and wrote a Constitution. I mean, I wasn't surprised they went to the polls. If you believe in the universality

of freedom, it shouldn't surprise you that people, if given a chance, will express their desire to be free. I wasn't surprised; I was pleased that 12 million people defied the car bombers and killers and murderers to vote.

And then the thinking enemy, recognizing that a free society in the Middle East would be a major blow to their ambitions to spread their caliphate throughout the Middle East, tried to create sectarian violence. They murdered the innocent in order to cause people to doubt government and doubt the coalition. These are coldblooded killers. These, by the way, have sworn allegiance to—many of them have sworn allegiance to Usama bin Laden, the same person that ordered the attacks that killed nearly 3,000 of our citizens. They can't stand the thought of a free society in their midst. An Iraq that can govern itself and sustain itself and be an ally against these radicals and extremists would be a major defeat in this ideological struggle.

And so they struck. And I was confronted with a decision: You either leave, pull back, or send more troops in to try to bring enough security so that the society can emerge and evolve. And I chose the latter. I chose the latter because the consequences of failure in Iraq are enormous for the security of the United States of America.

I gave a speech to the VFW the other day and talked about the different theaters of war in the past, whether it be Japan or Korea and Vietnam. I reminded the listeners, Vietnam was much different from Iraq in that you could leave Vietnam, and yeah, there was a human toll, huge human catastrophe as a result of us leaving, but the enemy wasn't going to follow us here. In the beginning of the 21st century, failure in Iraq would cause the enemy not to retreat, but to follow us to America. The stakes of success for your security are enormous. And that is why I listened to our commanders and the experts and military folks about how to provide enough security for democracy to have a chance to succeed.

I sent a new commander there on the ground, a fellow named General David Petraeus. We've been there for—fully staffed and engaged for about 2 months, with a full complement of manpower, and we're making a difference. It's changing on the ground. The people are beginning to see that grassroots reconciliation is possible. Neighbors—listen, people want to live in peace. People don't like violence. They want their children to grow up in a peaceful world. If given a chance, I believe people will cling to liberty and freedom. And I know it's in our interests for us to deny Al Qaida a safe haven or the extremists an opportunity to become more emboldened throughout the Middle East. What happens in Iraq matters in America.

And that's why I've asked Congress to wait until these commanders come back—the Ambassador and commander come back and tell people exactly what's happening. You know, when they open up a new school in Iraq, it doesn't make headline news. When Al Qaida kills a bunch of people, it does. And these folks are trying to shake our will. I'm giving a speech to the American Legion tomorrow, and a line in there is, "We will not be intimidated by thugs and murderers. The United States of America will stand strong."

I'm confident we can succeed. I really am. I could not look at a mother whose child was in combat if I didn't believe, one, it was necessary, and two, we can succeed. I couldn't do that in good conscience. And one of the reasons I'm confident we can succeed is because we have done this kind of work before.

I like to remind people about the story of my dad and my Presidency. I find it incredibly ironic that George H.W. Bush went straight out of high school, became a Navy fighter pilot, and fought the Japanese, and some 60 years later, his son sits down at the table with the Prime Minister of Japan, the former enemy, working to keep the peace. Isn't that interesting? I think it is. And you know what happens? Liberty has got the capacity to change an enemy into an ally. Liberty and freedom have—are transformative. They've got the ability to transform an entire region, one of hopelessness, where 19 kids are willing to get on an airplane to kill, to one of hope, where people realize a better future and a peaceful future.

This is a long ideological struggle we're involved in. And the fundamental question is, will the United States of America take the lead? Will we be confident in the values that have made us a great nation? And I answered that question loud and clear: We're in the

lead; we'll stay in the lead; and we'll work for the peace that we all want.

You know, every time you run, at least every time I've run, the economy has always been an issue. And I'm glad it is this time around. [*Laughter*] We have—I can remember campaigning in Washington State and campaigning with Dave before and reminding people of another principle that I believe in, and that is, you can spend your money better than government can. There is a kind of a philosophical divide in Washington. There are people that, one, don't—believe we don't have enough money in Washington—I happen to believe we do—and secondly, that they would rather figure out how to spend your money than you should.

You know—and so our argument, however, wins when you look at the facts. We had to deal with a recession, an attack on the country, corporate scandals. This economy was not very good in the beginning of my administration. So I went to Congress and said, "I've got an idea for us to get out of this recession. Why don't we let the people have more of their own money? Rather than taking money away from the spenders and savers and investors, why don't we try something different? Why don't we say, 'Here, you can have your own money in your own pocket so you can spend it yourself'?"

And it worked. Since August of 2003—by the way, we didn't cut taxes on a few people; we cut taxes on everybody that paid taxes. It wasn't one of these special deals where you paid some, and you paid some, but you get the tax break; you don't. If you have a family with children, you got a tax break. I happen to think it was a mistake to penalize marriage. We had a marriage penalty in the Tax Code. It seems like to me, we ought to be encouraging marriage rather than penalizing marriage.

We cut taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We cut taxes on small businesses, and we reduced all the income tax rates. And by the way, most small businesses pay tax at the individual income tax rate. See, if you're a subchapter S or a limited partnership, you pay income tax based upon individual rates. And so when you say you're cutting the individual rates, you're actually cutting taxes as well on small businesses. Seventy percent of new jobs are created by small businesses, and so when a small business has more money in its treasury, it tends to expand and invest. When a consumer has more money in his or her pocket, they either save or invest or spend.

And our plan worked. Cutting taxes works. Cutting taxes has created a strong economy. We've created 8.3 million new jobs since August of 2003. Unemployment rates are down. People are working; inflation is low; interest rates are low; people are owning homes. This economy is strong. And the best way to keep it strong is to put people in Congress that won't raise your taxes.

And make no mistake about it, the Democrats are going to raise your taxes, pure and simple. They may say they're not going to in the campaign, but they're going to raise your taxes. How do I know? Well, they submitted a budget recently. Their budget calls for $205 billion of extra discretionary spending over the next 5 years. That's their blueprint for what they're going to do with your money—205 billion additional dollars. That averages out to $112 million a day, $4.7 million per hour, $78,000 per minute, $1,300 in higher discretionary spending every second of every minute of every hour of every day of every year for the next 5 years. And you're going to pay for it. That's why we need to reelect Dave Reichert. And that's why they give the President the power of veto. I'm going to veto any tax threats.

What's interesting is that we were able to cut taxes and grow the economy and, at the same time, reduce our deficit. That's what we told the people we would do. We said, "Give us a chance. You're going to have more money in your own pocket to spend, save, and invest, and we're going to manage this fiscal house in such a way that the deficit comes down." Today, the projected deficit is about 205 billion—that's a nice number; that's what the Democrats are going to take out of your pocket; that's the size of the deficit, which, by the way, as a percentage of GDP is low.

And I've submitted a budget that will actually balance the budget by 2012, so long as

we have fiscally responsible people in Washington. And that means we need to elect people who understand what it means to set priorities. And the number-one priority, as far as I'm concerned, is to protecting the American people. The number-one priority is to make sure our troops have the support they need and to make sure our veterans get the care they need.

And Dave is right there. You can count on him. You can count on him to be a watchdog for your money in Washington, DC.

I want to talk about one other issue, and that is—it's a national security issue; it's an economic security issue; and it is an environmental issue—and that is our dependency on oil. Now, that probably comes as a shock to you to hear a Texan say that, but I understand what it means to be dependent on a product from parts of the world where some of the people don't like us. I know what that means for our national security.

I also understand, in this world we live in, when demand for crude oil goes up in a developing country like China and the corresponding supply doesn't keep up with the demand, the price of gasoline goes up at the pump here in Seattle, Washington. So it's an economic security issue as well. If the terrorists and these radicals that would like to create economic havoc on the United States were ever to able to significantly disrupt the oil supply, you'd feel it. So it's an economic security issue. And obviously, burning fossil fuels creates an environmental issue.

And so I look forward to working with Dave to come up with a practical plan that enables us, one, to grow the economy and, at the same time, to become less dependent on oil and better stewards of the environment. And our strategy makes sense. It's a commonsense strategy.

First, I believe that we can grow enough fuel to become less dependent on oil. I'd rather our farmers be producing fuel than buying fuel from overseas. I think that's a practical application of technology. We're selling a little—we're using a little more than 7 billion gallons of ethanol now, made mainly from Midwestern corn. In other words, there's a whole industry growing. And we're encouraging it. As a matter of fact, we believe that technology is going to advance to the point where we can reduce our gasoline usage by 20 percent over the next 10 years and replace it with alternative fuels. I believe that.

Your government is spending a fair amount of your money—if billions is fair—[*laughter*]—a lot of your money on technologies because the truth of the matter is, the only way to be able to grow our economy and, at the same time, be better stewards of the environment is to come up with new technologies. It's conceivable that relatively quickly, there are going to be automobiles where you can drive your first 40 miles on a battery and the thing you're in doesn't look like a golf cart. It will actually be a car, something that you'd like to be in. [*Laughter*]

I'm a big believer in clean coal technologies. We're spending up to about $2 billion to be able to use this plentiful supply of energy in an environmentally friendly way. And I think there's going to be some breakthroughs coming down the road.

I believe in nuclear power. I believe if you're really, truly interested in greenhouse gases, then you ought to be supporting nuclear power. If you're really that concerned about the environment, you ought to be saying, this great economy of ours can grow and, at the same time, not pollute. Nuclear power doesn't put one emission into the atmosphere.

And so we're spending money to come up with technologies that will enable us to be less dependent on oil. And I think it makes sense. And I'm proud to have Dave's support. He's an environmentally conscious guy. He cares about the environment, like a lot of people around the country do. But I want to tell you something that's interesting and something you probably haven't spent much time reading about. Do you realize that the United States is the only major industrialized nation that cut greenhouse gases last year? We grew our economy by 3.4 percent in the second quarter, and we cut greenhouse gases.

Our strategy is working. Our philosophy makes sense. It is a commonsense philosophy that's making a difference in the lives of the average citizens. David Reichert understands that, and that's why you need to send him

back to the United States Congress. And I'm proud to be here for him.

Thanks for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:28 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency. In his remarks, he referred to Luke Esser, chairman, Washington State Republican Party; Matt Hasselbeck, quarterback, and Mack Strong, fullback, Seattle Seahawks; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan.

Statement on the Death of Police Officer Germaine Casey

August 27, 2007

Officer Germaine Casey of the Rio Rancho Police Department died today from injuries suffered while serving as a member of my security detail in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I am deeply saddened by his death and extraordinarily grateful for his protection. It is a high calling to choose to serve and protect your fellow citizens, and I will always be indebted to Officer Casey's service.

He leaves behind his wife, Lisa, and their two children. They are in my thoughts and prayers. May God comfort the Casey family and his fellow law enforcement officials.

Remarks at the American Legion National Convention in Reno, Nevada

August 28, 2007

Thank you all very much. Thank you all. Please be seated. Commander, thank you very much for the invitation to come. I'm honored to be here. I'm honored to represent Post 77 of Houston, Texas. I hope my fellow Texans behave themselves here in Reno. [*Laughter*] You won't? Okay, well—[*laughter*].

I appreciate the fact that nearly every community in America has been enriched by the American Legion and the Women's Auxiliary. I appreciate the work that you do to remind our citizens about the blessings of America. You have the profound gratitude of the President and the people of this country. Thank you for your service.

I particularly appreciate the work you do with our country's young. I like the fact that you have a oratorical competition that, according to your organization, helps Americans communicate their ideas clearly and effectively. Paul suggested I might want to sign up. [*Laughter*] I appreciate the fact that through Boys and Girls Nation, you teach young people who are interested in public service about how Washington really works. [*Laughter*] I'm not going there. [*Laughter*]

We meet today at a critical time for our country. America is engaged in a great ideological struggle, fighting Islamic extremists across the globe. Today I want to talk to you and to the American people about a key aspect of the struggle: the fight for the future of the Middle East. I'm going to explain why defeating the extremists in this troubled region is essential to our Nation's security and why success in Iraq is vital to winning this larger ideological battle.

I do want to thank your commander. It's been my pleasure to work with Paul. He's been in the White House a lot, along with the executive director, John Sommer. He's represented you well, and he's served with distinction. I thank JoAnn Cronin, the national president of the American Legion Auxiliary. I appreciate Bob Spanogle, the national adjutant of the American Legion.

I want to welcome the Governor of the great State of Nevada with us today—Governor Jim Gibbons is with us. Mr. Governor, thanks for coming. The Congressman from this district is a fine Representative named Dean Heller. His wife, Lynne, sang the national anthem. Thank you both for being here today.

I'm honored to be in the presence of those who wear our Nation's uniform. I thank General Charles Campbell, commanding general, U.S. Army Forces Command, for joining us—Major General Gale Pollock, Acting Surgeon General of the U.S. Army. And for all those who wear the uniform, thank you for volunteering to defend this Nation in a time of peril. I'm proud to be your Commander in Chief.

For nearly a century, Presidents have looked to the American Legion to provide