

greatest threats to our security, which are criminals and drug dealers and terrorists.

The program would also improve security by creating tamper-proof identification cards that would allow us to keep track of every temporary worker who is here on a legal basis and help us identify those who are here illegally.

One thing the temporary-worker program should not do is provide amnesty for people who are in our country illegally. I believe granting amnesty would be unfair, because it would allow those who break the law to jump ahead of people like you all, people who play by the rules and have waited in the line for citizenship.

Amnesty would also be unwise, because it would encourage future waves of illegal immigration, it would increase pressure on the border and make it difficult for law enforcement to focus on those who mean us harm. For the sake of justice and border security, I firmly oppose amnesty.

This week, the Senate plans to consider legislation on immigration reform. Congress needs to pass a comprehensive bill that secures the border, improves interior enforcement, and creates a temporary-worker program to strengthen our security and our economy. Completing a comprehensive bill is not going to be easy. It will require all of us in Washington to make tough choices and make compromises, and that is exactly what the American people sent us here to do.

As we move toward the process, we also have a chance to move beyond tired choices and the harsh attitudes of the past. The immigration debate should be conducted in a civil and dignified way. No one should play on people's fears or try to pit neighbors against each other. No one should pretend that immigrants are threats to American identity because immigrants have shaped America's identity.

No one should claim that immigrants are a burden on our economy because the work and enterprise of immigrants helps sustain our economy. We should not give into pessimism. If we work together, I'm confident we can meet our duty to fix our immigration system and deliver a bill that protects our

people, upholds our laws, and makes our people proud.

It's a joyful day for all of you, and it's one you'll always remember. When you came here this morning, I was the President of another country. Now I'm the President of your country, and I'm grateful for that honor. I wish you good luck as citizens of the greatest Nation on the face of the Earth.

May God bless you and your families, and may God continue to bless America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:12 a.m. at the DAR Administration Building. In his remarks, he referred to Alfonso Aguilar, Chief, Office of Citizenship, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Reception for Senatorial Candidate Conrad Burns *March 27, 2006*

Senator, thank you. I kind of like being on the same platform as Senator Burns because he makes me sound like Shakespeare. [*Laughter*] I like a plain-talking fellow. The good thing about Conrad Burns is, you know where he stands. That's why the people of Montana respect him and they like him. And I'm here to urge the good people of the State of Montana to send him back to the United States Senate.

I appreciate Phyllis. Phyllis, it's great to see you. Conrad married well. [*Laughter*] So did I. And Laura sends her love to both you all. It was neat to meet daughter Keely and son Garrett, daughter-in-law Kate. But right before we came on, the Senator wanted me to make sure I understood how brilliant and beautiful his granddaughter Ella is. That says something about the man. He's got his priorities straight. He cares deeply about his family. He understands the importance of family in our society, and I appreciate your priorities, Senator.

By the way, he also loves Montana. Every time I see him, he says, "I want you to remember the great State of Montana." He cares deeply about the people there, and he knows the State about as well as anybody

could possibly know it. He's traveled the State. He tells people what's on his mind. He is—he's a down-to-earth guy. And the people of Montana have got to understand he can get some things done here in Washington, DC. No, there's a lot of eloquent folks in this town, but it's sometimes short of doers and people who can accomplish some things. I'm here because Senator Burns can get some things done for the good of the people of Montana and the people of the United States of America.

I thank Congressman Denny Rehberg for being here as well. He's a good, down-to-earth guy too. And he's serving the great State of Montana with class and dignity. He is the—he's the leader of the Montana congressional delegation. *[Laughter]*

I appreciate Senator Kit Bond. Senator Bond from Missouri is here tonight. It's nice of him to come by. It's good of you to honor your old buddy, and I'm proud to—I recently said hello to former Senator Don Nickles from Oklahoma. Don, thank you for coming here as well. Montana has elected some fine people—no finer person than Marc Racicot, who I've gotten to know really well, and I appreciate you being here, Governor. Thanks for coming.

Karl Ohs, who is the chairman of the Republican Party, and Sherri is with us—Republican Party of Montana, that is. I appreciate you being here, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for coming. I want to thank John Green, who is the finance chair. Thank you all for listening to John's admonition to support this good man. Long word—he's trying to show off here for the folks of Montana. *[Laughter]*

I particularly want to thank the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades for endorsing Conrad Burns tonight. The Painters' general president, Jimmy Williams, is here. Jimmy, thank you for supporting this good man. I'm proud you're here. There's Jimmy over there.

We've got a lot to do in this country. We're in—we're going through historic times, and it's important to have people in the United States Senate who understand the stakes, understand the world in which we live. It's important to have clear-eyed realists working with the administration to lay the foundation for peace. It's really easy to be out there talk-

ing about the world the way you'd like it to be, but we can't afford that luxury because we're in a war against some terrorists who would like to harm America again.

Our—over my time—my remaining time here and the time that Senator Burns will have here after he's reelected, we'll be working on making sure that we accomplished our most important objective, and that is to protect the American people from further harm. I know some probably think that, well, this war on terror is isolated to a few angry individuals that got lucky on September the 11th. That's not how I look at the world, and that's not how Conrad Burns looks at the world. After that attack, I vowed that I'd use everything in our national—everything we could, all our national assets to do our most important job, and that is defend the American people, which means we better have some people in the United States Senate who understand the best way to defend the American people is to stay on the offense against an enemy who would do us harm, to defeat an enemy overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

I appreciate people standing up and supporting the President when he enforces doctrine. I said to the world, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist." And the Taliban didn't take us seriously. So for our own national security and for liberating others, we sent a mighty coalition into Afghanistan to free the people of that country and, at the same time, secure our own. And Conrad Burns stood strong when it came to the liberation of Afghanistan, and I want to thank you for your support.

I want to thank you for your support in Iraq. Iraq is the central front in the war on terror. And one of the lessons of September the 11th is that when this Nation sees a threat, we must take the threat seriously, before it materializes.

And I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. But it wasn't just me who saw the threat. Members of the United States Senate from both political parties saw the same threat. My predecessor saw the threat. Members of the House of Representatives from both political parties saw the threat. Fifteen members of the United Nations Security Council saw the threat. And the United Nations Security

Council said to Saddam Hussein, “Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.” It was his choice to make. He chose war. And the world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power.

And we need people in the United States Senate who understand the stakes in this theater of the war on terror. The enemy cannot defeat us. They cannot defeat us militarily. The only thing they can do is to use their terror tactics to shake our will. And I’m enjoying working with a United States Senator like Conrad Burns whose will cannot be shaken because of the actions of thugs and assassins. The United States of America will accomplish our mission. There will be a democratic Iraq that is able to defend itself, sustain itself, and become an ally in the war on terror.

In order to achieve that objective, we must have Senators who support our men and women in combat, and Conrad Burns does. And we must have Senators who will not—who will not—lose their nerve in the face of these terrorist attacks. Conrad Burns is such a man.

I believe liberty and freedom are universal. So does Senator Burns. We believe that there is an Almighty, and the Almighty’s gift to each man and woman on the face of this Earth is freedom. The United States of America was formed on the natural rights of men and women. And it should not surprise us when 11 million Iraqis went to the polls in defiance of terrorists and car bombers and assassins and says, “We want to be free.” A free Iraq—a free Iraq will help lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

I like to remind people about this interesting fact of history. My dad—18-year-old kid—raised his arm and said, “I want to volunteer to defend the United States of America against the Japanese.” What I find interesting is that some 60 years later, his son, the current President, sits down with the Prime Minister of Japan talking about keeping the peace. We talk about North Korea; we talk about how proud I am that the Japanese have committed forces to help bring security to the people of Iraq so their democracy can develop. Japan is an ally. Japan is a friend in peace.

And what happened between then 18-year-old George H.W. and 59-year-old W.—*[laughter]*—standing here? What happened was, the Japanese adopted a Japanese-style democracy. History has proven people want to be free, and democracies yield the peace. And I believe 30 or 40 years from now, an American President will be up here talking—will be talking to people, and they’ll be looking back at this moment in history and say, thank God that people like Senator Conrad Burns and Chairman John Warner of the United States Senate and Senator Kit Bond were wise enough to understand about the power of liberty to transform nations into allies. And they’ll be keeping the peace with democratically elected leaders in the broader Middle East, starting with Iraq.

These are the stakes. We’re laying the foundation of peace, and it’s important to have Members of the United States Senate who can look beyond the short term, who have got a strategic view of the world in which we live. And Conrad Burns has that view. Proud to stand with you in laying that foundation.

Here at home we’ve been through a lot together. We’ve had a recession; we’ve had a stock market correction; we’ve had corporate scandals; we had an attack on our Nation; we went to war to defend ourselves; we had major natural disasters; we had rising energy prices. But we acted. We put progrowth economic policies in place. We believe that when people have more money in their pockets to save or to spend or to invest, the economy benefits. And so we cut the taxes on the hard-working people of America, and our economy is strong, and it’s getting stronger.

People say here in Washington, “Oh, well, these tax cuts didn’t make a difference.” I can remember all the dire predictions when the debates went on about the ability for taxes to help revitalize our economy and overcome the obstacles we went through. Not Conrad Burns, he understood the basic principle of trusting people with their own money. Today, our economy has grown to 3.5 percent. We have 4.8 percent unemployment nationwide. We’ve added over 5 million jobs in the last 2½ years. Productivity is up; homeownership is at an alltime high; small

businesses are flourishing. The tax cuts we passed are working.

And now the people of Montana are going to be facing a decision as to whether or not they want their taxes to go up or stay low. You see, the Democrat Party showed its true colors during the tax debate. Time in and time out, they voted against cutting the taxes on the American people. And now you hear them talking about, "Well, we need to raise taxes to balance the budget." Conrad and I know better. We've been in Washington long enough to understand how Washington works. Yes, they'll raise your taxes, but they will figure out new ways to spend your money. To keep this economy strong, we must make the tax relief permanent. And I'm proud to have Conrad Burns on the side—*[applause]*.

There are a lot of things we need to do during my—the rest of my time here and for Conrad's time as a reelected Senator, starting with making sure we get off foreign oil. In order to make sure this country is competitive over the next 30 to 50 years, in order to make sure we remain the economic leader of the world, we have got to be wise about our energy policy.

Conrad reminded me, walking in here, that we've got plenty of coal in the great State of Montana. And that's why I'm such a strong supporter of clean coal technologies to make sure we can use that coal in environmentally friendly ways and get us off Middle Eastern oil.

But that's just the start. We got to change how we fuel our automobiles. I want it to be said that when there's a good soy crop out of Montana, we got more biodiesel available for people to use in their automobiles. I want it to be said, when we have a technological breakthrough, which we're close to getting to, that we can use sawgrass grown in the State of Montana to help grow—to help produce ethanol so we become less dependent on Middle Eastern oil. I want it to be said that this country is imaginative in our use of technology to make us less dependent, for economic security as well as national security.

And Conrad Burns understands that. The people of Montana need to put him back in

the United States Senate to join us in making sure we have energy independence.

One of the things that's important for the people of Montana to understand is, you better have somebody here in Washington who's effective when it comes to representing the farmers and ranchers. You know, a lot of times you get the big talkers running for office, but they get here to Washington and they're unable to deliver. I'd suggest the voters of Montana pay careful attention to the record of this United States Senator when it comes to representing the basic industries and the small-business owners and the hard-working people of the State of Montana.

I remember when I went to Billings, and we sat around and talked to those farmers and ranchers about the threats to their industry and about the opportunities. Conrad was there. He was talking their language. They didn't need a dictionary or a Roget's Thesaurus to figure out what he was saying. *[Laughter]*

He's the kind of person the people of Montana need here. They need somebody who's steadfast when it comes to defending the country; who's wise about how we spend your money; who understands that the money we spend is your money, not the Government's money; who understands good tax policy can keep this economy growing; who knows we've got to have a good, wise energy policy; and who can speak the language of the farmers and the ranchers, right here in Washington, DC.

I'm proud to stand by this man. I strongly urge the people of Montana to reelect Conrad Burns to the United States Senate.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:07 p.m. at the Madison Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Phyllis Burns, wife of Senator Conrad Burns; former Gov. Marc Racicot of Montana; Sherri Ohs, wife of Montana Republican Party chairman Karl Ohs; John Green, national finance committee chairman, Senator Burns' reelection campaign; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Interview With Foreign Print Journalists

March 27, 2006

The President. Thanks for coming. I'm looking forward to going down to Cancun. I'm very grateful for President Fox's hospitality. I've never been to Cancun, but I've had a lot of friends who have been to Cancun, and they tell me if I stay too long, I won't return. This is a relatively quick trip. I'm looking forward to going to the Mayan ruins, which will be really exciting. And I'm looking forward to both bilateral and our trilateral discussions.

With Mexico, obviously, there's big issues, particularly immigration right now. But I'll remind people that our relationship is more than just the migration issue. Mexico is our second-largest trading partner. The relationship with Mexico is a strong and vital relationship. Obviously, not only do we have important trade equities, but we've also got common values, and we've got millions of Mexican Americans who take great pride in their heritage. And so Mexico has been and will be a vital issue for future Presidents. And it's very important for us to work on a relationship that has a foundation of mutual benefit, as well as openness and candor when it comes to dealing with difficult issues.

And I really value my friendship with President Fox. Obviously, we have been through a lot during my Presidency and his. We've agreed on things, and we haven't agreed, but we've always remained friends, and that's a sign of a vital relationship. I'm obviously aware that there is a political season coming up, but until someone is sworn in office, my relationship will be with Vicente Fox as the leader of our important friend to the south. And I'm sure there's going to be all kinds of speculation about whether or not the United States will be involved in the election, and we won't be, pure and simple.

The relationship with Canada is also a vital relationship. Canada is our largest trading partner. This will be my first meeting with the Prime Minister as—with him as the Prime Minister. Obviously, I met him in the past. I'm looking forward to it. This will be the third Prime Minister with which I've dealt as the President. I've had good relations

with the previous Prime Ministers, and I'm looking forward to good relations with Stephen Harper.

I'm fully aware of the relationship—the nature of the relationship between Canada and the United States. One, it's a vital relationship, but it's also one in which there is a certain skepticism about the United States, and therefore, I will do my very best to find common ground and to convince—through my relationship with the Prime Minister, convince the people of Canada we genuinely care about our friends and neighbors to the north and will work to resolve different issues in an aboveboard way that is mutually beneficial.

So it's an important meeting, and it's a way for us to confirm the—and then, eventually, the three of us will get into a room to meet. And it's a very strong signal that the three of us working together are better than each of us working apart, and that whether it be border security or commerce or hearing the values that are important in our neighborhood, we can do a lot together. And I find these meetings to be very useful and very important.

All right, we'll go around a couple of times. Pepe.

Mexico-U.S. Relations

Q. Sir, you mentioned the ties that bind both countries, the U.S. and Mexico. But those ties are also—those issues are extremely politically charged in both countries—trade, immigration, et cetera. So my question would be, where do you expect to lead the U.S.-Mexico relation in the next 3 years?

The President. Appreciate that. First, I think it's very important for both President Fox and myself to explain to both our countries the benefits of \$300 million [billion]* two-way trade—well, nearly \$300 million [billion]* in the year 2005 of two-way trade. In other words, it's one thing to talk trade, and I fully understand that unless those benefits are translated to more and more people, people begin to wonder whether or not trade is worthwhile.

* White House correction.