

**CAMPAIGN FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE**

**TAKE BACK AMERICA 2006**

**MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2006**

**WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**12:30-2:00 P.M. OPENING LUNCH**

**SPEAKER:**

**SENATE MINORITY LEADER  
HARRY REID (D-NV)**

*Transcript by:  
Federal News Service  
Washington, D.C.*

SEN. REID: (In progress, audio difficulties at venue) -- the last two grandchildren have been interesting stories in our lives. We have number 15. We waited and waited for my boy to give us a call. We wanted to know what the name of that little baby was going to be and finally call us five days after the birth and say, "Dad, we're going to name that -- your new grandchild Harry," and I said, "Well" -- I didn't realize how good that made me feel, but as soon as I got that message, I hung the phone up and called my other four children and disowned them -- (laughter) -- because you see, they had had opportunities to name their children after me -- (laughter) -- and my youngest boy had the lame excuse in saying, "Dad, but I had three girls." (Laughter.) I said, "You could have named one of them Harriet." (Laughter.) Now our newest baby, which was born just a few weeks ago, like three weeks ago -- (scattered cheers, applause) -- the last baby that was born has an interesting name. Remember the last name is Reid; the first name is River. I have my own little hippie; River Reid is three weeks old.

Anyway, enough about my grandchildren. Take America Back 2006 (sic) -- what a great name for a conference and the theme "It's time to lead" and it really is. I'm happy before we get started here to recognize in the audience someone I work with every day, someone who has been such a great asset to the state of Michigan, the state of Nevada, the country and to me personally, Debbie Stabenow. (Cheers, applause.)

Debbie, thank you for being here and proving that we can carry on the Clinton legacy of having a good environment and jobs -- they work together.

When I finish my remarks, there will be a short break, as I understand it, and then we're going to have a panel on people talking about energy with real solutions. I'm so happy that Jerome Ringo is going to be part of that panel, Larry Schweiger, Leo Gerard, Robert Redford -- should be a great panel, and I look forward to it.

I want to spend just a few minutes on Iraq. As we meet here today, the president is meeting with his Cabinet to talk about Iraq -- as well he should. (Laughter.) Think about it -- about two hundred -- about 2,500 American troops killed, 20,000 wounded, a third of them grievously wounded; a war costing \$10 billion a month, \$2.5 billion a week. I think he should be meeting with his Cabinet.

Last year, the Democrats came forward with an amendment in the Defense authorization bill. That amendment said that the year 2006 will be a year of "significant transition." This amendment passed the Senate on a bipartisan basis with 79 votes. That is the law of the land as we speak, that this year shall be a year of significant transition in Iraq. It's up to the president to fulfill the law of this country. But just last month, instead of bringing troops home, he indicated that the violence was such they were going to send more there.

The American people are understandably confused and certainly frustrated. They deserve a plan that provides our troops with an exit strategy from this seemingly unending conflict. (Applause.)

I don't know how many times we have heard the president say, "We will stand down as the Iraqis stand up." I don't want to hear that anymore. (Applause.) We now have trained about 300,000 -- we've now trained about 300,000 Iraqis to defend themselves -- 300,000. It seems to me that that mantra no longer stands; that is, we have to start bringing our troops home. This is the fourth year of this war. (Applause, cheers.)

If there were ever a time for clarity -- ever a time for clarity, it should be the conclusion of this Cabinet meeting that the president's having, going to finish tomorrow sometime. I think he has to address specifically U.S. troops levels, which he has refused to do in the past. And we're going to be listening and watching what he has to say. We cannot continue to be bogged down in Iraq as threats to our freedom around the world grow, and these threats will not be on hold -- they can't be on hold until we're ready to meet them, we have to do something about them now. Iraq is not a matter for future presidents, as the president -- as President Bush has said. It's his war and it's his responsibility. (Cheers, applause.)

Iraq is not the only issue threatening America today; there are many issues. As we speak, global warming is here. The ice caps are melting on both sides -- ends of the Earth. The president won't even acknowledge that global warming exists.

Health care is a problem. Forty-six million Americans have no health insurance, millions of others are underinsured. We have not been able to get a single day to debate on the Senate floor stem cell research, something that would give hope -- that gives hope to millions and millions of Americans, people who are suffering, and relatives and friends of people who are suffering -- Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, Lou Gehrig disease and others. Shouldn't we be able to debate this issue? I would certainly hope so.

We have other issues, of course. Why should a kid's ability to be educated be dependent on how much money their parents have? (Cheers, applause.)

And then there's the overall incompetence of this administration which has first -- (cheers, applause) -- which first we see with Katrina -- all kinds of problems with response to Katrina. But next time when we have a problem, let's have FEMA -- at FEMA someone who doesn't train horses but trains people on how to respond to an emergency. (Applause.)

But there's no better picture of the incompetence of this administration than the Veterans Administration, that's run by the former chair of the RNC. (Laughter.) Not only were the records stolen of 26 million veterans and about a million and a half people who are in Guard and Reserve, but now we're told that other people's records were on there -- maybe yours and mine. Not only were they stolen, but it took months before we knew about the theft. That's incompetence.

Distort, distract, divide. That's what this administration has done for these years. Distract, distort, divide. Here's what's going to happen in the next five months. They're going to be doing their distorting, their distracting and their dividing. And there's no better example of that than what happened on the Senate floor last week. With gas prices where they are, what did we do last week? We dealt with a marriage amendment and estate tax. (Applause.)

This has been a rubber stamp Congress. Think about it. You know, our Constitution was set up to have three separate and equal branches of government, each one as strong as the other. But during the Bush years, we've had two branches of government. There has been no legislative branch of government. There has been no Congress. There's -- the reason he didn't veto a single bill -- he hasn't vetoed a single bill is anything he wants, he gets. We've had two branches of government. The legislative branch of government, the Congress, has been silent.

And there's examples of that. What about the judges? (Boos from the audience.) What about domestic spying? (Boos from the audience.)

We're going to talk about energy today. I'm really concerned about energy for lots of reasons, not the least of which is Nevada has the third-highest gas prices in America, averaging about \$3.18 a gallon. Well, why hasn't the administration done something about this? Could it be that this is the most oil-friendly administration in the history of the country? (Laughter, cheers, applause.) Bush made his fortune in oil. Cheney made his fortune in oil. Condoleezza Rice, though, that's -- she's very special to me. She was on the board of Chevron, and they liked her so much they even named a tanker after her. (Laughter.)

Well, Exxon last year made more money in one year than any company in the history of our country -- \$34 billion. This year they're on target to match that. First quarter, they made \$8 billion net profits.

And what -- I talked about the Congress a little bit. During the Clinton years when the Republicans were in charge, they ordered him, and he -- the White House and -- the entire White House staff spent 140 hours explaining his Christmas card list. It's true. They demanded that. One committee alone issued 1,052 subpoenas to the Bush administration -- to the Clinton administration -- 1,052.

How many -- how many subpoenas has any committee issued on spying? You got it? Zero. (Boos from the audience.) Domestic spying. How many subpoenas have they issued on the price gouging, these gas prices? Zero. How many subpoenas have they issued on the war in Iraq? Zero.

Well, I personally have to say that Alfredo has proven to me again that global warming is here. We have in the Caribbean now a storm that's going to dump 30 inches

of rain on Cuba. The winds now are at 60 miles an hour. It's headed toward Florida. It's expected to drop 15 inches of rain in Florida.

But as far as the Bush administration is concerned, there is no global warming. Don't worry about that.

So what we have done, we've introduced what we call the Clean EDGE Act. We believe the Clean EDGE Act is something that needs to be done. Now, we know that we're not in charge and it's very difficult for us to have issues on the floor, as I explained, for example, with stem cell research. But we are going to continue to talk about this every chance we get, and we want you to talk about it. We must talk about energy. It's a significant problem in this country. Clean EDGE Act.

Why are we concerned about energy? Well, first of all, we use 21 million barrels of oil every day -- 21 million barrels in America. And we import about 66 percent of that oil. That's a lot of oil and a lot that comes from overseas. The Republican solution to it all is drill, drill, drill. But you see, we can't produce our way out of the problems we have. We only have -- we have less than 3 percent of the oil in the world. That's it -- less than 3 percent. So we must do something like our Clean EDGE Act -- move into a new era.

For example, one of the things we talk about in the Clean EDGE Act is reduce by 25 percent our consumption of oil -- consumption of oil by 25 percent. We want to do it by the year 2020. We want to have a national renewable portfolio, which we believe is so important. We believe that -- (applause) -- under this Clean EDGE Act, we think price gouging should be more than just two words in the dictionary. We believe that price gouging is here, it's alive, and it's well, and we have to put it to -- we have to do something about it. We have to have an administration and a Justice Department that will go after price gouging. That's what's in our bill.

We also believe that the federal government, which has the largest fleet in the world -- I should -- the largest fleet in America for sure -- we believe our federal fleet should be one that is using flex fuels. We believe that all federal vehicles should be hybrids. We think that -- (applause) --

We believe in more than a hundred dollar rebate, as the Republican solution to our energy problems. (Laughter.) We believe that as a start for doing something better than the \$100 rebate, we should eliminate the tax breaks for these oil companies. (Cheers, applause.)

Distort, distract, divide -- that's what we're up against. We have to take America back from ExxonMobil. We have to take America back from those who would hide the science. This is our task and it is our time. I think it's something that must be a priority.

You know, we had Franklin Roosevelt, who helped beat the Depression. John Kennedy took us to the moon. Johnson took on civil rights, he took on poverty. Bill

Clinton did something about deficits. Remember, during the Clinton years we spent less money the last three years that President Clinton was president than we took in. We actually retired the debt by a half a trillion dollars.

So -- (applause) -- 2006 is going to be a year of adventure and progress, and a time to take back the Congress, and in doing so, take back America. And together we can do this.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

(END)