

CAMPAIGN FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE

TAKE BACK AMERICA 2006

MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2006

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

**2:15 P.M. -3:45 P.M. PROGRESSIVE AGENDA
FOR THE COMMON GOOD**

SPEAKER:

**GARY HART,
CO-CHAIR,
NATIONAL COMMISSION ON TERRORISM**

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

MR. HICKEY: It's perhaps important that we ended up ending with this issue of common sense on security, because our next speaker has been warning, sounding the warning that this is a dangerous world and there are dangers that need to be addressed, and he's been sounding that warning since before 9/11. He has also been a voice of reason in explaining and dealing with -- forcing the country to deal with the fact that our leaders have been manipulating that need for security in order to do some very, very dangerous things for our country.

Our next speaker is Gary Hart, Senator Gary Hart, senator from Colorado, now a professor in Colorado. He has a lot to teach us about U.S. security, and a serious, a really serious approach to international terrorism. He co-chaired the U.S. Commission on National Security in the 21st Century, which outlined a new post-Cold War national security policy, and he also co-chaired the Council on Foreign Relations Task Force on Homeland Security, which recently released its report, "America Still Unprepared, Still in Danger."

While you're listening to him, imagine how much better off we would be if we had elected him president in 1983. Please welcome Gary Hart.

GARY HART: (Applause.) Thank you very much. Thank you. I'm Gary Hart, and I'm a Democrat. (Cheers, applause.)

I'm also a patriot. I'm as much a patriot as George W. Bush or Richard Cheney. I'm as much a patriot as Donald Rumsfeld or Paul Wolfowitz. I'm as much a patriot as Alberto Gonzales. There's one big difference between our patriotism: I happen to believe in a document called the Constitution of the United States, and they do not. (Cheers, applause.)

For the better part of the 20th century, the Democratic Party was known by old conservatives as the War Party. As recently as 1976, Senator Robert Dole said in vice presidential debates on national television, "If you want to go to war, vote Democratic," and he did so because Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson had all committed American military forces to causes around the world. And under Democratic presidents, we won two world wars and we prevailed in the Cold War. Many Americans lost their lives, but we were not known as the anti-defense party.

And then things began to change. Vietnam shattered our party and its consensus on defense, and it shattered this nation. And since that time, unfortunately, public opinion polls have showed -- erroneously, I think -- that people believe if they want to secure our nation, they have to vote Republican. I do not believe we will win back the White House or the Congress until we convince the American people in a variety of ways

that we understand security at least as well as Republicans. We certainly understand the Constitution better than Republicans, and we know how to make this country secure.

We do so by using opportunities to reduce threats. Right now, you have people in the White House and in the Republican Party that believe we ought to redemonize Russia. They are not happy without a single nation against which to deploy our forces, and so they're doing everything they can -- including a recent speech by the vice president -- to convince the American people that the Russians are our enemy. The Russians are not our enemy. We should have made, through international institutions and through our own bilateral foreign policy, a much stronger effort over the past 15 years since the end of the Cold War to bring Russia into the West, and it's still not too late. But we can't do that by demonizing Russia. The New York Times today said Russia is critical to energy security in the world.

There are those in this administration and in the Republican party that want to demonize China, despite the fact that, as previous speakers have said, we are -- our principal lender and creditor in the world is now China, and we're borrowing money from them so we can purchase their goods. It's a sweet deal for the Chinese. But we have people in spite of this fact saying we have to arm ourselves because we're going eventually, inevitably to have war with the Chinese. Well, I think the only way China's ever going to invade this country is to reclaim their debts. (Laughter, applause.)

We have to resist the temptation to empire. We salute the flag of the United States of America -- and by the way, there it is -- and the republic for which it stands. At no time in human history has a nation been simultaneously a republic and an empire. But if you read the doctrine of the neoconservatives starting in 1995, they said we should overthrow Saddam Hussein -- this is six years before 9/11 -- and use Iraq as our political and military base in the Middle East to dominate the region. That is an imperial strategy. They were very outspoken about it; they were very clear about it.

But you cannot, on the one hand, say we are going to be the imperial power of the Middle East and elsewhere and salute the flag of the United States and the republic for which it stands. (Applause, cheers.)

The revolutions of globalization and the information revolution have weakened the sovereignty of nation-states, and that, in turn, has led to the changing nature of warfare. If you want to know what warfare in the 21st century is going to look like, it's not going to look like World War I or World War two, and in many ways that is good, not mass armies in the field slaughtering men and material until one side gives up, it is going to look like Mogadishu in Black Hawk Down and it's going to look like Fallujah, which we insist on occupying, leaving and then having to occupy again. We destroyed that city as we did cities in Vietnam in order to save them.

That's the warfare of the future -- house to house, door to door, hand to hand. It's brutal, it's vicious, it's primitive, and it's barbaric. But it means we have to structure our forces for that eventuality, whether we like it or not. Right now, each of the major

services have Special Forces: Delta Force, Rangers, Seals, special units in the Air Force. I believe Democrats ought to advocate the creation of a fifth military service consolidating those special forces. They are the warriors of the future, whether we like it or not.

The good news is the idea and the chance for nation-state wars to occur in the 21st century is sharply declining because everybody understands the stakes. The chances of wars against stateless nations, including al Qaeda, is dramatically increasing, and that is low-intensity urban conflict involving tribes, clans and gangs and terrorist organizations. And by the way, we made a big mistake or the president did by declaring war on terrorism. Somebody said the equivalent in World War II would be to declare war on blitzkrieg. Terrorism is a method used by jihadists.

Now, today in Vietnam it is finally being acknowledged by this administration after four years of folly that 90 percent of the people who are attacking us simply want us out of their country. They're called insurgents. When the last Marine crosses the Iraqi border, they will not follow us home. Fewer than 10 percent of the people that are attacking us are foreign jihadists. We are beginning to understand finally after 25,000 American casualties -- and by the way, casualties are not just dead in warfare; they are dead and wounded. Casualties -- American casualties in Vietnam are not 2,500. That's tragic enough. Those are the dead ones. Total casualties are 25,000 -- half of the number that died in Vietnam. So write letters to your editors when they say American casualties are 2,500; they are not, they're well over 25,000. And those who have sponsored this war and voted for it are the first to turn their back on the returning -- the first generation of returning Iraqi vets who are now homeless and jobless on the streets of America, and they are not receiving support from this administration and our government. (Applause.)

We don't have to be the war party to convince Americans that we care about defense and we know how to defend this country. And we can start with the Department of Homeland Security, which is a total disaster. (Applause.)

I was one of the first in America to advocate a consolidated federal capability to protect our homeland because the commission on which I served did identify the terrorist threat earlier than almost anyone else, and we said we need to consolidate the forces that protect our border and respond to tragedies when they occur. And so we said there are four key agencies. The first was one of the best federal agencies that we had in this country in the '90s, and that was called the Federal Emergency Management Agency. It is now a disaster, and it's a disaster for one simple reason -- we turned it over to people who don't believe in government. Now, you can't say the government -- as Ronald Reagan did -- the government is the problem, and then govern effectively. This isn't an issue of big government versus small government, this is an issue of effective government versus ineffective government, and this administration is ineffective government. You don't appoint Michael Brown to do a serious job.

We can bring home the National Guard. The backbone of homeland security is the National Guard. (Applause.) Forty percent of our forces in Iraq and the Middle East

are National Guardsmen. While they are there fighting the Iraq war, they are not here at home preparing and training and equipping themselves to defend this country against future terrorist attacks. Furthermore, a disproportionate number of the National Guard and Reserves are what we call first responders -- policemen, firemen, and emergency health workers. So we are doubly vulnerable. By sending the National Guard to Iraq, they are not here preparing to defend this country, and they are the backbone of homeland security.

We ought to declare the Persian Gulf a zone of international interest and take the lead in making it a commitment of the international organizations and international states that America will not be the sole guarantor of oil supplies in the world. We can organize the world community, including the consuming nations, many of whom consume even more proportionately than we do, that they have a job to protect those oil supplies, and we should not guarantee ourselves the world oil supplies.

We can create a human intelligence corps in the CIA. We can offer national service with an option for military or non-military service, and young people that don't want to serve in the military can go back and help rebuild New Orleans. (Applause.)

The list goes on. There are all kinds of initiatives that I and others have advocated that the Democratic Party adopt as a pro-security, pro-defense policy. They don't mean that we have to be the war party. They certainly don't mean we have to vote for war resolutions simply to prove that we are for strong defense. (Applause.)

Where Iraq is concerned, two possibilities exist. Either the president was misled, in which case he should have fired the people who misled him. Or he misled us, in which case we should fire him! (Cheers, applause.)

The greatest threat to our security today is a constitutional crisis fomented by this administration, which is claiming extraordinary, extra-constitutional powers for this president. It will be up to the Supreme Court to decide those issues. I think we missed the point in the consideration of future Supreme Court appointments -- the issue is presidential power. This president has said 750 times surreptitiously, "I do not intend to obey the laws passed by the Congress of the United States." The security of this country will be increased enormously when we have a president who obeys the Constitution.

Thank you very much. (Cheers, applause.)

(End of remarks.)