

**CAMPAIGN FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE**

**TAKE BACK AMERICA 2006**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 2006**

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

**8:45 -9:15 A.M. BREAKFAST: REGIONAL GATHERINGS**

**SPEAKER:**

**CONGRESSWOMAN NANCY PELOSI (D-CA)**

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

(Cheers, applause.)

REPRESENTATIVE NANCY PELOSI (D-CA): Good morning. Good morning. Thank you, Bob Borosage and thank all of you who have come here to Washington to take back America for the American people. (Scattered cheers, applause.) Are you ready to take America in a new direction? (Cheers.) I thought so. Have you had enough?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

REP. PELOSI: Have you had enough of a war that is failing to make America more secure?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

REP. PELOSI: Have you had enough of burdening our children and grandchildren with billions of dollars of debt to give tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

REP. PELOSI: Have you had enough of paying higher prices for gasoline and prescription drugs in order to increase the profits of pharmaceutical companies and oil companies?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

REP. PELOSI: I thought so. Have you had enough of seeing America led in the wrong direction?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

REP. PELOSI: Enough about the Republicans.

AUDIENCE: (Laughter.)

REP. PELOSI: Let's talk about the Democrats. (Scattered cheers, applause.) Let's talk about the Democrats! (Scattered cheers, applause.)

Democrats stand united today perhaps more than ever in our belief that we must take America in a new direction, that it is urgent. Yesterday, you laid out an impressive agenda for the common good, and over these three days, you're focusing on innovative ideas to critical challenges from energy independence to job creation to health care and national security. On behalf of the House Democrats, I want to salute the Campaign for America's Future, salute Bob Borosage for his great leadership, and thank you all for what you are doing. (Applause.)

I particularly want to acknowledge so many young people that I see coming to this convention. Let's hear it for the young people! (Cheers, applause.) Oh, some of you are waving who are not that young! (Laughs.)

Tomorrow, House Senate -- House and Senate Democrats are coming together to present A New Direction for America -- a new direction for all Americans, not just the privileged few; a new direction to help America's families overcome day-to-day challenges about good-paying jobs, the education of their children, health care, and retirement.

In order for us to accomplish that, we must win the election. Are you ready to win the election? (Cheers, applause.) God willing, and when we do, in the first week of Congress, Democrats will make America safer by passing legislation to enact the 9/11 commission recommendation. (Cheers, applause.) This is in the first week.

America's Democrats will expand economic opportunity by passing legislation to raise the minimum wage. (Cheers, applause.) Again, this is the first week.

In the first week, Democrats will provide affordable health care, and we will begin by making prescription drugs more affordable. (Applause.)

Democrats will broaden opportunity, and we will begin by cutting in half the interest rate for student loans. (Cheers, applause.)

Democrats will energize America by declaring energy independence, and we will begin by rolling out the billions of dollars of tax cuts for oil and energy companies in America. (Applause.) That's just the first week. We will then proceed on our energy independence agenda. Democrats will energize America. America's farmers will fuel America's independence of energy -- on foreign oil. (Applause.) And we intend to achieve energy independence within 10 years. That's is our commitment. (Applause.)

Democrats will achieve this -- I'm just talking now in those beginning points in the first week. And we will achieve these with civility, with honesty, and with fiscal responsibility, because on the very first day, on the very first day, we will pass our reform package, "Honest Leadership, Open Government," to make the most corrupt, closed Congress in history the most honest and open Congress in history. (Cheers, applause.)

We will pass our civility package, which will again turn Congress into an arena of ideas instead of an auction house where legislation goes to the highest bidder. (Applause.)

And we will institute pay-as-you-go -- no new deficit spending. No new deficit spending. (Applause.) If America's families must balance their checkbooks, so too, should the Congress of the United States. (Applause.) And that's just the first day. (Laughter.)

I come to you today as House Democratic leader and make this commitment to you about the first day and the first week in Congress. I hope in January to keep -- to honor that commitment as the first woman speaker of the House of Representatives. (Cheers, applause.)

As we talk about a new direction for America, I think one place that it is very clear that we need a new direction is in the war in Iraq. (Applause.) The president continues to say that the situation is improving in Iraq, but just because the president wishes it doesn't make it so. (Applause.)

This week we reached a tragic milestone, having lost over 2,500 of our troops -- this in addition to over 18,000 who have been injured, more than half of them permanently. And that doesn't even count the mental health needs that our troops will have.

Improving? I don't think so.

In the cost of our readiness, cost in lives -- and most important, cost in lives and limbs -- the cost in readiness, we are told -- we were told yesterday that we are losing a battalion a month in deaths and injuries -- a battalion a month.

During the debate on the war, I was the senior Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee. I saw all the information, all the intelligence, and my statement was that I do -- I will not vote for this war, because the intelligence does not support the threat being claimed by the administration. (Applause.)

Nearly two-thirds, I'm proud to say, of House Democrats voted against the war. (Applause.) Because the administration is trying to say about faulty and intelligence and the rest -- well, whether there was faulty intelligence or not, there was never anything in the intelligence that said that Iraq posed an imminent threat to the United States -- never. (Applause.)

For these and other reasons, I have said -- long said that this war in Iraq is a grotesque mistake. (Scattered applause.) It is not making our country safer, it is not making our military stronger, and it is damaging America's reputation in the world. (Applause.)

Cost in lives, cost in reputation, cost in readiness. What about the money? Over \$300 billion and growing, and that doesn't count the additional cost for our veterans.

And by the way, shouldn't veterans' costs be considered right up as a cost of war? (Applause.) Shouldn't we be putting our veterans' concerns right up front? (Applause continues.)

We say -- the military says that no soldier will ever be left on the battlefield, left behind on the battlefield. We cannot allow our veterans to be left behind when they come home. (Applause.)

Back to these costs. It's probably a trillion-dollar war if it ended today. In that cost, think of the opportunity cost of what we could have done to promote freedom and democracy, alleviate poverty, give hope to people throughout the world. Think of what we could have done at home, the opportunity cost of that war.

And the reconstruction, where some of that money goes, is a total failure. A recent report said that \$9 billion of reconstruction money is totally gone. No one can account for it. In fact, another report said that the reconstruction -- the contracting -- the U.S. contracting there is so corrupt that you might as well turn it over to the Iraqis' corruption because then at least the money will stay in the country. (Laughter, applause.) That is what we are dealing with, my friends, a grotesque mistake.

And that is why more than two years ago, I called for the resignation of Donald Rumsfeld. (Cheers, applause.) He has been dismissive of international law, of world opinion and the opinion of the American people. He is the architect behind the failed policy in Iraq. Rumsfeld must go! (Cheers, applause.)

But we should never forget, in calling for his resignation, that this is George Bush's war. (Applause.) This is the president's war. It is his policy. He should be held accountable for the conduct of the war. (Cheers, applause.)

Aren't we proud of those brave, retired generals who are speaking truth to power? (Applause.) How courageous they are. They fought for our country on the battlefield; they are fighting for our country again by speaking truth to power.

I had met with many of our brave soldiers in my travels both here in Washington on a regular basis at Bethesda and at Walter Reed, in Germany, in Kuwait, in Iraq, in Qatar. Before I start talking about it, let's hear it for all of our brave men and women in uniform and what they are doing for our country. (Cheers, applause.)

When I meet them, I always thank them for their courage, their patriotism, the sacrifice they are willing to make for our country. I listen to the stories of their lives. I ask them about what's going on back home. So many of them are National Guardsmen, so some are first responders, are firefighters, teachers, mechanics and others.

But one that I met -- one young man I met in Iraq -- and this story is not unique -- I asked him, as I was talking to others and they told me what they did back home, I said, "And what did you do before you came to Iraq?" And this young man looked back to me and he said, "I was in high school, ma'am. (Laughter.) I was in high school." We are sending our children into a war without any plan to go in, without a plan to prevail and without a plan to come home. A long time ago in this war, General Zinni said that the

level of sacrifice is not being matched by the level of planning. How could we do that to our troops? (Applause.)

Congressman Jack Murtha had a plan and has a plan, and I want to say what that plan is because it's been characterized in a way that is not accurate. Now, isn't that a surprise? (Laughter.)

Mr. Murtha, and I quote, says that "the forces involved in Iraq should be deployed at the earliest practicable date." That is not cut and run, that is at the earliest practicable date. And I'm proud to support the Murtha plan. (Applause.) And it has been endorsed by over 100 of my House Democratic colleagues. There are only two directions to take in Iraq, the president's plan of stay the course and let a future president sweep up after you, or the Murtha plan to change the direction of that course. I support the Murtha plan. (Applause.)

In order for us to take America in a new direction at home and in Iraq, it is absolutely urgent that we win the election. If we are going to take America again in a new direction, we must work together. The Campaign for America's Future is key to our success, to the victory for the American people. The Campaign for America's Future is at the core of this new direction. Your agenda this week shows that you understand the needs of the American people.

And I just want to leave you with this thought. When President Roosevelt passed away -- I saw this on TV last year, it was the 60th anniversary and they were showing a retrospective. When he passed away, in his will he -- my understanding is that he said he didn't want a state funeral if we were at war because of the pomp, the circumstances -- circumstance and the cost. So what they did was they took him by train from Warm Springs, Georgia, to Washington, D.C., where he lay in state at the White House. And then they took him to Hyde Park, New York, where he was buried. Along the way, hundreds of thousands of people lined the tracks, so many people -- blacks, migrant workers, families, people in Oshkosh -- and you could just see, they had this grainy film of all these people lining the tracks to pay their respects to the president. When he got to Washington, a reporter went up to one of the mourners who was there observing the train, and he said to him, "Why are you here? Did you know Franklin Roosevelt?" And he said, "No, I didn't know President Roosevelt, but he knew me." But he knew me. And that's -- the Campaign for America's Future knows the American people. (Applause.)

As Democrats, we must convince the American people that we know them, we work for them every day, we understand their hopes, their dreams, the aspirations they have for their children, and the challenges that they face. That's why it's absolutely urgent that we win the election, that we take the country in a new direction for every one of those people -- for working families in America. Let us then go forth as a Democratic Party that is known as the champion of working people in our country. Onward to a great Democratic victory! (Cheers, applause.) Thank you all very much!

(End of remarks.)