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Remarks By John McCain To Potomac Primary Victory Party

February 13, 2008

ARLINGTON, VA - U.S. Senator John McCain's presidential campaign today released the following remarks by John McCain as prepared for delivery tonight Alexandria, Virginia:

Thank you. Thank you, voters of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, for a clean sweep of the Potomac primary. I want to commend my friend, Governor Huckabee, whose spirited campaign, many gifts as a communicator and advocate, and passionate supporters are a credit to him and our party. He certainly keeps things interesting, a little too interesting at times tonight, I must confess. But I have even more reason to appreciate just how formidable a campaigner he is. And thank you, my friends, for your support and all your hard work. We have come a long way in this campaign, and we have had our ups and downs. But as luck, that product of opportunity and industry, would have it, we are approaching the end of the first half of this election on quite an upswing. Without your faith and commitment we would not be here, and I am immensely grateful to you.

But now comes the hard part, and for America, the much bigger decision. We do not yet know for certain who will have the honor of being the Democratic Party's nominee for President. But we know where either of their candidates will lead this country, and we dare not let them. They will promise a new approach to governing, but offer only the policies of a political orthodoxy that insists the solution to government's failures is to simply make it bigger. They will appeal to our dreams of a better future for ourselves, our families and our country, but they would take from us more of the wealth we have earned to build those dreams and assure us that government is better able than we are to make decisions about our future for us. They will promise to break with the failed politics of the past, but will campaign in ways that seek to minimize their exposure to questions from the press and challenges from voters who ask more from their candidates than an empty promise of "trust me, I know better." They will paint a picture of the world in which America's mistakes are a greater threat to our security than the malevolent intentions of an enemy that despises us and our ideals; a world that can be made safer and more peaceful by placating our implacable foes and breaking faith with allies and the millions of people in this world for whom America, and the global progress of our ideals, has long been "the last, best hope of earth."

We will offer different ideas, based in a better understanding of the challenges we face, and the resolve to confront them with confidence in the strength and ideals of free people. We believe that Americans, not our detractors and certainly not our enemies, are on the right side of history. We trust in the strength, industry and goodness of the American people. We don't believe that government has all the answers. We believe that government must respect the rights, property and opportunities of the people to whom we are accountable. We don't believe in growing the size of government to make it easier to serve our own ambitions. We believe that what government is expected to do, what we cannot do for ourselves individually, it must do with competence, resolve and wisdom.

The American people don't send us to Washington to serve our self-interest, but to serve theirs. They don't send us to fight each other for our own political ambitions; but to fight together our real enemies. They don't send us to Washington to stroke our egos; but to help them keep this beautiful, bountiful, blessed country safe, prosperous, proud and free. They don't send us to Washington to take more of their money, and waste it on things that add not an ounce to America's strength and prosperity; that don't help a single family realize the dreams we all dream for our children; that don't help a single displaced worker find a new job, and the security and dignity it assures them; that won't keep the promise we make to young workers that the retirement they have begun to invest in, will be there for them when they need it. They don't send us to Washington to do their job, but to do ours; to do it better and with less of their money.

The work we face in our time is great, but our opportunities greater still. In a time of war, and the terrible sacrifices it entails, the promise of a better future is not always clear. But I promise you, my friends, we face no enemy, no matter how cruel; and no challenge, no matter how daunting, greater than the courage, patriotism and determination of Americans. We are the makers of history, not its victims.

Hope, my friends, is a powerful thing. I can attest to that better than many, for I have seen men's hopes tested in hard and cruel ways that few will ever experience. And I stood astonished at the resilience of their hope in the darkest of hours because it did not reside in an exaggerated belief in their individual strength, but in the support of their comrades, and their faith in their country. My hope for our country resides in my faith in the American character, the character which proudly defends the right to think and do for ourselves, but perceives self-interest in accord with a kinship of ideals, which, when called upon, Americans will defend with their very lives.

To encourage a country with only rhetoric rather than sound and proven ideas that trust in the strength and courage of free people is not a promise of hope. It is a platitude.

When I was a young man, I thought glory was the highest ambition, and that all glory was self-glory. My parents tried to teach me otherwise, as did the Naval Academy. But I didn't understand the lesson until later in life, when I confronted challenges I never expected to face.

In that confrontation I discovered that I was dependent on others to a greater extent than I had ever realized, but that neither they nor the cause we served made any claims on my identity. On the contrary, I discovered that nothing is

more liberating in life than to fight for a cause that encompasses you, but is not defined by your existence alone. And that has made all the difference, my friends, all the difference in the world.

I do not seek the presidency on the presumption that I am blessed with such personal greatness that history has anointed me to save my country in its hour of need. I seek the presidency with the humility of a man who cannot forget that my country saved me. I am running to serve America, and to champion the ideas I believe will help us do what every American generation has managed to do: to make in our time, and from our challenges, a stronger country and a better world.

I intend to do that by fighting for the principles and policies I believe best serve the interests of the American people: for a government that takes and spends less of your money and competently discharges its responsibilities; that shows a proper respect for our rights and values; that provides a strong and capable defense; that encourages the enterprise and ingenuity of individuals, businesses and families, who know best how to advance America's economy, and secure the dreams that have made us the greatest nation in history. As I have done my entire career, I will make my case to every American who will listen. I will not confine myself to the comfort of speaking only to those who agree with me. I will make my case to all the people. I will listen to those who disagree. I will attempt to persuade them. I will debate. And I will learn from them. But I will fight every moment of every day for what I believe is right for t his country, and I will not yield. And, my friends, I promise you, I am fired up and ready to go.

Thank you, and God bless you.

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