

What else can the President of the United States do to bring our people home?

The President. We're working behind the scenes. We've got every diplomatic channel open. We're in discussions with the Chinese. It is now time for our troops to come home so that our relationship does not become damaged.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Neal Sealock, USA, U.S. Embassy Defense Attache in Beijing. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With King Abdullah II of Jordan and an Exchange With Reporters

April 10, 2001

President Bush. I'm going to have an opening statement. His Majesty will have an opening statement. I'll be glad to take a couple of questions from the American press. His Majesty will take a couple of questions from the Jordanian press, and we'll alternate.

It's my honor to welcome the Majesty to the Oval Office, to our country. We had a very good lunch. We discussed a lot of subjects, starting with how best to work together to lay the foundation for peace in the Middle East. We had a very good discussion about trade, and I explained to His Majesty that ours is a country that believes in free trade.

We look forward to working to get an agreement, one way or the other, out of our Congress that encourages free trade with Jordan. We will be discussing strategies as how best to achieve that objective, but the objective is for there to be a free trade agreement between our countries.

His Majesty is one of the young leaders of the Middle East who has got a good vision for peace. And I look forward to his advice and counsel and working closely together to achieve peace. So welcome, Your Majesty.

King Abdullah. Thank you very much, sir. Mr. President, as you said, we had a very warm and constructive discussions today about not only bilateral relations but

that of the region. And I believe that we're both committed to finding peace and stability in our part of the world. We're very grateful for all the support that we've had from your country over the years. And I look forward to working with you, sir, and with your administration to try and bring peace and stability to the Middle East.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

U.S. Navy Aircraft Incident

Q. Your Majesty, with apologies, because there's another subject on everybody's mind—Mr. President—

President Bush. What might that be?

Q. Well, it's the China problem. What is it going to take to resolve that? Have you considered dealing directly with the President of China?

President Bush. We are working hard to resolve the situation. The first piece of news I have to report is, I talked to the General, Sealock, again. He met with our folks in Hainan Island. He reported that spirits are high, that the troops are patient. He informed us that there is an exchange of e-mails between the—our troops and their families, which is—I found to be an important piece of news, that the families will be able to talk to each other.

Diplomacy sometimes takes a little longer than people would like. I urge the

Chinese to bring resolution to this issue. It's time for our people to come home.

Q. Mr. President, what about the issue with Jesse Jackson? Mr. President, what about the issue with Reverend Jesse Jackson? He says if China lets him in, he will go there to help free the 24 detainees.

President Bush. We are—there's a lot of people that are anxious for this situation to end. I appreciate the good will of a lot of Americans that are concerned about our folks in Hainan Island. This administration is doing everything we can to end the stalemate in an efficient way. We're making the right decisions to bring the solution to an end.

Q. Do you support Reverend Jackson? Do you support—

Q. Mr. President, you said a moment ago—

President Bush. This is a Jordanian reporter.

Q. Mr. President, you said a moment ago that diplomacy takes longer than sometimes people would like. Are you trying to prepare the American people for an extended and prolonged stay of this 24-member crew in Chinese captivity?

President Bush. No. I am making it clear to the Chinese that it's in their nation's interests to end this situation as quickly as possible. As all members of my administration have been saying, that the longer this goes, the more likely it is that it could—could—jeopardize relations, and we certainly don't want that to happen.

Q. Mr. President—

President Bush. Is there anybody from the Jordanian—

Q. The West Bank—

President Bush. Yes, ma'am?

Middle East

Q. A Jewish spiritual leader yesterday called upon killing all Arabs, and we are seeing Israel launching an unannounced, full-scale war against Palestinians. Is your country going to use or veto another pro-

posal at the United Nations to send an international protection force?

President Bush. Our country is very interested and working with all parties to—for parties to lay down their arms. The only—wait, let me—

Q. Your Majesty, can you state specifically what you think—

President Bush. I'm not quite through yet—

Q. Sorry.

President Bush. And then you're next.

Q. Thank you.

President Bush. In order for there to be discussions that will lead to peace, first and foremost, the violence must stop. And we're working hard to convince the parties to stop the violence. His Majesty and I talked about how best that all countries, peaceful countries in the region can discourage violent activities. And the Secretary of State and—has been on the phone recently with the leaders in the Middle East to make sure that they understand the U.S. position is for the violence to stop.

Q. Your Majesty, can you say specifically, beyond rhetorical tools, what Jordan and the United States can do to stop the violence, bring it down, restore calm?

King Abdullah. Well, I think the situation at present is, try to find a way of deescalating the violence. There has been meetings between the Israelis and the Palestinians as early as last week which produced some results. And I think we need to be able to build on that.

President Bush. Thank you all. Look what you started. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:06 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Brig. Gen. Neal Sealock, USA, U.S. Embassy Defense Attache in Beijing. Reporters referred to President Jiang Zemin of China; civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson; and Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, founder, Shas. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.