

June 20 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Representative-Elect J. Randy Forbes June 20, 2001

The President. It is my honor to welcome the newest Member of the United States Congress to the Oval Office. Randy Forbes ran a great race. He won a race a lot of folks didn't think he could win. And he did it because he talked about issues that mattered to the people of Virginia: tax relief, Social Security reform, strong national defense.

We all knew he was a good candidate. We didn't realize how good until the results came in last night. So it's an honor for the Vice President and me, the chairman of the party, Congressman Davis, to welcome you both to the Oval Office and congratulate you and look forward to working with you.

Representative Forbes. Well, thank you, Mr. President. And it's an exciting victory

for us, and we couldn't have done it without the help from you, Mr. President, and the Vice President, and also the great chairman of our party and chairman of the congressional committee. They all just put so many resources together and made this victory possible.

The President. Congratulations.

Representative Forbes. Thank you.

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. James S. Gilmore III of Virginia, chairman, Republican National Committee; and Representative Tom Davis, chairman, National Republican Congressional Committee.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Easter Seals Representatives and an Exchange With Reporters June 20, 2001

The President. It's an honor for me to welcome the representatives from the Easter Seals here, two courageous Americans who are compassionate to give back to their country, and it's an honor to have you all in the Oval Office. Thanks for coming.

Situation in the Middle East

Q. Have you talked to Arafat yet?

The President. I talked to Chairman Arafat today.

Q. What can you tell us about that conversation?

The President. I told him—I talked to him about—I talked to Prime Minister Sharon, Mubarak, as well as Mr. Arafat. And I said we're making some progress and

that they all must continue to work toward breaking the cycle of violence.

I do feel like it's the appropriate time for Colin Powell to go to the Mideast—and he's headed there next week—and that the parties must continue to work in an all-out effort to bring peace. And people can find excuses or rationale not to continue to work to break the cycle of violence. I urged them just to not think that way, to believe in the possible. And we're making enough progress for me to feel comfortable about asking the Secretary of State to go.

We have another mission from our Government to remain involved in the process. We look forward to the implementation of Mitchell. But it's hard—we cannot start