

Exchange With Reporters During a Round of Golf With Former President George Bush in Kennebunkport
July 6, 2001

President's Golf Game

Q. Are you going to shoot your age, sir?
[Laughter]

President Bush. On the front nine.
[Laughter] Thanks for the optimism.
[Laughter] We may get to hit two from the first tee, just to loosen up, that's it.

Former President Bush. Absolutely.

Q. He doesn't need a second one.

President Bush. We're only playing one off the first tee. [Laughter]

Former President Bush. Do any of you guys understand these cameras?

Q. Sir, we might have some union issues here. [Laughter]

Former President Bush. I'm not asking you to use it; I'm just asking you to see what's wrong with it.

President's Birthday

President Bush. Nobody is commenting on the birthday hat.

Q. So what do you want for your birthday? Is that what you got?

President Bush. I want—I'm going to get what I want for my birthday, spend time with my family, a couple of good phone calls from some little girls down in Texas.

Q. Did they already call you?

President Bush. No. It's a little early.
[Laughter] Remember, they're 19. [Laughter]

Q. Who gave you the hat, sir?

President Bush. "Forty-one" gave me the "43" hat.

Q. And you gave him?

President Bush. "Thank you, sir."
[Laughter]

Former President Bush. A guy in Fort Worth gave me the "41."

[At this point, the Presidents played a round of golf.]

President's Golf Game

Q. Sir, tell us about your birdie on six.
The President. Thank you for noticing. I got two.

Q. What did you shoot?

President Bush. I don't know. It's hard to add an X into the score.

Q. Two birdies, sir?

President Bush. I had two birdies, a couple pars, a couple of double bogeys. We did play 2 hours and 15 minutes.

Q. We were timing it.

President Bush. What time did we tee off?

Q. I had 7:05 a.m.

Robert Hanssen Espionage Case

Q. Sir, is there anything you want to say about the Hanssen case, with the pleas being entered today?

President Bush. No.

Death of Hannelore Kohl

Q. Anything about former President Kohl's wife?

Former President Bush. We made a statement yesterday to the—knew her very well. Of course, we have great respect and affection for Helmut Kohl, so I sent him a message, simply telling him that we had great sorrow in our hearts for his loss. She's not been well for some time. We haven't seen her in the last 12 months, but she was always very pleasant to Barbara.

And we saw her on many occasions, in her home, small home, and they were our guests at Camp David. So this was a genuine condolence message we sent to the former Chancellor. And it's sad, but life goes on. And you know, he's got two wonderful sons.

Q. Did you send that in a cable, or something, to them?

Former President Bush. Yes. Well, I sent it through the Embassy, through the German Embassy.

Former President's Health

Q. Sir, how's your hip?

Former President Bush. It's all right. You couldn't tell it out there, but no, it's fine. It feels pretty well.

Q. Still hitting them okay?

Former President Bush. No. [Laughter] But we're enjoying it. I can go out in the boat. I can play some. But it's doing all right.

President's Birthday

Q. Mr. President, what else are you going to do for your birthday?

President Bush. I have a national security briefing. I'm going to speak to Mr. Putin this morning. Part of it's just to kind of continue our general conversation on world affairs. I've got a few specific things I want to talk to him about; he probably has some things on his mind.

And then I'm going to throw some horseshoes, probably regain the family championship.

Former President Bush. No. No way. [Laughter]

President Bush. Fishing. And I might go for a jog, too—complete the day. So if you see a rather old guy, kind of moving along slowly, that will be me. [Laughter]

President Vladimir Putin of Russia

Q. Can you tell us what you plan to talk to the Russian President about?

President Bush. No. [Laughter] No, he asked to call—I presume he's calling to wish me a happy birthday. If not, I'll remind him it's my birthday, so he can do that. But I look forward to talking to him.

We left some—you know, I told him I'd stay in touch with him. I want to talk to him about Iraq. So to answer your ques-

tion, yes, I'm going to talk to him about Iraq. I'm going to talk to him about the Balkans, Macedonia. I know it's on his mind; it's on my mind, as well. And I look forward to listening to what he has to say. It'll just be a series of conversations we have over the summer.

As you know, I'm going to see him in a couple of weeks. I look forward to continuing what has been a very good relationship. And it's important that I have a good relationship with Mr. Putin, because it's good for the—it's good for our nations, and it's also good for the world for us to develop a good relationship so we can work together to make the world more secure.

And we share common interests. He's deeply concerned about extremism and what extremism can mean to Russia. And as you know, I am, too. He recognizes there are new threats in the 21st century. The United States is not a threat, and we can work cooperatively to address the new threats of the 21st century.

We're beginning some bilateral dialogs with Russia here in a while. I want to make sure—I want to confirm to him that Evans and O'Neill—Secretaries Evans and O'Neill are looking forward to going over there. So we'll talk a little trade and economic activity, and then—I don't know what he wants to talk about.

Q. Happy birthday, again.

Former President Bush. We're off.

President Bush. Have fun. I'll try not to do too many public events, so you all can kick back and relax. [Laughter]

NOTE: The exchange began at 7 a.m. at the Cape Arundel Golf Club. In his remarks, former President Bush referred to former Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.