

And you remember, they convened in Cairo several times. We are ready to invite them again so as to help stability in Gaza for a continuation for more withdrawal.

Thank you.

*April 13 News Conference*

*President Bush.* Thank you, sir.

By the way, tomorrow night I'm interested in answering more questions for you all. So if you pick out a red or blue tie——

*Q.* A news conference?

*President Bush.* Why not. See you at the East Room.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:52 a.m. at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice; Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Adviser to the U.N. Secretary-General; and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel. He also referred to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt  
*April 12, 2004*

*Thirty Years of American-Egyptian Relations: A Partnership for Peace and Development*

For thirty years, Egypt and the United States have enjoyed a partnership dedicated to peace, stability, prosperity, and freedom in the Middle East.

Secretary Powell and Foreign Minister Maher plan soon to conduct a session of our bilateral strategic dialogue in Washington, reaffirming the determination of our two countries to strengthen our partnership.

In our meetings today, we reiterated our resolve to continue working, along with our partners in the region, in Europe, and around the world, to promote peace in the Middle East, maintain regional stability, fight terrorism, and bolster the region's efforts toward economic, political, and social development and modernization.

Our two nations have nurtured a vision of peace that is anchored by the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. This first peace agreement between Israel and an Arab country has been a model for subsequent endeavors

to achieve a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the region.

Our two nations' unwavering commitment to this process led to the universal acceptance of the necessity and inevitability of a negotiated settlement. We envisage two states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security. We will continue our determined efforts in the forthcoming months to achieve these objectives. We believe that an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the West Bank can, under the right conditions, and if it is within the context of the implementation of the Roadmap and President Bush's vision, be a significant step forward. It is our firm conviction that resolving the Arab Israeli conflict will be a major contribution to stability and progress in the region, removing a major source of tension.

Egypt and the United States also recognize the need for political and economic reform in the region. The United States has followed the steps taken by Egypt over the past few years, as well as the ongoing debate on reform in different sectors of

Egyptian society. This ongoing debate, including the call for reform produced at the meeting of Arab civil society held at the Library of Alexandria last March, as well as the speech given by President Mubarak in the opening of that meeting reaffirming his commitment for a continuing reform process, provide for a constructive foundation for further efforts toward democracy and development.

Egyptian-American cooperation will also continue to encompass many other areas. Iraq faces a critical moment in its history, with wide implications across the region. We are committed to helping the Iraqi people realize their aspirations to build a sovereign, prosperous, stable, unified, and peaceful modern nation.

We intend to maintain our close cooperation in the fight against terrorism. Our two nations are among those who have suffered the most from the scourge and have no intention to relent in this fight. The United States expresses its appreciation for Egypt's

invaluable help and its readiness to continue its contributions towards combating and eliminating terrorism.

Since the 1970s, the United States has been Egypt's leading partner in economic, political, and social reform efforts, providing highly appreciated material and moral support. The two nations look forward to strengthening their partnership in this respect for the benefit of the people of both countries and region as a whole.

The Egyptian-American partnership has promoted peace and stability, while supporting positive change in the Middle East, for thirty years. We are confident that it is equally capable of meeting the challenges of the next thirty years and beyond. We look forward to an intensified dialogue about Egyptian-American cooperation and partnership in the 21st century.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

## Statement on Signing Legislation To Provide for the Conveyance to the Utrok Atoll Local Government of a Decommissioned National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Ship *April 13, 2004*

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 2584, a bill to provide for the conveyance to the Utrok Atoll local government of a decommissioned National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ship, and for other purposes.

Section 101(c) of the bill purports to require the Utrok Atoll local government, in consultation with the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, to submit a plan to four committees of the United States Congress for the use of the ship to be conveyed. The Republic of the Marshall Islands, of which Utrok is a political subdivision, is a self-governing republic with a sovereign right to self-determination

whose government has the capacity to conduct foreign affairs. Accordingly, in light of the status of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the exclusive authority of the President with respect to the conduct of the foreign affairs of the United States, the executive branch shall construe section 101(c) as asking the President to request, rather than as requiring, that the Utrok political subdivision submit a plan for use of the ship to be conveyed. The Secretary of State, after consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, shall communicate on my behalf as appropriate with the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to