

Denmark first, then the G-8. And I'm proud to talk about the record we've got when it comes to HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa or feeding the hungry. But—and I've got a—I look forward to going to Denmark and explaining what's in our heart and our intentions and our desires and our friendship with the Danish people.

Iraq War/Weapons of Mass Destruction

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. But I do also sense that there are some who feel that the moral leadership of the United States has been somehow compromised by the fact that the world was led to the war in Iraq believing that there was weapons of mass destruction. It now seems like there wasn't. And I know that there were other nations, there was the U.N., who also believed there were weapons of mass destruction. But you said it again and again; people in your administration said it again and again.

The President. Right.

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. How do you feel about that today?

The President. Well, I'm obviously disappointed. I thought there were—I thought we'd find weapons of mass destruction, as did the world. In other words, it wasn't just our intelligence, nor was it just my administration. My predecessor, President Clinton, felt the same way, based upon what everybody thought was solid intelligence. That's why I—here I put together a group of distinguished citizens from both political parties to analyze what went wrong on the intelligence. As a matter of fact—announced today that we were implementing some serious reforms of our intelligence gathering.

On the other hand, I believe we made the right decision because Saddam Hussein was not only a tyrant, but he was a threat to world peace. He had the capacity to make weapons of mass destruction. Even though we hadn't found the weapons themselves, we certainly know he made the capacity.

And people who went and analyzed the situation came back and said, "Look, he was a dangerous person"—even though no weapons were found, the ability to make weapons and his intent and his relationship with terrorists. So I—

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. But do you understand that there are people who say, "Can we believe it the next time a grave danger is emerging?"

The President. Yes, I can. Sure. Absolutely. And I, myself, want to make sure that the intelligence that we share with our friends and allies is—or the intelligence we get from our allies—is good, solid intelligence. Absolutely. I've got to make decisions based upon good information.

And people of Denmark got to understand, listen, committing troops ought to be—is the last option for me. It's the hardest thing a President does, and I don't like to commit troops. Yesterday, I gave a speech to the Nation about a way forward in Iraq. I'm confident Iraq is going to be a free and democratic nation. Before I did so, I met with 38 families, all of whom had a loved one die in Iraq and Afghanistan. And it's hard to do that. It's hard to know that my decision put these kids in harm's way, and they didn't come back to the arms of their loved ones. And you just got to know, it is—it is the last thing I want to do. The last decision I want to make is to put our young folks into harm's way.

And it's—I had to tell every one of them two things. One, I thanked them for their sacrifice but also reminded them that we're laying the foundations for peace. And I truly believe we are. I would not put those kids out there if I didn't believe there's a better world ahead.

Europe-U.S. Relations/Kyoto Protocol

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. Now, you have, as President, been dealing seriously and intensively with Europe for the last 4½ years. And if I may ask you a little unconventional question: What do you think is the most

annoying aspect of the way that we Europeans look at the world?

The President. You know, that's a very tough question because if I answer it, obviously I admit there's something annoying about Europeans, which I don't want to admit. I don't want to say that. Listen, I think——

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. But we do look at the world very differently, don't we?

The President. Well, for example, Kyoto. Let me bring up a very controversial subject. A lot of the leaders in Europe and a lot of people in Europe believe that all—get the United States to sign Kyoto and everything would be fine with the environment.

Well, first of all, Kyoto would have wrecked our economy. And I couldn't, in good faith, sign Kyoto. And nor—99 Senators, U.S. Senators from both parties, said, "Don't sign Kyoto. We're not for Kyoto." It became a point of contention that I didn't think was healthy or necessary, and yet it became a—it became a—kind of a signpost of whether or not the United States was willing to participate with other nations.

By the way, Kyoto didn't include China and India, for starters, who happen to be big polluters as well. And so I'm going to go to the G-8, by the way, and I'll talk to Anders about this when I see him, about my plans to share a lot of the research and development we're doing. I mean, we're spending \$20 billion to better understand the science and better—and more likely to develop technologies that will enable this country to diversify away from fossil fuels.

See, we got to diversify away from fossil fuels. We're hooked on oil from the Middle East which is a national security problem and an economic security problem and, at the same time, burning fossil fuels is a part of the cause of greenhouse gases.

Domestic Cultural Issues

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. Let me change subjects completely, if I may. The cultural war, as it often described here in America, is something that we in Denmark look upon with some interest and some also maybe lack of understanding—gay marriage, abortion, and so forth.

The President. Sure.

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. Why have these subjects become such a focus in America today?

The President. Well, I think abortion—I know abortion has been a focus for quite a period of time. And there is a genuine philosophical debate, a debate amongst good people—good, decent, honorable, patriotic Americans who have a difference of opinion. I happen to be one who believes that we ought to guard life. Life is precious in all forms, all stages. And that then leads into political debates, that philosophy, that belief leads into political debates on issues like whether or not a parent should be notified prior to a daughter's abortion, for example. That's how it has manifested—different laws, for example. Occasionally—somebody proposed a law, for example, if you murder a pregnant woman, should the person be charged with murder once or twice? I happen to believe the person ought to be charged twice, first the mother and second the—the child. And that, of course, sparks debate. And that's why you're seeing debates on this issue.

Gay marriage is another issue——

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. Can I just, if I may, your personal—do you think abortion should be illegal?

The President. No, I've always believed that there—we ought to—abortion ought to be illegal with the exception of rape, incest, or life of the mother. But look, I'm a realist as well. I mean, this is an issue that has polarized the American political society. And in order to get good policy in place that protects the life of a child, we're going to have to change hearts. And

it's—so I've been promoting what I call a culture of life, at every aspect of the debate remind people that life is precious. And—but I can see why people take an interest in the debates here. It's—it's—I happen to believe a society based upon respect for life is an important society—is a whole society, I guess is a better way to put it.

The Presidency

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. When I told my 11-year-old daughter the other day that I was going to interview you, she asked me, "What does a President really do." And I told her, maybe a little simplistically, that he rules the world. [Laughter] And she then asked me, "What does a man with so much power think about before he falls asleep?"

The President. That's great.

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. So if I may be a little personal here, Mr. President—

The President. Sure.

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. —I would like to convey her question to you, and what do you think about when you have time alone?

The President. Yes, fascinating question. Sometimes the 11-year-olds ask better questions than us—than we adults. First, if I—if she asked me what do I do, I would—I would say, I make a lot of decisions. It's a decisionmaking job, which means I better listen to good people. And I think when the people take a look at my Government, they'll say, "Gosh, that old George W. is surrounding himself with some great people." And I have. And I give them a chance to tell me what's on their mind. I listen carefully, and then I make up my mind, and they say, "Yes, sir, Mr. President."

You've got to tell your daughter that, one, I sleep well at night. I subscribe that—this may be controversial for some—I subscribe it to the fact that I've got peace of mind. And I attribute that to my faith and to this amazing fact about America: Millions of people—no matter what their

political affiliation may be or their background—pray for me and Laura. And for that, I am incredibly grateful.

I'm an exerciser. I love to exercise. Your Prime Minister has challenged me to many a run and bike ride. I'm—I can only—I can't run with him because my knees hurt. And I probably won't be able to bike with him because he's a great athlete, but nevertheless, I exercise a lot. And that helps take the stress off.

I read a lot. And so when I—tell your daughter, right before I go to bed, after I do my homework, I'm an avid reader. I like to read history. I just finished a book about George Washington. And so I get my mind off my work and get my—I get—if I've got troubles, I get my—get the troubles off my mind by reading a lot. And then I—I'm kind of getting to be an old guy so I fall asleep about 9:30 p.m., much to the chagrin of Laura Bush. Up at 5:15 a.m., I get to work about 6:45 a.m.

President's Upcoming Visit to Denmark

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. Thank you, sir. Just this very last question.

The President. Please.

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. What are you looking forward mostly to your visit to Denmark?

The President. I'm looking forward to seeing your Prime Minister, who I like. He's a good guy. I'm looking forward to seeing Her Majesty. I have never been to Denmark. I'm looking forward to seeing the beauty of the country. I don't get out much when I travel, I must confess. I won't be your average American tourist being able to move around freely. I wish I could. But the job doesn't afford me to do that, nor—you know, it would be unfair to the people of Denmark if I tried to move around too much because the security would be quite inconvenient to them. But I really am looking forward to having a good discussion, talking about our common interests, talking

about a way forward to help promote democracy and peace. And I'm looking forward to a good night's sleep on the soil of a friend.

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. Thank you very much, sir, for your time. And I hope you have a pleasant and enjoyable visit to Denmark.

The President. Thank you, sir, appreciate it.

Mr. Bildsoe-Lassen. Thank you.

The President. Good job.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 1:45 p.m. in Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Queen Margrethe II of Denmark; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. This transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 30. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this interview. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks on the Upcoming Group of Eight Summit June 30, 2005

Thank you all. Thanks a lot. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's a pleasure for Laura and me to join you here at the Smithsonian, where America's heritage is kept and where the achievements of all cultures are celebrated.

I thank Wally Stern for your kind introduction and for his leadership of the Hudson Institute. I appreciate all the Hudson Institute members who are here. Thank you for your service to our country.

I want to thank the members of the diplomatic corps who have joined us. I appreciate your coming. I particularly want to say thanks to the Ambassadors from the African nations who are here. I have visited your beautiful and hopeful continent, and next month, Laura will travel to South Africa, Tanzania, and Rwanda to highlight the partnership we're building on education, the empowerment of women, and the fight against HIV/AIDS. She's a really good ambassador for our country.

I want to—I appreciate our Secretary of State who has joined us today. Condoleezza Rice, I'm proud you're here. Thanks for joining us. You're doing a fabulous job, by the way.

Ambassador Rob Portman, the U.S. Trade Representative is with us. Ambas-

sador, thanks for joining us. Andrew Natsios, Administrator of USAID, is with us. Good to see you, Andrew. Thanks for coming. Randy Tobias, who is the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator—Ambassador Randy Tobias—thank you for joining us, Mr. Ambassador. I appreciate your noble work.

I want to thank Senator Sam Brownback and Congressman Jim Kolbe and Congresswoman Nita Lowey for joining for us. We're honored you're here. Thanks for coming.

Secretary Ann Veneman, the UNICEF executive director, is with us. It's great to see you, Ann. Thanks for being here. I want to thank Larry Small, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute.

I want to thank Dr. Julian Raby, the director of the Freer and Sackler Galleries of Art. I appreciate Herb London, the president, Ken Weinstein, the executive officer of the Hudson Institute. And thank you all for being here.

Next week, I'm going to head to the G-8 summit in Scotland. Out there, I'll meet with leaders of the industrialized nations. As in earlier meetings, we will discuss the great political and economic progress being made in Africa and the next steps

we can take with African leaders to build on that progress. The whole world will benefit from prosperity and stability on the African continent. And the peoples of Africa deserve the peace and freedom and opportunity that are the natural rights of all mankind.

We seek progress in Africa and throughout the developing world because our interests are directly at stake. September the 11th, 2001, Americans found that instability and lawlessness in a distant country can bring danger to our own. In this new century, we are less threatened by fleets and armies than by small cells of men who operate in the shadows and exploit weakness and despair. The ultimate answer to those threats is to encourage prosperous, democratic, and lawful societies that join us in overcoming the forces of terror, allies that we're finding across the continent of Africa. We fight the war on terror with our power. We will win the war on terror with freedom and justice and hope.

We seek progress in Africa and throughout the developing world because conscience demands it. Americans believe that human rights and the worth of human lives are not determined by race or nationality or diminished by distance. We believe that every life matters and every person counts. And so we are moved when thousands of young lives are ended every day by the treatable disease of malaria. We're moved when children watch their parents slowly die of AIDS, leaving young boys and girls traumatized, frightened, and alone. Peoples of Africa are opposing these challenges with courage and determination, and we will stand beside them.

Yet the continent of Africa is so much more than the sum of its problems. After years of colonization and Marxism and racism, Africa is on the threshold of great advances. Economic growth is at the highest level in 8 years. Leaders have emerged from South Africa to Nigeria to Kenya, to broker an end to old conflicts. Last year

alone, five nations south of the Sahara held successful democratic elections. All who live in Africa can be certain, as you seize this moment of opportunity, America will be your partner and your friend.

In a developing world, we have an unprecedented opportunity to help other nations achieve historic victories over extreme poverty, with policies and approaches that are tested and proven. These victories will require new resources. The United States has tripled overseas development aid to Africa during my Presidency, and we're making a strong commitment for the future. Between 2004 and 2010, I proposed to double aid to Africa once again, with a primary focus on helping reforming countries.

Yet new resources are not enough. We need new thinking by all nations. Our greatest challenge is to get beyond empty symbolism and discredited policies and match our good intentions with good results.

First, overcoming extreme poverty requires partnership, not paternalism. Economic development is not something we do for countries; it is something they achieve with us. Their leaders, by definition, must play the main role as agents of reform and progress, instead of passive recipients of money.

Over the decades, we've learned that without economic and social freedom, without the rule of law and effective, honest government, international aid has little impact or value. But where there's freedom and the rule of law, every dollar of aid, trade, charitable giving, and foreign and local investment can rapidly improve people's lives.

Economic aid that expects little will achieve little. Economic aid that expects much can help to change the world. Through the Millennium Challenge Corporation, established a year-and-a-half ago,