

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan June 29, 2006

President Bush. Thank you all. Please be seated. Mr. Prime Minister, as I said on the South Lawn, we are delighted to have you here in Washington. The Prime Minister and I have got a very friendly relationship. We've just had 2 hours of discussions. We talked about a lot of areas of mutual concern. I've reminded the Prime Minister—the American people, Mr. Prime Minister, over the past months, that it was not always a given that the United States and America [Japan]* would have a close relationship. After all, 60 years we were at war—60 years ago, we were at war, and today we talked about North Korea and Iran and Iraq and trade and energy cooperation.

It's an amazing fact that we're able to have these discussions. To me it shows the power of liberty and democracy to transform enemies to allies and to help transform the world. And one thing about the Prime Minister is he understands that. He's a firm believer that—in universal values. He believes in freedom, and he's willing to act on those beliefs. And we have been a strong partner in peace, Mr. Prime Minister.

You've had a remarkable tenure as the Prime Minister of your country. You have led with courage. You have made hard decisions. You've helped us change our relationship so that Japan and the United States will be able to work even closer together in the 21st century. You made the hard decision to help realign our troops in your part of the world to better accommodate the needs of the Japanese people and, at the same time, keep in position a relationship that will be necessary for peace and stability.

I want to thank you for opening your markets to U.S. beef. I think the Japanese people are going to like the taste of U.S. beef. As a matter of fact, I had a good slice of beef last night, and you told me you did as well, and you look like you're feeling pretty good. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Koizumi. Very good. [Laughter]

President Bush. Right, good. We had an interesting discussion about energy. And one of the things that Japan and the United States can do is we can help provide technologies that will improve the climate as well as reduce our dependence on hydrocarbons. We discussed the Nuclear Suppliers Group that we're a part of and our contributions to some research and development that will help speed up fast breeder reactors and new types of reprocessing so that we can help deal with the cost of globalization when it comes to energy; make ourselves more secure, economically, as well as make us less dependent on hydrocarbons from parts of the world that may not agree with our policies.

As I mentioned, we discussed Iraq and Afghanistan. By the way, the Japanese defense forces did a really good job when they were in Iraq. And they're able to leave because they did such a good job. And now the Iraqis will be running the Province in which the Japanese forces used to be. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister, as he mentioned in the comments, will continue to provide airlift capacity and naval help.

The North Korean issue is one, obviously, that's got everybody's attention now. And we discussed this issue in length. We both agree that it's very important for us to remain united in sending a clear message to the North Korean leader that, first of all, launching the missile is unacceptable. There have been no briefings as to what's

* White House correction.

on top of the missile. He hasn't told anybody where the missile is going. He has an obligation, it seems like to me and the Prime Minister, that there be a full briefing—to those of us who are concerned about this issue—as to what his intentions are. It makes sense, doesn't it? It's a reasonable thing for somebody to do.

We talked about the six-party talks, and to make sure we remain bound up in sending a clear message to the leader of North Korea. I also talked about one of the most touching moments of my Presidency, when the mom of the abducted daughter came to the Oval Office and talked to me about what it was like to have a young daughter abducted by the North Koreans. And it really broke my heart. I told the Prime Minister it was a moving moment for me. I just could not imagine what it would be like to have somebody have taken, you know, my daughter—one of my daughters—and never be able to see her again. And the woman showed such great courage, Mr. Prime Minister, when she came and shared her story with me. It took everything I could not to weep, listening to her.

It also reminded me about the nature of the regime: what kind of regime would kidnap people, just take them offshore, you know; what kind of person would not care about how that woman felt.

And so we talked about the need to work together to bring a resolution to this issue about nuclear weapons. And I reminded the Prime Minister—he didn't need reminding, but I'm going to share with him once again my deep concern about the human condition inside North Korea. He shares that condition—after all, he's the Prime Minister of a country that has suffered a lot as a result of abductions. So we spent time talking about abductions.

All in all, it was a visit that I knew was going to be a good one, because I know the man; I know what he's like. He's a good thinker; he's a strategic thinker; he's a clear speaker. And plus, as you all know,

it's become quite well-known that we're going to end the visit at Graceland tomorrow. He's an Elvis fan. Laura and I gave him a jukebox as a gift, and I can't—what was the first song you put on? It wasn't "Hound Dog;" it was——

Prime Minister Koizumi. "I Want You, I Need You, I Love You."

President Bush. See, he loves Elvis, and I couldn't think of a better way to honor my friend, by going to Graceland. But it also sends a signal about how close our relationship is.

And so, Mr. Prime Minister, we're glad you're here. Thanks for your friendship; thanks for your alliance; and thanks for your leadership.

Prime Minister Koizumi. Thank you very much. With President Bush, I had a very candid exchange of views. Over the past 5 years, I've really had a close friendship with President Bush, and thanks to that, we've been able to have a very candid exchange of views. And I believe this is not just limited to close relations between us, personally, but I believe this close relationship is necessary in the future between Japan and the United States as well.

Japan and the United States is in a Japan-U.S. alliance in the world, and we reconfirmed that we can cooperate with each other on various challenges, maintain Japan's security and deterrence, and reduce burdens on local communities. On these points we were able to have a very important agreement, and we're most grateful for that.

In the meeting, we discussed not just Japan-U.S. bilateral relations but numerous challenges that the world community faces today—Afghanistan, North Korea, poverty reduction—reduced poverty for people who suffer from various diseases. We shared a common perception, and by doing so, we'll be able to cooperate with each other.

Now, Japan, in a way different than the U.S., has been supporting the nation-building in Iraq by the Iraqis themselves. The ground self-defense forces stationed in

Samawa, having accomplished their mission, will be withdrawing. But as a responsible member of the international community, through cooperation with various countries concerned and through cooperation with the United Nations, Japan will continue provide support and help the Iraqis get back on their feet.

With regard to North Korea, we spent a lot of time, and I expressed my views, and President Bush also expressed his thoughts. President Bush was kind enough to meet with Mrs. Sakie Yokota. And he told me he was very moved on that occasion. Anyone, if one's daughter is abducted, naturally will be grieved. And this feeling need to be shared by Americans and Japanese. We discussed that sort of thing.

We do have the six-party talks framework. Japan and the United States, I believe, need to maintain close coordination and encourage North Korea to become a responsible member of the international community.

With regard to Iranian nuclear proliferation, Japan also is concerned about this problem. The United States attaches importance to cooperation with EU and other countries concerned. Japan certainly supports that U.S. stance of seeking resolution through a dialog regarding the nuclear proliferation issue. The Iranian issue remains a grave issue for the entire world economy, and Japan wishes to cooperate with the United States and other countries concerned on this matter as well.

On U.N. reforms, building on the results achieved so far, we would like to work out with the G-4 a proposal that can be supported by the United States and achieve reforms of the United Nations and the Security Council. Japan and the United States will maintain close coordination, partnership. We need to do that and address various challenges.

The Japan-U.S. alliance is not just an alliance for our two countries; it is an alliance for the world. And in the interest of the world, we were able to confirm that

we need to cooperate with each other. And I think this was a very substantive, fruitful meeting. And I would like to thank President Bush and the U.S. for a very warm, hospitable welcome.

President Bush. We've agreed to take two questions a side. Walking in, I reminded the Prime Minister of one of Elvis's greatest songs, "Don't Be Cruel"—[laughter]. So keep that in mind, Hunt [Terence Hunt, Associated Press], when you ask your question.

Hamdan v. Rumsfeld

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You've said that you wanted to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay, but you were waiting for the Supreme Court decision that came out today. Do you intend now to close the Guantanamo Bay quickly? And how do you deal with the suspects that you've said were too dangerous to be released or sent home?

President Bush. Thank you for the question on a court ruling that literally came out in the midst of my meeting with the Prime Minister—and so I haven't had a chance to fully review the findings of the Supreme Court. I, one, assure you that we take them very seriously; two, that to the extent that there is latitude to work with the Congress to determine whether or not the military tribunals will be an avenue in which to give people their day in court, we will do so.

The American people need to know that this ruling, as I understand it, won't cause killers to be put out on the street. In other words, there's not a—it was a drive-by briefing on the way here; I was told that this was not going to be the case. At any rate, we will seriously look at the findings, obviously. And one thing I'm not going to do, though, is I'm not going to jeopardize the safety of the American people. People have got to understand that. I understand we're in a war on terror, that these people were picked up off of a battlefield. And I will protect the people and, at the same

time, conform with the findings of the Supreme Court.

Q. Do you think the prison will close?

President Bush. Well, I haven't had a chance to fully review what the Court said, Terry. I wish I had, and I could have given you a better answer. As I say, we take the findings seriously. And again, as I understand it—now please don't hold me to this—that there is a way forward with military tribunals in working with the United States Congress. As I understand, certain Senators have already been out expressing their desire to address what the Supreme Court found, and we will work with the Congress. I want to find a way forward.

In other words, I have told the people that I would like for there to be a way to return people from Guantanamo to their home countries, but some of them—people need to be tried in our courts. The Hamdan decision was the way forward for that part of my statement, and again, I would like to review the case. And we are; we've got people looking at it right now to determine how we can work with Congress, if that's available, to solve the problem.

North Korea

Q. On North Korea, I'd like to ask a question of both of you, Prime Minister and President. On North Korea, I understand you spent a lot of time to exchange views. It is said that the North Koreans are preparing to launch Taepodong-2. To resolve this missile issue, what kind of cooperation do you think is possible between Japan and the United States? And also, did you discuss possibly referring the matter to the U.N. Security Council?

On the abduction issue and human rights issue, I understand, Mr. President, you've shown deep concern for the resolution of the abduction issue. What sort of cooperation do you think is possible between the U.S. and Japan?

President Bush. Do you want to go? Yes, please.

Prime Minister Koizumi. The North Koreans—I believe, in the first place, we need to try and approach the North Koreans not to launch Taepodong-2, through various efforts, and should they ever launch the missile, that will cause various pressures—we would apply various pressures. And we discussed that. I believe it is best that I do not discuss what specific pressures we were talking about.

As we approach the North Koreans, we shall maintain close cooperation and coordination with the United States, including the abduction issue.

President Bush. —all kinds of opportunities, and the U.N. is an opportunity to express our common concern. You know, another interesting opportunity is, over time, to work on missile defenses. The Japanese cannot be—afford to be held hostage to rockets. And neither can the United States or any other body who loves freedom. And so one really interesting opportunity is for—to share and cooperate on missile defenses.

You know, the leader of North Korea is just going to have to make a decision: Does he want to be isolated from the world, or is he interested in being an active participant in, kind of, the nations of the world who care about their people and desire peace? It's his choice to make. We've made our choice. We believe it's important for nations such as Japan and the United States to be active participants in the world in a positive way. And that's what we're doing.

You know, a lot of the focus of our relationship is based upon, obviously, Iraq and Afghanistan, but the truth of the matter is, Japan and the United States make mighty contributions to end suffering because of disease and hunger. And that's why I appreciate the Prime Minister's leadership. He understands that with economic might comes serious responsibilities in the world. And the United States takes those responsibilities seriously, and so does Japan. Matt [Matt Spetalnick, Reuters].

Hamdan v. Rumsfeld

Q. Yes, Mr. President. We can assume you've at least been given some of the broad strokes of the Supreme Court's decision on Guantanamo—

President Bush. No, I just gave you the answer on that. I'll be glad to answer another question—I gave you the broad strokes I've been given.

Q. Right, but this—can you comment on what looks like a judicial repudiation of your administration's policy on the treatment of terror suspects post-9/11?

President Bush. Matt, I can't—I wish I could comment, and would, obviously. I'm a person who generally comments on things. I haven't been briefed enough to make a comment on it, except for the following things. I'm sorry you had to waste your question, but we will conform to the Supreme Court. We will analyze the decision. To the extent that the Congress has given any latitude to develop a way forward using military tribunals, we will work with them.

As I understand, a Senator has already been on TV. Haven't seen it; haven't heard what he said, but as—they briefed me and said he wants to devise law in conformity with the case that would enable us to use a military tribunal to hold these people to account. And if that's the case, we'll work with him.

I can't comment any more than I have just done in the first question; otherwise, I would have. I just haven't been fully briefed enough to answer your question, Matt.

Japan-U.S. Relations

Q. Over the past 5 years, Prime Minister Koizumi and President Bush have built up the best sort of relationship between the two of you in the history of Japan and the United States. Now, what is the greatest reason for having maintained this policy of attaching greatest importance to Japan-U.S. relations?

And a question for President Bush. Various problems have occurred after 9/11. And in the Prime Minister Koizumi's policy of attaching importance to Japan-U.S. relations, what was the case—instance where you were most appreciative of Prime Minister Koizumi's position? And what sort of impact has it had on your feeling and stance toward Japan?

Prime Minister Koizumi. Well, attaching importance to our relations with the United States—well, after the Second World War, throughout—over the past 6 years, Japan has maintained that policy. We've recognized the importance of a Japan-U.S. alliance and also maintain a stance of international cooperation and coordination. It's because we have learned the lessons of World War II, we took up this policy in believing that this was good for Japan. In the past, today, and the future, as well maintain Japan-U.S. alliance and international cooperation. This is a very important fundamental policy of Japan that should never change.

Last year, President Bush visited Kyoto in Japan and had one-on-one meeting. Some seem to think that the—to the extent Japan-U.S. relations is undermined, that could be complemented by better relations with Asia and other countries. And I've said I do not subscribe to that view. The better the Japan-U.S. relations, my view is that we will be able to have better relations with China and other countries in Asia.

Now, some in the mass media took up on that and misinterpreted my position. In other words, they thought that I was saying, to the extent Japan-U.S. relations remain good, I couldn't care less what Japan's relations would be with other countries. That is not at all what I said. I've been saying that there is no country in the world that has as important bilateral relations as Japan-U.S. bilateral relations. But I have no view such as having better relations with the United States at the expense of relations with other countries.

My view is that by having better relations with the United States, I can have better relations with other countries. And from that perspective, in the post-war years, Japan has achieved remarkable growth and development. It is because we've learned lessons from the past in our relations with the United States and determined to maintain friendly relations with the United States. And that is what we have done to date.

In the future as well, Japan-U.S. alliance is something that will be—contribute to the resolution of various challenges in the world—by maintaining friendly ties between Japan and the United States. Attaching importance to our relations with the United States does not sacrifice our views and our relations with other countries. Please do not misunderstand.

President Bush. It's a pretty tricky question. I hate to point out one area where that has influenced my thinking about Japan's contributions for fear of diminishing the contributions in other areas. Because the truth of the matter is, we live in a very complex world, and by—cooperating to solve problems makes the world a better place. However, since you asked, I'll answer. I would think it is the Prime Minister's understanding of the capacity for democracies to help change the conditions of the world. And therefore, his strong support for helping a new Afghanistan democracy grow and his willingness to do something a lot of other leaders in Japan have been unwilling to do, which is to commit Self-Defense Forces to help the growth of a new democracy.

And I tell the American people this: I use the Prime Minister all the time in my speeches, as the press corps will tell you, incredibly bored of hearing. But neverthe-

less, I do share the example with the people about my relationship with the Prime Minister. It is just—it strikes me as just amazing. A lot of people take it for granted. I don't, because 60 years ago, we were at war. And something happened between our visit to Graceland and when our respective fathers looked at each other with deep suspicion. And what happened was, Japan developed a Japanese-style democracy based upon shared values. And today, we're able to discuss peace. It is a remarkable transformation of a relationship. We just happen to be the beneficiaries of that transformation. I also believe, however, that there are people who are coming up who have shedded the bonds of tyranny are also the benefits of this relationship.

And so Japan is making a mighty contribution to new democracy, which I strongly believe is in our Nation's interests and I strongly believe will yield peace. And I firmly believe that the example that we show today will be repeated over the decades, particularly with newly elected leaders in the Middle East. And the Prime Minister understands that. And I'm grateful for the contribution of the Japanese people to the cause of peace.

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you.

Prime Minister Koizumi. Thank you very much, American people, for "Love Me Tender." [Laughter]

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:33 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea; and Sakie Yokota, mother of Megumi Yokota, who was abducted by North Korean authorities. Prime Minister Koizumi and some reporters spoke in Japanese, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister
Junichiro Koizumi of Japan: The Japan-U.S. Alliance of the New Century
June 29, 2006

President George W. Bush of the United States of America hosted Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan for an Official Visit to the White House on June 29, 2006, that celebrated their close personal friendship and the deep and increasing ties between the American and Japanese people.

The two leaders agreed that the U.S.-Japan partnership stands as one of the most accomplished bilateral relationships in history. They reviewed with great satisfaction the broadened and enhanced cooperation achieved in the alliance under their joint stewardship, and together heralded a new U.S.-Japan Alliance of Global Cooperation for the 21st Century.

The U.S.-Japan Alliance Based on Universal Values and Common Interests

The United States and Japan stand together not only against mutual threats but also for the advancement of core universal values such as freedom, human dignity and human rights, democracy, market economy, and rule of law. These values are deeply rooted in the long historic traditions of both countries.

The United States and Japan share interests in: winning the war on terrorism; maintaining regional stability and prosperity; promoting free market ideals and institutions; upholding human rights; securing freedom of navigation and commerce, including sea lanes; and enhancing global energy security. It is these common values and common interests that form the basis for U.S.-Japan regional and global cooperation.

Bilateral Political, Security and Economic Cooperation

The President and Prime Minister welcomed the tremendous progress in the U.S.-Japan security relationship achieved

during their tenures. Bilateral security cooperation has deepened as a result of ballistic missile defense cooperation and legislation in Japan to deal with contingencies.

The two leaders welcomed the establishment of common strategic objectives of February 2005 as well as the conclusion of watershed agreements to transform the alliance for the future. These agreements, including the most significant realignment of U.S. and Japanese forces in decades, constitute historic steps forward that make the U.S. military presence more enduring and effective, and ensure the capabilities necessary for the alliance to cope with diverse challenges in the evolving security environments. The two leaders agreed that full and prompt implementation of these agreements is necessary, not only for Japan and the United States, but also for peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region.

Asia's historic transformation is underway, creating a region that increasingly embraces the universal values of democracy, freedom, human rights, market economy, and rule of law. The two leaders pledged to work together to shape and support this transformation. In this regard, the two nations will continue to work on common challenges in the region such as (a) promoting individual freedoms; (b) increasing transparency and confidence in the political, economic, and military fields; and (c) protecting human dignity, and resolving humanitarian and human rights problems including the abduction issue.

The two leaders affirmed that robust U.S.-Japan cooperation embraces the dynamism of China, and helps to maintain peace and tranquility in Northeast Asia. They reaffirmed the importance of advancing strategic dialogues with friends and allies in the region such as Australia. They called on North Korea to fulfill