

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; and President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel November 26, 2007

*President Bush.* Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. It's an honor to have you back in the Oval Office. Thanks for coming to the Annapolis Conference. I'm looking forward to continuing our serious dialog with you and the President of the Palestinian Authority to see whether or not peace is possible. I'm optimistic. I know you're optimistic, and I want to thank you for your courage and your friendship. I'm proud of you—I'm proud of you.

*Prime Minister Olmert.* Thank you very much, Mr. President. I'm delighted to come with my colleagues to—another time to the Oval Office. This time it's different because we are going to have lots of participants in what I hope will launch a serious process of negotiations between us and the

Palestinians. This will be a bilateral process, but the international support is very important for us.

And I thank you for the efforts that you, President, made in order to make it possible, and the Secretary of State, together with us, in order to come to this point where from we and the Palestinians will sit together in Jerusalem and work out something that will be very good to create a great hope for our peoples.

*President Bush.* Thank you, sir. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority November 26, 2007

*President Bush.* Mr. President, welcome.

*President Abbas.* Thank you.

*President Bush.* Yes. It's good to have you back here in the Oval Office. Thank you for coming, and thank you for working hard to implement a vision for a Palestinian state.

We want to help you. We want there to be peace. We want the people in the Palestinian Territories to have hope. And we thank you for your willingness to sit down with Israel to negotiate the settlement.

The United States cannot impose our vision, but we can help facilitate. And the process will begin tonight at the State Department and then on to Annapolis tomorrow. And I want to thank you for coming. Wish you all the very best.

*President Abbas.* I am delighted to have the opportunity to meet with President Bush after his invitation and this historic initiative that he launched to convene the Annapolis Conference. We have a great deal of hope that this conference will produce a permanent status negotiations, expanded negotiations over all permanent