

Remarks on the Middle East Peace Process in Jerusalem, Israel *January 10, 2008*

Good afternoon. I'd like to first thank Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas for their hospitality during my trip here to the Holy Land. We've had very good meetings, and now is the time to make difficult choices.

I underscored to both Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas that progress needs to be made on four parallel tracks. First, both sides need to fulfill their commitments under the roadmap. Second, the Palestinians need to build their economy and their political and security institutions. And to do that, they need the help of Israel, the region, and the international community. Third, I reiterate my appreciation for the Arab League Peace Initiative, and I call upon the Arab countries to reach out to Israel, a step that is long overdue.

In addition to these three tracks, both sides are getting down to the business of negotiating. I called upon both leaders to make sure their teams negotiate seriously, starting right now. I strongly supported the decision of the two leaders to continue their regular summit meetings, because they are the ones who can and must and, I am convinced, will lead.

I share with these two leaders the vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. Both of these leaders believe that the outcome is in the interest of their peoples and are determined to arrive at a negotiated solution to achieve it.

The point of departure for permanent status negotiations to realize this vision seems clear. There should be an end to the occupation that began in 1967. The agreement must establish Palestine as a homeland for the Palestinian people, just as Israel is a homeland for the Jewish people. These negotiations must ensure that Israel has secure, recognized, and defensible borders. And they must ensure that

the state of Palestine is viable, contiguous, sovereign, and independent.

It is vital that each side understands that satisfying the other's fundamental objectives is key to a successful agreement. Security for Israel and viability for the Palestinian state are in the mutual interests of both parties.

Achieving an agreement will require painful political concessions by both sides. While territory is an issue for both parties to decide, I believe that any peace agreement between them will require mutually agreed adjustments to the armistice lines of 1949 to reflect current realities and to ensure that the Palestinian state is viable and contiguous. I believe we need to look to the establishment of a Palestinian state and new international mechanisms, including compensation, to resolve the refugee issue.

I reaffirm to each leader that implementation of any agreement is subject to implementation of the roadmap. Neither party should undertake any activity that contravenes roadmap obligations or prejudices the final status negotiations. On the Israeli side, that includes ending settlement expansion and removing unauthorized outposts. On the Palestinian side, that includes confronting terrorists and dismantling terrorist infrastructure.

I know Jerusalem is a tough issue. Both sides have deeply felt political and religious concerns. I fully understand that finding a solution to this issue will be one of the most difficult challenges on the road to peace, but that is the road we have chosen to walk.

Security is fundamental. No agreement and no Palestinian state will be born of terror. I reaffirm America's steadfast commitment to Israel's security.

The establishment of the state of Palestine is long overdue. The Palestinian people deserve it, and it will enhance the stability of the region, and it will contribute to the security of the people of Israel. The peace agreement should happen and can happen by the end of this year. I know each leader shares that important goal, and

I am committed to doing all I can to achieve it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:27 p.m. at the King David Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; and President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks During a Visit to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem January 11, 2008

Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your wonderful hospitality. I would hope as many people in the world would come to this place, it would be a sobering reminder that evil exists and a call that when we find evil, we must resist it. It also is a—I guess I came away with this impression, that I was most impressed that people, in the face of horror and evil, would not forsake their God, that in the face of unspeakable crimes against human-

ity, brave souls, young and old, stood strong for what they believe.

It's an honor to be here. It is a moving experience, and it is a living memory that is important. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:43 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; and Avner Shalev, chairman, Yad Vashem Directorate.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Senior Administration Officials and an Exchange With Reporters at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait January 12, 2008

Good morning. I just had a really good meeting with Ambassador Crocker, General Petraeus, Secretary Rice, and members of my national security team. We discussed the situation in Iraq. We discussed the progress that's being made, the challenges that lie ahead, and we discussed the fact that what happens in Iraq impacts everything else in this vital region.

I really appreciate you all coming over, but more importantly, I appreciate your service to the country.

One year ago, I addressed the American people to announce a new way forward in

Iraq. At that time, Iraq was riven by sectarian violence. The violence had increased over the course of 2006, and it threatened the collapse of the political process. Economic activity was languishing. Al Qaida was strengthening its grip in critical parts of Iraq, including parts of the capital city of Baghdad. Shi'a extremist groups, some with the backing from Iran, were increasing their attacks on coalition and Iraqi forces.

Our strategy simply wasn't working, and the world was watching. Our friends and foes had the same question: Would we turn our back on our friends and allow Iraq