

The President. Yes. I mean, I raise it with him every time I see him. And it's gotten higher. And, yes, of course, I will. It's—the interesting thing for people to understand, though, is that there's not just—there's not a lot of excess capacity in the world now. Demand has risen so fast relative to supply that it's very tight. And there is no easy solution. It took us a while to get to where we are, and it's going to take us a while to get out of where we are.

The Presidency and the Middle East

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Finally, what would be your advice to the next President regarding the Middle East? How would you—

The President. Take the Middle East seriously because that's the center of—that's the place where people are—get so despondent and despair that they're willing to come and take lives of U.S. citizens.

On the other hand, be hopeful, because the Middle East is full of really decent, honorable people that want to live in peace. And use our influence to promote peace,

whether it would be in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestinian Territories, or elsewhere.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Thank you very much.

The President. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Thank you for your time. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 12:09 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Tzipora "Tzipi" Livni of Israel; former Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei (Abu Ala), Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, and President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority; former Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom, Quartet Representative in the Middle East; and King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia. Ms. Bilbassy Charters referred to Parliament Members Sa'ad al-Din al-Hariri and Walid Jumblatt of Lebanon; former Israeli Defense Force Chief of Staff Annon Lipkin-Shahak; and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel.

Statement on the Earthquake in China
May 12, 2008

I extend my condolences to those injured and to the families of the victims of today's earthquake in China's Sichuan Province. I am particularly saddened by the number of students and children affected by this

tragedy. The thoughts and prayers of the American people are with the Chinese people, especially those directly affected. The United States stands ready to help in any way possible.

Statement on the Situation in Lebanon
May 12, 2008

I strongly condemn Hizballah's recent efforts, and those of their foreign sponsors in Tehran and Damascus, to use violence and intimidation to bend the Government

and people of Lebanon to their will. The United States will continue to firmly support the Government of Lebanon, led by Prime Minister Siniora, against this effort

to undermine the hard-fought gains in sovereignty and independence the Lebanese people have made in recent years. The international community will not allow the Iranian and Syrian regimes, via their proxies, to return Lebanon to foreign domination and control. To ensure the safety and security of the people of Lebanon, the United States will continue its assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces to ensure they are able to defend the Lebanese Government and safeguard its institutions.

It is critical that the international community come together to assist the Leba-

nese people in their hour of need. I plan to consult with regional leaders on my upcoming trip to the Middle East to coordinate efforts to support the Lebanese Government and implement U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701, among others, which seek to bolster Lebanon's sovereignty against external efforts at destabilization and interference. The Lebanese people have sacrificed much for the sake of their freedom, and the United States will continue to stand with them against this latest assault on their independence and security.

Interview With Jacob Eilon and Gil Tamari of Channel 10 TV of Israel May 12, 2008

Q. Mr. President, thank you for speaking with Channel 10.

The President. Yes, sir.

Jenna Bush Hager's Wedding

Q. First of all, congratulations on your daughter's wedding this weekend. [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you. It was—as my Jewish friends tell me, there was *mazel tov*. And it was a beautiful experience. It was very emotional, and it was—to see your little girl marry a good guy. And Laura and I were thrilled.

Q. Made you proud?

The President. Yes, I was very proud of her. It was a wonderful time. And we did it on our ranch, which was—we didn't do it here in the White House because Jenna wanted a more low-key, kind of homey environment. And she loves the ranch, and so do we, so it was perfect. It was wonderful. Thanks for asking.

Q. Great. Now to business.

The President. Yes. [*Laughter*]

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert just said a couple days ago that he would

resign if he was indicted with some new corruption charges. Does that change in any way your strategy on the peace process in the Middle East?

The President. No. The vision of the peace process still is the same. I have come to the conclusion that it is essential for Israel to have a Palestinian partner that is a democracy committed to peace. I fully understand not all Palestinians agree with that vision. But I also believe, over time, that when confronted with life in Gaza, what that's like, or life in a place where you can raise your child in peace, most of the Palestinians will choose peace, and that the best way to marginalize these radicals who murder the innocent to achieve their political objectives is through Palestinian democracy.

Q. And you can do that with Olmert and Abbas?

The President. Well, the Prime Minister's—as I understand it, the legal issue goes on, and I fully understand that and respect Israeli rule of law. I will just tell you, in my—I have great relations with the Prime Minister. I find him to be a frank man, an honest man, an open man, a guy