

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