

your help, your good will to have peace in this part of the world. And as you've played lots of roles in having peace and security in lots of parts of the world—you, your father, and the other President.

Again, welcome, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:03 p.m. at the U.S. Embassy. In his remarks, he referred to Deputy Chief of Mission and Charge d'Affaires Alan Misenheimer of the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait; Amir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah of Kuwait; and Jenan Boushehri, former candidate for the Kuwait Municipal Council.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony in Manama, Bahrain *January 12, 2008*

Your Majesty, thank you very much for bestowing upon me the award. I'm most honored. I accept it on behalf of the people of the United States of America. I also thank you and the Crown Prince and the Prime Minister for your gracious hospitality. I am really honored to be the first U.S. sitting President to have visited your country. Perhaps I should say, it's about time.

The American people have a long friendship with the people of Bahrain. For decades, Bahrain has welcomed the United States Navy and is now home to our 5th Fleet. Two years ago, I was pleased to sign legislation that strengthened our friendship and our relationship. It was the free trade agreement with Bahrain; it's America's first such agreement with any nation in the Gulf. This agreement is helping to pave way to freer and fairer trade between our countries so we can create jobs and opportunity and hope in both our lands.

Our two nations share a common vision for the future of the Middle East. Through our alliance, we share the burdens and risks of maintaining security as well as defending freedom throughout the region. We also believe in the power of democratic reform. Your Majesty, I appreciate the fact that

you're on the forefront of providing hope for people through democracy. Your nation has held two free elections since 2000. And in 2006, your people elected a woman to your parliament. Bahrain's reforms are making your nation stronger. You're showing strong leadership, and you're showing the way forward for other nations.

Your Majesty, I look forward to our meetings later today. I look forward to discussing how we continue—can continue to advance peace in the Middle East. I look forward to sharing with you my experiences that I had in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. I look forward to talking about how we can continue to ensure security in the Gulf. Together, we will continue to strengthen our friendship and our cooperation, and I'm proud to be with you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:55 p.m. at Sakhir Palace. In his remarks, he referred to King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, Crown Prince Sheikh Salman bin Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, and Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman al-Khalifa of Bahrain. He also referred to Lateefa al-Geood, who was the first woman elected to the Council of Representatives of the National Assembly of Bahrain in 2006.

The President's Radio Address January 12, 2008

Good morning. I'm speaking to you from the Middle East, where I have been meeting with friends and allies. We're discussing how we can work together to confront the extremists who threaten our future. And I have encouraged them to take advantage of the historic opportunity we have before us to advance peace, freedom, and security in this vital part of the world.

My first stop was Israel and the Palestinian Territories. I had good meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Olmert and Palestinian President Abbas. Both these men are committed to peace in the Holy Land. Both these men have been elected by their people. And both share a vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

I came away encouraged by my meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders. Each side understands that the key to achieving its own goals is helping the other side achieve its goals. For the Israelis, their main goal is ensuring the safety of their people and the security of their nation. For the Palestinians, the goal is a state of their own, where they can enjoy the dignity that comes with sovereignty and self-government.

In plain language, the result must be the establishment of a free and democratic homeland for the Palestinian people, just as Israel is a free and democratic homeland for the Jewish people. For this to happen, the Israelis must have secure, recognized, and defensible borders, and the Palestinians must have a state that is viable, contiguous, sovereign, and independent. Achieving this vision will require tough decisions and painful concessions from both sides.

I believe that a peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians that defines a Palestinian state is possible this year. Prime Minister Olmert made clear to me that he understands a democratic Pales-

tinian state is in the long-term security interests of Israel. President Abbas is committed to achieving this Palestinian state through negotiation. The United States cannot impose an agreement on the Israelis and Palestinians; that is something they must work out themselves. But with hard work and good will on both sides, they can make it happen. And both men are getting down to the serious work of negotiation to make sure it does happen.

The United States will do all we can to encourage these negotiations and promote reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. But the international community has a responsibility to help as well. In particular, the Arab nations of the Gulf have a responsibility both to support President Abbas, Prime Minister Fayyad, and other Palestinian leaders as they work for peace and to work for a larger reconciliation between Israel and the Arab world. And in my meetings with Arab leaders over the next few days, I will urge them to do their part.

A democratic Palestinian state is in the interests of the Palestinians. It is in the long-term security interests of Israel. And it is in the interests of a world at war with terrorists and extremists trying to impose their brutal vision on the Middle East. By helping the Israeli and Palestinian people lay the foundation for lasting peace, we will help build a more hopeful future for the Holy Land and a safer world for the American people.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:05 p.m. on January 11 at the Bayan Palace Guest House in Kuwait City, Kuwait, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m., e.d.t., on January 12. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 11, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.