

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.

Due to the 8-hour time difference, the address was broadcast after the President's remarks in Kuwait and Bahrain. In his address, the President referred to Prime Minister

Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates *January 13, 2008*

Dr. Aida, thank you very much for the kind introduction. Ministers, members of the diplomatic corps, and distinguished guests: I am honored by the opportunity to stand on Arab soil and speak to the people of this nation and this region.

Throughout the sweep of history, the lands that the Arab people call home have played a pivotal role in world affairs. These lands sit at the juncture of three great continents, Europe and Asia and Africa. These lands have given birth to three of the world's major religions. These lands have seen the rise and fall of great civilizations. And in the 21st century, these lands are once again playing a central role in the human story.

A great new era is unfolding before us. This new era is founded on the equality of all people before God. This new era is being built with the understanding that power is a trust that must be exercised with the consent of the governed and deliver equal justice under the law. And this new era offers hope for the millions across the Middle East who yearn for a future of peace and progress and opportunity.

Here in Abu Dhabi, we see clearly the outlines of this future. Beginning with the revered father of this country, Sheikh Zayed, you have succeeded in building a prosperous society out of the desert. You have opened your doors to the world economy. You have encouraged women to contribute to the development of your nation, and they have occupied some of your highest ministerial posts. You have held historic elections for the Federal National Council.

You have shown the world a model of a Muslim state that is tolerant toward people of other faiths. I'm proud to stand in a nation where the people have an opportunity to build a better future for themselves and their families. Thank you for your warm hospitality.

In my country, we speak of these developments as the advance of freedom. Others may call it the advance of justice. Yet whatever term we use, the ideal is the same. In a free and just society, every person is treated with dignity. In a free and just society, leaders are accountable to those they govern. And in a free and just society, individuals can rise as far as their talents and hard work will take them.

For decades, the people of this region saw their desire for liberty and justice denied at home and dismissed abroad in the name of stability. Today, your aspirations are threatened by violent extremists who murder the innocent in pursuit of power. These extremists have hijacked the noble religion of Islam and seek to impose their totalitarian ideology on millions. They hate freedom and they hate democracy because it fosters religious tolerance and allows people to chart their own future. They hate your government because it does not share their dark vision. They hate the United States because they know we stand with you in opposition to their brutal ambitions. And everywhere they go, they use murder and fear to foment instability to advance their aims.

One cause of instability is the extremists supported and embodied by the regime