

I have to believe that the mothers of Palestinians and the mothers of Israelis hope the same thing for their children. They want them not to be vulnerable to violence. They don't want, when their child gets on a bus, to worry that that bus might explode. They don't want their child to have to suffer indignities because of who they are. And so sometimes I think that if you just put the mothers in charge for a while, that things would get resolved.

And it's that spirit of thinking about the future and not the past that I just talked about earlier that I think could help advance the peace process, because if you look at the situation there, over time, I don't believe it's sustainable. It's not sustainable for Israel's security because as populations grow around them, if there is more and more antagonism towards Israel, over time that will make Israel less secure. It's not sustainable for the Palestinians because increasingly their economies are unable to produce the jobs and the goods and the income for people's basic quality of life.

So we know that path is a dead end, and we've got to move in a new direction. But it's going to be hard. A lot of mistrust has been built up, a lot of anger, a lot of hatred, and unwinding that hatred requires patience. But it has been done. You know, think about—my Special Envoy to the Middle East is a gentleman named George Mitchell, who was a Senator in the United States and then became the Special Envoy for the United States in Northern Ireland. And the Protestants and the Catholics in Northern Ireland had been fighting for hundreds of years, and as recently as 20 years ago or 30 years ago, the antagonism, the hatred,

was as fierce as any sectarian battle in the world.

And yet because of persistent, courageous efforts by leaders, a peace accord was arrived at. A government that uses the democratic process was formed. And I had in the White House just a few weeks ago the leader of the Protestants, the leaders of Catholics in the same room, the separatists and the unionists in the same room, as part of a single system. And so that tells me that anything's possible if we're willing to strive for it. But it will depend on young people like you being open to new ideas and new possibilities. And it will require young people like you never to stereotype or assume the worst about other people.

In the Muslim world, this notion that somehow everything is the fault of the Israelis lacks balance because there's two sides to every question. That doesn't mean that sometimes one side has done something wrong and should not be condemned, but it does mean there's always two sides to an issue.

I say the same thing to my Jewish friends, which is, you have to see the perspective of the Palestinians. Learning to stand in somebody else's shoes, to see through their eyes, that's how peace begins. And it's up to you to make that happen.

All right. Thank you very much, everybody. I enjoyed it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:18 p.m. at the Tophane Cultural Center. In his remarks, he referred to Rahmi Aksungur, professor and rector, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University; President Abdullah Gul of Turkey; and President Nicolas Sarkozy of France.

## Exchange With Reporters in Baghdad, Iraq April 7, 2009

### *The President's Visit to Iraq*

Q. Sir, can you tell us what your primary purpose is in being here?

*The President.* To say thank you to the troops. They are doing extraordinary work. General Odierno has been helping to lead a very effective operation here. We want to be

fully briefed, and nothing does that better than face-to-face meetings.

I'll have the opportunity to meet with Prime Minister Maliki and President Talabani while I'm here. Obviously, we've spent a lot of time trying to get Afghanistan right. But I think it's important for us to remember that there's still a lot of work to be done here. And in addition to

thanking our troops, I also want to send a strong message to our diplomatic corps and our civilians that they're going to be critical to our success here.

We've made significant political progress. You've seen a greater willingness on the part of all the factions in Iraq to resolve their issues politically and through nonviolent means. But with the national elections coming up, many of the unresolved issues may be brought to a head. And it's very important for us to use all of our influence to encourage parties to resolve these issues in ways that are equitable and fair. And I think that my presence here can help do that.

Okay. Thank you, guys.

Not to mention, Chip [Chip Reid, CBS News], I thought you guys hadn't been on the road long enough. [Laughter] I know that you

didn't feel like going home. We had underworked you, so I figured one more stop.

#### *Meeting With Iraqi Leaders*

Q. Did you say you're meeting with or talking to——

*The President.* I will be meeting with them face to face.

Q. Face to face?

Q. Will that be here, Mr. President?

*The President.* Yes, in the near vicinity.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:24 p.m. in Al Faw Palace at Camp Victory. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Forces—Iraq. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### Statement on the 15th Anniversary of the Genocide in Rwanda

*April 7, 2009*

This week marks the 15th commemoration of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. It is a somber occasion that causes us to reflect upon the deaths of the more than 800,000 men, women, and children who were killed simply because of their ethnicity or their political beliefs. The memory of these events also deepens our commitment to act when faced with genocide and to work with partners around the world to prevent future atrocities. The figure of 800,000 is so enormous, so daunting, that it runs the risk of becoming a statistic. Today, we must remember that each of the 800,000 individuals who died in 1994 had their own story, their

own family, and their own dreams. As we mourn their senseless passing, we must also acknowledge the courageous men and women who survived the genocide and have since demonstrated remarkable strength and generosity in forgiving those who committed these heinous acts. These individuals inspire us daily by working to restore trust and rebuild hope in Rwanda. The United States is committed to its partnership with Rwanda and will continue to support efforts to promote sustainable development, respect for human rights, and lasting peace in Rwanda.

### Remarks to Military Personnel in Baghdad

*April 7, 2009*

*The President.* Thank you. Thank you, guys. Hooah!

*Audience members.* Hooah!

*The President.* Let me say, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Multi-National Corps—Iraq; Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq; First Corps; America's Corps

Band: Thanks to all of you. Listen, I am so honored.

*Audience member.* We love you.

*The President.* I love you back. I am honored and grateful to be with all of you. And I'm not going to talk long because I want to shake as many hands as I can, and I've been talking