

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Sens. Edward M. Kennedy and Max S. Baucus. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Sec-

retary on June 3. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia June 3, 2009

The President's Visit to Saudi Arabia

Q. Mr. President, what's your message, sir, here?

President Obama. This is my first visit to Saudi Arabia, but I've had several conversations with His Majesty, and I've been struck by his wisdom and his graciousness. Obviously, the United States and Saudi Arabia have a long history of friendship; we have a strategic relationship. And as I take this trip, and we'll be visiting Cairo tomorrow, I thought it was very important to come to the place where Islam began and to seek His Majesty's counsel and to discuss with him many of the issues that we confront here in the Middle East.

So I just want to again thank him for his extraordinary generosity and hospitality. And I'm confident that working together the United

States and Saudi Arabia can make progress on a whole host of issues and mutual interests.

King Abdallah. I thank you, Mr. President, for the kind words and the kind sentiments expressed within them. I am not surprised, given the historic and strategic ties between our two countries, I believe, that go back to the time of the meeting between the late Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the late King Abdul Aziz.

I also want to express my best wishes to the friendly American people who are represented by a distinguished man who deserves to be in this position.

President Obama. *Shukran.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:22 p.m. at the King's Royal Farm. King Abdallah spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Arms Control and Nuclear Nonproliferation June 3, 2009

I welcome Senator McCain's important statement on President Reagan's legacy and the need to move toward a world free of nuclear weapons. In my speech in Prague, I outlined my agenda for keeping the American people safe from the dangers posed by nuclear weapons, and I am grateful to John McCain for his leadership on these critical issues. I have out-

lined an ambitious strategy for promoting arms control and preventing nuclear terrorism and proliferation, which is already bearing fruit. I look forward to working with Senator McCain and the entire Congress to ensure that we accomplish these goals together for the American people and the security of the entire planet.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt in Cairo, Egypt June 4, 2009

President Mubarak. I'd like to welcome President Obama to Egypt. This is his first—our

first meeting together. We discussed so many issues: the Middle East issues, interests in the

region. We also discussed all problems here in the region, the situation and everything related to Iran and to the region.

I repeat welcoming Mr. Obama. We discussed everything candidly and frankly, without any reservation, but there are other meetings that will take place later, either in the United States of America or anywhere else.

Thank you very much.

President Obama. Well, I just want to thank President Mubarak as well as the people of Egypt for their wonderful hospitality. I'm very much looking forward to speaking at the university this afternoon. I wanted to first sit down with President Mubarak, who, obviously, has decades of experience on a whole range of issues.

As the President has indicated, we discussed the situation with Israel and the Palestinians. We discussed how we can move for-

ward in a constructive way that brings about peace and prosperity for all people in the region. And I emphasized to him that America is committed to working in partnership with the countries in the region so that all people can meet their aspirations.

And I'm very much looking forward in the months and years to come to continuing to consult with the President. And I've communicated to him, and I want to communicate to the Egyptian people, our greetings from America.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:29 a.m. in Quba Palace. President Mubarak spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in Cairo

June 4, 2009

The President. Thank you so much. Good afternoon. I am honored to be in the timeless city of Cairo and to be hosted by two remarkable institutions. For over a thousand years, Al-Azhar has stood as a beacon of Islamic learning, and for over a century, Cairo University has been a source of Egypt's advancement. And together, you represent the harmony between tradition and progress. I'm grateful for your hospitality and the hospitality of the people of Egypt. And I'm also proud to carry with me the good will of the American people and a greeting of peace from Muslim communities in my country: *As-salaamu alaykum*.

We meet at a time of great tension between the United States and Muslims around the world, tension rooted in historical forces that go beyond any current policy debate. The relationship between Islam and the West includes centuries of coexistence and cooperation, but also conflict and religious wars. More recently, tension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims and a cold war in which Muslim-majority countries were too often treated as proxies without regard to their own aspirations. More-

over, the sweeping change brought by modernity and globalization led many Muslims to view the West as hostile to the traditions of Islam.

Violent extremists have exploited these tensions in a small, but potent minority of Muslims. The attacks of September 11, 2001, and the continued efforts of these extremists to engage in violence against civilians has led some in my country to view Islam as inevitably hostile not only to America and Western countries, but also to human rights. All this has bred more fear and more mistrust.

So long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace, those who promote conflict rather than the cooperation that can help all of our people achieve justice and prosperity. And this cycle of suspicion and discord must end.

I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in