

## Remarks Following a Meeting With King Abdullah II of Jordan May 17, 2011

*President Obama.* Well, it is a great pleasure to welcome once again my good friend King Abdullah to the White House. The United States and Jordan have had a longstanding friendship, an extraordinary relationship of co-operation on a wide range of fronts. I have valued His Majesty's advice on numerous occasions, and obviously this meeting was an opportunity for us to share our views on the extraordinary changes that are taking place throughout the Middle East, throughout the region.

We discussed the situation in Libya and are grateful for the support of a wide range of Arab countries in our efforts to make sure that humanitarian assistance and humanitarian protection occurs inside of Libya. We discussed the rapid transformation that's taking place in places like Egypt and Tunisia, and we both agreed that it's critical that not only does political reform proceed, but economic reform accompanies those changes there, because so much of what's taking place has to do with the aspirations of young people throughout the Arab world for their ability to determine their own fate, to get an education, to get a job, to be able to support a family. And that means some of the old structures that were inhibiting their ability to progress have to be reworked.

His Majesty discussed the reform efforts that are taking place inside Jordan as well, and we welcome the initiatives that His Majesty has already embarked on and feel confident that, to the extent that he's able to move these reforms forward, this will be good for the security and stability of Jordan, but also will be good for the economic prosperity of the people of Jordan. And so we're very pleased to support him on that front.

Along those lines, one of the things we discussed is how the United States can continue to be supportive of these economic efforts that His Majesty has embarked on. And so I'm pleased to announce that we have mobilized several hundreds of millions of dollars through OPIC, and that will leverage ultimately about a billion dollars for economic development in-

side of Jordan. In addition, because of the huge spike in commodity prices throughout the world, we are going to be providing 50,000 metric tons of wheat to Jordan. All of this will help to stabilize the cost of living and day-to-day situation of Jordanians and will provide a foundation so that these economic reforms can move forward and long-term development can take place. So we're very happy to be partnering with His Majesty on that issue.

We also discussed the situation with respect to Israel and the Palestinian conflict. And we both share the view that despite the many changes, or perhaps because of the many changes, that are taking place in the region, it's more vital than ever that both Israelis and Palestinians find a way to get back to the table and begin negotiating a process whereby they can create a—two states that are living side by side in peace and security.

Jordan, obviously, with its own peace with Israel, has an enormous stake in this. The United States has an enormous stake in this. We will continue to partner to try to encourage an equitable and just solution to a problem that has been nagging the region for many, many years.

Finally, I just want to say that we continue to appreciate all the security and counterterrorism cooperation that we receive from the Jordanians. It is very important in terms of our own security, and that partnership we expect to continue.

So, Your Majesty, you are always welcome here. The American people feel a great affection for the Jordanian people. And we trust that during this remarkable time of transition in the region, that Jordan will be at the forefront in being able to move a process forward that creates greater opportunity and ensures that Jordan is a model of a prosperous, modern, and successful Arab state under your leadership.

So thank you very much.

*King Abdullah.* Thank you. Mr. President, I'm delighted to be back here and again to take this opportunity to thank you and your Government for the tremendous support that you're

showing Jordan economically and the support of the United States and a lot of our friends internationally on really being able to push reform in an aggressive manner in our country and, again, your continued interest and support on the core issue of the Middle East, which is the Israeli and Palestinian peace.

We are very, very grateful to the President's role in all these issues. I'm delighted to be back

here. And I will continue to be a strong partner with you, sir, on all the challenges that we face. Thank you.

*President Obama.* Good. All right. Thank you very much, everyone.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:17 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

## Remarks at a Reception Celebrating Jewish American Heritage Month May 17, 2011

Hello, everybody. Good afternoon. Welcome to the White House.

I am going to be very brief, but I do want to start by recognizing a few people. First of all, a great friend of mine, one of the driving forces behind the creation of this month, and somebody who happens to be the new chair of the DNC, Debbie Wasserman Schultz is here. I want to thank—did somebody say, “Stand up!” to Debbie? Come on, that’s—[*laughter*]*—that’s all right. There’s a lot of fight in that little package. [Laughter]*

I want to thank Ambassador Michael Oren for being here and doing fine work representing our great friend, the State of Israel. Jewish Americans have always stood up for freedom and democracy around the world, and that includes our unshakeable support and commitment to the security of the State of Israel.

I want to thank the Maccabeats for their outstanding performance. They just did an outstanding number for me. It was very brief. [*Laughter*] It said, “Four more years.” [*Laughter*] It was good. I really liked it. So thank you.

We’ve got more than a few Members of Congress here, and I just want to say thank you to all of them for everything that they do working with us to help advance not only freedom and prosperity here in the United States, but around the world.

Finally, we’re honored to be joined by Justices Breyer and Ginsburg, and a dear friend of

mine and an inspiration to the world, the great Elie Wiesel is here, so—[*applause*].

This month is a chance for Americans of every faith to appreciate the contributions of the Jewish people throughout our history, often in the face of unspeakable discrimination and adversity. For hundreds of years, Jewish Americans have fought heroically in battle and inspired us to pursue peace. They’ve built our cities, cured our sick. They’ve paved the way in the sciences and the law, in our politics and in the arts. They remain our leaders, our teachers, our neighbors, and our friends.

Not bad for a band of believers who have been tested from the moment that they came together and professed their faith. The Jewish people have always persevered. And that’s why today is about celebrating the people in this room, the thousands who came before, the generations who will shape the future of our country and the future of the world.

So I hope that everybody enjoys themselves. I encourage you to take a look at some of the exhibits that are set up here in the hallway. And I am grateful for all of your friendships.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Nobel Prize winner, author, and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. The Jewish American Heritage Month proclamation of April 29 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.