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NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 1.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With King Abdullah II of Jordan and an Exchange With Reporters

August 1, 2002

President Bush. Before I welcome His Majesty back to the Oval Office, we will take two questions apiece after our opening statements.

First, Your Majesty, welcome back. I look forward to a good and fruitful discussion about our common interests. Obviously, your neighborhood is still a dangerous place. Today in America we mourn the loss of American lives. My prayers and sympathies go to the loved ones of those who were killed by terrorists—who must hate the thought of peace, who must firmly believe that violence is the best hope for mankind in that part of the world—a concept I strongly reject. It's a concept that is just foreign to peace. And therefore, the first thing we must do is to work hard as a team to uphold our responsibilities and fight off terrorist activities that kill innocent life.

I look forward to talking to His Majesty about how to move the foundations of peace, the prospects of peace forward in the Middle East. That's going to, of course, be discussions about a security force in the Palestinian territory that will be able to help deal with those who want to destroy the prospects for peace. I want to thank His Majesty for working with CIA Director Tenet to strategize about how to best help the Palestinians have a more secure future.

We'll also be talking about the plight of the Palestinian people, how sad it is that for too long the Palestinians have suffered. They've been pawns in the game of foreign policy, and we want to help them.

It's going to be very important for us as we go forward to have confidence, however, in the Palestinian government that emerges. We want to have confidence that the money that we eventually will spend to help the Palestinian people is spent on the people. We want to have confidence that those who emerge to lead the Palestinian people are—long for peace and want to coexist side by side in peace with Israel.

And so, Your Majesty, welcome back. I look forward to a good and fruitful discussion.

King Abdullah. Thank you, Mr. President. Again, it's a delight to be back with you here, especially to discuss your tremendous commitment to bring peace and stability to our region. You have really given us hope that once and for all we will be able to move forward as Arabs and Israelis, to be able to live in harmony and have a tremendous future.

We're here, obviously, to discuss how we can best move the process forward, but again, the President's very strong commitment to assist alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian people, which is of tremendous importance, and we're very grateful for that. So I'm looking forward to——

President Bush. Thanks.

King Abdullah. ——fruitful discussions.

President Bush. Barry [Barry Schweid, Associated Press].

American Victims of Hebrew University Bombing

Q. Mr. President, with American victims now—and of course, you've touched on this, and I'm sure I know how you feel about it—but does this raise the war on terrorism to a new level? Is there something the U.S. must do to respond to the murder of Americans now?

President Bush. Well, Barry, we are responding to the murder of Americans. We're responding all across the globe to murders of Americans. We responded in Afghanistan to murders; we responded in the Philippines; we will—we're responding by working with our Arab friends and Israel, of course, to track these people down. The war on terror is fought on many fronts. And I just—I cannot speak strongly enough about how we must collectively get after those who kill in the name of—in the name of some kind of false religion.

I just—I grieve for all people whose lives are taken by terrorist activities. I'm particularly sad today because of the American families who cry today, weep at the loss of a loved one, because there's some fanatic who believes that killing innocent life is positive. It's incredibly negative.

And so, yes, Barry, we're committed to the war on terror and to fighting the war on terror and to winning the war on terror. And this bombing in Israel showed how tough it's going to be, but this country is tough and united and strong, Your Majesty.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, you've recently articulated your vision for peace in the Middle East. However, an action plan is still needed to be crystallized.

President Bush. Yes.

Q. So, you know, is there any framework for such a plan? And what are the guarantees that both sides would be committed to that plan?

President Bush. Well, first of all, I'm committed to peace; that's—I can speak for myself. And I'm committed to a vision of two states respecting each other, two states living side by side in peace. Secondly, there is an action plan going forward, and that's what I'm going to review with His Majesty.

Step one is to develop a security force that actually serves the people, not a particular leader. The security force must be designed to fight off terror, not designed to serve the whims and interests of a—of one person.

Secondly, we've got to work together to develop a constitution, so that the institutions of a new state are bigger than any one person. And that's very important.

Thirdly, that we've got to make sure that there is the capacity for the Palestinian Authority to spend money in a way that—and account for money in a transparent way that will give us all confidence that when we try to help the Palestinian people, the money goes to the people.

At the same time, as I mentioned in my talks, I do believe that we can get to a so-called conference within the 3-year period of time. But before—what has to happen is, we must have confidence in a state.

Now, there are some who will say, "Well, you know, there's only one person that could conceivably make this happen from the Palestinian side." I just simply don't believe that. I believe there's all kinds of brilliant and smart and capable Palestinians that, given the chance, given a chance to emerge—and by the way, people committed to peace—and given the chance to articulate that vision of peace, will do so.

And I look forward to working on this—on the vision. It's the right vision. It will lead to peace.

All parties have responsibilities, by the way, and we will continue to insist that people uphold their responsibilities.

Yes, Patsy [Patricia Wilson, Reuters].

Hebrew University Bombing

Q Mr. President, thank you. I can't see you there. Israel has said it will respond militarily to yesterday's attacks. Do you support this, and is it the right thing to do at this time?

President Bush. Israel must defend herself, but as I say to all parties involved, we must keep the vision of peace in mind. We must be committed to peace. We must understand that the consequences we take to make the area more secure also must be—these decisions to make the area more secure must be made in the context of peace for the long run.

And I'm just as angry as Israel is right now. I'm furious that innocent life is lost. However, through my fury, even though I am mad, I still believe peace is possible. And I will—and I know that we can improve the conditions of everybody in the region by working toward a vision that is hopeful and optimistic and not letting the terrorists destroy the possibility for peace.

King Abdullah. Mr. President. I have to support the President's vision that he does understand that, the suffering that Israelis and Palestinians and Arabs are going through in the Middle East. And what has been so reassuring to me is that the President has the commitment to work very hard with his Government to give the hope for Arabs and Israelis to be able to move to the future.

And we have always been working very closely with the President, and he does have

the courage and conviction to stand up for the hope that we've all had in him and his Government to bring peace and prosperity to the Middle East. And we're very grateful for your position on that.

President Bush. Have you got a final question?

Iraq

Q Mr. President, you seem to—the two of you seem to disagree on Iraq. Are you going to discuss those disagreements? And could you maybe elucidate on those disagreements?

President Bush. Well, I appreciate that, John [John Cochran, ABC News]. The policy of my Government, our Government, of this administration, is regime change—for a reason. Saddam Hussein is a man who poisons his own people, who threatens his neighbors, who develops weapons of mass destruction. And I will assure His Majesty, like I have in the past, we're looking at all options, the use of all tools. I'm a patient man, but I haven't changed my opinion since the last time he was in the Oval Office. And one of the things we will do is consult with our friends, but he just needs to know how I feel. He knows how I feel, I have had the opportunity and the honor of explaining that to him before. And he'll find out I haven't changed my mind.

King Abdullah. All I'd like to say is that, again, what I've found from day one with the President is, he understands the bigger picture and that at the end of the day, peace and stability for the Middle East has been at the forefront of his mind. And so we have many areas where we find common base to be able to move the region forward.

President Bush. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks in a Telephone Conversation With Senate Leaders

August 1, 2002

[*The conversation is joined in progress.*]

Trade Promotion Authority Legislation

The President. Chairman Baucus, and Grassley——

Senator Charles E. Grassley. We're here.

The President. And I understand Trent Lott is there as well.

Senator Trent Lott. Yes, Mr. President.

The President. Well, thank you three very much for your leadership. I want to congratulate you all for achieving an historic—historic moment in our Nation, because what you all have done is, you've made it much more likely somebody is going to be able to find work, and some farmer is going to be able to sell his product, and some nation is going to be able to trade with us, which will help lift them out of poverty.

I want to congratulate you very much for your fine work, on your bipartisan effort. Max and Chuck worked well together, and I'm just calling to congratulate you and thank you, for a grateful nation.

Senator Lott. Mr. President, this is Trent. I want to thank you for your leadership. You came to town saying this is something we needed to do; we needed to give this authority back to our President. And because you continued to push for it and emphasize what it will mean to American families and workers and farmers and ranchers and business men and women, we got it done.

And I want to say that I certainly agree when you give credit to Chairman Baucus and to Senator Grassley. They were very persistent. They worked with our House colleagues—Bill Thomas obviously did a great job. And your representatives here, Secretary Evans and Ambassador Zoellick, they were there, many times at all hours. Sometimes we were trying to bait them, but they did a great job. [*Laughter*] And I think this is a great moment for our country. And we can get back into promoting trade worldwide.

The President. Well, we really can. Thanks for saying that, Trent. I appreciate—it's a team effort, and the House gets a lot of credit, and Max and Bill Thomas stayed up late one night and got it done.

Senator Max Baucus. That's right, Mr. President, though I must say it was more than one night, regrettably. [*Laughter*]