

**Terrorism and Resolution of Issues**

**Q.** Mr. President, Mr. President—

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**President Bush.** Wait, wait, wait. It's best if we only have one question at a time.

**Q.** Mr. President, do you think that—

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**President Bush.** Ladies first.

**Prime Minister Abbas.** Ladies first, okay. [Laughter]

**Q.** When you speak to Palestinians, they're saying that the biggest problems they have now are the 160 Israel checkpoints that are suffocating the Palestinian community. Did you get any guarantees from Mr. President that he will pressure Israel in removing these checkpoints?

And Mr. President, you said the settlements are an obstacle for peace. Will you pressure Israel to stop the settlement activity? When and how?

**President Bush.** Well, let me start, and then you can end.

**Prime Minister Abbas.** Please.

**President Bush.** We'll let my guest end. I just told you that we brought this issue up. I've constantly spoken out about the end of settlements. I have done so consistently. It's very important for us to continue to earn the confidence of each other. And I'm going to tell you pointblank that we must make sure that any terrorist activity is rooted out in order for us to be able to deal with these big issues.

Nobody is going to accept a situation in which they become less secure, whether it be the Palestinian people or the Israeli people. Security is the essential roadblock to achieving the roadmap to peace. And the reason I'm confident that we can achieve substantial progress and achieve the vision of two states living by side by side in peace is because I believe that the Prime Minister and his team is interested in routing out terror.

And so to answer your question, the more progress there's made on terror, the more progress there will be made on difficult issues.

**Prime Minister Abbas.** The issue of the checkpoints between various Palestinian towns and villages was one of the issues that basically was discussed with the President. As he mentioned, we discussed a wide variety

of issues. We discussed issues of settlements, the issue of the wall, the issue of prisoners, and others, including the checkpoints. We feel that the President is paying attention to all these issues, and we believe that he will raise those issues with the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Sharon.

**President Bush.** Thank you all very much.

**Q.** We need three questions—we're making a news conference.

**President Bush.** Thank you very much.

That's Bill Plante of CBS, an old veteran, constantly willing to express his opinion.

Thank you for your opinion.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:05 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; President Charles Taylor of Liberia; and Finance Minister Salam Fayyad and Minister of State for Security Affairs Mohammed Dahlan of the Palestinian Authority. During the question-and-answer session, some reporters asked their questions in Arabic, and Prime Minister Abbas responded in Arabic, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

**Statement on the Death of Colin McMillan**

*July 25, 2003*

Laura and I are saddened by the death of our good friend Colin McMillan. Colin was a public servant and patriot who served his country and State as a marine, State legislator, Assistant Secretary of Defense, community leader, and successful businessman. We send our condolences and prayers to his wife, children, and friends.

**Proclamation 7693—Parents' Day, 2003**

*July 25, 2003*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

Children are a daily reminder of the blessings and responsibilities of life and a source of joy, pride, and fulfillment. Parents, step-parents, adoptive parents, and foster parents