

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority

November 26, 2007

President Bush. Mr. President, welcome.

President Abbas. Thank you.

President Bush. It's good to have you back here in the Oval Office. Thank you for coming, and thank you for working hard to implement a vision for a Palestinian state.

We want to help you. We want there to be peace. We want the people in the Palestinian Territories to have hope. And we thank you for your willingness to sit down with Israel to negotiate the settlement.

The United States cannot impose our vision, but we can help facilitate. And the process will begin tonight at the State Department and then on to Annapolis tomorrow. And I want to thank you for coming. Wish you all the very best.

President Abbas. I am delighted to have the opportunity to meet with President Bush after his invitation and this historic initiative that he launched to convene the Annapolis conference. We have a great deal of hope that this conference will produce a permanent status negotiations, expanded negotiations over all permanent status issues that would lead to a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian people, an agreement to secure security and stability.

President Bush's initiative is a great initiative. We will continue to rely on his support and the support of the United States and his administration in order to achieve the intended objective. Thank you.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:11 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Abbas spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the Situation in Russia

November 26, 2007

I am deeply concerned about the detention of numerous human rights activists and political leaders who participated in peaceful rallies in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, and Nazran this weekend. I am particularly troubled by the use of force by law enforcement authorities to stop these peaceful activities and to prevent some journalists and human rights activists from covering them.

The freedoms of expression, assembly, and press, as well as due process, are fundamental to any democratic society. I am hopeful that the Government of Russia will honor its international obligations in these areas, investigate allegations of abuses, and free those who remain in detention.

Statement on Senator Trent Lott's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

November 26, 2007

For more than three decades, Trent Lott has been an outstanding advocate in the United States Congress for the people of Mississippi. With service in the Republican leadership in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, he has skillfully advanced legislation and effectively championed key principles of our party, including low taxes and a strong national defense.

Trent has worked to enhance the economic vitality of our Nation and his home State throughout his career. By focusing on the important defense, transportation, infrastructure, agricultural, and educational needs of Mississippi, he has helped bring new development and opportunity to his constituents.

Throughout his service, Trent has always been a leader, someone his colleagues have known they could count on to stay true to his principles while working cooperatively to achieve results for the American people. Trent enjoyed bipartisan respect because of his reverence for the institutions of Congress and because Republicans and Democrats knew they could count on him to keep his

commitments and his word. His immense talent will be missed in our Nation's Capital. Laura and I wish him and his wife, Tricia, all the best.

Joint Declaration by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq: Declaration of Principles for a Long-Term Relationship of Cooperation and Friendship Between the Republic of Iraq and the United States of America

November 26, 2007

As Iraqi leaders confirmed in their Communiqué signed on August 26, 2007, and endorsed by President Bush, the Governments of Iraq and the United States are committed to developing a long-term relationship of cooperation and friendship as two fully sovereign and independent states with common interests. This relationship will serve the interest of coming generations based on the heroic sacrifices made by the Iraqi people and the American people for the sake of a free, democratic, pluralistic, federal, and unified Iraq.

The relationship of cooperation envisioned by the Republic of Iraq and the United States includes a range of issues, foremost of which is cooperation in the political, economic, cultural, and security fields, taking account of the following principles:

First: The Political, Diplomatic, and Cultural Spheres

1. Supporting the Republic of Iraq in defending its democratic system against internal and external threats.

2. Respecting and upholding the Constitution as the expression of the will of the Iraqi people and standing against any attempt to impede, suspend, or violate it.

3. Supporting the efforts of the Republic of Iraq to achieve national reconciliation including as envisioned in the Communiqué of August 26.

4. Supporting the Republic of Iraq's efforts to enhance its position in regional and international organizations and institutions so that it may play a positive and constructive role in the region and the world.

5. Cooperating jointly with the states of the region on the basis of mutual respect, non-intervention in internal affairs, rejection of the use of violence in resolving disputes, and adoption of constructive dialogue in resolving outstanding problems among the various states of the region.

6. Promoting political efforts to establish positive relationships between the states of the region and the world, which serve the common goals of all relevant parties in a manner that enhances the security and stability of the region, and the prosperity of its peoples.

7. Encouraging cultural, educational, and scientific exchanges between the two countries.

Second: The Economic Sphere

1. Supporting Iraq's development in various economic fields, including its productive capabilities, and aiding its transition to a market economy.

2. Encouraging all parties to abide by their commitments as stipulated in the International Compact with Iraq.

3. Supporting the building of Iraq's economic institutions and infrastructure with the provision of financial and technical assistance to train and develop competencies and capacities of vital Iraqi institutions.

4. Supporting Iraq's further integration into regional and international financial and economic organizations.

5. Facilitating and encouraging the flow of foreign investments to Iraq, especially American investments, to contribute to the reconstruction and rebuilding of Iraq.

6. Assisting Iraq in recovering illegally exported funds and properties, especially those smuggled by the family of Saddam Hussein and his regime's associates, as well as antiquities and items of cultural heritage, smuggled before and after April 9, 2003.

7. Helping the Republic of Iraq to obtain forgiveness of its debts and compensation for the wars waged by the former regime.

8. Supporting the Republic of Iraq to obtain positive and preferential trading conditions for Iraq within the global marketplace including accession to the World Trade Organization and most favored nation status with the United States.

Third: The Security Sphere