

Demand has risen so fast relative to supply that it's very tight. And there is no easy solution. It took us awhile to get to where we are, and it's going to take us awhile to get out of where we are.

### ***The Presidency and the Middle East***

**Ms. Bilbassy Charters.** Finally, what would be your advice to the next President regarding the Middle East? How would you—

**The President.** Take the Middle East seriously because that's the center of—that's the place where people are—get so despondent and despair that they're willing to come and take lives of U.S. citizens.

On the other hand, be hopeful, because the Middle East is full of really decent, honorable people that want to live in peace. And use our influence to promote peace, whether it would be in Iraq, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, or elsewhere.

**Ms. Bilbassy Charters.** Thank you very much.

**The President.** Yes, ma'am.

**Ms. Bilbassy Charters.** Thank you for your time. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 12:09 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Tzipora "Tzipi" Livni of Israel; former Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia (Abu Ala), Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, and President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; Quartet Representative in the Middle East Tony Blair; and King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia. Ms. Bilbassy Charters referred to Parliament Members Saad Hariri and Walid Jumblatt of Lebanon; and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel.

### **Statement on the Earthquake in China**

*May 12, 2008*

I extend my condolences to those injured and to the families of the victims of today's earthquake in China's Sichuan Province. I am particularly saddened by the number of students and children affected by this tragedy. The thoughts and prayers of the American people are with the Chinese people, es-

pecially those directly affected. The United States stands ready to help in any way possible.

### **Statement on the Situation in Lebanon**

*May 12, 2008*

I strongly condemn Hizballah's recent efforts, and those of their foreign sponsors in Tehran and Damascus, to use violence and intimidation to bend the Government and people of Lebanon to their will. The United States will continue to firmly support the Government of Lebanon, led by Prime Minister Siniora, against this effort to undermine the hard-fought gains in sovereignty and independence the Lebanese people have made in recent years. The international community will not allow the Iranian and Syrian regimes, via their proxies, to return Lebanon to foreign domination and control. To ensure the safety and security of the people of Lebanon, the United States will continue its assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces to ensure they are able to defend the Lebanese Government and safeguard its institutions.

It is critical that the international community come together to assist the Lebanese people in their hour of need. I plan to consult with regional leaders on my upcoming trip to the Middle East to coordinate efforts to support the Lebanese Government and implement U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701, among others, which seek to bolster Lebanon's sovereignty against external efforts at destabilization and interference. The Lebanese people have sacrificed much for the sake of their freedom, and the United States will continue to stand with them against this latest assault on their independence and security.

### **Interview With Jacob Eilon and Gil Tamari of Israel's Channel 10 TV**

*May 12, 2008*

**Q.** Mr. President, thank you for speaking with Channel 10.

**The President.** Yes, sir.