



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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President Bush Meets with Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia

Remarks by the President After Meeting With Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia

Bush Ranch

Crawford, Texas

4:06 P.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon. I was honored to welcome Crown Prince Abdallah to my ranch, a place that is very special for me, and a place where I welcome special guests to our country. The Crown Prince and I had a very cordial meeting that confirmed the strong relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States of America.



VIDEO Multimedia

President's Remarks

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Our partnership is important to both our nations. And it is important to the cause of peace and stability in the Middle East and the world. We discussed the critical importance of the war on terror. Much of our discussion centered on the Middle East, and how to defuse the current situation so we can get back on the path to peace.

Our two nations share a vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. I reiterated that all parties have responsibilities to help achieve that vision. The Palestinian Authority must do more to stop terror. Israel must finish its withdrawal, including resolution of standoff -- standoffs in Ramallah and Bethelam, in a non-violent way.



We discussed the need for Arab states to condemn terror, to stop incitement of violence, and as part of a long-term peace, to accept Israel as a nation and a neighbor. We also agreed the world must join in offering humanitarian aid to the many innocent Palestinians who are suffering.

I told the Crown Prince how much I appreciate his vision for a peaceful and integrated Middle East, and how I appreciated his leadership in helping rally the Arab world toward that vision. I also appreciated the Crown Prince's assurance that Saudi Arabia condemns terror.

The Crown Prince is going to be in America for several more days, and officials from both our governments will be continuing our discussions with the hope that our efforts can help return us to the path of peace -- a lasting peace.



I'll answer a couple of questions. Sondra.

Q Mr. President, Saudi officials have taken strong issue with your characterization of Prime Minister Sharon as a man of peace, and say that your tolerance of what he's doing risks damage to U.S.-Arab relations. Were you and the Crown Prince able to bridge differences over that issue, and find ways to fix the fragile Arab support?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, one of the really positive things out of this meeting was the fact that the Crown Prince and I established a strong personal bond. We spent a lot of time alone, discussing our respective visions, talking about our families. I was most interested in learning about how he thought about things. I'm convinced that the stronger our personal bond is, the more likely it is relations between our country will be strong.

I made it clear to him that I expected Israel to withdraw, just like I've made it clear to Israel. And we expect them to be finished. He knows my position. He also knows that I will work for peace, I will bring parties along. But I think he recognizes that America can't do it alone, that it's going to require a unified effort. And one of the main things about this visit was to solidify that effort.

He's a man with enormous influence in the Middle East. I respect that a lot, and I'm confident we can work together to achieve a peace.

Patsy.

Q Mr. President, the Crown Prince raised the prospect of Saudi support for Iraq's oil embargo, and are you concerned that Arab nations might use oil as a -- try to use oil as a bargaining chip in the Middle East crisis?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Saudi Arabia made it clear, and has made it clear publicly, that they will not use oil as a weapon. And I appreciate that, respect that, and expect that to be the case.

Q Mr. President, to follow on what Sondra asked you, do you feel like you made some personal headway in meeting with the Prince today in reassuring him of the United States belief that all parties in the region must work harder to --

THE PRESIDENT: I --

Q -- do you feel like -- do you feel like you need to convey this message perhaps in a stronger way by sending somebody to the region to meet with other Arab leaders who are raising concerns along these lines?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Stretch, we just sent somebody to the region. And that somebody has just returned from the region. And his name is Colin Powell. And we're exploring all options. A lot of our discussion with the Saudi delegation was how to get back on the path to peace. Clearly, there's some things that must be done in the short run -- finish the withdrawal by Israel, for the Palestinian Authority to clamp down on terror. We discussed that in very plain and straightforward terms.

As to where we head from now, one of the things that I think is important for the Crown Prince to have heard is we're interested in his advice, we're interested in his counsel. We share a vision and I reminded him how much I appreciated his statement toward Israel. I thought that was a breakthrough moment. And it -- and then he went and sold that in Beirut, and I appreciated that, as well.

So there's a shared vision. And as to how to achieve that vision is something we must consult with our

friends. And that's what this meeting was about. It went on quite a while because there was a lot to discuss, plus, I want you to know, I had the honor of showing him my ranch. He's a man who's got a farm and he understands the land, and I really took great delight in being able to drive him around in a pickup truck and showing him the trees and my favorite spots. And we saw a wild turkey, which was good. But we had a very good discussion, and I'm honored he came to visit.

Last question.

Q Mr. President, do you believe -- you said that the Crown Prince is against terror. Do you think he will speak out? Did he make any promises about speaking out? Should he speak out? And secondarily, in Saudi Arabia, do you believe the leadership is doing enough to deal with their own problems with terrorism that comes out of their own country? Fifteen of the 19 hijackers --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I -- the Crown Prince has been very strong in condemning the murder of U.S. citizens. He's been very strong about condemning those who committed those murders. And I appreciate that a lot. Right after 9/11, he was one of the strongest voices of condemnation. He understands how devious Osama bin Laden has been. He knows that -- that anybody who -- you know, that a strategy by some would be to split the United States and Saudi Arabia. It's a strong and important friendship, and he knows that and I know that, and we're not going to let that happen. So he's been very strong in the condemnation of terror, for which I'm grateful.

And we're constantly working with him and his government on intelligence-sharing and cutting off money. And we're reminding him on occasion where we find money flows, and the government has been acting, and I appreciate that very much. He's got a -- right now we're working on an issue in the border region with Yemen to make sure that Yemen doesn't become a haven for al Qaeda killers. And I appreciate his cooperation on that matter, as well. It's in his interest that we rout out terror.

Listen, thank you all very much.

END 4:15 P.M. CDT