



# THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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Office of the Press Secretary  
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## President's Radio Address

### [In Focus: Peace in the Middle East](#)

**THE PRESIDENT:** Good morning. This week I returned from Russia, where I met with world leaders at the G8 summit. The summit was an opportunity for important talks with these nations, and it brought progress on key issues. We had wide-ranging discussions on the global economy. We agreed on new steps to strengthen our collective security, including a United Nations Security Council resolution on North Korea. This resolution condemned North Korea's recent missile launches and it urged the North Korean regime to abandon its nuclear programs and return to the six-party talks.

Much of our time at the summit was spent discussing the situation in the Middle East, especially the recent violence in Israel and Lebanon. The recent crisis in the region was triggered by the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers by the terrorist group Hezbollah and the launch of rockets against Israeli cities. I believe sovereign nations have the right to defend their people from terrorist attack, and to take the necessary action to prevent those attacks.

We're also mindful of the cost to innocent civilians in Lebanon and in Israel, and we have called on Israel to continue to exercise the greatest possible care to protect innocent lives. Throughout this crisis I have spoken to leaders in the Middle East and around the world. Our efforts to resolve this dangerous situation are guided by an international framework that is already in place.

In 2004, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1559, which recognizes the sovereignty of Lebanon, calls for all foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon, and calls for the disbanding and disarmament of all militias. Hezbollah defied the world's just demands by maintaining armed units in the southern region of Lebanon and attacking Israel in defiance of the democratically elected Lebanese government.

I've directed Secretary of State Rice to travel to the Middle East in the

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coming days to discuss the best ways to resolve this crisis with leaders in the region. Secretary Rice will make it clear that resolving the crisis demands confronting the terrorist group that launched the attacks and the nations that support it.

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For many years, Syria has been a primary sponsor of Hezbollah and it has helped provide Hezbollah with shipments of Iranian made weapons. Iran's regime has also repeatedly defied the international community with its ambition for nuclear weapons and aid to terrorist groups. Their actions threaten the entire Middle East and stand in the way of resolving the current crisis and bringing lasting peace to this troubled region.

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We're also concerned about the impact the current conflict is having on Lebanon's young democracy. This is a difficult and trying time for the people of Lebanon. Hezbollah's practice of hiding rockets in civilian neighborhoods, and its efforts to undermine the democratically elected government have shown it to be no friend of Lebanon. By its actions, Hezbollah has jeopardized Lebanon's tremendous advances and betrayed the Lebanese people.

Over the past week, nations like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates have stepped forward to offer humanitarian aid and assistance to the Lebanese government. America and our allies will join these efforts. We're also working to help American citizens who wish to leave Lebanon. American military personnel and embassy officials are working hard to ensure this operation proceeds smoothly and safely. We continue to pray for the safety of all people in Lebanon -- Americans, Lebanese, and citizens of other countries.

America remains committed to lasting peace in the Middle East. The United States and our partners will continue to seek a return to the road map for peace in the Middle East, which sets out the pathway to establishing a viable democratic Palestinian state that will live in peace with Israel. We will continue to support moderate leaders, like Palestinian Authority President Abbas. We will continue to call on Hamas to end its acts of terror. And now, more than ever, the Palestinians need leaders who are not compromised by terror and who will help the Palestinian people provide a future for their children based on regional peace and security.

In the long-term, this peace will come only by defeating the terrorist ideology of hatred and fear. The world's best hope for lasting security and stability across the Middle East is the establishment of free and just societies. America and our allies will act decisively because we know our security is at stake in this struggle and we know the cause of freedom will prevail.

Thank you for listening.

END