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PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release
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 the international community continued to build a political and security framework to confront the crisis in the Middle East, a crisis that began with Hezbollah's unprovoked terrorist attacks on Israel. Secretary of State Rice traveled to Lebanon, Israel, and Europe, and met with key leaders to discuss a way forward. In Rome, she met with representatives of more than a dozen nations and international organizations. Our governments agreed to provide relief to the people of Lebanon, using corridors for humanitarian aid that Israel is opening. We pledged to support Lebanon's revival and reconstruction. And we agreed to continue to work for a sustainable cease-fire that will stop the current violence, end the suffering of people in Lebanon and Israel, and move us toward a lasting peace.

Yesterday, I met with Prime Minister Tony Blair to discuss our strategy to achieve these shared goals. We agreed that Lebanon's democratic government must be empowered to exercise full authority over its territory. Militias in Lebanon must be disarmed, the flow of illegal arms must be halted, and the Lebanese security services should deploy throughout the country. We also agreed that a robust multinational force must be dispatched to Lebanon quickly. An effective multinational force will help speed delivery of humanitarian relief, facilitate the return of displaced persons, and support the Lebanese government as it asserts full sovereignty over its territory and guards its borders. In addition, Iran must end its financial support and supply of weapons to terrorist groups such as Hezbollah -- and Syria must end its support for terrorism and respect Lebanon's sovereignty.

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Secretary Rice will return to the region this weekend, and she will work with the leaders of Israel and Lebanon to seize this opportunity to achieve lasting peace and stability for both countries. Next week, the United Nations Security Council will also meet. We will work with our allies to adopt a resolution that establishes a framework to end the violence

quickly, and mandates the multinational force. This approach will demonstrate the international community's determination to support the government of Lebanon, and defeat the threat from Hezbollah and its foreign sponsors. And this approach will make possible what so many around the world want to see: the end of Hezbollah's attacks on Israel, the return of Israeli soldiers taken hostage by terrorists, the suspension of Israel's operations in Lebanon, and the withdrawal of Israeli forces.

FAQ

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As we work to resolve this current crisis, we must recognize that Lebanon is the latest flashpoint in a broader struggle between freedom and terror that is unfolding across the region. For decades, American policy sought to achieve peace in the Middle East by promoting stability in the Middle East, yet these policies gave us neither. The lack of freedom in that region created conditions where anger and resentment grew, radicalism thrived, and terrorists found willing recruits. We saw the consequences on September the 11th, 2001, when terrorists brought death and destruction to our country, killing nearly 3,000 innocent Americans.

The experience of September the 11th made it clear that we could no longer tolerate the status quo in the Middle East. We saw that when an entire region simmers in violence, that violence will eventually reach our shores and spread across the entire world. The only way to secure our Nation is to change the course of the Middle East -- by fighting the ideology of terror and spreading the hope of freedom.

So we have launched a forward strategy for freedom in the broader Middle East, and that strategy has set in motion a transformation that is changing millions of lives for the better. From Kabul to Baghdad, to Beirut, and beyond, we've seen the birth of democratic governments that are striving to serve their people, reject terror, and work for peace. We're also seeing those who oppose democracy fighting its progress with all the destructive power they can muster. We see this in Hezbollah's attacks on Israel, in the suicide bombings that kill innocent Iraqis, and in al Qaeda's campaign of terror across the world.

The enemies of freedom have shown their ability to set back our efforts with deadly attacks, but ultimately they will fail. They will fail because courageous leaders in the region have stepped forward to defend freedom and set the Middle East on a better course. And they will fail because millions of people who have suffered decades of oppression and violence will choose to live in peace with their neighbors.

In Iraq, we will help Prime Minister Maliki's unity government defeat the terrorists, insurgents, and illegal militias and establish a democracy in the heart of the Middle East. In Lebanon, we will stand with the democratic government in its efforts to rid the country of terrorists and foreign influence and bring about a better life for the Lebanese people. In the Palestinian Territories, we will work with President Abbas to support the forces of moderation, and achieve our shared vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security.

This moment of conflict in the Middle East is painful and tragic. Yet it is also a moment of opportunity for broader change in the region. Transforming countries that have suffered decades of tyranny and violence is difficult, and it will take time to achieve. But the consequences will be profound -- for our country and the world. When the Middle East grows in liberty and democracy, it will also grow in peace, and that will make America and all free nations more secure.

Thank you for listening.

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