

Remarks Following Discussions With King Abdullah II of Jordan February 8, 2006

President Bush. Your Majesty, welcome back. I have had two good discussions with His Majesty. Last night His Majesty and the Crown Prince came to have dinner with Laura and me and some Members of Congress, and we had a really good discussion. We had a little time by ourselves to talk strategically about the world and our deep desire for this world to be peaceful.

Of course, we talked about Iraq, Iran, the Palestinian Territories. And I appreciate your vision and your desire to achieve a better world for the people in your neighborhood.

We also talked about a topic that requires a lot of discussion and a lot of sensitive thought, and that is the reaction to the cartoons. I first want to make it very clear to people around the world that ours is a nation that believes in tolerance and understanding. In America, we welcome people of all faiths. One of the great attributes of our country is that you're free to worship however you choose in the United States of America.

Secondly, we believe in a free press. We also recognize that with freedom comes responsibilities. With freedom comes the responsibility to be thoughtful about others. Finally, I have made it clear to His Majesty, and he made it clear to me, that we reject violence as a way to express discontent with what may be printed in a free press. I call upon the governments around the world to stop the violence, to be respectful, to protect property and protect the lives of innocent diplomats who are serving their countries overseas.

And so, Your Majesty, thank you for coming. I'm proud to share the moment with you.

King Abdullah. Thank you very much for your kind words. And I would just like to

echo what the President said. We've had some very fruitful discussions, and we're appreciative of the vision and the desire that the President has for peace and stability in our part of the world. He has always strived to make life better for all of us in the Middle East, and I tremendously appreciate that role.

The issue of the cartoons, again, and with all respect to press freedoms, obviously, anything that vilifies the Prophet Mohammed—peace be upon him—or attacks Muslim sensibilities, I believe needs to be condemned. But at the same time, those that want to protest should do it thoughtfully, articulately, and express their views peacefully. When we see protests—when we see destruction, when we see violence, especially if it ends up taking the lives of innocent people, is completely unacceptable. Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, is a religion of peace, tolerance, moderation.

And we have to continue to ask ourselves, what type of world do we want for our children? I too often hear the word used as, tolerance. And tolerance is such an awful word. If we are going to strive to move forward in the future, the word that we should be talking about is acceptance. We need to accept our common humanity and our common values. And I hope that lessons can be learned from this dreadful issue, that we can move forward as humanity, and truly try to strive together, as friends and as neighbors, to bring a better world to all.

President Bush. Thank you, Your Majesty. I appreciate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:26 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Crown Prince Hussein of Jordan.

Remarks to the Business and Industry Association of New Hampshire in
Manchester, New Hampshire
February 8, 2006

The President. Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you for the welcome. It's good to be back here in New Hampshire. We had a little problem scheduling a room here in this State. It turns out, a lot of Judd's colleagues are prebooking for the '08 elections. [Laughter]

I really appreciate you giving me a chance to come by. I want to spend a little time on our economy. I want to talk about your money; I want to talk about the budget I submitted. I hope at the end of this discussion you'll have a better feel for why I make the decisions I've made. You know, one of the interesting things about my job is you get to make a lot of decisions. My buddies from Texas come up, and they say—after they get over the initial shock of me being in the White House in the first place—[laughter]—they say, “What's the job like? What's it like to be President of the United States?”

The best thing I can tell them is it's a job that requires decisionmaking. Decisionmaking is based upon—good decisionmaking is based upon standing for something, making decisions based upon certain principles that won't change even though the political circumstances may appear to be changing. Decisionmaking means listening to people, surrounding yourself with excellence. Decisionmaking means doing what you think is right, not what may be politically expedient.

And so today I hope I give you a sense of why I made some of the decisions that I made on the budget I've submitted to the Congress and why I believe it'll help the American people.

Before I begin, I do want to thank Judd. The guy is a great friend—he's a great friend of mine; he's a great friend of the people of New Hampshire. I've gotten to know him really well. He's a good man—

and he married well too, by the way. [Laughter] So did I. Laura sends her best. She's winging her way, by the way, to Italy to represent the United States at the Winter Games, which is pretty unusual for a woman who was raised in west Texas, where it rarely snows. [Laughter]

I'm also proud to be traveling today with Senator John Sununu. He, too, is a fine man and a great Senator for the people of New Hampshire. I'm proud to be here with the two Congressmen, Jeb Bradley and Charlie Bass. I'm looking forward to flying them back to Washington. It's amazing what people will do to get a free flight. [Laughter]

I want to thank the speaker who is here; Doug, thank you for being here. I remember going to your farm a while back. You know, I don't follow New Hampshire politics that closely these days, at least statehouse politics, but I do know this is a guy who loves his family. And he's got a lot of family to love; I've met them all. Appreciated his hospitality.

I want to thank the president of the senate, Ted Gatsas, who is with us as well. Mr. Mayor, thank you for joining us today. The mayor said he just got elected; he's all excited and fired up. Just fill the potholes, Mayor, and everything will be fine. [Laughter]

I want to thank all the other State and local officials. I want to thank George Gantz. Thanks for the introduction. I asked him what his middle name was; I was hoping it was W. [Laughter] But it wasn't. But, anyway, George, thanks for introducing me, and thanks for having me here. I want to thank Mike Donahue and all the other members of the board of the Business and Industry Association of New Hampshire.

I also want to thank the bankers who are here. Thank you for allowing me to