

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel November 24, 2008

President Bush. I am pleased to welcome my friend Prime Minister Ehud Olmert back to the Oval Office. And I thank you for bringing your wife to have dinner tonight with Laura and me. I'm looking forward to it.

We've been through a lot together during our time in office. We strongly believe that Israel will benefit by having a Palestinian state, a democracy on her border that works for peace. And, Prime Minister, that vision is alive because of you. And I thank you for your steadfast support for peace.

And it's not easy. It's not easy to try to change the paradigm, and I understand that. But one thing is for certain: You've kept your word. And in international politics, that's important. And I want to thank you for the friendship and thank you for your vision. And I just want you to know that I believe that vision is alive and needs to be worked on.

And again, I welcome you. Appreciate you coming.

Prime Minister Olmert. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I'm delighted to have this opportunity to express again the deep gratitude that we all have to you, personally, as a human being, as a friend, as a courageous leader who has helped Israel so much over the period since you were President of the United States of America.

We will never forget that you have removed one of the most threatening strategic dangers from Israel on the east side, in Iraq. And this is a great achievement

that makes life much better for many people in our part of the world, particularly for us and for our neighbors as well.

You have set forth in motion the Annapolis process, which I was very proud to take part in.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

Prime Minister Olmert. It continues with your guidance and support and inspiration. And this is very important, because as you say, a two-state solution is the only possible way to resolve the conflict in the Middle East.

So, Mr. President, on behalf of the people of Israel, I want to thank you. The importance of your leadership is greatly appreciated in our country. And I'm sure that when the history books will be written, the contributions that you made to the safety and security of many people will be greatly appreciated.

Personally, I want to thank you for your friendship on behalf of my wife Aliza and myself. And I'm so happy and proud that I have an opportunity to bid farewell to you before you leave this great place and before I leave my office. And I'm sure that we will continue our friendship for many years to come.

Thank you very much.

The President. Sure. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:40 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks to the Community at Fort Campbell, Kentucky November 25, 2008

The President. Thank you. Please be seated; unless, of course, you don't have a seat.

[*Laughter*] I am honored to be here at Fort Campbell. I'm honored to be with the