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I have enclosed a copy of the Executive Order I have issued. This Order becomes effective at 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on July 29, 2003.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. H.R. 2330, approved July 28, was assigned Public Law No. 108–61.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel

July 29, 2003

President Bush. Good day. I'm pleased to welcome Prime Minister Ariel Sharon back to the White House. I think you said this is our eighth meeting——

Prime Minister Sharon. Eighth meeting here.

President Bush. Eighth meeting in Washington. That should indicate to everybody that our nations have a deep and abiding friendship. America is firmly committed to the security of Israel as a Jewish state, and we are firmly committed to the safety of the Israeli people. We have now a tremendous opportunity to add to Israeli security and safety and add to the hopes of the average Palestinian citizen by making tangible progress towards two states living side by side in peace.

Last month's Red Sea Summits in Egypt and Jordan gave momentum to that progress. I'm encouraged by the positive steps that Israel has taken since then to further the cause of peace, including prisoner releases. Prime Minister Sharon is now meeting regularly with Prime Minister Abbas, and that's positive. Israeli and Palestinian cabinet and security officials are meeting as well. Israel has recently taken steps to make it easier for Palestinians to work in Israel and to travel to their jobs and schools and families, and I thank the Prime Minister for these important actions.

Much hard work remains to be done by Israelis and Palestinians and by their neighbors. If we are ever to reach our common goal of two states living side by side in peace and security, leaders must assume responsibility. The Prime Minister is assuming responsibility.

All parties agree that a fundamental obstacle to peace is terrorism, which can never be justified by any cause. Last month in Aqaba, Prime Minister Abbas committed to a complete end to violence and terrorism. The Palestinian Authority must undertake sustained, targeted, and effective operations to confront those engaged in terror and to dismantle terrorist capabilities and infrastructure. We're determined to help Prime Minister Abbas as he works to end terror and establish the rule of law that will protect Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Today I urge Arab states to follow through on the pledges made in Sharm el-Sheikh to actively contribute to these efforts and to reject the culture of extremism and violence from whatever source or place. The rise of a peaceful Palestinian state and the long-term security of the Israeli people both depend on defeating the threat of terrorist groups and ending incitement and hatred.

In our discussions, I encouraged the Prime Minister to take further steps to improve the daily conditions faced by Palestinians. Israelis and Palestinians deserve the same chance to live normal lives, free from fear, free from hatred and violence, and free from harassment. I also urged the Prime Minister to carefully consider all the consequences of Israel's actions as we move forward on the road to peace.

The United States of America will continue to act in the interests of peace. We will continue to be a firm warrior against terrorism wherever it is found. We will encourage all parties to keep their promises and monitor the progress that is made. We will also help the parties find solutions to legitimate concerns. As we head down the road to peace, my commitment to the security of Israel is unshakable, as is the enduring friendship of our countries. I want to thank Ariel for all he's done to contribute to that friendship, for his leadership, and his willing to make tough decisions in the cause of peace.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Sharon. Mr. President, it is a great privilege for me to be here at the White House for the eighth time. I am always pleased to visit and feel that I am among friends, true friends of the state and the people of Israel.

Mr. President, I congratulate you on the impressive victory in the Iraqi campaign and for removing Saddam Hussein from power, one of the most ruthless and tyrannical leaders in history. For 30 years, the free world has witnessed the recklessness and brutality of this dictator. Only you, Mr. President, have shown the courage, determination, and leadership needed to spearhead the successful campaign to oust this ruthless, merciless despot, his dynasty, and evil regime.

For the first time since World War II, the freedom- and peace-seeking democratic world had the wisdom to go after murderers and evil rulers and bring them to justice. I have no doubt, Mr. President, that thanks to you, any villain in any corner of the world knows that the long arm of justice will reach them. So many will owe their lives to you and the great nation of America. I'm confident, Mr. President, that the lessons learned by the nations of the world and the region on the courageous action of the United States in Iraq will serve to advance the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians and the entire Arab world.

Your latest statement regarding the threats emanating from Syria and Iran prove once again the seriousness of your intentions to continue leading the fight against terror. It must be made clear to these countries that their evil deeds cannot continue. There can be no compromise with terror and evil.

The people of Israel, Mr. President, are greatly thankful and appreciative of your activity, unrelenting commitment to Israel's security and the safety of its citizens, and your determination to advance the peace process between us and the Palestinians.

We are currently at an important juncture in our relations with our Palestinian neighbors. While relative quiet currently prevails in Israel, terror has not yet completely ceased. This relative calm was achieved, first and foremost, through the uncompromising activity of the Israeli security forces and as a result of your personal effort and the actions taken by the United States among Arab and European countries. We are thankful for every hour of increased quiet and less terrorism and for every drop of blood that is spared. At the same time, we are concerned that this welcome quiet will be shattered any minute as a result of the continued existence of terror organizations which the Palestinian Authority is doing nothing to eliminate or dismantle.

Mr. President, I am confident that you, as the leader of the free world in this war against terror, will act to ensure that the Palestinians put a complete stop to the threat of Palestinian terrorism so that it will never rear its head again. I wish to move forward with a political process with our Palestinian neighbors. And the right way to do that is only after a complete cessation of terror, violence, and incitement, full dismantlement of terror organizations, and completion of the reform process in the Palestinian Authority.

We had a useful talk today, where we examined ways to advance the peace process between us and our Palestinian neighbors. In this context, a number of issues came up: the security fence which we are forced to construct in order to defend our citizens against terror activities; the removal of unauthorized outposts; and the freezing of settlements in Judea and Samaria.

I listened to your statement on this subject and assured you, Mr. President, that I would address them. The security——

President Bush. It's stuck.

Prime Minister Sharon. As you can see, we need your help. [*Laughter*]

The security fence will continue to be built with every effort to minimize the infringement on the daily life of the Palestinian population. Unauthorized outposts will be removed, as required in a law-abiding country. We'll continue to discuss all these issues both directly and through our bureaus, which maintain close contact.

Mr. President, we also discussed a series of issues which could serve to promote the peace process. In a statement published on my behalf last Friday, we listed a long series of steps to accommodate the Palestinians. If calm prevails and we witness the dismantlement of terror organizations, Israel will be

able to take additional—to take additional steps.

I wish to thank you again, George, for your friendship and understanding toward the state and people of Israel and for your contribution and personal involvement in the effort to turn the Middle East into a place where the peoples of the region can live in peace and security and guarantee a better life for our children and generations to come.

Thank you, George.

Q. Mr. President——

President Bush. Hold on a second, please. I'll call upon two members of our press corps. We'll alternate. First, Barry [Barry Schweid, Associated Press].

Report of the Joint Inquiry Into the September 11, 2001, Terrorist Attacks

Q. Mr. President, will the decision to not declassify the entire 9/11 report affect relations with Saudi Arabia, do you think? Might it have an impact on what they are doing to counter terrorism? Do you have any qualms?

President Bush. About not declassifying? No, absolutely have no qualms at all, because there's an ongoing investigation into the 9/11 attacks, and we don't want to compromise that investigation. If people are being investigated, it doesn't make sense for us to let them know who they are.

Secondly, we have an ongoing war against Al Qaida and terrorists, and the declassification of that part of a 900-page document would reveal sources and methods that will make it harder for us to win the war on terror. Now, perhaps at some point in time down the road, after the investigations are fully complete and if it doesn't jeopardize our national security, perhaps we can declassify the 27 of the hundreds of pages in the document. But it makes no sense to declassify when we've got an ongoing investigation; that could jeopardize that investigation. And it made no sense to declassify during the war on terror because it would help the enemy if they knew our sources and methods.

Israeli Security Fence

Q. Mr. President, what do you accept Israel to do in practical terms in regarding the separation fence that you call the wall? Due to the fact that this is one of the most effective measure against terrorism, can you clarify what do you oppose, the concept of the separation fence or only its roots?

And with your permission——

[*At this point, the reporter asked a second question in Hebrew, and no translation was provided.*]

President Bush. ——an international problem. [*Laughter*]

[*The reporter continued in Hebrew.*]

President Bush. Me? Okay. First, the most effective way to fight terror is to dismantle terrorist organizations. I fully recognize that. And we will continue to work with all parties to do just that. I mean, I fully understand that the most effective campaign to enhance the security of Israel, as well as the security of peace-loving people in the Palestinian territories, is to get after organizations such as Hamas, the terrorist organizations that create the conditions where peace won't exist. And therefore, I would hope in the long term a fence would be irrelevant.

But look, the fence is a sensitive issue, I understand. And the Prime Minister made it very clear to me that it was a sensitive issue. And my promise to him is, we'll continue to discuss and to dialog how best to make sure that the fence sends the right signal that not only is security important, but the ability for the Palestinians to live a normal life is important as well.

Q. Why do you criticize, Mr. President——

President Bush. No, no, no. Hold on. Not you. Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters]. Maybe some other time, but not now.

Q. All right. Thank you.

Ending Terrorism in the Middle East

Q. Thanks, sir. How are both of you going to get the Palestinian militants to extend the cease-fire?

President Bush. Do what now?

Q. How are both of you going to get the Palestinian militants to extend the cease-fire?

President Bush. Let me—look, the important message that should have come out of the meeting with Prime Minister Abbas and, of course, with Prime Minister Sharon, is that the—those who want to destroy the

peace process through terrorist activities must be dealt with. There will be no peace if terrorism flourishes. There's no peace. It's a contradiction in terms. Terrorists are against peace. Terrorists kill innocent life to prevent peace from happening. The way to make sure peace happens is for all of us to work to dismantle those who would like to kill. Those are called terrorists.

And the positive news is that Prime Minister Abbas made a public declaration that we would work together to dismantle terrorist organizations. And that's exactly what's going to happen. For those who want peace—I mean, all around the world have got to understand very clearly, if you're interested in peace in the Middle East, then all of us must work together to dismantle terrorist organizations, to cut off money to terrorist organizations, to prevent the few from damaging the aspirations of the many.

Q. Mr. President——

President Bush. Answer his question first, though. We don't want to hurt your feelings.

[*At this point, Prime Minister Sharon answered the question in Hebrew, and no translation was provided.*]

President Bush. Okay.

Palestinian Prisoners

Q. Mr. President, why do you expect Israeli Government to set free Palestinian prisoners, while you don't order to set free the Israeli civilian Jonathan Pollard?

President Bush. Yes, well, I said very clearly at the press conference with Prime Minister Abbas, I don't expect anybody to release somebody from prison who will go kill somebody. That doesn't make any sense. I mean, if we're trying to fight off terror and we're interested in a peaceful settlement, it doesn't make any sense to release somebody who is going to get out of prison and start killing.

I do hope that the Prime Minister continues to work with the Palestinian Authority to release those prisoners that won't create the conditions of terror.

And I believe that Prime Minister Abbas wants peace. I know that the—his cabinet is interested in developing the institutions necessary for a Palestinian state to emerge in a peaceful way. I've been impressed by the Finance Minister of the Palestinian Authority, who's willing to put the Palestinian budget up on the web page. In other words, he believes in transparency. And the reason I bring that up is that I also know that those same Palestinians who are working for the institutions necessary for a peaceful state to evolve know that terrorists would like to derail those plans and, therefore, are willing to work to rout out terrorist organizations. And look, we don't want to put people back into society that will make that task more complicated.

Listen, thank you all very much.

Q. Mr. President, Senator Shelby says 95 percent of the redaction has nothing to do with sources and methods, sir. Is he wrong?

President Bush. Sorry.

[*At this point, Prime Minister Sharon answered a final question in Hebrew, and no translation was provided.*]

President Bush. Let's go have lunch.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at noon in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and Minister of Finance Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority. Prime Minister Sharon referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A reporter referred to former civilian U.S. Navy intelligence analyst Jonathan Pollard, convicted of treason and espionage in 1987.

Executive Order 13311—Homeland Security Information Sharing

July 29, 2003

By the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including sections 892 and 893 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (the "Act") (6 U.S.C. 482 and 483) and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. *Assignment of Functions.* (a) The functions of the President under section 892 of the Act are assigned to the Secretary of Homeland Security (the "Secretary"), except the functions of the President under subsections 892(a)(2) and 892(b)(7).