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the authority to pass tax bills and set spending levels. The President has the authority to reject unwise or excessive taxes and spending. And unless Congress has a two-third majority, it must come to an agreement with the President if it wants to get a bill enacted.

Every year, Congress deals with separate bills that fund the day-to-day activities of our Government, everything from defense to homeland security to education and transportation. These 12 spending bills are the normal process by which Congress sets it priorities when they spend your money.

Now we are days away from the end of the year, end of the fiscal year. And as I told you, Congress hadn't finished one of these bills. They got the requirement to do 12; they hadn't done 1. If Congress doesn't get its work done in a week, the Government is not going to have the funding to continue important services. I don't believe the American people should be denied those services because Congress can't get its work done.

Congress needs to pass these annual spending bills. And if they need more time, I urge them to pass a clean continuing resolution. Under a clean continuing resolution, the Government would continue to operate at current funding levels while the Congress works on the annual appropriations bills. The principle should be that there would be no new spending, no new policies, no new projects unless the President and Congress agree in advance on a specific item.

The continuing resolution is not a new idea. This isn't the first time it's—would have happened. The last Congress didn't pass all its appropriations bills on time. And with the help of a continuing resolution, Congress kept the Government running while finishing the work. An earlier Republican Congress did the same thing during President Clinton's second term after a disruptive Government shutdown that no Congress has allowed since.

When the 110th Congress took office earlier this week, the leaders promised to make the legislative process more transparent and to—prove they could be responsible with the people's money. They said, "Give us a chance to be responsible." Well, now is the time to honor those pledges. By passing a clean continuing resolution, Congress would give itself extra time to complete the 12 annual spending bills, and do them 1 at a time, in a fiscally responsible way.

I believe we can work together to keep your taxes low, to keep the economy growing, and to balance a Federal budget. I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and visit with you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:52 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Office of Management and Budget Director James A. Nussle.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority in New York City

September 24, 2007

President Bush. Mr. President, Prime Minister, members of your delegation, thank you for coming. I strongly support the creation of a Palestinian state. I believe it's in the interests of the Palestinian people. I believe it's in the interests of Israel to have a democracy living side by—democracies living side by side in peace.

And the fundamental question that I ask is, is there leadership that share the vision and are willing to work hard to achieve the vision? And if the answer to that question is yes, the United States of America will be a strong partner in implementing the vision.

I have known the President for quite a while. I am convinced that he is dedicated to the formation of a Palestinian democracy that will live with peace with their neighbor, Israel. And I believe the Prime Minister of Israel is dedicated to the same vision. And therefore, as I told the President, the United States of America will work as hard as we possibly can to help you achieve the vision, Mr. President.

Condi Rice has been very engaged; Secretary Rice has been very engaged in the region. And when she speaks, she's speaking for me and my Government. And I appreciate you taking time to explain to me the hurdles you see, the role you'd like to see the United States play, and your dedication

to a cause that is just and important. I appreciate the fact that you're fighting the extremists who don't share the same kind of view. And I believe that the vision of two states, side by side in peace, is achievable. And we want to help you realize that goal.

So thank you for coming.

President Abbas. Mr. President, thank you very much for receiving us here and for hosting us. We appreciate that very much. I would like to take this opportunity to confirm to you that we truly believe very strongly in the peace process, and we believe very strongly in your vision of establishing a Palestinian, independent, viable state that lives side by side with the State of Israel.

Mr. President, these days we feel hopeful, and we feel and we sense the hope, especially after the call to convene an international meeting during the month of November. We believe that this meeting should deal with the substance and issues of substance that would lead to full negotiations on permanent status that would lead to a permanent peace and a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

And based on our belief of the seriousness of this call, both us and the Israelis have formed the teams that will work immediately in order to negotiate for the issues to be ready and ripe to take it one step further and be prepared and ready prior to the mid-November date for the convening of the meeting.

I also take this opportunity to reaffirm again that we strongly believe in the roadmap, which includes your vision, Mr. President, as well as the Arab initiative. Collectively, together, I believe they represent a strong framework that would allow us and help us to negotiate the permanent status issues and reach an agreement on it.

Therefore, Mr. President, we will continue to count on your work, on your support, and your serious efforts. We have faith and trust in all of this and believe that with the help of this, we'll be able to reach the just and durable peace in the Middle East.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:46 p.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority; and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel. President Abbas spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil in New York City

September 24, 2007

President Bush. It's a pleasure to be with my friend the President of Brazil. Every time we visit, it's always a fruitful and important discussion. We talked about climate change. And I assured the President that the event we're having in Washington—which he kindly is coming to—is an important meeting about reaching international consensus on how to move together on the issue of climate change.

We talked about alternative fuels. Brazil, under President Lula's leadership, is a leading producer of ethanol. And he is an evangelist on the subject. And I appreciate very much his leadership, because I believe the United States will benefit from ethanol. And so I look forward to working with you. And I want to thank you for your leadership in Haiti.

And finally, we had a good discussion on Doha. We share a commitment to a successful round of trade talks. And I assured the President that the United States would show flexibility, particularly on agricultural goods, in order to help achieve a breakthrough. So I want to thank you for the conversation. It's a joy being with you.

President Lula. First of all, I would like to thank for the opportunity once again to be here with President Bush and with members of his Cabinet. Secondly, we are convinced that on the climate change and the Doha round, we're still dependent on some factors. And one of these factors is the willingness of an important country like the U.S. demonstrating its capability to be flexible.

And President Bush has demonstrated the willingness to reach an agreement—in the many different conversations that we have had, he has demonstrated very clearly his willingness. And the U.S. is willing to be more flexible. And he's also willing to discuss with all countries on climate change. And this has been Brazil's position.