

Since America's first Thanksgiving, we have changed in many ways. Our population has grown. Our people have prospered. And we have become a great beacon of hope and freedom for millions around the world. Despite these changes, the source of all our blessings remains the same. We are grateful to the Author of Life who blessed our Nation's first days, who strengthened America in times of trial and war, and who watches over us today.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2 p.m. on November 20 at Camp David, MD, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Annapolis Conference

November 25, 2007

I am pleased to welcome Prime Minister Olmert, President Abbas, and representatives of more than 40 countries to the United States for the November 27 Annapolis conference. The broad attendance at this conference by regional states and other key international participants demonstrates the international resolve to seize this important opportunity to advance freedom and peace in the Middle East.

This conference will signal international support for the Israelis' and Palestinians' intention to commence negotiations on the establishment of a Palestinian state and the realization of peace between these two peoples.

It will also provide an opportunity for the Israelis, the Palestinians, and their neighbors to recommit to implementing the roadmap, with the U.S. monitoring their progress by the parties' agreement.

Finally, the conference will review Palestinian plans to build the institutions of a democratic state and their preparations for next month's donors' conference in Paris.

I remain personally committed to implementing my vision of two democratic states,

Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

The Israelis and Palestinians have waited a long time for this vision to be realized, and I call upon all those gathering in Annapolis this week to redouble their efforts to turn dreams of peace into reality. I look forward to my discussions with Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas this week, as well as to addressing the conference along with them on Tuesday.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; and President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel

November 26, 2007

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. It's an honor to have you back in the Oval Office. Thanks for coming to the Annapolis conference. I'm looking forward to continuing our serious dialog with you and the President of the Palestinian Authority to see whether or not peace is possible. I'm optimistic. I know you're optimistic, and I want to thank you for your courage and your friendship. I'm proud you—I'm proud of you.

Prime Minister Olmert. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I'm delighted to come with my colleagues to—another time to the Oval Office. This time it's different because we are going to have lots of participants in what I hope will launch a serious process of negotiations between us and the Palestinians. This will be a bilateral process, but the international support is very important for us.

And I thank you for the efforts that you, President, made in order to make it possible, and the Secretary of State, together with us, in order to come to this point where from we and the Palestinians will sit together in Jerusalem and work out something that will be very good to create a great hope for our peoples.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority

November 26, 2007

President Bush. Mr. President, welcome.

President Abbas. Thank you.

President Bush. It's good to have you back here in the Oval Office. Thank you for coming, and thank you for working hard to implement a vision for a Palestinian state.

We want to help you. We want there to be peace. We want the people in the Palestinian Territories to have hope. And we thank you for your willingness to sit down with Israel to negotiate the settlement.

The United States cannot impose our vision, but we can help facilitate. And the process will begin tonight at the State Department and then on to Annapolis tomorrow. And I want to thank you for coming. Wish you all the very best.

President Abbas. I am delighted to have the opportunity to meet with President Bush after his invitation and this historic initiative that he launched to convene the Annapolis conference. We have a great deal of hope that this conference will produce a permanent status negotiations, expanded negotiations over all permanent status issues that would lead to a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian people, an agreement to secure security and stability.

President Bush's initiative is a great initiative. We will continue to rely on his support and the support of the United States and his administration in order to achieve the intended objective. Thank you.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:11 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Abbas spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the Situation in Russia

November 26, 2007

I am deeply concerned about the detention of numerous human rights activists and political leaders who participated in peaceful rallies in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, and Nazran this weekend. I am particularly troubled by the use of force by law enforcement authorities to stop these peaceful activities and to prevent some journalists and human rights activists from covering them.

The freedoms of expression, assembly, and press, as well as due process, are fundamental to any democratic society. I am hopeful that the Government of Russia will honor its international obligations in these areas, investigate allegations of abuses, and free those who remain in detention.

Statement on Senator Trent Lott's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

November 26, 2007

For more than three decades, Trent Lott has been an outstanding advocate in the United States Congress for the people of Mississippi. With service in the Republican leadership in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, he has skillfully advanced legislation and effectively championed key principles of our party, including low taxes and a strong national defense.

Trent has worked to enhance the economic vitality of our Nation and his home State throughout his career. By focusing on the important defense, transportation, infrastructure, agricultural, and educational needs of Mississippi, he has helped bring new development and opportunity to his constituents.

Throughout his service, Trent has always been a leader, someone his colleagues have known they could count on to stay true to his principles while working cooperatively to achieve results for the American people. Trent enjoyed bipartisan respect because of his reverence for the institutions of Congress and because Republicans and Democrats knew they could count on him to keep his