AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO



much—I'm the only President that's really articulated a two-state solution so far. But saying two states really doesn't have much bearing until borders are defined, right of return issues resolved, there's—Jerusalem is understood, security measures—the common security measures will be in place. That's what I'm talking about. I'm talking about a clear, defined state around which people can rally.

And there's going to be—there will be no better difference, a clearer difference, than the vision of Hamas in Gaza and the vision of the President and the Prime Minister and his team based here in Ramallah. And to me, that's how you solve the issue in the long term. And the definition of long term—I don't know what it means. I'm not a timetable person. Actually, I am on a timetable; I've got 12 months. [*Laughter*] But it's—I'm impressed by the President's understanding about how a vision and a hopeful future is—will help clearly define the stakes amongst the Palestinian people.

***President Abbas.*** Gaza is considered a coup by us; we consider it a coup d'etat what happened in Gaza.

[*A call to prayer could be heard in the background.*]

***President Abbas.*** Now, with a call to prayer—we consider it a coup d'etat. [*Laughter*] And we deal with Gaza at two levels. The first is that we deal with the people as part of us, and we take full responsibility that is necessary towards our people. We spend in Gaza 58 percent of our budget. This is not to—it is our duty towards our people that we provide them with all they need.

As for the issue of Hamas, we said that this is a coup; and they have to retreat from this coup; and they have to recognize international legitimacy, all international legitimacy, and to recognize the Arab peace initiative as well. In this case, we can—we will have another talk.

***President Bush.*** Thank you all.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:12 a.m. at the Muqata. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; Lt. Gen. William M. Fraser III, USAF, U.S. monitor of the Israeli-Palestinian roadmap peace plan; Lt. Gen. Keith W. Dayton, USA, U.S. security coordinator to Israel and the Palestinian Authority; and Quartet Representative in the Middle East Tony Blair. A reporter referred to Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority. President Abbas and some reporters spoke in Arabic, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks Following a Visit to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, Palestinian Territories

*January 10, 2008*

Madam Minister, thank you very much for your hospitality. It's been a moving moment for me and the delegation to be here at the Church of the Nativity. For those of us who practice the Christian faith, there's really no more holy site than the place where our Savior was born.

And I want to thank the Government for arranging this trip. I also thank very much the three different churches for welcoming me here. It's a fascinating history in this church, and so not only was my soul uplifted; my knowledge of history was enriched.

I want to thank the people of Bethlehem for enduring a Presidential trip. I know it's been inconvenient for you. I very much appreciate your tolerating my entourage. Someday, I hope that as a result of a formation of a Palestinian state there won't be walls and checkpoints, that people will be able to move freely in a democratic state. That's the vision, greatly inspired by my belief that there is an Almighty and a gift of that Almighty to each man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth is freedom. And I felt it strongly here today.

Anyway, thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:46 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Khouloud Daibes of the Palestinian Authority.

## Remarks on the Middle East Peace Process in Jerusalem

*January 10, 2008*

Good afternoon. I'd like to, first, thank Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas for their hospitality during my trip here to