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Week Ending Friday, January 9, 2009

The President's Radio Address

January 2, 2009

Good morning. Over the past week, I have been monitoring the situation in the Middle East closely with the members of my national security team. Secretary Rice is actively engaged in diplomacy. And I've been in contact with leaders throughout the region, including the King of Saudi Arabia, the King of Jordan, the President of Egypt, the President and Prime Minister of the Palestinian Territories, and the Prime Minister of Israel.

This recent outburst of violence was instigated by Hamas, a Palestinian terrorist group supported by Iran and Syria that calls for Israel's destruction. Eighteen months ago, Hamas took over the Gaza Strip in a coup, and since then has imported thousands of guns and rockets and mortars. Egypt brokered a cease-fire between Hamas and Israel, but Hamas routinely violated that cease-fire by launching rockets into Israel. On December 19th, Hamas announced an end to the cease-fire and soon unleashed a barrage of rockets and mortars that deliberately targeted innocent Israelis, an act of terror that is opposed by the legitimate leader of the Palestinian people, President Abbas.

In response to these attacks on their people, the leaders of Israel have launched military operations on Hamas positions in Gaza. As a part of their strategy, Hamas terrorists often hide within the civilian population, which puts innocent Palestinians at risk. Regrettably, Palestinian civilians have been killed in recent days.

The United States is deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation facing the Palestinian people. Since Hamas's violent takeover in the summer of 2007, living conditions have worsened for Palestinians in Gaza. By spending its resources on rocket launchers instead of roads and schools, Hamas has demonstrated that it has no intention of serving the Palestinian people. America has helped by providing tens of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid, and this week we contributed an additional $85 million through the United Nations. We have consistently called on all in the region to ensure that assistance reaches those in need. And as I told President Mubarak, America appreciates the role Egypt has played in facilitating the delivery of relief supplies in recent days.

In addition to reducing humanitarian suffering, all nations must work toward a lasting end to the violence in the Holy Land and a return to the path of peace. The United States is leading diplomatic efforts to achieve a meaningful cease-fire that is fully respected. Another one-way cease-fire that leads to rocket attacks on Israel is not acceptable. And promises from Hamas will not suffice; there must be monitoring mechanisms in place to help ensure that smuggling of weapons to terrorist groups in Gaza comes to an end. I urge all parties to pressure Hamas to turn away from terror and to support legitimate Palestinian leaders working for peace.

In the days ahead, the United States will stay closely engaged with our partners in the region, in Europe, and in the international community. My administration will continue to keep the President-elect and his team informed. And America's objectives in the Middle East will remain clear: We seek security and peace for our allies, the free people of Israel. For the Palestinian people, we seek a peaceful and democratic Palestinian state that serves its citizens and respects its neighbors. For all in the region, we seek an end to terror. And we seek an enduring peace based on justice, dignity, and human rights for every person in every nation of the Middle East.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10 a.m. on January 2 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 3. The transcript was made available by the Office

of the Press Secretary on January 2. In his address, the President referred to King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; King Abdullah II of Jordan; President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; and President-elect Barack Obama. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Presidential Determination on Waiver of Reimbursement Under the United Nations Participation Act to Support the United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur

January 1, 2009

Presidential Determination No. 2009–10

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Waiver of Reimbursement Under the United Nations Participation Act to Support the United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 10(d)(1) of the United Nations Participation Act of 1945, as amended (22 U.S.C. 287e–2(d)(1)), I hereby determine that provision of assistance to the United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur to support the airlift of equipment for peacekeeping in Darfur without reimbursement from the United Nations is important to the security interests of the United States.

You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., January 12, 2009]

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 5, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 13.

Remarks Following a Meeting With First Vice President of Sudan and President of Southern Sudan Salva Kiir Mayardit

January 5, 2009

President Bush. I'm proud to be meeting again with the Vice President of Sudan. He's a friend of mine. He is a strong leader who is dealing with a very difficult situation.

We talked about two important subjects. One is the north-south agreement in Sudan. It's a vital agreement, and it's going to be very important for the United States to pay attention to the implementation of this agreement. And the Vice President brought me up to date on what has been accomplished and what still remains to be accomplished.

And I thank you for, one, your clear briefing, but also your leadership on this important issue.

And then the Vice President and I discussed Darfur. And he has taken the lead in helping the rebels come together so that there would be a more unified voice in negotiating a—hopefully, negotiating a peace with the Bashir Government.

I informed the Vice President that I have provided a waiver to the State Department so they can begin to move 240 containers worth of heavy equipment into Darfur, and that the Defense Department will be flying Rwanda equipment into Darfur to help facilitate the peacekeeping missions there.

So I want to thank you very much for coming back. It's good to be with you. He asked me whether or not I was going to still care about Sudan—after all, the north-south agreement was negotiated under my watch—and my answer is, absolutely, Mr. Vice President.

Finally, I've been—Secretary Rice was just here, and prior to Vice President's arrival we did talk about Gaza. I've been closely monitoring the situation in Gaza. I understand Israel's desire to protect itself, and that the situation now taking place in Gaza was caused by Hamas. Instead of caring about the people of Gaza, Hamas decided to use Gaza to launch rockets to kill innocent Israelis. And Israel has obviously decided to protect herself and her people.