

Week Ending Friday, May 16, 2008

The President's Radio Address

May 10, 2008

Good morning. Today is my daughter Jenna's wedding day. This is a joyous occasion for our family as we celebrate the happy life ahead of her and her husband, Henry. It's also a special time for Laura who, this Mother's Day weekend, will watch a young woman we raised together walk down the aisle.

Mother's Day is a special time for mothers all across America. On this holiday, we pause to celebrate the love and compassion of the women who have raised us and to thank them for the many years of patience and selflessness. Throughout our lives, mothers are there with an encouraging word, a sympathetic ear, and a tender heart. They set our direction in life, and from time to time, they have been known to correct our course.

Like many of you, my life has been blessed by a mother who is a source of unconditional love. Those of us who have been so fortunate are forever in debt to these caring women. So on this holiday weekend, we celebrate all those mothers who help make our country a better place.

On this Mother's Day weekend, we think of the mothers who are celebrating this holiday for the very first time. Few blessings can compare to starting a new family, and few bonds are stronger than those between a mother and her newborn baby. This is also a special time for new adoptive mothers, who have welcomed their children into their homes with open arms and an open heart. We wish all these new parents many happy Mother's Days to come.

On this Mother's Day weekend, we think of the many mothers who raised the brave men and women serving our country in uniform. And to those mothers, I offer the thanks of a grateful nation. Your sons and daughters are defending our freedom with dignity and honor. And America appreciates

the sacrifices that your families make in the name of duty.

On this Mother's Day weekend, we remember the mothers grieving a son or daughter lost in the service to their country as well as the children who have lost a mother in uniform. We share their pride in these wonderful Americans who have given everything to protect our people from harm. Nothing we say can ever make up for their loss. But on this special day, we hold them in our hearts, and we lift them in our prayers.

I wish every mother listening this morning a blessed Mother's Day, including my own. And I have a message for every son and daughter listening this morning: Remember to tell mom, the first thing tomorrow, how much you love her.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:20 a.m. on May 8 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 9 but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on May 10. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks on Departure From Waco, Texas

May 11, 2008

Laura and I want to wish everybody a happy Mother's Day. It's just a special day for—to give thanks to our moms, to appreciate the hard work that moms do. And I understand that for some, however, Mother's Day is a sad day for those who lost their lives in Oklahoma and Missouri and Georgia because of the tornadoes—are wondering whether or not tomorrow will be a bright and hopeful day.

We send our prayers to those who lost their lives, the families of those who lost their lives. And the Federal Government will be

moving hard to help. I'll be in touch with the Governors to offer all the Federal assistance we can.

This Mother's Day weekend was awfully special for Laura and me. Our little girl Jenna married a really good guy, Henry Hager. The wedding was spectacular. It's just—it's all we could have hoped for. The weather was—cooperated nicely, and just as the vows were exchanged, the sun set over our lake. And it was just a special day and a wonderful day, and we're mighty blessed.

Anyway, thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:52 a.m. at Texas State Technical College. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Brad Henry of Oklahoma; Gov. Matt Blunt of Missouri; and Gov. Sonny Perdue of Georgia.

Interview With Nadia Bilbassy Charters of Al Arabiya Television

May 12, 2008

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Mr. President, thank you very much for your time, sir.

The President. I am honored to be with you again. Thank you.

Situation in Lebanon

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Thank you. And of course, we're going to focus on Lebanon. You have been a strong supporter of Prime Minister Siniora. Yet when he came under attack, he seems to be abandoned—not the U.S. and not the U.N., not Arab countries came to his aid. How do you explain that?

The President. Well, I don't think it's an accurate description that the United States hasn't stayed in contact with him, has listened to him, has listened to his requests. I mean, we're in contact with him a lot. And the reason why is because I personally admire Prime Minister Siniora, and the Lebanese democracy is essential to a peaceful Middle East in many ways. And so we're—we will help him. We will help him particularly and primarily through strengthening his armed forces, the Lebanese Armed Forces. It's probably the most practical way that we can get some help to him quickly.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Just to follow up on that, during the fight with Fatah al-Islam,

you have helped the Lebanese Army, but in this particular case, it doesn't seem to be coming. So what—can you just give us some details—

The President. Yes, we probably got some more work to do, Nadia. I mean, we've got—it's interesting, the situation has evolved from one where Hizballah supposedly was protecting the Lebanese people from Israel; now we're going to need—inherent in your question is a desire for the Lebanese Armed Forces to protect the Lebanese people from Hizballah. And the roles are seemingly reversed. And so Condi, in particular, has been in touch—Condi Rice has been in touch with the Prime Minister a lot to assess needs and to help and see how we can help.

Safety of Lebanese Leaders

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Three of your closest allies, which is Saad al-Hariri, Walid Jumblatt, and Prime Minister Siniora, are under siege. They're under house arrest. Is this any guarantee that you—their life or—is safe or that they're not going to be attacked? And if they are attacked, what the United States can do?

The President. Well, we're constantly looking at options, of course. And we're monitoring the situation very closely by staying in touch with these leaders, particularly Prime Minister Siniora. And the best solution is for the Lebanese Armed Forces to be—is to be capable of protecting the leaders. And that's what we expect. And our Ambassador evidently was in with the Prime Minister when he gave instructions to the military to protect these leaders.

And the Lebanese Armed Force is pretty good. They're not great yet, but they're pretty good. And we want to make them better so that they can respond.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. But you're confident that their safety is not going to be touched?

The President. I hope so. I'm not confident the—I was hopeful that Hizballah would become patriotic—patriots to Lebanon and not respond every time to Syrian or Iranian demands. And so we'll see what happens. As you know, there's been a lot of confusing stories coming out. But one thing