

# President Bush Meets with Prime Minister Olmert of Israel

Contributed by Whitehouse / Oval Office  
Tuesday, 25 November 2008

Oval Office  
For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
November 24, 2008

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Oval Office

Video (Windows)  
Presidential Remarks  
Audio

In Focus: Global Diplomacy

5:40 P.M. EST

PRESIDENT BUSH: I am pleased to welcome my friend, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, back to the Oval Office. And I thank you for bringing your wife to have dinner tonight with Laura and me. I'm looking forward to it.

We've been through a lot together during our time in office. We strongly believe that Israel will benefit by having a Palestinian state, a democracy on her border that works for peace. And, Prime Minister, that vision is alive because of you. And I thank you for your steadfast support for peace.

And it's not easy. It's not easy to try to change the paradigm, and I understand that. But one thing is for certain -- you've kept your word. And in international politics, that's important. And I want to thank you for the friendship, and thank you for your vision. And I just want you to know that I believe that vision is alive and needs to be worked on.

And again, I welcome you. Appreciate you coming.

PRIME MINISTER OLMERT: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I'm delighted to have this opportunity to express again the deep gratitude we all have to you, personally, as a human being, as a friend, as a courageous leader who has helped Israel so much over the period since you were President of the United States of America.

I will never forget that you have removed one of the most threatening strategic dangers from Israel on the east side, in Iraq. And this is a great achievement that makes life much better for many people in our part of the world, particularly for us and for our neighbors, as well.

You have set forth in motion the Annapolis process, which I was very proud to take part in.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes, sir.

PRIME MINISTER OLMERT: It continues with your guidance and support and inspiration. And this is very important, because as you say, a two-state solution is the only possible way to resolve the conflict in the Middle East.

So, Mr. President, on behalf of the people of Israel, I want to thank you. The importance of your leadership is greatly appreciated in our country. And I'm sure that when the history books will be written, the contributions that you made to the safety and security of many people will be greatly appreciated.

Personally, I want to thank you for your friendship on behalf of my wife, Aliza, and myself. And I'm so happy and proud that I had an opportunity to speak of it to you before you leave this great place and before I leave my office. And I'm sure that we will continue our friendship for many years to come.

Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, sir. Thank you.

END 5:45 P.M. EST

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