



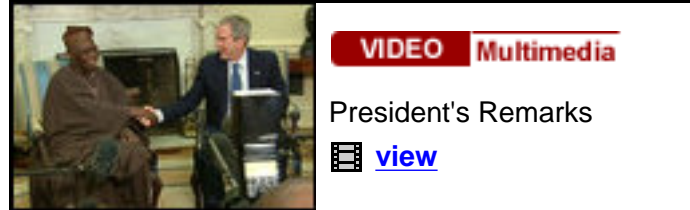
For Immediate Release  
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## President Bush Welcomes President Obasanjo of Nigeria to the White House

The Oval Office

- [In Focus: Africa](#)
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10:30 A.M. EST



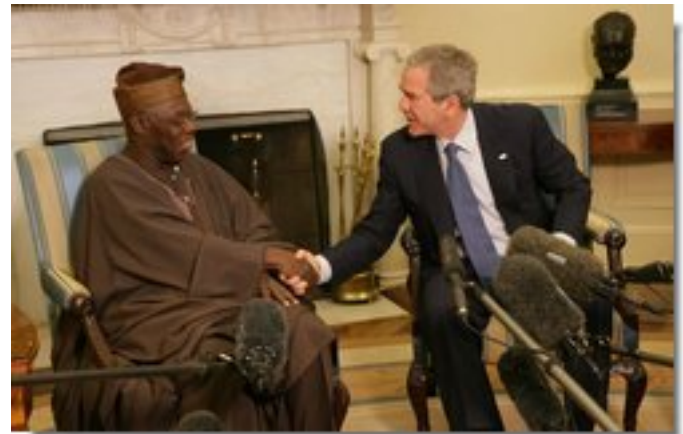
**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Mr. President, welcome back to the Oval Office. We have just had a discussion that covered a lot of topics. Every time I meet with the President he brings a fresh perspective about the politics and the situation on the continent of Africa, and I want to thank you. I want to thank you for your leadership.

The President and I talked about Darfur and the Sudan, and I made it very clear to him that we're deeply concerned about the humiliation, the rape, the murder that is taking place among the -- against the citizens of Darfur. He agreed. And I want to thank you for your compassion.

We talked and strategized about how to move forward, how to make it clear to the Sudanese government that there will be a international response in working toward a peace. We talked about a dual track, that the rebels must come together and negotiate with the government, and at the same time, we talked about bolstering the AU peacekeeping force with a Blue Helmet force. And I explained my desire to have a NATO overlay, to make sure that force is robust.

We talked about economic development. Of course, I brought up energy to the President. He's -- and I talked about the situation in the Nigerian Delta. He talked to me about his strategy to deal with the energy issue.

And finally, I appreciate the decision he made regarding Charles Taylor. In my visit last week with the President of Liberia, we talked about Charles Taylor. The fact that Charles Taylor will be brought to justice in a court of law will help Liberia and is a signal, Mr. President, of your deep desire for there to be peace in your neighborhood.



So welcome to the Oval Office. It's good to have you here, sir.

**PRESIDENT OBASANJO:** Thank you very much. And as usual, I want to thank you for the warm and hardy reception that you have accorded us.

The areas that I would call the areas of concern, by the time I arrived here last night, seemed to have been definably dealt with by this morning, particularly the issue of Charles Taylor. And as I said to you about a minute -- a few minutes ago, Charles Taylor should be landing in Liberia by now, which should start putting the issue of Charles Taylor behind us.

I appreciate the understanding of everybody and the way that the issue has been handled. I met the press earlier today to actually give what was our own position and how we were hoping to deal with the issue of Charles Taylor's disappearance. And of course, I do not agree, must disagree that we have been negligent in the way we handled the Charles Taylor issue. If we had been negligent then Charles Taylor would have got away. He would not have been arrested if there was connivance or condonation on our part.

Having said that, we, of course, talked about the general situation of peace and security in the West Africa sub-region, and how West Africa sub-region, with Charles Taylor issue behind us, how West Africa sub-region is gradually becoming a haven of peace. We have dealt with Togo, we have dealt with Guinea-Bissau, we have dealt with Sierra Leone. Hopefully, we are now dealing with Liberia. And things seem to be going fairly well in Cote D'Ivoire. Well, of course, we are keenly watching the situation in Guinea Conakry.

Then we looked at the rest of Africa, particularly Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and the Great Lakes, generally. Then we talked about the issue of development, particularly security -- supplies, security, stability, and also -- of hydrocarbons from the Gulf of Guinea area, and how we are working hard to establish a Gulf of Guinea commission that will also deal with the issue of reconciling and dealing with ending misunderstanding among those in that -- among countries that are in the Gulf of Guinea, how we can protect and how we can monitor what happens in that area, because the hydrocarbon we need for our own development and we need for the economic development and progress of the world. We are moving in this regard not only by ourselves, but also by our -- with our development partners.



Then, of course, we talked about NEPAD, which is where we work with the G8 and -- politically and individually.

And we -- I briefed the President on what we are doing with the Niger Delta, which is very important. And we are very grateful that the measures we are taking, which are essentially socioeconomic

measures, to address some of the grievances, identified grievances, will resolve the issue of the Niger Delta.

I think these are some of the points. And I think -- I want to thank President for remaining his charming self. (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you, sir.

END 10:38 A.M. EST

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