



For Immediate Release
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President Bush Participates in Joint Press Availability with Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom

Rose Garden

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2:43 P.M. EDT

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you all. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome to the Rose Garden. Glad you're here. It's a beautiful day. I'm -- been a pleasure to welcome a good friend to the Oval Office, and had a good discussion.

Appreciate our special relationship with Britain, and I believe that the actions we've taken are making it stronger. We spent time talking about the terrorists and extremists. I would remind my fellow citizens that just days after the Prime Minister took office, his country was attacked by murderers and extremists. And he handled the situation brilliantly. Prime Minister Brown understands our enemies remain determined to strike our countries and to kill our people. He and I share a determination, a fierce determination, that these evil men must be stopped and that we can defeat their hateful ideology by the spreading of liberty and freedom.

We're working together in Iraq. I want to appreciate the sacrifice of the British troops, their families and the British people. During the recent fighting in the Basra province, our nation's coordinated our support for the Iraqi security forces as they took on extremists and criminals. Most thankful for the brilliance of the British helicopter crews that fired under courage and helped evacuate wounded Iraqi soldiers.

I talked to the Prime Minister about my meetings with General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker and why I made the decision I made about our troop levels in Iraq. Appreciate the fact that the Prime Minister briefed me on what the British commanders are saying about Iraq. The key thing there is that we're working very closely together, and that we're making progress.



Also talked about Afghanistan with the Prime Minister. Appreciate the 7,900 British troops that are serving bravely in that country. We talked about the very successful NATO summit that we just concluded in Romania. And we talked about our commitment to see to it that we succeed in Afghanistan.

Spent some time on Iran. Our position is clear that we're going to work together, along with other nations, to make it abundantly clear to the Iranian regime that they must not have the capability of developing a nuclear weapon.

We talked about Zimbabwe. And I appreciate Gordon Brown's strong position on that issue. And I appreciate the fact that he went to the United Nations and made it abundantly clear that which I feel, as well, which is, you can't have elections unless you're willing to put the results out. What kind of election is it if you not let the will of the people be known?

I appreciate those in the region who have spoken out on this issue. Appreciate the fact that some in the region have spoken out against violence. More leaders in the region need to speak out. And the United Nations and the AU must play an active role in resolving the situation in Zimbabwe.

We shared our deep concern about the people in Darfur. And I -- I share frustrations that the United Nations-AU peacekeeping force is slow in arriving. I made the decision not to put our troops in there on the expectation that the United Nations, along with the AU, could be effective -- and they haven't been as effective as they should be, and we'll continue to work to help them.



We talked about our joint desire to train health care workers in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique and Zambia, as well as our continued effort to confront disease, whether it be malaria and HIV/AIDS.

And then of course we spent time on our economy -- ies. (Laughter.) That would be two economies. (Laughter.) We first spent some time on the global financial markets, and then we spent time talking about what each of us are doing in our respective countries to deal with our financial circumstances. We spent some time on trade. The worst signal we could send during this global uncertainty is that the world is going to become more protectionist and less willing to open up markets. And I want to thank Gordon Brown for his strong belief that the Doha Rounds ought to proceed. I agree with you, sir, and believe we can make good progress toward that end.

We talked about the climate change issue. I gave a speech right here in the Rose Garden yesterday. I don't know whether any of our press corps read it, but it was a far-reaching speech that talked about our commitment to deal with the issue in such a way that we can develop technologies without wrecking our economy. And it was in clear recognition that unless countries like China and India are at the table, any agreement is not going to work. And I assured the Prime Minister that by the time the G8 comes, we will work hard to make sure we can reach an international consensus that will be effective.

All in all, we had a fabulous conversation. I'm looking forward to dinner tonight. The Prime Minister is bringing his wife Sarah up here to the White House. And I'm -- Laura and I are going to cook you up a meal. (Laughter.) Well, we'll eat one with you. (Laughter.) Thanks for coming.

PRIME MINISTER BROWN: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Let me first of all thank you for your warm welcome, for your hospitality, and for your offer to cook the meal this evening. (Laughter.) And let me thank you most of all for your leadership. The world owes President George Bush a huge debt of gratitude for leading the world in our determination to root out terrorism, and to ensure that there is no safe haven for terrorism and no hiding place for terrorists.

It's my profound belief that over many decades, no international partnership has served the world better than the special relationship between our two countries, the United States and the United Kingdom. And following our excellent meeting, I'm able to report that the bond between our two countries is stronger than ever.

From the darkest days of the Second World War, when the strongest transatlantic partnership was forged to defend freedom, to the challenges we face together against terrorism in every part of the world, our alliance will remain strong and steadfast in standing for freedom and for justice. And we will continue to work together with the strenuous efforts we are making together in Iraq and Afghanistan.



Today we agreed our determination that in advance of the July G8 meeting in Japan, where all the major economies will meet together, we will do everything in our power to ensure economic stability and growth. We should be vigilant in maintaining the proactive approach to monetary and fiscal policy to enable our economies to resume their paths of upward growth. We want all our international partners to do the same. To ensure greater confidence in the financial system, all countries should ensure the immediate implementation of the plans for transparency and disclosure and risk management agreed by our finance ministers.

We agreed to work, and President Bush has just referred to this, for an early world trade deal that will give new confidence to the international economy at this time. An enhanced dialogue between oil consumers and oil producers, with rising output from the oil-producing countries, should help stabilize and then cut the price of oil, now at over \$110 a barrel.

We want to work with the World Bank and agricultural producers to enhance food supply, tackle food shortages, and increase agricultural production. And both Britain and America are taking action to help the housing market for homeowners and those who want to buy their homes for the first time.

President Bush and I also talked about an agreed new work programs between our two governments on development. And let me acknowledge the pioneering work of President Bush's administration in tackling on the African continent HIV/AIDS and addressing the scandal of avoidable deaths from malaria.

We agreed to work together, as President Bush has just said, to increase the number of doctors, nurses and midwives in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique and Zambia -- a down payment which, if extended to the whole of Africa, would lead to one-and-a-half million more health service, health care workers.

At the same time, the professionalism and commitment of our brave forces serving alongside America with determination in Iraq and Afghanistan was a subject of much of our discussions. We praise the commitment of the troops of both America and Britain and all who serve in these two countries. And we believe that our program of overwatch in Basra in the south of Iraq is making substantial progress. At the same time, we've agreed at the NATO summit in Bucharest measures that we can take so that we match the military effort in Afghanistan with proposals that will enable economic and social development of that country. America and Britain have the first and second largest number of forces in both these countries, and we are determined on the success of our missions.

We reiterated our command stand on Darfur, and we want to see talks from the rebels and the government working together. We reiterated our common stand also on Burma, where it is important to repeat the call for reconciliation. And on the situation in Zimbabwe, President Bush has made a strong statement that I entirely endorse, calling for full democratic rights of the Zimbabwean people to be respected, and that elections that happen have got to be not only reported but be fair and be seen to be fair in the interest of democracy, not just in Zimbabwe but the reputation of democracy throughout Africa and the world.

We have repeated our common commitments in the fight against terrorism, and will continue to work together at every level to defeat terrorism wherever it is. Iran continues to defy the will of the international community, and we are agreed on the need to strengthen the sanctions regime and ensure that these sanctions are effectively implemented. I will be talking to my European colleagues in the next few days about how we can move forward with both these issues throughout Europe. And we want to extend measures to include investment in liquefied national [sic] gas.

We also discussed climate change, following President Bush's announcement yesterday. And we agreed we must work internationally to secure progress at the G8 and towards a post-Kyoto deal on climate change.

President, this is an ambitious agenda that we share together. It can only be achieved by closer cooperation that will happen over these next few months. I look forward to continuing to work with President Bush and his administration in taking it forward. And thank you for your warm welcome and hospitality.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes, sir. We'll take two questions a side. Hunt. Terry Hunt.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. You said last week that Iraq was not an endless war, but others have called it an open-ended war and a war with no end in sight. Do you agree with those descriptions?

And Mr. Prime Minister, you met today with the three candidates who want to succeed President Bush. Did you feel a special kinship with any one of them? And do you think that the transatlantic relationship will improve under the next President? Thank you.

PRESIDENT BUSH: One of those three has a good chance of winning. (Laughter.) Look, I'm interested in

succeeding in Iraq. I mean, it's -- this is a mission that is succeeding on the security front, it's getting better on the economic front, and it's improving on the political front.

And therefore my statement has been, we'll have the troops there necessary to succeed. It's -- it hasn't been easy; it's been difficult. It's taking longer than I anticipated. But it's worth it. A failure in Iraq would embolden al Qaeda, would give al Qaeda a huge victory, enable them to more likely establish safe haven in a wealthy country from which to launch attacks against us.

And a failure in Iraq would send a message to Iran that the United States and its allies were not intent upon making sure that they stay within the borders of their country and stop promoting terrorism through organizations like Hezbollah, and they wouldn't take us seriously when it came to stopping their desires to have a nuclear weapon. Failure in Iraq would send a message to our friends, you can't count on America.

Success in Iraq will be a significant blow to both al Qaeda and Iran's ambitions. And it's worth it, in my judgment, to succeed against al Qaeda, the very country -- the very group of people that attacked our country, and those who would like to do so again, even on a more massive scale. And it's worth it to say to the theocrats in Iran that you must reform and that we're going to work to prevent you from having a nuclear weapon.

And so when it comes to troop levels and duration, my question is, what does it take to win? And General Petraeus thinks we can win with fewer troops. That's why I accepted the recommendation. General Petraeus and Ryan Crocker know that the troops were necessary to provide stability for the political progress to be made -- that's being made, and for the economy to improve. And so, so long as I'm the President, my measure of success is victory and success.

Q (Inaudible.)

PRESIDENT BUSH: I've only got 10 more months left of the presidency.

PRIME MINISTER BROWN: There's no artificial timetable here. Let's not forget that Iraq is now a democracy, that democratic rights have been restored to the Iraqi people, that we're now building schools and hospitals, seeing economic development -- and I'm particularly referring to the area where we have responsibility, and that is Basra.

And let us also remember that there is progress in Iraqis now being able to take more control of their own affairs. And we're now in a situation where we've trained up 20,000 Iraqi forces, 22,000 Iraqi policemen and women. We've got more to do in that area. And so our role in training the Iraqis, making it possible for them, as they did in the Basra operation, to assume more control of their own affairs is the way that we want to move from combat to overwatch in Iraq, and that's exactly what we're going to do. And we're going to combine that with building up local government -- where there will be local government elections that will force militias to make a choice between the democratic process and armed insurrection, and at the same time, economic and social development will be pushed forward. And we are having a conference in London in the next few days where Iraqis and others will look at how we can move forward with the reconstruction and economic development of the area, so that people have a stake in the future, they have jobs, businesses have been created, and Iraq -- and Iraqis are now running their own affairs.

It is -- if I might answer your second question, it is for Americans to decide who their President is going to be. I was delighted to meet the three presidential candidates who remain in the field. What I was convinced of after talking to each of them, and talking about the issues that concern them and concern the world, is that the relationship between America and Britain will remain strong, remain steadfast; it will be one that will be able to rise to the challenges of the future. And I look forward to continuing my discussions with all three of them over the next few months.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes, call on one of these --

PRIME MINISTER BROWN: Nick. I thought you usually called Nick. (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT BUSH: I was afraid Nick might ask me a question this time. (Laughter.)

Q The last thing I'd like to do is disappoint you, Mr. President. (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT BUSH: Nick, you need a hat, my boy, you need a hat. (Laughter.)

Q I thought of getting one saying --

PRESIDENT BUSH: That's right. (Laughter.)

Q Mr. President, Prime Minister, Nick Robinson of BBC News. The Prime Minister has repeatedly said that Britain's economic difficulties started here in the United States. Do the solutions to them have to begin here as well?

And Prime Minister, if I could ask you, you've got a very important agenda here on this trip, and yet at home increasingly you're being criticized from within your own political party. What is going wrong in your party and government, and what are you going to do about it?

PRIME MINISTER BROWN: I'm sticking to the job and I'm getting on with the job. And I think people understand that there is a difficult situation around the world. We did have a credit crunch. It did mean that there were problems that started in the financial institutions in America, but these are problems now in Europe. There are problems in Britain, there are problems in every country of the world. And one of the issues that we're dealing with is that the issues that brought about the credit crunch are combined to rising food prices around the world, rising oil prices, and the threat of inflation in certain areas as well.

And I'm satisfied that the discussions we've had today with President Bush, yesterday in Wall Street -- I'm meeting Ben Bernanke, the head of the Federal Reserve tomorrow -- show the common ground we have in dealing with the issues ahead, and in getting the economy to a position where markets are moving again, where growth is restored on an upward path, and where people can feel more safe and more secure about their jobs.

What matters to me is that people feel safe and secure about the future, about their prospects, and about their jobs. And that's why we will not hesitate to take any action that is necessary to keep the economy moving forward.

That's why I've outlined today measures that include what we can do in the housing market, what we can do to tackle food price rises, what we can do to tackle oil price rises. And that's why it's important that there is coordination across the Atlantic -- indeed, coordination between all the major industrial powers -- so that we can all contribute what each of us can in each continent to the process of restoring both confidence in the world economy, and stability and growth, and we will continue to do that.

And as far as the domestic situation back home, I will continue to do the right thing, and do what is right for the British economy and the British people.

PRESIDENT BUSH: We're in a rough patch right now. Had a pretty good run. Matter of fact, had the most consecutive months of job growth in the country's history. And our housing market went soft and it began to affect the financial markets.

So we've done a -- taken a variety of steps. First, we're trying to help credit-worthy people stay in their homes. I don't know what it's like in Britain, but here, the guy who gave you your mortgage generally doesn't own the paper anymore; they bundled it up and sold it somewhere else, and it's hard to find somebody to renegotiate with. So we put a system in place that helps credit-worthy homeowners renegotiate. In other words, we want to help people stay in their homes.

I'm not particularly interested in bailing out lenders or speculators. But I am interested in helping hard-working Americans be able to find a way to stay in their homes. And it's been effective -- effective program.

Secondly, we worked with Congress on a pro-growth package, over \$150 billion of tax cuts, most of which will start hitting people's mailboxes and/or accounts in the second week of May. Some of the incentives in the pro-growth package are for small businesses and businesses with accelerated appreciation, incentives to invest. And it's beginning to kick in a little bit, but the program hasn't really taken effect. I mean, the consumers don't have

their checks yet. And we feel good that this will help our economy.

And finally, the Fed -- which is independent from the White House, I might add -- has taken some strong actions to enhance liquidity in the system. And I'm -- we'll work with Congress on pieces of legislation that will actually help people and I'll take a dim view of legislation that will make it harder for the economy to correct.

Yes, Toby.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, Mr. ElBaradei of the IAEA said today that Iran's progress in developing uranium enrichment is slow and that its centrifuges are older models. So how do you reconcile that with the U.S. view that Iran is a major nuclear threat?

And Prime Minister Brown, what concrete measures can Western governments take to address the soaring food prices? And do you think that there should be a rethinking of biofuel policy?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Let me start on Iran here. If they learn how to enrich, it is knowledge which can be used to develop a nuclear weapon. They claim that they have got a civilian program in place -- this is only for civilian purposes. If that's the case, why did they have a secret program? Why have they violated the IAEA? And so our objective is to, on the one hand, recognize they have a sovereign right to have civilian power by joining Russia and providing them with the fuel necessary to run their civilian nuclear facility; and then having them honor the agreements they've signed up to.

They have proven themselves to be untrustworthy. And, you know, to say that, well, okay, it's okay to let them learn to enrich -- and assume that that program and knowledge couldn't be transferred to a program, a military program, is, in my judgment, naive. And that is why the United States, in working with Britain and France and Germany and the United Nations Security Council, is all aiming to say to the Iranians: Verifiably suspend your program and there's a better way forward for you.

And so it's -- our diplomatic efforts are ongoing, and I appreciate the fact that Great Britain has been a great country to work with on this issue because Gordon Brown seriously sees the threat -- as do I. And now is the time to confront the threat, and I believe we can solve the problem diplomatically, and that is why we're working to verifiably suspend their enrichment.

PRIME MINISTER BROWN: Well, I make no apology for saying that we will extend sanctions where possible on Iran. Iran is in breach of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Iran has not told the truth to the international community about what its plans are. And that's why I'm talking to other European leaders about how we can extend European sanctions against Iran over the next period of time, and to ensure that what sanctions are taken are effectively implemented, and to monitor the effect on the Iranian regime where we see high inflation in Iran that is not properly disclosed by the regime, and the effect that sanctions are actually beginning to have on that country.

So in the next few weeks we want to extend the measures and sanctions to include investment in liquefied natural gas. I believe that sends another signal to the regime that what is happening is unacceptable. I'm pleased Secretary of State Rice is here with us today because we will support her in the efforts that are being made, working with our other partners, including of course Russia and China on this, to make sure that Iran recognizes that it cannot ignore the international community and its obligations at its -- without -- with impunity.

You also asked about food prices. I'm calling a meeting in London in the next few days with the head of the World Food Program to discuss what we can do to deal with the situation that is producing food riots in many countries - - the lowest supplies of food for 30 years, shortages of food in many continents and many countries, that are making people worried about whether, in some countries, they can actually feed the people.

Now there are long and detailed causes for why this is happening. In Asia people's demand for better and higher quality of food means that more agriculture production is needed. Subsidies in some areas have meant that there is less agriculture production in Africa than there should be. The World Food Program is wanting and has issued an appeal for more support. And we and America have already offered more support to help feed people who are in the greatest of difficulty.

And in the long term, yes, we will look at biofuels where we've withdrawn some of the subsidies for biofuels. We've got to get it absolutely right but we're dealing with the environmental issue, as well as dealing with the problem of increased production of food. And of course we've got to increase generally our ability to produce more food for more of the world's people over the next few years.

So, yes, we must act immediately and, yes, we must have a long-term plan. The world needs to have more supply of food to meet the rising demand of people around the world.

Q Mr. President, I notice your warm words at the start. Some people would suggest that this special relationship is a little less special than it was under Mr. Brown's predecessor. Is that true or false?

And Prime Minister, a domestic question, I'm afraid --

PRESIDENT BUSH: False. (Laughter.)

Q -- a member of your government appears upset enough tonight about the abolition of the 10p rate to consider resigning. Isn't it time for you to at least consider unraveling that particular change?

PRESIDENT BUSH: False -- you didn't hear me. We got a great relationship. And it's -- we're working on a variety of issues. Listen, our special relationship has been forged in common values in history, and we're making history together. And we're dealing with a lot of problems. The most severe problem as far as I'm concerned is the willingness of people to murder innocent people to achieve their political objectives. I mean, this is the fundamental threat facing civilization in the 21st century.

And Prime Minister Brown sees the threat. He had to live through the threat. So it's -- our relationship is very special and it's -- I'm confident future Presidents will keep it that way. There's just such a uniqueness in the relationship. That's not to say you can't have other friends, and we do. But this is a unique relationship, truly is. And I value -- I value my personal friendship, as well as our -- the relationship between our countries.

Look, if there wasn't a personal relationship I wouldn't be inviting the man to a nice hamburger. (Laughter.) Well done, I might add.

PRIME MINISTER BROWN: I'm very proud to be here today to celebrate a special relationship. In 1941, Winston Churchill met Franklin Roosevelt and inaugurated what is the modern phase of that special relationship. And Churchill said at the time, same language, same hymns, he said, same ideals, same values -- something big is happening. And what was big that happened was that never before has a relationship yielded so much in the 1940s in the fight against fascism and the Cold War that then followed, where we worked together. In the fight against terrorism we're -- as Tony Blair said, we stand shoulder to shoulder with the American people and with President Bush. And I continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with him in rooting out terrorism wherever we find it, in any part of the world, which puts freedom, democracy and justice at risk.

And what I think is fascinating is that over the next few months we will be developing that special relationship in new ways -- a special relationship of peoples, as well as of their governments; more cooperation between our universities and more exchanges between young people in Britain and young people in America; more scientific cooperation; more cooperation in the fight against cancer, whether a joint project, the Human Genome Project, where we're working together; environmental action, where institutes in Britain and America are agreeing this week to have more cooperation; and right across the board, as we take the English language, Britain and America, and make it a gift and then offer it to the rest of the world to make it possible for millions of people in different parts of the world to learn the English language.

So this is a special relationship not just of governments, but of peoples. And I look forward to its enhancement at all levels in the years to come. And I will work as hard as President Bush to make that relationship as strong and as enduring for the future.

You asked also about our economic policies. We have low inflation; therefore we've brought down interest rates. We have low debt; therefore we can afford to spend more.

We've made a major tax reform -- and you ask about the 10p rate. Let's not forget that this April, the tax rate in Britain, the basic rate of tax is going down from 22 pence to 20 pence. We've virtually doubled child benefit for families over the last 10 years, and raised it again this year, and we'll raise it next year. We're raising the child tax credit. We've got a new winter allowance addition for pensioners so that they can meet the fuel bills. In every area where the 10p rate has affected people, whether it be low-paid workers or pensioners, or whether it be families with children, we have acted to see that we could do the best by people in our country.

Now of course a tax reform is a big thing, but when you're reducing the basic rate from 22 pence to 20 pence -- the first time it's been achieved, the lowest tax rate, basic tax rate for 75 years -- it is an important thing to do. And I'm satisfied that once people understand the scale of the good things that we have been able to do in reforming the tax system and making it better, and that we're tackling poverty, as they do in America, by introducing and increasing tax credits for the poorest people, then whatever questions people have about these changes can be answered.

Yes, they are important changes. They move the British economy forward. We have just seen this week that despite all the world difficulties, we have the highest employment rates at any time in our history. We have lower unemployment than at any time for 30 years. We have more vacancies in the economy, and that combined with low inflation, a stable economy, lower interest rates, as we've managed to achieve over the last few weeks, means that the British economy is well positioned to face the challenges of the future, and will continue to be so.

And my answer to people who say, what is happening domestically, is we are taking the right long-term decisions for the British economy, whether it's on nuclear power or on housing or on planning or infrastructure. And of course at some times people ask questions about whether you're doing the right thing. But we will see these long-term changes through, and these are the right long-term changes for Britain and for the British people.

PRESIDENT BUSH: You guys want to sit out here for the afternoon or -- (laughter.) Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER BROWN: Thank you very much.

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