

The President. Well, first of all, Iran must be a contributor in the war against terror; that our Nation and our fight against terror will uphold the doctrine, "Either you're with us, or against us," and any nation that thwarts our ability to rout terror out where it exists will be held to account, one way or the other.

I hope—we had some positive signals early—early in this war from the Iranians. We would hope that they would continue to be a positive force in helping us bring people to justice. We would hope, for example, they wouldn't allow Al Qaida murderers to hide in their country. We would hope that if that be the case, if someone tries to flee into Iran, that they would hand them over to us, that they're a part of—if they're a part of the coalition, then they need to be an active part of the coalition.

In terms of Afghanistan, we are—we would like to work with the Iranians, as well as other neighboring countries, to bring a stable interim government—to stabilize the interim government. And to the extent that they're involved, we would hope that they would participate. If they are trying—if they in any way, shape, or form try to destabilize the government, the coalition will be—we'll deal with them, in diplomatic ways initially. And we would like very much for them to be active participants in a stable Afghanistan. It's to their advantage, by the way, that Afghanistan be stable.

Middle East Arms Shipment

Q. Mr. President, based on the evidence the Israeli delegation presented at the State Department yesterday, about this arms shipment, do you believe that it's time for the United States to either break or suspend relations with Mr. Arafat and the Palestinian Authority?

The President. John [John King, Cable News Network], I think it's very important for our administration to remain engaged with both parties. Obviously, I want to make sure that the evidence is definitive. But I'm, like many, beginning to suspect

that those arms were headed in the wrong—to promote terror. And terror will never enable us to achieve peace in the Middle East. So long as there's terrorists trying to disrupt the peace process, there won't be peace.

I do believe that once the evidence is in, that those responsible need to be held to account. On the other hand, I also believe that our country must stay engaged in the process. I intend to ask Zinni to go back to the region at the appropriate time, to keep pushing for a dialog, to keep pushing for the process to go forward.

Mr. Arafat must renounce terror, must reject those who would disrupt the peace process through terror, and must work hard to get to the peace table. It seems like it's up to him to make these decisions.

Q. But has he been less than truthful in speaking to Secretary Powell, General Zinni, and others, in saying he had nothing to do with this and no knowledge of it?

The President. We will find out the facts, John. But he is—you asked a question, should we basically disengage? And the answer is no, we won't disengage from the Middle East. We will stay involved in the Middle East peace process—or trying to get to the peace process. And it starts with making the region more secure. Mr. Arafat must renounce terror and must reject those in the region that would disrupt the peace process by the use of terrorist means.

Pension Reform

Q. What can you do about pensioners—what can you do about pensioners now? Isn't that horse already out of the barn at Enron?

The President. Our group is meeting, and they will bring recommendations here. They'll look at—fully investigate what went on. My concern, of course, is for the shareholders of Enron. But my—I have great concern for the stories—for those I read about in the stories who put their life savings aside and for whatever reason, based upon some rule or regulation, got trapped