
Transcript: Exclusive Bush Interview

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27, 2006

(CBS) *The following is a transcript of **Bob Schieffer**'s exclusive pre-State of the Union interview with President Bush, held on Jan. 27, 2005.*

SCHIEFFER: Mr. President, there is certainly no shortage of questions to ask you today, and I guess I had better start with this thunderbolt from the Middle East that happened yesterday. We had a democratic election that the United States and others in the West encouraged, and, of all things, the party that has sworn to destroy Israel wins the majority of the seats in the Palestinian parliament. You said yesterday that unless they renounce violence, we can't deal with them.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Um-hmm.

SCHIEFFER: What if they don't renounce violence?

PRESIDENT BUSH: I—I said two things. One, they've got to get rid of that arm of their party which is armed and violent, and secondly, they have got to get rid of that part of their platform that says they want to destroy Israel. And if they don't, we won't deal with them.

SCHIEFFER: Well, what—

PRESIDENT BUSH: Aid packages won't go forward. Well, that's their decision to make. It's—first of all, the government is beginning to form. They're trying to work through all the—as you said, it was a lightning bowler, and it was—caught everybody's surprise, I suspect, including—I know that the Fatah was caught by surprise, maybe Hamas, and they have yet to work out how they are going to form their government. But we won't be providing help to a government that wants to destroy our ally and friend. I don't see how you can be a partner in peace if you—if you don't renounce violent aims. The—the other thing that's interesting about the elections, though, that I found fascinating is that it reminded me that the elections are window panes into the actual condition of society.

SCHIEFFER: Um-hmm.

PRESIDENT BUSH: In other words, a lot of us were assuming that maybe life was this way or that way, and all of a sudden the people showed up to vote and said we want something different, we want good, honest government; we want people to listen to our needs; we want people to provide services so our families can, you know, be—grow up and be prosperous.

SCHIEFFER: Let me just ask you this question. You say you can't deal with them, but would it be beneficial to try to talk to them, to talk to them about moderating their stance, or is there just simply nothing to talk about?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Well—well, in essence I am talking to them now.

SCHIEFFER: Okay.

PRESIDENT BUSH: I'm confident they're listening to what you've asked me and what I'm answering.

SCHIEFFER: Um-hmm.

PRESIDENT BUSH: And that is for them to, you know, have support from the United States and the United States Congress, and from this administration they must renounce their policies, stated policy that they want to destroy Israel.

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