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**President Bush Meets with President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority**

Oval Office

PRESIDENT BUSH: Mr. President, welcome back. You and I have met a lot since I have been the President and you have been the President. And I appreciate your determination and your desire to have a Palestinian state, and I share that desire with you. It's not easy -- no doubt it must be frustrating at times for you, because it's hard work to get a state after all these years. But nevertheless, there is a firm determination on your part and on my part to give the Palestinians a place where there can be dignity and hope.

We are working hard with you on security matters. We're working hard with you on helping the international community help you get the economy going in the West Bank. And I welcome you back.

As you know, I've got four more months left in office and I'm hopeful that the vision that you and I have worked on can come to pass. And my only pledge to you is that I'll continue to work hard to see that it can come to pass. And so I welcome you back -- and I think it's safe for me to say I welcome you back, my friend.

PRESIDENT ABBAS: Thank you. (As translated.) Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am delighted, as well as the members of my delegation, to come here again to Washington and meet with you. We've met together for numerous times. Mr. President, we know very well how important this issue is for you and we will continue to work very hard together in order to realize your vision of two states living side by side.

There is no doubt that you have done a great deal, Mr. President, and you have exerted a great deal of efforts aiming at achieving that vision that we will work together to achieve. Your efforts, Mr. President, as well as your vision, both help us and the Israelis to work very hard during the last year and since the convening of the Annapolis Conference. Hope will remain, Mr. President. We cannot live without hope. We will continue to work to achieve and realize that hope.

And Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you and thank the United States for the help and the support and the aid that you have given us, and as well as the efforts that you led to mobilize the world to help the Palestinian Authority on the economic front as well as on the security front.

Mr. President, we will continue to work with you and we will continue to keep the hope alive in order to reach a political solution for our issue and for the Middle East.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you, sir.