



## A Dignified Presidency

Dear President Bush,

Here are the two hopes and dreams I have for you.

First, keep the presidency dignified.

Rightly or wrongly, Americans look to you as an embodiment of the best of America. It is a cliché of American life that many American parents dream, "Maybe my child will grow up to be president someday." Few parents say that about becoming a senator or CEO or any other powerful position. There is a mystique to the presidency that is very good for our country. We have no king or queen. The president is it.

It is therefore critical that a president dignify the office. In the opinion of many millions of Americans of both major parties, that dignity has been compromised in the last eight years. One only has to recall President Clinton's appearance on national TV, taking questions from an audience of young Americans, when one young woman asked him what sort of underpants he wore — boxer shorts or jockey briefs.

I said on my radio show — and I am one radio host who almost never commented on President Clinton (until the impeachment hearings — about which, for the record, I was both publicly and privately ambivalent) — that it was inconceivable that any other president would have been asked this question. Even worse, the President responded to the question. He should have said, "Young lady, one does not ask that of anyone publicly, least of all the President of the United States."

Another example of the erosion of presidential dignity was at the Democratic national convention when the Vice President gave a prolonged, open-mouthed kiss to his wife. No president or presidential nominee had ever done this. Many of us love

our wives as much as Mr. Gore professes his love for Tipper. But most of us do not grab our wives and act so unreservedly in public forums. I do not kiss my own wife like that in front of our closest friends or children, and I suspect that this is true of virtually every reader of this journal.

Second, support Israel.

As President, you will have to decide if America will remain neutral — as it now claims to be — toward Israel and those who wish its destruction, or whether America will resolutely support Israel. It is morally indefensible to be "neutral" when innumerable numbers of young men are lining up to murder Jews while chanting "God is great;" when Palestinians cheer the ripping apart of Jews and show hands soaked in innocent Jews' blood to a frenzied Palestinian mob; when every Palestinian who murders a Jew is declared a hero and martyr in virtually every Palestinian mosque, school, and home.

As the President of the United States, you should take the Bible seriously — specifically God's promise to Abraham, "I will bless those that bless you and curse those that curse you." America's blessedness and its support for Israel are related, and this blessed state will not survive should America abandon the Jewish people. Many Jews have been thrilled to see the large number of Jews serving this past Administration, but the truth is that Israel would probably be much better off if many believing Christians were in the next administration. Far more Christians believe in that biblical passage than do Jews.

Sincerely,  
Dennis Prager  
Los Angeles

## Prosperity or Poverty

Dear President Bush,

Even after the record prosperity of recent years, there are large numbers of people in America who are still left behind economically. Neither you nor candidate Gore spoke much about this in the campaign; you need to address this important subject.

Our country is massively wealthier than it was twenty years ago. Yet while our gross domestic

product has doubled, the average American family isn't twice as well off. The top fifth of Americans have done well, and the top 1 percent have done extraordinarily well. In the late 1970s their total income was equal to the total income of the top 1 percent. Now the top 1 percent — or about 2.7 million people — have incomes equal to the total income of the bottom 38 percent, or 100 million people. Those at the