Bush: Must not cede victory to extremists

by UPI

ANNAPOLIS, Md. -- U.S. President George Bush Tuesday convened his Middle East peace summit, saying "we must not cede victory to the extremists."Bush urged Israelis and Palestinians to understand and help each other. Only through such understanding can both achieve their aspirations, Bush said in prepared remarks delivered to representatives from some 40 nations gathered at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.The goal, Bush said, is Israelis and Palestinians living side-by-side in peace."Achieving this goal will not be easy -- if it were easy, it would have happened a long time ago," Bush said. Bush said the goal of the Annapolis conference is to get serious peace talks started again."For the rest of us, our job is to encourage the parties in this effort -- and to give them the support they need to succeed," he said.Bush said he decided to convene the talks now because he sees determination among Israeli and Palestinian leaders to achieve peace and because peace between Israelis and Palestinians is crucial "for the future of the Middle East -- and we must not cede victory to the extremists." Bush said the rest of the world also understands the urgency."The task begun here at Annapolis will be difficult. This is the beginning of the process, not the end of it -- and much work remains to be done," Bush said. "Yet the parties can approach this work with confidence. The time is right. The cause is just. And with hard effort, I know they can succeed."

Copyright Â© 2007, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.