

George W. Bush planned a trip to the Middle East to discuss issues with several leaders there; however, the US economy and the budget were in such bad shape that the USAF couldn't afford 10,000 gallons of jet fuel that it would take for Air Force One to make the flight. Because congressional action to approve more money could take forever (or nearly so), some bright staff member suggested asking public citizens for donations to finance the trip. Although John Kerry was sure that he would be the last person in Washington to be asked to contribute, even though he and Bush were fraternity brothers, along about noon of the second day, a group representing Bush approached him to ask if he and his wife Teresa could make the necessary contribution. Not wanting to help Bush, who he thought unfairly won the 2004 election, but also not wanting to appear stingy, Kerry hesitated briefly and then asked how much had been pledged. The spokesman hemmed and hawed but finally answered, "Well, we've had several offers of 5,000 gallons if the person making the donation can get sole credit."