

side—but we'll receive them at any time that's appropriate to them.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 5:30 p.m. at Brdo Castle. President Putin spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. In his remarks, President Bush referred to his mother, Barbara Bush, his mother-in-law, Jenna Welch, and his daughters, Jenna and Barbara P.;

Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov; and President Milan Kucan and Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek of Slovenia. He also referred to MAP, NATO's Membership Action Plan process. President Putin referred to former U.S. Secretary of State Madeline K. Albright; and to JPC, the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council. A reporter referred to NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and  
an Exchange With Reporters  
*June 18, 2001*

*The President.* Good morning. The Secretary and I were following up on our recent trip to Europe. I had some conversations today with the President of Spain, the Prime Minister of Britain, the President of Poland, to brief them on my conversations with President Putin.

The conversation with President Putin was positive. It indicated to me that we can have a very frank and honest relationship, that there are areas where we can work together. And I shared with those three leaders the summary of my discussions with him.

They were most pleased that the conversation went well. They were pleased to hear that the United States welcomes Russia to look westward and will help Russia do so. And they were pleased to hear we're going to send some delegations over to Russia to have economic dialog.

So, the Secretary is here today, where we can follow up and put an action plan in place to take advantage of the cooperation that I'm confident can exist.

*Senior Adviser on Strategic Initiatives Karl Rove*

Q. Mr. President, I was wondering what your level of confidence is, sir, in one of your senior political advisers, Mr. Rove? It

seems that some Republicans have voiced displeasure about some of the issues and decisions he was involved in recently—Vieques among them—as well as the calls for investigation of him, sir, in the House. I'm just wondering what your level of confidence is.

*The President.* My level of confidence with Karl Rove has never been higher. He's a man of—he gives me sound advice. He adheres to the ethical rules of our Government, and he's doing a great job on behalf of the American people.

*Situation in Macedonia*

Q. Mr. President, President Putin is now warning that the situation in Macedonia shows signs of becoming another, sort of, Kosovo. And in particular, he's called for closing the border between Kosovo and Macedonia, Albania and Macedonia. Are those steps that you would support? And what do you think can be done to avoid having the sort of U.S.-Russian tensions that occurred during the Kosovo crisis?

*The President.* Well, we strongly believe we need to shut off the border between Kosovo and Macedonia. As a matter of fact, our troops that participate in KFOR are doing just that.

President Putin also believes that we ought to all work together to achieve a political solution. And the Secretary of State—he'll be glad to comment on that—has worked very closely with Mr. Trajkovski, as well as the legitimate Albanians, those who aren't extremists, those who want the Government to work. We are—as you know, there was a meeting over the weekend, right before the weekend, where democratically elected officials in Macedonia met to determine how best to fashion a constitution that meets minority needs. We strongly support that process.

I believe we can work with the Russians. We share the same interests, which is a stable Macedonia. Our Governments understand that a Macedonia that is fractured, where extremists are able to make headway is a—it will create instability in the region.

#### *U.S.S. Cole Investigation*

Q. Mr. President, can you comment, sir, on reports out of Yemen that the FBI investigators that are looking into the bombing of the U.S.S. *Cole* are leaving the area?

*The President.* I'm not in a position to make comments on that right now. Once we finish our full investigation, our Government will be willing to discuss that.

Q. Are you pleased with the pace of the investigation, sir?

*The President.* I'd rather not comment about ongoing investigations, particularly in regards to the security of the country.

#### *Energy Price Controls*

Q. With the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission meeting on the California power crisis—price crisis today, are you still

as firmly opposed, as you've said in the past, to mandatory, strict price controls?

*The President.* I am, because price controls do not create additional supply, nor do they reduce demand. I think price controls would not benefit the California consumer. It wouldn't help solve the problem. I'm interested in seeing what FERC comes up with. They're not talking about firm price controls. They're talking about a mechanism to—as I understand it—a mechanism to mitigate any severe price spike that may occur, which is completely different from price controls.

Q. Do you like that idea?

*The President.* I want to see what they have to say. I haven't had a chance to fully look at what their proposal is. As you know, it's an independent organization. And although I've had the opportunity of naming two members, I believe, to the FERC, they are independent. They know full well my administration's belief that price controls will not solve the problem. And a lot of folks in California understand that, as well.

Again, I repeat: Price controls do not increase supply nor reduce demand, and that's precisely what is needed in the State of California.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; and President Boris Trajkovski of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### Remarks to Agricultural Leaders June 18, 2001

Well, thank you very much. It's nice to be home. [*Laughter*] And welcome to the

people's home. As I'm sure you can imagine, it is an unimaginable honor to live