

Steve, is to work on a—is to work on a political solution.

Georgia-Russia Relations

Q. —very complicated problems, with Russian bases problems—

President Bush. Well, I appreciate you bringing up the Russian bases problem. We expect the Russian Government to honor the Istanbul commitment. The Istanbul commitment made it very clear that Russia would leave those places. We will continue to work with the President and President Putin on that commitment.

I also appreciate very much the President's work with the Russians. It's important that relations between Georgia and Russia be positive. I found it a very positive move and a very sophisticated move by the President that his first trip was to Russia, and I encouraged that. I thought it was a smart thing to do. And we will work with Vladimir Putin, with whom I've got a good relationship, to make sure relations

are good with Georgia. It's important for the Georgian people to have good and strong and peaceful relations with Russia. There's a lot we can work on. We can work together to fight terror. Hopefully, as the Georgia economy approves—improves—and I'm confident it will—there will be opportunities for—business opportunities.

So the President has got a good vision and this has been a good trip. I believe in his abilities, and I appreciate his vision. And the people of Georgia will be well served by his leadership.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:26 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia. A reporter referred to President Jean-Bertrand Aristide of Haiti. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of U.S. Military Forces in Response to Security Concerns for United States Embassy Personnel in Haiti

February 25, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Increasing armed rebellion in Haiti, the limited effectiveness of the Haitian National Police, and insecurity in Port-au-Prince brought on by increased armed pro-government gang activity have contributed to a climate of insecurity for the U.S. Embassy and its supporting facilities in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. These circumstances and the potential for further deterioration of the security environment in Haiti render the safety of the U.S. Embassy, its facilities, and U.S. personnel uncertain.

On February 23, 2004, a security force of approximately 55 U.S. military personnel from the U.S. Joint Forces Command de-

ployed to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to augment the Embassy security forces.

Although the U.S. forces are equipped for combat, this movement was undertaken solely for the purpose of protecting American citizens and property. It is anticipated that U.S. forces will provide this support until such time as it is determined that the security situation has stabilized and the threat to the Embassy, its facilities, and U.S. personnel has ended.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the

Congress informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Ted Stevens, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Message to the Congress Reporting a Certification Regarding NATO Invitees Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia

February 25, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with Condition (3) of the resolution of advice and consent to the ratification of the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, adopted by the United States Senate on May 8, 2003, and based on the recommendation of the Department of State, I hereby certify to the Congress that each of these governments is cooperating fully with United States efforts to obtain the fullest possible accounting of captured or missing United States personnel from past military conflicts or Cold War incidents, to include:

- (A) facilitating full access to relevant archival material; and
- (B) identifying individuals who may possess knowledge relative to captured or missing United States personnel, and encouraging such individuals to speak with United States Government officials.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
February 25, 2004.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 26.

Message to the Senate Reporting a Certification Regarding NATO Invitees Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia

February 25, 2004

To the Senate of the United States:

Consistent with Condition (1)(A) of the resolution of advice and consent to the ratification of the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, adopted by the United States Senate on May 8, 2003, and based on the recommendation of the Department of State, I hereby certify to the Senate that:

- (i) the inclusion of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia in NATO will not have the effect of increasing the overall percentage share of the United States in the common budgets of NATO; and (ii) the inclusion of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia in NATO does not detract from the ability of the United States