

Remarks on Being Presented the Order of Three Stars, First-Class in Riga, Latvia

May 7, 2005

Madam President, I gratefully accept. I am so honored and so thrilled to be here in your beautiful country.

I was telling the President that it's such a joy to come to a country that loves and values freedom and to be in the presence of a President who speaks so clearly about the need for people to be free and her recognition that a free world will yield peace.

And so, Madam President, thank you for your hospitality, and thank you so much for this great honor. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 a.m. in the Hall of Coats and Arms at Riga Castle. In his remarks, he referred to President Vaira Vike-Freiberga of Latvia.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Vaira Vike-Freiberga of Latvia in Riga

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President Vike-Freiberga. We are, of course, very gratified at this sudden interest in Latvia that we're seeing among the journalists. [Laughter] And it's truly a great pleasure to see these wonderful journalists coming to my country and having a look around. And, Mr. President, I think that you have something to do with that. [Laughter]

President Bush. Well, thank you for having us, Madam President. It's been a trip I've really been anxious to fulfill. I admire your leadership; I admire your country's courage. I love the fact that you're a free nation and willing to speak out so clearly for freedom. So, thanks for the hospitality.

President Vike-Freiberga. And we're pleased that the cameras are now turned on Latvia while you are here. [Laughter]

President Bush. That's right.

Q. Mr. President—

President Bush. Thank you all. We'll have ample opportunity in an open press conference. And I certainly wouldn't want you to fire your best question here. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:10 a.m. in the Golden Hall at Riga Castle. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.