

Thank you.

Mayor Ismet Mavriqi of Fushe-Kruje, Albania.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:50 p.m. at Cafe Cela. In his remarks, he referred to

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments

June 8, 2007

Dear Madam Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2008 Budget amendments for the Departments of Commerce, Energy, Homeland Security, Justice, and Transportation, as well as the Legal Services Corporation. Overall, the discretionary budget authority proposed in my FY 2008 Budget would not be increased by these requests.

This transmittal also contains FY 2007 proposals and FY 2008 Budget amendments for the Legislative Branch. As a mat-

ter of comity between branches, appropriations requests of the Legislative Branch are transmitted without change.

The details of these amended requests and proposals are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 11.

The President's News Conference With President Georgi Parvanov of Bulgaria in Sofia, Bulgaria

June 11, 2007

President Parvanov. Distinguished members of the delegation, ladies and gentlemen: I would like briefly to outline the results of the discussions we just had and just closed with the President of the United States, George Bush. I must say, this is a very significant visit. It is another proof, a very cogent proof of the fact that our two countries' relations are in their best state now in more than a hundred years of their establishment.

I am happy we had a chance today to draw the balance sheet of what has happened in the interim since the meeting, our visit there in Washington in October 2005. And indeed, the balance sheet is definitely positive. The United States and Bul-

garia continue to be good, reliable partners within NATO, within the peacekeeping missions in different parts of the world. This is a firm, long-term commitment. It is not affected by the changes and setup of the political situations in both countries.

The second thing that strikes about it is the new dynamics in the development of our economic relations. We have either new or updated treaties, bilateral treaties, which give the framework of our business contacts. There has been a sharp trend of improving the term over, and the American investments in Bulgaria, and the number of U.S. tourists to Bulgaria also is on the increase. However, this is not the ceiling.

We believe there is a much greater potential, and this is why we should seek and explore the avenues of promoting these trends in several directions: A, by presenting a better, fuller, and more adequate image of Bulgaria in the United States, with an emphasis on the business information, addressed to the businesspeople. And I hope that the newly setup foundation, America for Bulgaria, will promote these efforts.

Second, in the foreseeable future, very soon we will, hopefully, have a positive solution on the visa regime, on facilitating, lifting the visa barriers. And we do appreciate everything that President Bush has personally been doing in the light of the negotiations within the United States and the European Union. And we, in turn, pledge to do our best to meet our commitments on the security, which is one of the major criteria in addressing this issue.

I believe we should make an effort to improve the structure of trade and investment. And I did lay down to my guest, President Bush, the possibility for a more significant involvement of American businesses in the major energy projects, both in Bulgaria and the Balkans, in the infrastructure, in the defense industry. A better cooperation in this area, in the defense industry, could be an important incentive for the development of our economy as a whole. I do hope we will have President Bush—the support of President Bush and the United States—in our effort to modernize our armed forces at a faster pace, so that we could be effective and efficient in performing—discharging our commitments as allies.

And next, I would like to thank President Bush for the support we've always enjoyed from the United States to our efforts to find a fair, a just solution to the crisis with the Bulgarian medics in Libya and for their release. And I was happy to hear from him this repeated support.

At the same time, we discussed the two countries' possibilities, both within the—our

interaction with the European Union and otherwise, to support and help for the treatment of the AIDS-infected children and their families as a longer term commitment through involvement in the International Fund, which is meant to streamline this process. And I did point out to President Bush that there are expectations both among the public and in the media in this country, an expectation from the major companies to get involved and to donate to this fund.

We also discussed a wide range of international issues related to the situation in the Balkans, to our desire to play a stabilizing role in the Balkans, to be a factor of stability here. We also commented on some of the issues that are on both countries' agenda and on the agendas of the European Union and NATO.

Thank you.

President Bush. President Parvanov, thank you very much. I call him George. He calls me George. It's good to be here in your beautiful country. Laura and I are looking forward to our lunches together. Thank you very much.

We are allies, we share values, and we believe in freedom. And I appreciate the progress your country has made toward a free society. And I thank you for being an ally in helping others realize the blessings of liberty. We have accepted our responsibilities to help defend freedom against terrorists and extremists, and it's hard work. And I thank the people of Bulgaria for understanding the stakes, the true challenges of the 21st century.

We had a great discussion, and that's what you'd expect among friends. I am impressed by the transition that Bulgaria has made to a free market economy. Success is evidenced by results, by the results of attracting more capital. I know U.S. companies are seriously looking at Bulgaria, and that's because there is transparency and fairness in taxes. In other words, when somebody invests in a country, they expect to get a reasonable rate of return, and they

expect government to not interfere but, in fact, to expedite the flow of capital. And so therefore, when the President talks about more capital coming to your country from the United States, it means that the government has made reforms necessary to attract capital.

My call, of course, is to continue to make reforms and, if you find corruption, rout it out. People of Bulgaria expect their government to be open and honest, and so do those who spend capital in countries. And the President is committed to that; I know.

We talked about the energy diversification program for Bulgaria. America has got to diversify its energy too. We're too dependent on foreign sources of energy. So, we share a common goal about diversification of energy supply. We're in the process of spending a lot of money on new technologies that will enable us to diversify our energy supply and, at the same time, be good stewards of the environment. And I look forward to sharing those technologies with countries, once they become fully developed.

I appreciate very much the reforms you made so that the EU is comfortable in accepting Bulgaria as a member state, and I congratulate you on those accomplishments. And of course, we're proud to stand with you in NATO. These are big achievements for this country, and the people of Bulgaria ought to be proud of the achievements that they have achieved.

We discussed, of course, Iraq. And I thank the President and I thank the people of Bulgaria for supporting those in Iraq who long to live in a free society. The fight's tough in Iraq, and I know some of your families have suffered. And on behalf of our Nation, I extend our condolences and prayers to the families who have lost a loved one against these extremists and murderers.

I thank you for your commitment to Afghanistan. And I appreciate so very much your willingness to do the hard work nec-

essary to enable young democracies to survive in the face of significant opposition from ideologues who use murder as a weapon to achieve their objectives. Mr. President, I firmly believe the commitments that we're making are laying the foundations of peace for generations to come.

I thank you for your advice on Kosovo. We spent some time talking about Kosovo. The time is now to move the Ahtisaari plan. We—America believes that Kosovo ought to be independent, and I sought the President's advice. One of the things he made clear is something I agree with, and that is, is that as we seek independence for Kosovo, we've also got to make it clear to the—Serbia that there's a way forward, maybe in NATO, maybe in the EU, and definitely in better relations with the United States. So, I thank you for your sound judgment and your solid advice.

We talked about the Bulgarian nurses. This is not the first conversation I've had with the President on this subject. He's deeply concerned about the fate of the nurses. We spoke in person about it at the White House, we have had phone calls on the subject, and of course, today again he emphasized his deep concern for the nurses and their families. And I appreciate your compassion, Mr. President.

We strongly support the release of the Bulgarian nurses in Libya. That's the position of the United States. They should be released, and they should be allowed to be returned to their families. We will continue to make clear to Libya that the release of these nurses is a high priority for our country.

Our hearts also go out to the children who have been infected by HIV/AIDS. Together with the EU, the United States is contributing to a fund to provide assistance to the Libyan children suffering from this disease and to their families. My hope is that this issue gets resolved quickly.

We talked about visa reform. I assured the President, what I said in the past is

what I still believe, and that is: We need to reform our visa system. The system is stuck in the past. It can be reformed to work better for the citizens of this country. And I'm working with Congress to get it done. We're in the middle of an immigration debate, as well, in America. I hope that my country understands that it's in our interest to treat people with respect and to treat people fairly. And so I told the President that we'll continue to work with Congress to resolve this issue in a satisfactory way. I've laid out a way forward, and I'm committed to seeing it through.

And so, George, thanks for having me. It's been a good visit. I'm looking forward to lunch. And I guess we'll answer some questions.

*Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales/
Immigration Reform*

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. You've had quite a week in Europe, and I wonder, as we head home, if I could ask you to turn to some domestic issues. Your Attorney General is under fire in the Senate. General Pace has had a setback. The immigration reform bill seems not to be moving very quickly. And I won't even mention the latest polls. So I'm just wondering, sir, as you head home, to what extent do you still have the political clout and capital to get some of these issues done? Do you have any left? If you do, how do you intend to use it?

President Bush. First of all, we've had a great trip, Ed [Edwin Chen, Los Angeles Times]. It's a chance for America to talk about a liberty agenda and a chance to talk to our allies about how we can advance it and what we can do together to make our respective countries better off.

Listen, the immigration debate is a tough debate. I'm under no illusions about how hard it is. There are people in my party that don't want a comprehensive bill; there are people in the Democrat Party that don't seem to want a comprehensive bill. I was

disappointed that the bill was temporarily derailed.

I frankly find it interesting that a so-called important subject they need to get to would be to pass a political resolution on my Attorney General that's going to have no bearing on whether he serves in office or not.

I believe we can get an immigration bill. Now, it's going to require leadership from the Democrat leaders in the Senate, and it's going to require me to stay engaged and work with Republicans who want a bill.

Last—earlier in this trip, I called three members of the Senate from the Republican Party and said: "What can we do together to get the bill back up? What do we need to do to work with Senators like Senator Ted Kennedy, who is strongly committed to a comprehensive bill?" And tomorrow I'll be going to the Senate to talk about a way forward on the piece of legislation.

It's important that we address this issue now. And I believe we can get it done. Listen, there was—a lot of progress was made between people in both parties making hard decisions necessary to move a comprehensive plan. It's in the Nation's interest to get a comprehensive bill done. So the political process sometimes isn't pretty to look at it. There's two steps forward, one step back. We made two steps forward on immigration, we took a step back, and now I'm going to work with those who are focused on getting an immigration bill done and start taking some steps forward again. I believe we can get it done. I'll see you at the bill signing.

Bulgarian Nurses Held in Libya

Q. President Bush, you have already voiced your support in favor of our medics and their release. We appreciate that. Although, despite the fact that our fellow country people are still in prison—absolutely innocent, as you well know—I would like to ask you, as a part of the general effort to solve this drama, which has been

going on for more than 10—8 years now, my question is: Would you commit yourself to lobbying in front of the U.S. Congress and doing so that some of the funds under your 5-year program for fighting HIV/AIDS can go to supporting the children infected with AIDS and their families?

And, President Parvanov, I would be happy to hear your view on the Libya issue, and, notably, how would you comment the fact, or rather the Bulgarian media's idea, who are covering the trial in Libya, to send a letter to the hundred most influential representatives of the economy and business, according to the Forbes ratings, and call on them to donate to the building of modern, up-to-date medical center where children, all people, with HIV/AIDS could be treated?

President Bush. There's a fund into which we're contributing money. And I don't think you ought to be concerned about the source of the funding. What you ought to be focused on is whether or not the U.S. is willing to commit funds, along with the EU. And we are. And at the same time, we're willing to send messages to the Libya Government that we expect the release of the nurses. We've been very much in concert with your Government. This is an issue that we care about. And so—but we do agree with the strategy that there ought to be some compensation for the Libyan children and their families.

President Parvanov. Ladies and gentlemen, many of you know that I have visited Libya; I have visited the hospital in Benghazi. I've spoken with the parents and the infected children, and I'm clearly aware of the great drama they're suffering, they're going through, and how much it needs to be done in order to invest in this hospital and in order to relieve the pain and suffering of both the children and their kin, and their families and friends.

This is a Bulgarian; this is a European; this is a commitment of the entire democratic public, worldwide. By all means, Bulgaria and, I believe, our friends from the

United States and the European Union consider this not a one-off, not a temporary—an attempt to release the nurses, and then we quit. For us—and I'm happy that this was—we went along with George on this. For us, this is a long-term commitment. This is a commitment we take in respect of the both those suffering in Benghazi, but also everyone suffering of AIDS, not just in Benghazi, but in the whole of Africa. Let's remember G-8 and their decision: \$60 billion were allocated to this policy by the world democratic community a few days ago.

I, for one, 6 months ago, in addressing the European Parliament, I said—and I appealed to the big players, so to speak, worldwide, in the businesses worldwide, to take a more—a firmer commitment to this fund, to donate more, contribute more to this fund. In this sense, I join my voice and I welcome and I do support the appeal which the Bulgarian media have issued. I hope their voice will be heard. I know, whenever the media speak, their voice is heard more clearly than that of politicians.

*Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales/
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*

Q. Mr. President, I want to take you back to domestic issues again. You say the no-confidence vote has no bearing as to whether Alberto Gonzales remains as Attorney General. How can he continue to be effective? And it seems like you're not listening to Congress when it comes to Gonzales, but you are listening to Congress when it comes to Peter Pace.

President Bush. Yes, it's an interesting comment about Congress—isn't it?—that, on the one hand, they say that a good general shouldn't be reconfirmed, and, on the other hand, they say that my Attorney General shouldn't stay. And I find it interesting. I guess it reflects the political atmosphere of Washington. And they can try to have their votes of no confidence, but it's not going to determine—make the determination who serves in my Government.

Pete Pace was going to go up for confirmation; that's the difference. I have—I had confidence in Pete Pace. But people view this as an opportunity to make statements, and upon the recommendation of Secretary of Defense Gates, I agreed to send up another nominee.

And as to Al Gonzales, first of all, this process has been drug out a long time, which says to me it's political. There's no wrongdoing. You know, he—they haven't said, "Here's—you've done something wrong, Attorney General Gonzales." And therefore, I ascribe this lengthy series of news stories and hearings as political. And I'll make the determination if I think he's effective or not, not those who are using an opportunity to make a political statement on a meaningless resolution.

Missile Defense System/Energy

Q. President, clearly the relations between our two countries, politically, have been very good. How could we achieve the same in the area of security, in the context of the antimissile shield, our common—our cooperation in using common sites, and also in respect of the trade investment?

President Bush. Do you want me to start on the missiles? The proposed missile shield is aimed at long-range missiles, missiles that would fly over Bulgaria. There are missile systems and defense systems available that would deal with intermediate-range missiles. And so just because Bulgaria is not a part of the longer range missile shield doesn't mean that there won't be equipment and help available for intermediate range. That's how I can answer that question.

I know this creates some concerns around Europe, this missile shield, because of Russian objections. And so I had a meeting with President Putin in Germany at the G-8 and explained to him what I've been saying publicly, is, the missile shield would be developed to deal with a rogue regime that would try to hold a free nation

hostage, or free nations hostage; that it's not aimed at Russia.

I talked to Vladimir Putin a lot about our relations and made it clear that I simply do not view Russia as an enemy. I view Russia as a country with whom we should have and can have good relations to solve common problems.

One such problem is Iran. Another problem is proliferation. There are areas we can work together, and he brought an interesting proposal. He said: "I have an idea. Why don't we jointly use a radar in Azerbaijan to help deal with a potential threat?" And I said: "That's a good idea. I don't know how—whether it's technologically feasible; I'm not an expert. I've got experts in my Government, however, who could analyze your proposal, and I'd like for you to maybe—not maybe—I'd like for you to assign some experts in your Government to analyze my proposal."

And that's where we left it in Germany. So we're going to have a group of people come together from the State Department, Defense Department, and the military to discuss how to deal with the true threats of the 21st century.

And I would hope that would help explain some of the rhetoric that people in your country have seen coming out of the G-8, that there's a process where we can collaborate and share information in a very transparent way, which I think will be beneficial. And I would hope that the Russians would see the meetings as beneficial and out of the meetings realize our true intent, and hopefully, design systems that protect us all.

President Parvanov. I would like to begin by saying that we welcome the strategic dialog, and it was described as a strategic dialog by both leaders, both by President Bush and by Putin, a dialog which started within the framework of G-8. We Bulgarians would accept any solution that

would provide more guarantees, more security guarantees, more guarantees of the indivisibility of the security of the Euro-Atlantic space, any solution that has been achieved, hammered out through dialog and in transparency, and any solution that is not directed against a third country, notably Russia in this case.

I would take the liberty of paraphrasing something that was said in Prague—hopefully, my source was reliable; the President would correct me if I'm wrong or imprecise—the Bulgarians mustn't choose between their friendship with the United States and that with Russia. The Bulgarians should and can maintain friendly relations with both countries. Just as I am a friend with George and a friend with Vladimir, we could maintain, within the context of our Euro-Atlantic orientation, friendly relations with both without diluting the things, without losing sight of our strategic priorities. We should maintain relations with everyone who thinks likewise.

This means the same approach would apply to the energy, the infrastructure sphere. This is why Bulgaria maintains—

has maintained active relations with Russia on the major infrastructure, or rather energy projects.

I myself, earlier today, offered to President Bush a clearer, firmer commitment by American companies to the energy project. Chevron, in respect of Bourgas-Alexandroupolis, or AMBO—I'm not going to list them all here—this is an investment in peace and the security of the region. This is a geostrategic contribution. And I'm saying this both as the President of Bulgaria, but also as a citizen of the Balkans, a region for whose fate and future I feel responsible.

President Bush. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10:35 a.m. at the National Museum of Archaeology. In his remarks, he referred to former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Future Status Process of Kosovo. President Parvanov and some reporters spoke in Bulgarian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by President Georgi Parvanov of Bulgaria in Sofia

June 11, 2007

Mrs. Parvanova, Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, members of the Government, and distinguished guests: Laura and I are thrilled to be with you, and we're really happy to be in your country.

You know, sitting here in this beautiful museum reminds me of the great history of Bulgaria. And it was important for me to be with leaders who are still writing a history of this important country. And for a person who was raised in the deserts of Texas, this is a magnificent view. It reminds me of the beauty of your country. I was

telling the President, my only regret is that we didn't have this meeting on the beaches.

I congratulate you on your admission into the EU. A lot of people said, there is no way that Bulgaria can do the necessary things to join the EU. And you proved the critics wrong. We're proud to be a member of NATO with you. Bulgaria is a valued ally of all of us in NATO and a valued ally of the United States.

I thank you for your strong stand for freedom. I thank you for helping spread liberty into places like Iraq and Afghanistan, where people want to live a peaceful