

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Lech Kaczynski of Poland July 16, 2007

President Bush. Mr. President, welcome to the United States. Poland and the United States have a very unique and strong relationship. And the President and I have just had a very constructive dialog. And, by the way, Mr. President, there are a lot of my fellow citizens who trace their heritage back to Poland who are delighted to welcome you to America.

And along those lines, I fully understand a lot of Polish citizens would like to travel to the United States. And so my friend the President has once again brought up to me the visa waiver issue, which I fully understand, Mr. President, and thank you for your candor. And I will continue to work with Congress to change a law that needs to be changed.

Poland is a strong ally. And Poland has taken some very difficult decisions to help a young democracy survive in the face of extremist threats. And I want to thank you, Mr. President, and the Polish people for supporting the people of Afghanistan and Iraq.

War is never popular. But having heard from the Iraqi leaders today and their expression of gratitude, not only to the Polish Government but the Polish people and the American people for supporting this democratic experiment, Mr. President, it reminds me of how important what we're doing is.

America is, of course, pleased that the Polish economy is strong. We want our friends to prosper. Of course, the President, in all modesty, reminded me that's the purview of the Prime Minister. Of course, I reminded the President he knows the Prime Minister quite well. [*Laughter*]

And finally, we talked about how we can enhance the mutual security issues. And there's no better symbol of our desire to work for peace and security than working on a missile defense system, a missile defense system that would provide a—security

for Europe from single or dual-launch regimes that may emanate from parts of the world where leaders don't particularly care for our way of life and/or are in the process of trying to develop serious weapons of mass destruction.

And I thank you, Mr. President, for your vision and your understanding about the nature of the world in which we live. And I thank you for working on behalf of securing the security of others. And we continue to work and consult very closely with you. And so we welcome you. Thank you for coming.

President Kaczynski. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. President has already briefed you about the issues we were talking about during our meeting. And concerning visa waiver, we discussed the issue; however, it is in the hands of the Congress. We do understand that the legislative process in the U.S. is very—it is stable, and it is really hard to change that binding law, that existing law. And so we are looking forward to positive changes in this area.

Another very important issue is the issue of missile defense. And I would like to emphasize that we discussed it in terms of defensive instruments because it is aimed at defense of our democracies against the countries who might have or already do have nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. So it is really a defense instrument—missile defense instrument. And so I do hope that all this project—the whole project will be completed successfully.

And we also discussed other forums which could foster and strengthen our mutual relations and also the NATO. And this issue of strengthening our cooperation will be discussed at the level of the Secretary of Defense of the United States of America

and also our Defense Minister of the Republic of Poland and on the level of experts. And our conversation, our meeting is not over yet, and there are some issues we are going to—[inaudible].

President Bush. I've got to buy him some lunch. [Laughter]

Thank you, sir. Yes. Thank you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski of Poland. President Kaczynski referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; and Minister of National Defense Aleksander Szczyglo of Poland. President Kaczynski spoke in Polish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks on the Middle East *July 16, 2007*

Good afternoon. In recent weeks, debate in our country has rightly focused on the situation in Iraq, yet Iraq is not the only pivotal matter in the Middle East. More than 5 years ago, I became the first American President to call for the creation of a Palestinian state. In the Rose Garden, I said that Palestinians should not have to live in poverty and occupation. I said that the Israelis should not have to live in terror and violence. And I laid out a new vision for the future: two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

Since then, many changes have come, some hopeful, some dispiriting. Israel has taken difficult actions, including withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. Palestinians have held free elections and chosen a President committed to peace. Arab States have put forward a plan that recognizes Israel's place in the Middle East. And all these parties, along with most of the international community, now share the goal of a peaceful, democratic Palestinian state, a level of consensus never before seen on this crucial issue.

The past 5 years have also brought developments far too familiar in the recent history of the region. Confronted with the prospect of peace, extremists have responded with acts of aggression and terror. In Gaza, Hamas radicals betrayed the Pal-

estinian people with a lawless and violent takeover. By its actions, Hamas has demonstrated beyond all doubt that it is devoted to extremism and murder than to serving the Palestinian people.

This is a moment of clarity for all Palestinians, and now comes a moment of choice. The alternatives before the Palestinian people are stark. There is the vision of Hamas, which the world saw in Gaza, with murderers in black masks and summary executions and men thrown to their death from rooftops. By following this path, the Palestinian people would guarantee chaos and suffering and the endless perpetuation of grievance. They would surrender their future to Hamas's foreign sponsors in Syria and Iran. And they would crush the possibility of any—of a Palestinian state.

And there's another option, and that's a hopeful option. It is the vision of President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad; it's the vision of their Government; it's the vision of a peaceful state called Palestine as a homeland for the Palestinian people. To realize this vision, these leaders are striving to build the institutions of a modern democracy. They're working to strengthen the Palestinian security services, so they can confront the terrorists and protect the innocent. They're acting to set up competent ministries that deliver services without corruption. They're taking steps to improve the