

protect our nations and serves as forces for peace. And that is what's made our alliance unbreakable, and that is why NATO remains the most successful alliance in the history on behalf of human freedom.

Congratulations, and thank you.

Secretary General Jakob Gijbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic

Treaty Organization. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. at the Palace of Parliament. In his remarks, he referred to President Traian Basescu of Romania.

Remarks Following a Discussion With Prime Minister Calin Popescu-Tariceanu of Romania in Bucharest April 4, 2008

Interpreter. Hello, good day. Of course, our discussion was a very useful and very pleasant one. We discussed both bilateral issues between Romania and the United States. I expressed to the—to President Bush our gratitude for having had the trust to have Romania organize this important NATO summit in Bucharest.

The organization of the NATO summit in Bucharest was very symbolic. It is part of a much larger vision and concept, this vision being that to strengthen and to unify Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. And the idea was to foster, to strengthen the alliance in the eastern and southeastern flank, from the Baltic Sea all the way to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. That is how we have to interpret the membership of Albania and Croatia to NATO, the future membership of Macedonia, and eventual Georgia and Ukraine membership as well.

But our discussion was not limited to that. We also discussed other issues of political and economic relationship between our countries and about the U.S. investments in our country. And I shared with President Bush my ambition, my hope, and actually, my dream that to see a very important industrial investment from the United States in Romania, an investment with which generate common interests and would foster even more our partnership.

And I'm referring to the Ford company, and of course, a common interest like this would make me feel, as a citizen and as a Prime Minister, much more protected by our common interests.

I would like to also mention another initiative which was announced by the President yesterday, which was the creation of an American-Romanian foundation which will set up educational programs and grants for Romanian students. I'm talking about the seed money of \$100 million, which could be—

Prime Minister Popescu-Tariceanu. Hundred and fifty.

President Bush. Hundred fifty. Don't shortchange it.

Interpreter. —\$150 million, which in time will arrive at \$1 billion investment, which will create—which would be an investment in the future, creating the future—Romanian Ambassadors to United States or the American Ambassadors to Romania—it would be our hope.

Prime Minister Popescu-Tariceanu. Thank you.

President Bush. Yes, thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. We just had a great—we had a good meeting, because we're good friends. All right. Okay, I'll just keep going.

Interpreter. I was actually told that everybody speaks English, so I should not interpret.

President Bush. Okay, fine. I'll speak in Romanian. [Laughter] Anyway, we had a very good meeting, Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you for your time. First of all, I want to congratulate the Government, yourself, for hosting a very successful NATO summit. It's not easy to host as many automobiles, bodyguards, world leaders, hanger-on-ers as you did. And yet you did it and you organized well. Everybody who came to the summit was most impressed. I really do want to thank you, and I want to thank the people of Bucharest for their patience. I apologize for the inconvenience, but I do think it was a good sign, and it was important for your country to be the host of this important event. And it was a very successful summit.

We had good discussions about a successful bilateral relationship as well. I told the Prime Minister, one reason why capital comes to a country is because people feel comfortable about taking risk. I also congratulated him on these big investments that are coming; it's a good sign. And the people of Romania ought to be—appreciate the fact that the conditions are such that people are willing to invest. And by the way, investment creates jobs, which is also—will have a direct benefit for the people of Romania.

I also congratulated the Prime Minister on having a 16-percent flat tax. I'm a little envious. I would like to have been able to achieve the same objective for our Tax Code. And it was a smart thing to get done, cause I think those kinds of policies will enable the Romanian folks to have a bright future.

We talked about energy; we also talked about visas. There is a real contradiction here that's hard for the people of Romania

to understand in that, on the one hand, how can certain people within the EU be treated one way and Romanians be treated another way, when it comes to visas? And I fully understand that contradiction, Mr. Prime Minister. Our Congress passed new law—it frankly wasn't as good as I thought it should be, but nevertheless, it is the law of the land cause I signed it into law.

And we will work with your Government on a couple of matters: one, to figure out why the rejection rate is so high. There needs to be more transparency, and the Prime Minister made it very clear that we have an obligation to explain why certain folks are not getting visas. And we'll do that. And——

Prime Minister Popescu-Tariceanu.
Thank you.

President Bush. ——the other thing is, obviously, we've got law on our books that we need to work with you, to help everybody understand in the process what compliance means.

Overall, the trip here has been great. This is the second time I've come. I didn't have quite the dramatic rainbow scene this time as I did the first time I came, but it's—clearly there's been a lot of progress. The city looks different to me. The spirit is still strong. Freedom has taken hold, and I congratulate you, the Government, and all involved for the progress you've made. Thank you.

Prime Minister Popescu-Tariceanu.
Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:03 p.m. at the Victoria Palace. Prime Minister Popescu-Tariceanu spoke partly in Romanian, and those portions of his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the 40th Anniversary of the Death of Martin Luther King, Jr.
April 4, 2008

Forty years ago today, America was robbed of one of history's most consequential advocates for equality and civil rights. On this day, we mourn the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and we celebrate his powerful and eloquent message of justice and hope.

Dr. King was a man of courage and vision. He understood that love and compassion will always triumph over bitterness and hatred. His words and deeds inspired Americans of all races to confront prejudice

and to work to ensure that our country is a land of opportunity for all its men and women.

We have made progress on Dr. King's dream, yet the struggle is not over. Ensuring freedom and equality for all Americans remains one of our most important responsibilities. As we reflect upon Dr. King's life and legacy, we must recommit ourselves to following his lasting example of service to others.

Remarks at a Dinner Hosted by President Stjepan Mesic of Croatia in Zagreb, Croatia
April 4, 2008

Mr. President and Madam, thank you very much. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you very much. Also good to meet your wife.

Laura and I are thrilled to be in your beautiful country, Mr. President. We appreciate your gracious hospitality, and we celebrate your invitation to become one of America's closest allies. I—you said you're from a small country. I'm impressed by the big hearts and the big basketball team. [*Laughter*]

We are so proud of our relationship, Mr. President. We share common values. We believe in human rights and human dignity. We believe there's a Creator that has given every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth the great gift of freedom. We believe markets are capable of unleashing the entrepreneurial spirit of our peoples. We understand that freedom requires sacrifice.

I salute the people of your country for your courage and willingness to help a young democracy in Afghanistan not only thrive but succeed. I appreciate the friends who have stared evil in the face and understand there's a better tomorrow.

And so, Mr. President, I bring the greetings of my country to your beautiful land. With the honor due to a trusted ally, I offer a toast to you and to the valiant people of Croatia.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:04 p.m. at the Pucka Dvorana. In his remarks, he referred to Milka Mesic, wife of President Mesic; and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader of Croatia and his wife Mirjana. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Mesic.