

America stands for. Otherwise, why would so many people wanting to be—come here, for example, which we welcome. And so I don't—I hear just stuff like that, and I just—I dismiss it as kind of like what happens when there's, kind of, gossip and rumors and—because the truth of the matter is, America, just like many nations in Europe, stands for what's right, which is decency and freedom of speech and freedom to worship. And I'm very proud of my country, obviously.

2008 Presidential Election

Ms. Briski. Okay. And on American Presidency, actually on elections, international policies are the aspects where the President's work—that—where the Commander in Chief has an opportunity to change the history's course.

The President. Yes.

Ms. Briski. And that is why people around the world follow the American elections very, very closely. It's been very interesting so far.

The President. Yes, it has.

Ms. Briski. The Democrats—Democratic candidates have not been very easy on you.

The President. Of course not. They got me—look, if you're—that's what happens. I mean, they say, "We want change." Of course—and I tell people, every time I ran for politics I said, "We want change," unless, of course, I was the incumbent, in which case I was not for change; I was for myself. But what you'll see is a lot of rhetoric, and I understand that. It's—and,

you know, I'm in an unusual position because for the past 14 years, I've been an active candidate myself, and now I'm kind of getting to be a senior—kind of senior status. And I'll help my party, and of course, I'm for John McCain. But there will be a lot of debate, and it will be interesting to watch these candidates.

Ms. Briski. Sure. So your message to the 44th President of the United States would be?

The President. Stand on principle, stay strong, promote freedom, defend America, and work with our friends and allies to achieve common objectives.

Ms. Briski. Mr. President, thank you very much for this interview. I hope you will have a safe flight to Europe. And as you referred to Slovenia 2 years ago, on our Prime Minister's visit to the White House, as an "interesting slice of heaven," I hope you will have a heavenly stay.

The President. I'll bet I do.

Ms. Briski. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you so much. Good to see you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 10:15 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, in his former capacity as the President of Russia; and Republican Presidential candidate John McCain. Ms. Briski referred to Prime Minister Janez Jansa of Slovenia. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 8.

Remarks on Departure for Kranj, Slovenia June 9, 2008

Good morning. I'm just about to leave for Europe. I'm looking forward to my trip. I'm looking forward to meeting with our friends and allies. We've got strong relations in Europe, and this trip will help so-

lidify those relations. And we got a lot to talk about.

First, I'm looking forward to talking about the freedom agenda with the European nations. You know, we've got a lot

of work to do in Afghanistan. And the countries I'm going to have committed troops to Afghanistan, and of course, I want to thank them and remind them there's a lot of work to be done.

I talked to Laura yesterday, who, as you now know, took a trip to Afghanistan. I want to thank her for going. She gave me a good assessment about what she saw. She saw progress, but she also saw there needs to be a lot of work to be done—there's a lot of work to be done. And so she's going to go to the Paris conference, along with Secretary Rice, on our behalf to ask nations to contribute to the development of Afghanistan, which will mean they'll be contributing to peace.

And then, of course, we'll be talking about the economy. A lot of Americans are concerned about our economy. I can understand why. Gasoline prices are high; energy prices are high. I do remind them that we have put a stimulus package forward that is expected to help boost the economy. Of course, we'll be monitoring the situation.

We'll remind our friends and allies overseas that we're all too dependent on hydrocarbons and must work to advance technologies to help us become less dependent on hydrocarbons. I'll also remind them, though, that the United States has an opportunity to help increase the supply of oil on the market, therefore, taking pres-

sure off gasoline for hard-working Americans, and that I've proposed to the Congress that they open up ANWR and open up the Continental Shelf, and give this country a chance to help us through this difficult period by finding more supplies of crude oil, which will take the pressure off the price of gasoline.

These are global issues we'll be discussing. Secretary Paulson will be also discussing issues at the G-8 ministers in Japan this week.

As well, I'll talk about our Nation's commitment to a strong dollar. A strong dollar is in our Nation's interests; it is in the interests of the global economy. Our economy is large, and it's open and flexible. Our capital markets are some of the deepest and most liquid. And the long-term health and strong foundation of our economy will shine through and be reflected in currency values.

U.S. economy has continued to grow in the face of unprecedented challenges. We got to keep our economies flexible. Both the U.S. economy and European economies need to be flexible in order to deal with today's challenges.

I'm looking forward to my trip, and I'm looking forward to seeing Laura. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:55 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

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

June 9, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed amendments to my FY 2009 Budget requests for the Departments of Agriculture, Energy, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, the Interior, Labor, Transportation, and the Treasury; as

well as the Corps of Engineers, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Office of Personnel Management. These amendments will decrease by \$3 million the overall discretionary budget authority in my FY 2009 Budget.