

to express religion [religious] * freedom. And it's our way of expressing our personal faith and, at the same time, urging societies to feel comfortable with and confident in saying to their people, if you feel like praising God, you're allowed to do so in any way you see fit.

God bless, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:14 a.m. at Cua Bac Cathedral.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Hu Jintao of China in Hanoi

November 19, 2006

President Hu. It's a great pleasure to see you again, Mr. President. I remember, in the course of this year, we have already met each other three times; we had four telephone conversations; and we also maintained frequent exchange of letters. So it is fair to say that we are keeping very close touch and this has vigorously promoted China-U.S. relations.

I'm pleased to see new progress in China-U.S. relations since our meeting in St. Petersburg in July this year. Our two countries have maintained a frequent exchange of visits at the top levels and at different levels. And actually, our trade has also been expanding very rapidly, and I do have a piece of good news to share with you. According to U.S. statistics, in first 7 months of this year, U.S. exports to China jumped 35 percent.

Nationally, our mechanism for having strategic economic dialog has also been launched, and the first inaugural dialog will be held in Beijing around the middle of next month. And Chinese naval ships have again paid a visit to the continental America for the first time in 6 years. And even as we speak, our naval ships of the two countries are conducting joint search and rescue maneuvers in Chinese waters.

So, all in all, we feel very happy about the healthy and stable extension of China-U.S. relations. I think we would not have achieved such a state of our bilateral relations had it not been for your outstanding leadership.

* White House correction.

President Bush. Well, thank you.

President Hu. So, with this, I would like to turn it over to you.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. President. You're right; you and I have had a lot of meetings. And the reason why is because we recognize that working together, we can accomplish a lot for the security of the world and for the prosperity of our people. China is a very important nation, and the United States believes strongly that by working together, we can help solve problems such as North Korea and Iran.

Our bilateral relations are very good, and we—you and I are committed to keeping them that way. Obviously, with as much commerce between our countries as there is, there's going to be trade difficulties, but nevertheless, we both adopt a spirit of mutual respect and the desire to work through our problems for the common good of our peoples.

I strongly support your vision, Mr. President, of encouraging your country to become a nation of consumers and not savers, which will inure to the benefit of our manufacturers, both large and small, and our farmers as well.

I always enjoy our frank and friendly discussions, and I'm looking forward to this one as well. And I thank you for your hospitality.

Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8:34 a.m. at the Hanoi Daewoo Hotel. President Hu spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Vladimir Putin of Russia in Hanoi

November 19, 2006

President Bush. Today Vladimir and I are pleased to report that after a long set of negotiations, Representative Gref and Ambassador Schwab have signed agreements that will be good for the United States and good for Russia—and that is, we support Russia's accession into the WTO. I congratulate you all for your hard work and thank you very much for the hard work.

I repeat, this is a good agreement for the United States. And equally important, it's a good agreement for Russia, and it's a good agreement for the international trading community. And I thank you very much, Vladimir, for working hard on this agreement.

As usual, we've had a very important dialog. And we talked about common interests and how we can work together to solve some of the world's problems, including North Korea and Iran. And I want to thank you for your time and friendship.

President Putin. On my part, I would like to add that we've been in the process of difficult and lengthy work, 5 years of intense effort which has been culminated today with the signing of a protocol on Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization, which has been a successful outcome of this effort.

And I would like to underscore that this would not have been possible to achieve without expert and professional involvement both on the side of the U.S. and Russia, and without good will expressed in this—should I say, in the right term would be to use here—very businesslike approach in their dealing.

On top of that, it would not have been possible without a political will, which has been here expressed by the President of the United States of America. And I agree with you, George, that this lays out very favorable conditions to us to jointly tackle the very pertinent and acute problems of international relations together.

It also lays out favorable conditions to further develop the scope and volume of commerce and economic interaction between the business partners—between our two countries involved with other countries.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:16 p.m. at the Sheraton Hanoi. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Economic Development and Trade German Oskarovich Gref of Russia; and Ambassador Susan C. Schwab, U.S. Trade Representative. President Putin spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Business Leaders in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

November 20, 2006

Thank you all very much for—thank you very much for joining me and the Secretary of State. I find it really interesting that my first meeting in Ho Chi Minh City is at the stock exchange, and I'm meeting with entrepreneurs, people who have taken a look at the markets in Vietnam and have decided that this is a good place to invest.

I want to thank you all for coming to share some of your stories with me. I'm very interested in hearing what the opportunities are like and the obstacles you face and how, perhaps, the United States can help foster the market economy that is growing here.

I must tell you, I am, first of all, unbelievably grateful for the welcome that Laura and I have been received with here in Ho Chi Minh City—I've never seen as many people line the streets with such a friendly attitude. Secondly, when I read about the recent economic history of Vietnam, I am amazed at the size of the growth and the fact that are people are beginning to realize dreams. I recognize that some of you here at the table were born in Vietnam, came to the United States in the midseventies, and have decided to return. And I'm really interested in hearing what that has been like and the contrast in lifestyles and why you made the decisions you made.

And I do want to hear from you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. at the Ho Chi Minh City Securities Trading Center.

Remarks Following a Tour of the Pasteur Institute in Ho Chi Minh City

November 20, 2006

Laura and I are honored to be here at the center of an effort to help Vietnam battle HIV/AIDS. And Doctor, thank you for this wonderful tour. We've got a comprehensive strategy involved through our PEPFAR program with the country. We've got a very