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You can tell them that freedom is the only real path to prosperity and security and peace. And there are those who ask whether the pain and sacrifices for freedom are worth the costs. And they should come to Croatia, and you can show them that freedom is worth fighting for.

The great church in this square has stood since the Middle Ages. Over the centuries, it has seen long, dark winters of occupation and tyranny and war. But the spring is here at last. This is an era in history that generations of Croatians have prayed for. It is an era that Pope John Paul II envisioned when he came to this land and prayed with the Croatian people and asked for "a culture of peace." Today in this square, before this great church, we can now proudly say those prayers have been answered.

Interpreter. [*Inaudible*]

The President. They can't hear you. Don't worry about it.

May you always remember the joy of this moment in your history. And may the hopeful story of a peaceful Croatia find its way to those in the world who live as slaves and still await a joyful spring.

May God bless Croatia. And thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:49 a.m. in St. Mark's Square. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ivo Sanader of Croatia. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Sanader.

The President's Radio Address

April 5, 2008

Good morning. I'm speaking to you from Europe, where I attended the NATO summit and witnessed the hopeful progress of the continent's youngest democracies.

The summit was held in Romania, one of the 10 liberated nations that have joined the ranks of NATO since the end of the cold war. After decades of tyranny and oppression, today, Romania is an important member of an international alliance dedicated to liberty, and it is setting a bold example for other former Communist nations that desire to live in peace and freedom.

One of those nations is Croatia, which I'm also visiting on my trip. Croatia is a very different place than it was just a decade ago. Since they attained their independence, the Croatian people have shown the world the potential of human freedom. They've overcome war and hardship to build peaceful relations with their neighbors, and they have built a maturing democracy on the rubble of a dictatorship.

This week NATO invited Croatia, as well as the nation of Albania, to join the NATO alliance. These countries have made extraordinary progress on the road to freedom, prosperity, and peace. The invitation to join NATO represents the alliance's confidence that they will continue to make necessary reforms and that they will become strong contributors to NATO's mission of collective defense.

I regret that NATO was not able to extend an invitation to a third nation, Macedonia, at this week's summit. Like Croatia and Albania, Macedonia has met all the criteria for NATO membership. Unfortunately, its invitation was delayed because of a dispute over its name. I made clear that the name issue should be resolved quickly, that NATO should intensify its engagement with Macedonia, and that we look forward to the day when this young democracy takes its place among the members of the NATO alliance.

After a century when the great wars of Europe threatened destruction throughout the world, the continent has now entered into a promising new era. Less than two decades ago, Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia suffered under the yoke of Communist oppression. The people in these countries know what the gift of liberty means, because they know what it is like to have their liberty denied. They know the death and destruction that can be caused by the followers of radical ideologies who kill the innocent in pursuit of political power. And these lessons have led them to work alongside America in the war on terror.

Today, soldiers from Croatia, Albania, and Macedonia are serving bravely in Afghanistan, helping the Afghan people defeat terrorists and secure a future of liberty. And forces from Albania and Macedonia are also serving in Iraq, where they're helping the

Iraqi people build a society that rejects terror and lives in freedom. These nations have displayed the ultimate devotion to the principle of liberty, sacrificing to provide it for others.

Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia are not alone in discarding the chains to their past and embracing the promise of freedom. Another burgeoning democracy is Ukraine. Earlier this week, I traveled to Kiev to express America's support for beginning the process of bringing both Ukraine and Georgia into NATO. In recent years, both of these nations have seen tens of thousands take to the streets to peacefully demand their God-given liberty. The people of Ukraine and Georgia are an inspiration to the world, and I was pleased that this week NATO declared that Ukraine and Georgia will become members of NATO.

Nearly 7 years ago, I came to Europe and spoke to the students and faculty at Warsaw University in Poland. On that day, I declared that all of Europe's new democracies, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, should have the same chance for security and freedom and the same chance to join the institutions of Europe. Seven years later, we have made good progress toward fulfilling this vision, and more work remains.

In many parts of the world, freedom is still a distant aspiration. But in the ancient cities and villages of Europe, it is at the center of a new era of hope.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:30 p.m. on April 3 in Bucharest, Romania, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m., e.d.t., on April 5. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 4 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. Due to the 6-hour time difference, the radio address was broadcast after the President's remarks in Croatia. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Vladimir Putin of Russia in Sochi, Russia

April 6, 2008

President Putin. Dear Mr. President, let me once again welcome you here in Sochi. I am very pleased that you've accepted this invitation. And I'm pleased that after the meeting in Bucharest, you now have the opportunity to discuss with me our bilateral relations and security issues.

Yesterday we actually started discussing those issues, and today we'll have to—we have the opportunity to discuss this in a calmer working manner. And on top of all, I am delighted to show you around Sochi, which will be the capital of the Olympic games in 2014.

Welcome, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you. I, first of all, was most grateful for the dinner that you gave last night. Secondly, thank you very much for providing fantastic entertainment. I'm only happy that our press corps didn't try—see me trying to dance the dance that I was asked to do. [*Laughter*]

President Putin. We were able to see that you are a brilliant dancer. [*Laughter*]

President Bush. Yes, well, thank you very much. We'll leave it at that, Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

I do want to—you know, it's going to be a very interesting meeting. This is the final meeting that we will have as Presidents of our respective countries. We have met a lot over the past years, and I've come to, you know, respect you. I respect the fact that you love your country. You've been a strong leader. You're not afraid to tell me what's on your mind. And when it's all said and done, we can shake hands.

And so I thank you very much for your wonderful hospitality here. Thank you, sir. Yes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. at the Bocharov Ruchei. President Putin spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks During a Meeting With President-elect Dmitry Medvedev of Russia in Sochi

April 6, 2008

President-elect Medvedev. Good afternoon, Mr. President. I'm happy to meet you again. And I would like to once again thank