

The President's News Conference With European Union Leaders in Kranj, Slovenia

June 10, 2008

Prime Minister Jansa. Good afternoon, and welcome to Slovenia. Welcome to Brdo, where we have just concluded this year's summit meeting between the EU and the U.S.A. I welcome in our midst the President of the United States of America, Mr. George W. Bush, and the President of the European Commission, Mr. Jose Barroso.

For the U.S. President, this is the eighth summit and his second visit to Slovenia. It happened on the same spot; also, the press conference was held here. This is a historic event. On my visit to Washington 2 years ago, Mr. President, you welcomed us by saying that Slovenia is a piece of heaven on Earth, and we enjoyed your excellent hospitality. I hope we are returning that hospitality to some extent today.

Our discussions at this summit were very good and open. We confirmed that the transatlantic partnership is solid and dynamic. This message carries special weight in the historic context of this summit. Sixty years ago, the U.S. offered the ravaged and divided Europe hope through the Marshall plan and through courage, solidarity, and vision. The first U.S. President, George Washington, once said that there will be a united states of Europe. This has not happened yet, but European Union has been created, an area of freedom and progress uniting 500 million Europeans.

The European Union and the U.S. share the most important fundamental values: democracy, free entrepreneurial initiative, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the respect for the principles of the rule of law. The EU and the U.S. together represent 10 percent of the world's population. The trade in goods and services amounts to 3 billion euros a day, and they together produce almost 60 percent of the world's GDP. And together they

contribute 75 percent of development aid to poor countries. However, they also emit the majority of greenhouse gases.

Because of all these reasons, they also share a significant joint responsibility impacting the key global challenges. Our views on certain paths differ. Our views are different on, for example, the death penalty or the mandatory restriction on CO₂ emissions, but we are openly discussing these differences and looking for solutions.

We spoke at length about the issues of climate change and energy security. These issues affect all humanity and our well-established habits and our way of life. We confirmed our readiness to face this challenge together. We in the European Union consider it necessary to define the mandatory objectives for reducing CO₂ emissions and to reach a global agreement. We must cooperate in protecting the environment, in searching new sources of energy, and in developing new technologies.

High oil prices have forced us to intensify our search for new energy solutions. We are on the threshold of a new industrial revolution. Low carbon production and transport are becoming an economic necessity in addition to an environmental one. We need the most efficient solutions to the benefit of the present and future generations as soon as possible. The European Union and the U.S. will lead the new industrial revolution.

We must also create broad alliances. Several important meetings are ahead of us this year. We have great expectations concerning the G-8 summit and the U.N. conference on climate change in Poland.

We spoke about the most topical issues of the world economy. Our goals include a secure future, preservation of jobs, and

combating protectionism. We are determined to cooperate in eliminating the global imbalances and to attract to the this—to this task the new, fast-growing economies. We are committed to continuing discussions on the Doha development agenda within the framework of the WTO and to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

We also discussed a series of regional issues. We focused in particular on the Western Balkans. In the European Union, we value greatly the role the U.S. played in the 1990s in putting an end to the violence in the region. Today we are united and firm in our support of the prospect of these countries joining the Euro-Atlantic structures. This is the path which leads to peace and stability, as well as to the necessary democratic and economic reforms.

We were informed of the work carried out by the Transatlantic Economic Council. We remain committed to the elimination of barriers to mutual trade, a process which will bring economic growth and create new jobs. We are in favor of establishing the Transatlantic Economic Council as a mechanism for bringing tangible results that will benefit both consumers and producers in the EU and the U.S. The European Commission and its President, Barroso, are making every effort to this end.

The concrete results also includes the Air Transport Agreement. The first stage of the agreement has already entered into force. It liberalizes conditions for mutual investment and enables a freer access to air services. And in the middle of the former months, we launched the negotiations on the second stage. The work on the Aviation Safety Agreement has also been completed, and I hope it will be signed by the end of the month.

We also spoke about visa-free travel to the U.S. for all EU citizens. I am pleased that we are close to seeing new countries join the Visa Waiver Program soon. We are aware that certain restrictions are necessary for security reasons. Nevertheless,

we remain determined to ensure that the need for enhanced security will not restrict the visa-free travel for our citizens.

[At this point, Prime Minister Jansa continued in English.]

Mr. President, European Union and United States are most developed democracies. Last big EU enlargement, which included Slovenia and other center and Eastern European countries, has been one of the great—greatest achievements in terms of promotion of democracy. Today, almost whole Europe is free and united. This is very strong message for 21st century. The world is now complex. Nobody alone can solve all problems. War, peace, security, and promotion of democracy, climate change, and fight against poverty are global challenges today. Even together, we are not able to solve all of them, but if we don't work together and we are not able to form even stronger alliance, then I'm afraid we won't succeed.

I'm glad that we can conclude after last few and also after today's EU-U.S. summit that we indeed work together. Although we might have different approaches in some aspects, it should never overshadow the depth and quality of our cooperation. We covered, as I said, a wide range of issues during our talks, from foreign policy to economic cooperation. Many strategic projects are underway. Maybe we need to develop also a common name for them. Symbols and names are important in the world's politics.

Mr. President, we led strongly to the rich story of your—this time's European tour—60th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift and the Marshall plan. United States engagement did not only bring rehabilitation to Europe by promoting integration, it set an irreversible process in motion. Today Slovenia is hosting EU-U.S. summit, something that seemed impossible 60 years ago, something that seemed impossible even 20 years ago, during the Slovenian Spring,

when our streets were full of people fighting for freedom and democracy.

Our history teach us that we must be ambitious. It's time to be ambitious. We have to create stronger alliance based on our democratic values—ever to protect them, but also to share them with others. Alliance of democracies is strong and credible toward inside and open to outside world. Alliance able to lead, to change, and to help—a new hope for those who suffer. Who else can start the work if the biggest and most developed democracies can't?

Now I invite the President of United States, Mr. George Bush, to take the floor, and then the President of the European Commission.

Thank you.

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you. Commission President Barroso, it's good to see you. Thank you for your time and friendship. Let me correct the record, Mr. Prime Minister. I said, "Slovenia was a little slice of heaven." I'd like to, with your indulgence, change my remarks. Slovenia is a big slice of heaven. [Laughter] And I'm—

Prime Minister Jansa. Thank you.

President Bush. —honored to be back in your beautiful country. One of these days, I'm going to come back as a tourist. As you know, I'm close to retirement. [Laughter] And I'm looking forward to seeing more of your beautiful country and meeting more of your really gracious and hospitable people. So thank you very much.

This is my eighth EU-U.S. meeting. My message at the end is that it's really important for the United States to stay close with the EU. It's in our interest that the EU be strong, vibrant, and it's in our interests to work hard to have a partnership that solves problems.

And we discussed a lot of problems today. First, we discussed the freedom agenda. I find it ironic—not ironic, just interesting—that 20 years ago, Mr. Prime Minister, you were in jail—[laughter]—because of your beliefs, because—

Prime Minister Jansa. Not very happy times. [Laughter]

President Bush. You shouldn't have been happy about it. But because you had the courage to stand up and speak out clearly for freedom for all people, you were put in jail. And it seems like that any time we find people who were put in jail because they're willing to speak up for freedom, those of us who live in free lands ought to work to liberate them, Mr. Prime Minister.

And we spent a lot of time talking about how to help others realize the blessings of liberty, whether it be in the Balkans, and whether it be a Palestinian state, whether it be to use the EU as a way to encourage people to develop the habits of reformist societies.

And by the way, one subject we didn't spend a lot of time on that I'd like to clarify the U.S. position on is, we strongly believe Turkey ought to be a member of the EU. And we appreciate Turkey's record of democratic and free market reforms in working to realize its EU aspirations.

We spent a lot of time on the Middle East. Besides the Palestinian state, we talked about Lebanon, Iran, and Syria. One thing is for certain: If more people lived in free societies in the Middle East, the Middle East would be a more hopeful and more peaceful place. And so we strategized as to how to do that, Mr. Prime Minister, and I want to thank you for that.

I thank you for your support in Iraq and Afghanistan. It's amazing how these countries have gone from tyrannical situations to hopeful, young democracies. And I believe it's in our mutual interest to work hard to help these democracies survive for the sake of peace and for the sake of human rights and human dignity.

We talked about Cuba. I want to thank very much your leadership—both of your leadership in having the EU summit in South America. Obviously, it's in the U.S. interest that you do so. We've got a lot

of relations with countries in our neighborhood.

I want to thank you very much for your expressions on Cuba. They said, before relations should go forward, all political prisoners ought to be freed. If the Castro administration really is different, the first way to show that difference to the world is to free the political prisoners. That's something, Mr. Prime Minister, that I'm sure you can relate to.

We talked about Zimbabwe, Darfur, and Burma. We talked about how to make sure we have travel in a way that comforts our societies. I understand the visa waiver issue very well. I spend a lot of time talking to people that are worried about not being able to be treated like other members of the EU. I know the problem. We're on our way to solving it in a way that, I think, will satisfy countries as well as the EU itself, Jose.

We spent a lot of time on Iran. And I appreciate the Foreign Minister, Solana, going to Iran to deliver a clear message: There is a better way for you to move forward than a way that, so far, has led to isolation. And a—Iran with a nuclear weapon would be incredibly dangerous for world peace. And so we've got to continue to work together to make it clear, abundantly clear to them, that it's their choice to make. They can either face isolation, or they can have a—better relations with all of us if they verifiably suspend their enrichment program.

We talked about trade and the Doha round. We're committed to a successful Doha round. It's not going to be easy, but it's, in our judgment, necessary that we continue to work together. I appreciate Ambassador Schwab and Commissioner Mandelson's cooperation in trying to get an agreement that we all can live with. It's really important to defeat the voices of protectionism now. And if you're truly worried about global development, if you're worried about poverty, one of the best ways

to help poor people is through trade. And so we're committed to the global round.

I thought our discussions today were very good. And we don't—we spent time talking about HIV/AIDS and malaria on the continent of Africa. The United States is—looks forward to working with EU nations to helping alleviate folks from needless death. We've got a strategy in place that's effective, and we look forward to having partners join us.

And then finally, of course, we talked about energy and global climate change. I assured the leaders we have a strategy that we think will be effective at addressing global climate change and, at the same time, dependence on hydrocarbons, and that is through a major economies meeting, a series of meetings, all aimed at getting the major developing—the major economies to agree to a firm goal and to commit to strategies to achieve that goal. The United States is more than willing to engage in those discussions. I will just tell you that unless China and India are at the table, unless they agree to a goal, unless they agree to firm strategies to achieve that goal, then I don't see how any international agreement can be effective.

And so therefore, our strategy is to be realistic and to understand that the process is important but not nearly as important as the results. And so we've had good engagement, Mr. Prime Minister and Commission President Barroso. Thank you for your friendship. I'm—you know, it's interesting, my first visit as U.S. President to Europe included a—my first stop in Slovenia. My last visit as U.S. President to Europe includes first stop in Slovenia. It's a fitting circle. [*Laughter*]

Thank you.

Prime Minister Jansa. Thank you. Please.

President Durao Barroso. Thank you. Thank you, Prime Minister Jansa, President Bush. I'll start by this point. I think it's very symbolic and important that this summit, here with President Bush, the last one you will be present as President of the

United States, with European Union is in Slovenia, a country that, more or less, 25 years ago was not yet free and independent. And today, it's the Presidency of the European Council, is a member of the euro zone, is a member of the Schengen area, and assuming full its responsibilities.

And let me underline this point, because it really deserves to be underlined: That would not have been possible without European Union and without strong transatlantic relationship, because during the cold war, we have always had the support of the United States of America.

And this is very important to understand, for the public in Europe and, I believe, also in United States, that the support of the United States of America to freedom and democracy and, indeed, to the European integration process was very, very important, and that this great project of European integration is well and running. Fifty years ago, we were 6 member states; now we are 27 countries. And this country where we were was not a free country. My own country, 45 years ago, was not a democracy. And now we have from the Atlantic to the Black Sea, from the Mediterranean to the Baltic Sea, democratic countries living together in peace and freedom.

This is indeed a great achievement. And this achievement was possible thanks to the commitment of the founding fathers of the European Union to a united Europe, but also thanks to support of the United States of America. That's why I think it's fair to say to the United States sometimes, "Thank you." Thank you for all the support you have been giving to the integration and progress of democracy also in Europe.

So I believe it's important that we put all our relations in this perspective: a community of values, a community of values not only for our respective nations but beyond, promoting and supporting a world based on human rights and democracy.

President Bush and Prime Minister Jansa already spoke about the main subjects. I

will not repeat what—everything they said. Let me just underline one or two points that are more in the competence of the European Commission.

On trade issues, we must work hard to achieve a fair and balanced outcome to the current round of WTO talks. The deal remains there to be done if the political will is there. I believe the deal will be good for developing countries in terms of new opportunities. It will also give a needed boost to the global economy, including the European Union and the U.S. economies. Time to move is now. We have a fair and balanced deal in our grasp that will help us face the challenges of globalization.

So I believe together the United States and European Union can make a difference trying to bring others to a more realistic position so that we can achieve that deal on Doha trade and development talks.

One year ago, we have adopted a framework for advancing transatlantic economic integration, and I was proud, together with President Bush and Chancellor Merkel—then President of the Council—to create a Transatlantic Economic Council. We have put in place a new working method. Today I'm happy to say that in just 1 year of existence, this body has brought more and steadier progress on some issues than in many years before. We have made progress on open investment, on accounting standards, on finding alternative methods to animal testing, on certification of electrical equipment.

This might be seen as rather technical, but all of these developments add up to major cost savings for European Union companies and United States companies as well. This is understood by all parties. There were reports made by the transatlantic business community as estimated economic benefits of the items on our TEC—on our Transatlantic Economic Council agenda—as \$10 billion in terms of savings for business on both sides of the Atlantic.

So it is fair to say that Transatlantic Economic Council has given new momentum to the bilateral economic agenda. Indeed, the European Union and the United States of America count for the largest bilateral trade relationship in the world. Transatlantic trade in goods and services totals over 1.9 billion euros a day, and the figures of all bilateral trade and investment show the high degree of interdependence of our economies. The European—the United States remains the largest export destination for the European Union. In a time of important challenges to our economies, we have reaffirmed our commitment to free trade, open economies in the face of protectionist voices on both sides of the Atlantic.

The challenging economic situation makes the partnership ever more important. As we see with rising fuel and food prices, we, now in Europe, are discussing what are the right policy choices to increase energy diversification, energy efficiency, and also to improve food management. And we believe that these developments make it even more urgent to find a global agreement on climate change, and we spent a lot of our time discussing this.

What we have in common? The will to come to that agreement. We need that agreement to be global, so, of course, to add also China, India, and others. And I believe it is important now to move ahead.

We have discussed some of the events that we are preparing, like that major economies meeting and also the G-8 meeting. And we hope that the United States and Europe can work even closer in this matter, because we—European and American leadership—it's quite clear for me that it will be easier to get that global agreement. We are trying to get it by 2009 in Copenhagen, a United Nations agreement that could, of course, create the right response—global response for a global problem in terms of climate change. We need that not only because of a responsibility towards our planet, but we need also be-

cause of energy security concerns and also because of the rising food prices and the pressure that those prices are putting on our economies and the competitiveness of our economies.

So those were two of the subjects that we have discussed—economic—more in detail: the economic and trade and investment relations and also climate change. There were many others that President Bush and Prime Minister Jansa also referred, but let me congratulate you, Prime Minister Jansa, for a very successful meeting and for the high quality of the debate and the open debate that you had today.

Prime Minister Jansa. Thank you. Now we have time for a few questions.

EU-U.S. Relations

Q. Hello, Mr. President, here I am—Slovenian public television. Mr. President, as you mentioned before, this is probably your last visit in Slovenia and Europe.

President Bush. As President. [Laughter]

Q. As President, of course. With your past experience of last, let's say, 8 years, how can you see the future of the European Union and its relations with United States? There are certain problems.

President Bush. Yes, there are problems. On the other hand, there is much more that unites us than divides us. Of course, there is going to be problems and differences. That's normal.

First of all, there's going to be differences within the EU. You got—you have 27 nations all trying to come together to forge a common agenda. That's why I'd much rather have my job than Jose's job. [Laughter] But there will be differences. But somehow they managed to forge a common position on a lot of key issues, and that's where we discuss these issues.

And—but the thing that unites us—and this is important for all of us to realize—is that we share common values. And people say, oh, that's just corny, that doesn't mean anything. It means a lot if you believe in human rights and human dignity and

rule of law and freedom to speak and freedom to worship. That's a lot. That's a foundation for a very firm and lasting relationship.

And so I am confident that whoever succeeds me as President will understand the importance of the EU in regards to United States foreign policy and will work hard to make sure ties, you know, remain strong. But make no mistake about it, there will be differences of—on how to approach certain issues, and that's okay, just so long as we let those—don't let those differences divide us permanently, and I don't believe they possibly can.

Press Secretary Dana Perino. All right, we'll take a question from the American side, Steven Lee Myers of the New York Times, please.

Iran

Q. Thank you, gentlemen. I wonder if I could ask about your statement on Iran and the communique today. And you described a combination of incentives as well as additional measures that you might take. And I wonder if you think that that is enough—the idea of the prospect of future action is enough or sufficient to get the Iranians to change their point of view?

And for you, President Bush, sir, are you frustrated at all by the pace of the diplomatic negotiations underway, particularly in light of the IAEA findings and Iran's insistence that it's going to continue to enrich? Thank you.

President Bush. I'll start. We've always made it clear to the Iranians there's a better way forward, that if they want to have a relationship with the EU-3 and the United States and other countries, they—all they've got to do is verifiably suspend their enrichment program. And the reason why that's important is that they learn to enrich, it means they've learned to—a key part of developing a nuclear weapon. And if they end up with a nuclear weapon, the free world's going to say, why didn't we do something about it at the time, before

they developed it? And so now is the time for there to be strong diplomacy.

You know, the fundamental question is not ours to make; it's theirs to make, and that is, are they going to continue on their path of obstruction? Will they continue to isolate their people? Are they going to continue to deny the people of Iran a bright future by basically saying, we don't care what the world says.

And that's the position they're in. I'll leave behind a multilateral framework to work this issue. I think the Prime Minister said it's—you know, one country can't solve all problems. I fully agree with that. A group of countries can send a clear message to the Iranians, and that is, we're going to continue to isolate you; we'll continue to work on sanctions; we'll find new sanctions if need be if you continue to deny the just demands of a free world, which is to give up your enrichment program.

They've ignored IAEA in the past, and therefore, they can't be trusted with enrichment. And I thought we had a very fruitful discussion. We're on the same page. And I want to thank both leaders up here and Foreign Minister Solana as well.

Iran/Israel/Environment

Q. [Inaudible]

President Bush. This is "Ask George" day. [Laughter]

Moderator. A question from the European side.

Q. Yes. I would have a question for both of—President and the Prime Minister.

President Bush. Which President? [Laughter] Let me guess.

Q. The President of the United States.

President Bush. Yes, all right. [Laughter] Sorry, Jose. Just trying to work you in the deal here, you know? [Laughter]

Q. As you said, he's the Commission's President.

President Bush. Okay, fine.

Q. On Iran, I would like to ask you, Mr. President, there is—seems to be an emerging debate in Israel about a military

option against the nuclear installations in Iran. How do you see that debate?

And, Prime Minister Jansa, I would like to ask you on climate change, how do you rate the chances that in the following years there will be an agreement with the U.S. on this issue?

President Bush. First of all, if you were living in Israel, you'd be a little nervous too if a leader in your neighborhood announced that they—he'd like to destroy you. And one sure way of achieving that means is through the development of a nuclear weapon. Therefore, now is the time for all of us to work together to stop them. There's a lot of urgencies when it comes to dealing with Iran, and the Israeli political folks—and if you go to Israel and listen carefully, you'll hear that urgency in their voice—one of many urgencies. And I'm hopeful we can get it done.

And by the way—I don't want to preclude the Prime Minister's answer—I think we can actually get an agreement on global climate change during my Presidency, just so you know.

Prime Minister Jansa. I believe in a global agreement for a joint fight against climate change. This is, as a matter of fact, the only solution. An agreement or a self-commitment of the most developed or industrial countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is not enough, especially because some developing countries are developing really fast. China will, in a few years, become the first in terms of the greenhouse gas emissions. And a global agreement without the developing countries would be a short-term solution.

So, as a matter of fact, we really need that everybody who is a key stakeholder sits at the table. And I have mentioned already in my introduction, those who are most developed should take the leading role. And therefore, this alliance, these agreements, these discussions on bringing closer the standpoints is of such significance.

As President Bush has mentioned, the commitment of the most developed economies—which is mandatory to reduce emissions by a certain deadline—this is a key commitment: how individual economies this reach is less important. However, the goals must be set, and we must have mandatory goals, and this is of key importance. And in this way, we will reduce the threat of climate change.

And of course, we should also attract to this task the other countries. Without the leading role of the European Union and the United States of America and without close cooperation, it is not possible to reach a global agreement in short term. Therefore, this discussion is of extreme importance. And the G-8 summit in Japan in next month should represent an important step forward if we wish, in time, before the U.N. conference in Copenhagen, reach this agreement. There is not much time left. The time is running out.

Press Secretary Perino. All right, we'll take the last one from John McKinnon of the Wall Street Journal.

President Bush. It's called technology. [Laughter]

Q. Thanks again.

President Bush. Yes. [Laughter] Glad to help out, you know.

*U.S. Monetary Policy/European Economy/
EU-U.S. Relations*

Q. I'd like to ask each of you leaders about economic issues. For President Bush, will the United States intervene to support the dollar if your current efforts to talk it up don't succeed? And what also is your reaction to the Saudi Arabian proposal for a summit on energy prices?

For Prime Minister Jansa, what effects are you feeling in Eastern and Central Europe from the rising energy prices and the rising value of the euro? Did those factors pose a risk to growth and integration for those countries, for your countries?

And for President Barroso, given the proliferation of disputes between Europe and

the United States over food safety issues, is there a concern that the EU is being too restrictive on those issues?

President Bush. Okay, John, interesting idea by the—His Majesty, the King of Saudi Arabia. Secondly, I articulated a policy that I had been articulating ever since I have been the President. It's the same policy, which is, we believe in a strong dollar and that relative value of economies will end up setting the proper valuation of the dollar.

Prime Minister Jansa. Past growth, or growth with little comparison in the history—this is the growth of energy and food prices. And the food prices are going up due to high cost of energy or oil, and this has a significant effect on the economy in Slovenia and throughout Europe. This is one of the key questions being dealt with at the national level and at the level of the European institutions, as has been mentioned by President Barroso. This is a serious problem. It will, on the one hand, make us search long-term solutions. I have mentioned this in part before. And on the other hand, it will make us search short-term solutions, and one of these is energy efficiency.

We have also discussed this at today's summit, and this is a strong message. The investment in research and development, the investment into what the economy can do, an economy that is less dependent on carbon, less dependent on fossil fuels, this will have a long-term strategic effect on the price.

So the key is the technology. I remember the President of the United States saying 2 years ago at the summit meeting in Vienna that the key thing is investment in the development of new technologies. This is the key strategic reply to these challenge. And as far as the euro is concerned, on the one hand, we are satisfied and happy that euro is a strong currency. And since the 1st of January of last year, Slovenia is also part of the euro zone. And I can say that in the majority, the effects are

positive. When calculating the high prices of oil in dollars, this slightly mitigates this jump. And on the other hand, this is also a problem for importers in the European Union. We wouldn't like to see a weak euro and a strong dollar.

Moderator. The press conference is nearly completed.

President Durao Barroso. Honestly, I don't see the proliferation of difficulties with the United States on food. On the contrary, some of the issues that we have been discussing for some time have now known some progress. What I believe is that on food and energy in general, there are issues that we have to address together. And some of those challenges are really global by nature, and we need to have a structured responses to them.

There will not be quick fixes. Some of those developments are long-term structural challenges. What is important, by the way, is that in the short term, we do not take measures against what is the long-term solution for those problems—namely, once again, we need a global agreement on climate change, is best way to fight some of the problems of energy prices and also to address some of problems of food security, namely in some developing countries.

But I don't see a proliferation of specific problems now on United States regarding food. On the contrary, I see a very cooperative position, and negotiations on the specific issues are going on with a very constructive mood.

Moderator. Thank you very much. The press conference has finished. And now I give the concluding words to the Prime Minister, Mr. Janez Jansa, the President of the Council of the European Union.

Prime Minister Jansa. Mr. President, before we conclude this press conference, let me repeat once again how much we appreciate your visit here after 7 years, concluding the circle, as you said. And our bilateral meeting, which we had in this morning, confirmed that Slovenia and the

United States have established sound foundations for building excellent relations. And I want just to repeat the words from the President of the European Commission, that without the vital support of United States for this positive changes in Europe, before the fall of Berlin Wall and after it, maybe we wouldn't be here today at Brdo. And I surely wouldn't be here in this capacity. [Laughter]

But I also want to say thank you because of one other thing. Sir, hundreds of thousands of Slovenes driven from homeland by the economic and political hardship of our history have found open hands and hearts in the United States. Some of them are making great contributions their walks of life in the United States. We are proud of them here in Slovenia. We are also pleased that the progress that Slovenia has made since independence gives them pride. And I'm sure that today, as we host this summit, there is a lot of proud Slovenes in the States.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

Prime Minister Jansa. Mr. President, this was your eighth EU-U.S. summit. During this last 8 years, our EU-U.S. strategic part-

nership has developed significantly. It has faced also some serious challenges, which we have successfully overcome. Today, we are closer to common position to our most important global challenges than ever. It is not too early, but it's not too late either. Thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you. I appreciate you. Good job.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 2:35 p.m. at Brdo Castle. Participating in the event were Prime Minister Janez Jansa of Slovenia, in his capacity as President of the European Council; and President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European Commission. President Bush referred to President Raul Castro Ruz of Cuba; Foreign Minister Javier Solana Madariaga and Commissioner for Trade Peter Mandelson of the European Union; and King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia. President Durao Barroso referred to Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany. Prime Minister Jansa spoke partly in Slovenian, and those portions of his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

The President's News Conference With Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany in Meseberg, Germany June 11, 2008

Chancellor Merkel. Well, good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I see that there are quite a number of you who have made the trouble to come here today. I would like to welcome you very warmly. Let me say that I'm delighted to be able to have this press conference together with the American President after our talks here today. Yesterday we had very intensive talks over dinner. We had intensive talks this morning. We're going to continue them over lunch later on. Let me say that I'm very, very pleased to have the President

of the United States here as our honored guest in this guest house of the Government.

We had a very good atmosphere. This atmosphere shows—I think shows very clearly that we have constructive dialogue at virtually all levels on virtually all issues. We've had that for quite some time, and we're going to continue this dialogue in the next few months to come.

We debated on the issues that are of global importance. First, the world trade round—Doha—I'm very glad to note that