AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

The President's Radio Address

November 23, 2002

Good morning. I'm speaking to you from Europe where, this week, I am meeting with NATO Allies and friends to discuss terrorism and other threats to our shared security.

It has also been an important week at home on Capitol Hill. After 2 years of achievements, which included tax relief and education reform, the last days of this session of Congress brought additional historic progress. Soon after I return from Europe, I will sign several important new laws that help secure the homeland and create jobs.

Republicans and Democrats approved a Department of Homeland Security that will unite dozens of Federal agencies and nearly 170,000 Federal workers behind a single, overriding mission, keeping Americans safe. This new Department will coordinate our response to any future emergency. It will help us know who's coming into our country and who's going out. This new Department will bring together the best intelligence information about our vulnerabilities to terrorist attack so that we can act quickly to protect America. I appreciate the Congress listening to my concerns and retaining the authority of the President to put the right people in the right place at the right time in defense of our country.

Congress also acted to protect the Nation's ports and coasts by passing port security legislation. With this law, we will add port security agents, restrict access to sensitive areas, and require ships to provide more information about the cargo, crew, and passengers they carry. These measures will help keep terrorists and their weapons out of America.

In addition, Congress passed terrorism insurance legislation to help protect our economy from any future terrorist attack. This new important law will lower insurance premiums and get many real estate and construction projects that had been put on hold moving again, creating thousands of hardhat jobs.

On my trip this week here in Europe, I'm consulting with our friends and NATO Allies about the new threats to freedom that we face together. Today, the United States is joined by more than 90 nations in a global coalition against terrorism, sharing intelligence, cutting off terrorist finance, and pursuing the terrorists where they plot and train. The world is also uniting to answer the unique and urgent threat posed by Iraq, whose dictator has already used weapons of mass destruction to kill thousands. We must not and will not permit either terrorists or tyrants to blackmail freedom-loving nations.

Our NATO Allies are making important contributions. Sixteen NATO countries have sent military forces to the fight against terror in Afghanistan, and at this week's summit, NATO committed to build a new military response force with strong, ready forces that are prepared to deploy on short notice wherever they are needed.

NATO members also voted to invite seven of Europe's newest democracies to join our Alliance. The addition of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia will increase NATO's military strength. These nations will also bring greater clarity to NATO's purposes because they know, from the hard experience of the 20th century, that threats to freedom must be opposed, not ignored or appeased.

This week, we saw the historic expansion of NATO and historic progress by Congress. Both will make America more secure.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:05 p.m. on November 21 at the Ambassador's Residence in Prague, Czech Republic, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 22 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to the People of Lithuania in Vilnius

November 23, 2002

The President. Thank you all very much. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for your friendship, and thank you for your leadership.

I'm also honored to be here with the Presidents of Latvia and Estonia. I want to thank them for coming as well. Laura and I are

honored to be here with you. Thank you for coming out to say hello.

This is a great day in the history of Lithuania, in the history of the Baltics, in the history of NATO, and in the history of freedom. The countries of NATO have opened the doors of our Alliance to Lithuania and six other European democracies. And I have the honor of sharing this message with you: We proudly invite Lithuania to join us in NATO, the great Atlantic Alliance.

Many doubted that freedom would come to this country, but the United States always recognized an independent Lithuania. We knew that this continent would not remain divided. We knew that arbitrary lines drawn by dictators would be erased, and those lines are now gone. No more Munichs. No more Yaltas. The long night of fear, uncertainty, and loneliness is over. You're joining the strong and growing family of NATO. Our Alliance has made a solemn pledge of protection, and anyone who would choose Lithuania as an enemy has also made an enemy of the United States of America. In the face of aggression, the brave people of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia will never again stand alone.

Audience members. *Aciu! Aciu! Aciu!*

The President. You're welcome. [*Laughter*] You are needed in the NATO Alliance. You will contribute to our common security. Yet the strength of NATO does not only depend on the might of armies but on the character of men and women.

We must be willing to stand in the face of evil, to have the courage to always face danger. The people of the Baltic states have shown these qualities to the world. You have known cruel oppression and withstood it. You were held captive by an empire, and you outlived it. And because you have paid its cost, you know the value of human freedom.

Lithuania today is true to its best traditions of democracy and tolerance and religious liberty, and you have earned the respect of my Nation and all nations.

Our Alliance of freedom is being tested again by new and terrible dangers. Like the Nazis and the Communists before them, the terrorists seek to end lives and control all life. And like the Nazis and the Communists before them, they will be opposed by free nations, and the terrorists will be defeated.

Over a decade ago, hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians joined hands, from Talin to Vilnius, to show your love for freedom. Near Cathedral Square is a stone commemorating that struggle. Inscribed on that stone is one word: Miracle. The recent history of the Baltic states truly is a miracle. You've gained your freedom. You have won your independence. You now join a great Alliance, and your miracle goes on.

Today on this great day, may God bless the memory of Lithuanian patriots and freedom fighters who did not live to see this moment. And may God always bless the brave and the free people of Lithuania.

Thank you for coming today. May God bless freedom.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in Rotuse Square. In his remarks, he referred to President Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania, who introduced the President; President Vaira Vike-Freiberga of Latvia; and President Arnold Ruutel of Estonia.

Remarks on Receiving the Star of Romania in Bucharest, Romania

November 23, 2002

Mr. President, thank you so much for this honor. I accept the Star of Romania on behalf of my country, and I appreciate the spirit of friendship that this award represents.

I want to thank the Prime Minister and members of your Government for such fine hospitality.

Laura and I are honored to be here, and so is my Cabinet—members of my Cabinet, as well as senior members of my staff. We're here because America and the nations of the world have seen the courage and character of the Romanian people. You have liberated yourselves from tyranny. You're building a vibrant democracy. And you're preparing to join NATO. In all these events of history, America has been your friend, and we'll be proud to call you Ally.