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During any period when the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (Director), or the Deputy Director of the Office of Personnel Management, has died, resigned, or otherwise become unable to perform the functions and duties of the office of Director, the following officers of the Office of Personnel Management, in the order listed, shall perform the functions and duties of the office of Director, if they are eligible to act as Director under the provisions of the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, until such time as at least one of the officers mentioned above is able to perform the functions and duties of the office of Director:

General Counsel;
Chief of Staff;
Director, Office of Communications and Public Liaison;
Director, Office of Congressional Relations;
Associate Director, Human Resources Products and Services;
Associate Director for Management;
Associate Director, Strategic Human Resources Policy;
Chief Financial Officer;
Associate Director, Human Capital Leadership and Merit Systems Accountability;
Deputy Associate Director, Center for Investigations Services; and
Director, Federal Executive Institute.

Sec. 2. *Exceptions.*

(a) No individual who is serving in an office listed in section 1 in an acting capacity, by virtue of so serving, shall act as Director pursuant to this memorandum.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of this memorandum, the President retains discretion, to the extent permitted by the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, 5 U.S.C. 3345–3349d, to depart from this memorandum in designating an acting Director.

Sec. 3. *Prior Memorandum Superceded.* This memorandum supercedes the Presidential Memorandum of March 11, 2003, entitled, "Designation of Officers of the Office of Personnel Management to Act as Director of the Office of Personnel Management."

Sec. 4. *Publication.*

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register.*

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

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

May 5, 2005

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2006 budget amendments for the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Justice, and the Treasury; and the United States-Canada Alaska Rail Commission. Overall, the discretionary budget authority proposed in my FY 2006 Budget would not be increased by these requests.

This transmittal also contains FY 2006 budget amendments and an FY 2005 proposal for the legislative branch. As a matter of comity, appropriations requests of the legislative branch are commonly transmitted without change.

The details of these proposals are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Interview With Latvian Television

May 4, 2005

Latvia-U.S. Relations

Q. So there is no secret that you were a jet pilot, so how would you describe, in a couple of sentences, where is Latvia on your radar?

The President. That's very interesting. Latvia is a close friend. Latvia is a country that has made a big difference in important alliances to the United States, like NATO. I remember when the moment came when the countries—the new countries admitted to NATO came into the room that I was sitting in, and I turned to the person I was sitting next to and said, "It's going to be so

important for NATO to have these fresh—these new countries, because they bring a fresh outlook to freedom. These are people that have recently lived under, in this case, communism and realized what it means to be free, and it's going to be very important."

And so Latvia is very high on my radar screen. Plus, I'm very close to the President.

Q. How come you've become such good friends?

The President. Well, first of all, she's a straightforward person. I like straightforward people. You know, sometimes in politics you get people who say one thing and don't mean it. When she tells me something, she means it. She's very engaging and—very intelligent woman, and I admire her courage. And so I'm fond of her.

Russia-Baltic States Relations

Q. You're good friends with President Putin of Russia. Do you think you could encourage him to admit historical justice and admit the fact that Baltic States were occupied in 1940?

The President. Well, yes, I've talked to him about this issue when I was in Slovakia. I said, "Do you understand, friend, that you've got problems in the Baltics? You've got problems with Latvia because people don't like—the remembrances of the time of communism are unpleasant remembrances, and you need to work with these young democracies." I explained to him that it's best that there be democracies on his border, free countries, because free countries don't attack people; free countries listen to the hopes and aspirations of people. I don't know if I've made any progress with him or not, but I have made my position clear.

I understand there's a lot of people in the Baltics who are—you know, don't view the celebration in Russia as a day of liberation. Frankly, it's the beginning of a difficult period, and I can understand why some leaders of countries aren't going and some others are. That's a decision each leader must make, and I respect the decision of each leader.

But I'm going to continue to speak very forcefully on freedom and liberty, and the Baltics are a great example of free countries.

Q. But you are pretty certain that Russia is at least on the right path of development, and it does not pose any threat to its smaller neighbors?

The President. Well, I certainly hope not. And one of the reasons a relationship with the United States and Latvia is important is, is that we will stand with Latvia if a larger country tries to intimidate the people. That's the great thing about Latvia joining NATO, is that the security is now guaranteed by not only the United States but all members of NATO.

Listen, the President and I speak about relations between Russia and Latvia quite frequently. And my job at times is to send a message that says, "Look, treat your neighbors with respect. Free nations, democracies on your border are good for you, whether that be, by the way, in the Baltics or in Ukraine." I've sent that same message—or Georgia. In other words, countries that are free countries are countries that will be good neighbors.

Belarus

Q. What can we do about Belarus, because a couple of hundred miles from where you're going to be visiting there sits the last dictator of Europe. What can we do about it?

The President. The "last dictator of Europe" is right, and we'll continue to pressure Belarus and call upon the world, the rest of the world, the free world—not the whole world but the free world—to work to give the people of Belarus a chance to live in a free society.

When I was in Slovakia I met with people of the freedom movement. I know when Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State, was in your part of the world, she met with leaders of the freedom movement too. And we'll continue to press forward. President Putin must understand that a free Belarus is in his country's interest.

Freedom and Democracy

Q. The sentiment of anti-Americanism, as I'm sure you know, is quite widespread in Europe and in my country as well. Do you think there is any degree of your own fault in the fact that this sentiment is on the rise or——

The President. I made some hard decisions. You know, going into Iraq was a hard

decision. I can understand people not liking that. But I would hope people in Europe would understand that freedom is not owned only by Europeans, that people around the world deserve to be free. And as we act in our self-interest to fight terrorists, as we work to make sure terrorists can't get weapons of mass destruction to cause great harm, that we will also work to free people. After all, the people of Latvia, of all people, ought to understand what it means to live under the subjugation of a doctrine that doesn't allow for freedom, communism.

And here people are living in the Middle East, for example, under the brutal reign of tyrants, huge mass graves, massive death, people tortured. And now they're living free. And when 8½ million people went to vote in Iraq, it sent a clear message that said, "We will not let the terrorists intimidate us; we want to be free, just like people in the Balkans used to speak, we want to be free."

You know, our country had a great history with the Baltics, that we said, "Your Embassies will remain little havens for freedom." We never recognized the lack of independence in the Baltics. We always believed that you should be free. And I hope over time, the young people of Latvia understand that that's what we stand for in America. We stand for freedom. We don't believe freedom is America's gift. We believe there's universal desire to be free. And the world will be more peaceful.

The hard decisions I've made I am confident will make this world a more peaceful place.

Q. Thanks very much, Mr. Bush.

The President. Welcome.

Q. I hope it's a good visit.

The President. I'm confident it will be. I'm looking forward to it.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 2:06 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast and was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 6. In his remarks, the President referred to President Vaira Vike-Freiberga of Latvia; President Valdimir Putin of Russia; and President Aleksandr Lukashenko of Belarus.

Interview With NTV of Russia

May 5, 2005

World War II

Q. Good morning, Mr. President, although it's good evening for Russian audience because of the time change. [*Laughter*] Your father is a World War II hero, the youngest Navy pilot. So how important the D-day is for you, personally, and for your family?

The President. Well, thank you for asking about my dad. He is—he was a—like many in America and in Russia that were called upon to defend the world against nazism. And fortunately, he came home.

And today, the celebration in Russia will remind us all about the sacrifices of, in my case, an individual I love, but also a generation, a generation of men and women who made extraordinary efforts, in Russia's case to defend the homeland, in America's case to work with allies to defeat Adolf Hitler as well as the Japanese.

And so it's a special day for me, personally, because it reminds me of the willingness of a young kid to go fight. But it also reminds me of the duty of my generation to work together to make the world a better place.

Eastern Europe After World War II

Q. The after-war Europe has been reshaped according to the Yalta Conference of 1943, by the decision of three very important personalities of this time, Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Churchill, and Mr. Stalin. How fair is it to hold only Russia responsible for all the misfortunes of Eastern Europe and Baltic States over the last—[*inaudible*]?

The President. Now, that's a very fair question. Obviously, it was a decision made at the end of the war. I think that the main complaint would be that the form of government that the Baltics had to live under was not of their choosing. But no, there's no question three leaders made the decision.

Q. So not only Russia the bad guy of history?

The President. Well, I think everybody ought to bear the—as historians look back at Yalta—got to recognize that it was—you're rightly so in pointing it out—it was not only