

Week Ending Friday, May 13, 2005

**Remarks on Being Presented the
Order of Three Stars, First-Class in
Riga, Latvia**

May 7, 2005

Madam President, I gratefully accept. I am so honored and so thrilled to be here in your beautiful country.

I was telling the President that it's such a joy to come to a country that loves and values freedom and to be in the presence of a President who speaks so clearly about the need for people to be free and her recognition that a free world will yield peace.

And so Madam President, thank you for your hospitality, and thank you so much for this great honor. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 a.m. at Riga Castle. In his remarks, he referred to President Vaira Vike-Freiberga of Latvia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Remarks Following Discussions With
President Vaira Vike-Freiberga of
Latvia in Riga**

May 7, 2005

President Vike-Freiberga. We are, of course, very gratified for this sudden interest in Latvia that we're seeing among the journalists. *[Laughter]* And it's truly a great pleasure to see these wonderful journalists coming to my country and having a look around. And Mr. President, I think that you have something to do with that. *[Laughter]*

President Bush. Well, thank you for having us, Madam President. It's been a trip I've really been anxious to fulfill. I admire your leadership; I admire your country's courage. I love the fact that you're a free nation and willing to speak out so clearly for freedom. So, thanks for the hospitality.

President Vike-Freiberga. And we're pleased that the cameras are now turned on Latvia while you are here. *[Laughter]*

President Bush. That's right.

Q. Mr. President——

President Bush. Thank you all. We'll have ample opportunity in an open press conference. And I certainly wouldn't want you to fire your best question here. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:10 a.m. at Riga Castle. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**The President's News Conference
With President Vaira Vike-Freiberga
of Latvia, President Arnold Ruutel of
Estonia, and President Valdas
Adamkus of Lithuania in Riga**

May 7, 2005

President Vike-Freiberga. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming to this joint press conference of the three Baltic Presidents and the President of the United States of America. We have just had a meeting together and the most fruitful discussion about our transatlantic relationships and also on the relationship between the two institutions of which Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania have become members since the past year, the relationship between NATO and the European Union.

We are honored and pleased to have this opportunity to have a great leader from a great and powerful country come to our region and show interest in what happens here and to have this open and very frank debate with the three Baltic Presidents. With this, I pass the floor to the President of Lithuania, President Valdas Adamkus.

President Adamkus. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, this was an extremely good meeting and at a very good time. We are welcoming the President of the United States here; as I said, welcome back to the