

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:57 p.m. at the Eleiff Center for Education and Culture. In his remarks, he referred to Olga Borissova, director, Centre for European Programmes, American University in Bulgaria. Participating in the event were Stanko Stankov, Katya Georgieva, Hristina Jordanova, Nita Gojani, and Filjor Broka, recent graduates, and Nemanja Gruicic, student, American University in Bulgaria; Dilyana Mincheva and Bilyana Hristova, students, University of Sofia; and Hawa Ansary and Stanislav Andreev, recent graduates, American College of Sofia.

Proclamation 8156—Father’s Day, 2007

June 11, 2007

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

On Father’s Day, we reflect on the many ways that fathers contribute to the lives of their children with spoken words and unspoken kindness.

Fathers are one of the most important influences in the lives of children, and their unconditional love is an indispensable anchor of certainty and strength. By placing their family’s well-being above their own, fathers provide children with an example of what it means to be a responsible person. Through unwavering devotion and daily sacrifice, fathers work to create an environment where children are protected and encouraged. Fathers instill in their children an understanding of right and wrong and help them to grow in confidence and character. These dedicated men strive to give their sons and daughters the necessary foundation to make good choices and lead lives of purpose.

On Father’s Day and throughout the year, we honor the men who have taken on the great joy and responsibility of fatherhood, and we celebrate their extraordinary impact and influence. All Americans are especially grateful to the many fathers who are serving their country as members of the Armed Forces, and we lift them and their loved ones up in prayer.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, in accordance with a joint resolution of the Congress approved April 24, 1972, as amend-

ed (36 U.S.C. 109), do hereby proclaim June 17, 2007, as Father’s Day. I encourage all Americans to express admiration and appreciation to fathers for their many contributions to our Nation’s children. I direct the appropriate officials of the Government to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on this day. I also call upon State and local governments and citizens to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:47 a.m., June 12, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on June 13.

Remarks at the Victims of Communism Memorial Dedication

June 12, 2007

Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. Dr. Edwards, thanks for your kind words. Congressman Lantos—no better friend to freedom, by the way; Congressman Rohrabacher, the same. Members of the Czech and Hungarian Parliaments; Ambassadors; distinguished guests; and more importantly, the survivors of Communist oppression, I’m honored to join you on this historic day.

And here in the company of men and women who resisted evil and helped bring down an empire, I proudly accept the Victims of Communism Memorial on behalf of the American people.

The 20th century will be remembered as the deadliest century in human history. And the record of this brutal era is commemorated in memorials across this city. Yet, until now, our Nation’s Capital had no monument to the victims of imperial communism, an ideology that took the lives of an estimated 100 million innocent men, women, and children. So it’s fitting that we gather to remember those who perished at communism’s hands and dedicate this memorial that will

enshrine their suffering and sacrifice in the conscience of the world.

Building this memorial took more than a decade of effort, and its presence in our Capital is a testament to the passion and determination of two distinguished Americans: Lev Dobriensky, whose daughter Paula is here—give your dad our best—and Dr. Lee Edwards. They faced setbacks and challenges along the way, yet they never gave up, because in their hearts, they heard the voices of the fallen crying out: “Remember us.”

These voices cry out to all, and they’re legion. The sheer numbers of those killed in communism’s name are staggering, so large that a precise count is impossible. According to the best scholarly estimate, communism took the lives of tens of millions of people in China and the Soviet Union and millions more in North Korea, Cambodia, Africa, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Eastern Europe, and other parts of the globe.

Behind these numbers are human stories of individuals with families and dreams whose lives were cut short by men in pursuit of totalitarian power. Some of communism’s victims are well-known. They include a Swedish diplomat named Raoul Wallenberg, who saved 100,000 Jews from the Nazis, only to be arrested on Stalin’s orders and sent to Moscow’s Lubyanka Prison, where he disappeared without a trace. They include a Polish priest named Father Popieluszko, who made his Warsaw church a sanctuary for the Solidarity underground, and was kidnapped and beaten and drowned in the Vistula by the secret police.

The sacrifices of these individuals haunt history, and behind them are millions more who were killed in anonymity by communism’s brutal hand. They include innocent Ukrainians starved to death in Stalin’s Great Famine; or Russians killed in Stalin’s purges; Lithuanians and Latvians and Estonians loaded onto cattle cars and deported to Arctic death camps of Soviet communism. They include Chinese killed in the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution; Cambodians slain in Pol Pot’s Killing Fields; East Germans shot attempting to scale the Berlin Wall in order to make it to freedom; Poles massacred in the Katyn Forest; and Ethiopians slaughtered in the “Red Terror”;

Miskito Indians murdered by Nicaragua’s Sandinista dictatorship; and Cuban *balseros* who drowned escaping tyranny. We’ll never know the names of all who perished, but at this sacred place, communism’s unknown victims will be consecrated to history and remembered forever.

We dedicate this memorial because we have an obligation to those who died to acknowledge their lives and honor their memory. The Czech writer Milan Kundera once described the struggle against communism as “the struggle of memory against forgetting.” Communist regimes did more than take their victims’ lives; they sought to steal their humanity and erase their memory. With this memorial, we restore their humanity and we reclaim their memory. With this memorial, we say of communism’s innocent and anonymous victims, “These men and women lived, and they shall not be forgotten.”

We dedicate this memorial because we have an obligation to future generations to record the crimes of the 20th century and ensure they’re never repeated. In this hallowed place we recall the great lessons of the cold war: that freedom is precious and cannot be taken for granted; that evil is real and must be confronted; and that given the chance, men commanded by harsh and hateful ideologies will commit unspeakable crimes and take the lives of millions.

It’s important that we recall these lessons because the evil and hatred that inspired the death of tens of millions of people in the 20th century is still at work in the world. We saw its face on September the 11th, 2001. Like the Communists, the terrorists and radicals who attacked our Nation are followers of a murderous ideology that despises freedom, crushes all dissent, has expansionist ambitions, and pursues totalitarian aims. Like the Communists, our new enemies believe the innocent can be murdered to serve a radical vision. Like the Communists, our new enemies are dismissive of free peoples, claiming that those of us who live in liberty are weak and lack the resolve to defend our free way of life. And like the Communists, the followers of violent Islamic radicalism are doomed to fail. By remaining steadfast in freedom’s cause, we will ensure that a future American President does not have to stand

in a place like this and dedicate a memorial to the millions killed by the radicals and extremists of the 21st century.

We can have confidence in the power of freedom because we've seen freedom overcome tyranny and terror before. Dr. Edwards said President Reagan went to Berlin. He was clear in his statement. He said, "Tear down the wall," and 2 years later the wall fell. And millions across Central and Eastern Europe were liberated from unspeakable oppression. It's appropriate that on the anniversary of that speech, that we dedicate a monument that reflects our confidence in freedom's power.

The men and women who designed this memorial could have chosen an image of repression for this space, a replica of the wall that once divided Berlin, or the frozen barracks of the Gulag, or a killing field littered with skulls. Instead, they chose an image of hope, a woman holding a lamp of liberty. She reminds us of the victims of communism and also of the power that overcame communism.

Like our Statue of Liberty, she reminds us that the flame for freedom burns in every human heart, and that it is a light that cannot be extinguished by the brutality of terrorists or tyrants. And she reminds us that when an ideology kills tens of millions of people and still ends up being vanquished, it is contending with a power greater than death. She reminds us that freedom is the gift of our Creator, freedom is the birthright of all humanity, and in the end, freedom will prevail.

I thank each of you who made this memorial possible for your service in freedom's cause. I thank you for your devotion to the memory of those who lost their lives to Communist terror. May the victims of communism rest in peace. May those who continue to suffer under communism find their freedom. And may the God who gave us liberty bless this great memorial and all who come to visit her.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Lee Edwards, vice chairman, and Lev E. Dobriansky, chairman emeritus, Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Republican Senate Policy Committee

June 12, 2007

I just had a good exchange with my fellow Republicans. We talked about a lot of issues. I briefed them on my trip to Europe. We talked about—they were very interested in the Ahtisaari plan for Kosovo. They were interested in my conversations with Vladimir Putin on missile defense. We talked about the energy bill. We talked about the appropriations process

And we talked about immigration. Some Members in there believe that we need to move a comprehensive bill; some don't. I understand that. This is a highly emotional issue, but those of us standing here believe now is the time to move a comprehensive bill that enforces our borders and has good workplace enforcement, that doesn't grant automatic citizenship, that addresses this problem in a comprehensive way.

I would hope that the Senate majority leader has that same sense of desire to move the product that I do—or the bill that I do and these Senators do because now is the time to get it done. It's going to take a lot of hard work, a lot of effort. We've got to convince the American people that this bill is the best way to enforce our border. I believe without the bill, that it's going to be harder to enforce the border. The status quo was unacceptable. And I want to thank those Senators on both sides of the aisle who understand the time is now to move a comprehensive piece of legislation. The White House will stay engaged.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:54 p.m. at the U.S. Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Future Status Process of Kosovo; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.