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Minister Ahmed Qureia (Abu Ala) of the Palestinian Authority; and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Tzipora "Tzipi" Livni of Israel. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 13.

Message to the Congress on the Russia-United States Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

May 12, 2008

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, pursuant to sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2153(b), (d)) (the "Act"), the text of a proposed Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation for Cooperation in the Field of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy. I am also pleased to transmit my written approval, authorization, and determination concerning the Agreement, and a Nuclear Proliferation Assessment Statement (NPAS) concerning the Agreement (in accordance with section 123 of the Act, as amended by title XII of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–277), a classified annex to the NPAS, prepared by the Secretary of State in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, summarizing relevant classified information, will be submitted to the Congress separately). The joint memorandum submitted to me by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Energy and a letter from the Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission stating the views of the Commission are also enclosed.

The proposed Agreement has been negotiated in accordance with the Act and other applicable law. In my judgment, it meets all applicable statutory requirements and will advance the non-proliferation and other foreign policy interests of the United States.

The proposed Agreement provides a comprehensive framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation with Russia based on a mutual commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. It has a term of 30 years, and permits the transfer of technology, material, equipment (including reactors), and components for nuclear research and nuclear power production. It does not permit transfers of Restricted Data, and permits transfers of sensitive nuclear technology, sensitive nuclear facilities, and major critical components of such facilities by amendment to the Agreement. In the event of termination, key non-proliferation conditions and controls continue with respect to material and equipment subject to the Agreement.

The Russian Federation is a nuclear weapon state party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Like the United States, it has a "voluntary offer" safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That agreement gives the IAEA the right to apply safeguards on all source or special fissionable material at peaceful nuclear facilities on a Russia-provided list. The Russian Federation is also a party to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, which establishes international standards of physical protection for the use, storage, and transport of nuclear material. It is also a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, whose non-legally binding Guidelines set forth standards for the responsible export of nuclear commodities for peaceful use. A more detailed discussion of Russia's domestic civil nuclear program and its nuclear non-proliferation policies and practices, including its nuclear export policies and practices, is provided in the NPAS and in the classified annex to the NPAS submitted to the Congress separately.

I have considered the views and recommendations of the interested agencies in reviewing the proposed Agreement and have determined that its performance will promote, and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. Accordingly, I have approved the Agreement and authorized its execution and urge that the Congress give it favorable consideration.

This transmission shall constitute a submittal for purposes of both sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Atomic Energy Act. My Administration is prepared to begin immediately the consultations with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and House Foreign Affairs Committee as provided in section 123 b. Upon completion of the 30-day

continuous session period provided for in section 123 b., the 60-day continuous session period provided for in section 123 d. shall commence.

George W. Bush

The White House,
May 12, 2008.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 13.

Statement on Farm Legislation

May 13, 2008

In January 2007, I was hopeful that leaders in Washington could come together on a good farm bill. At that time, my administration had completed more than 50 listening sessions across the country and developed a reform-minded farm bill based on the thousands of comments received. Our proposal would make wise use of the people's money by reforming farm programs, funding emerging priorities, and providing a safety net that better targets benefits for farmers.

I am deeply disappointed in the conference report filed today, as it falls far short of the proposal my administration put forward. If this bill makes it to my desk, I will veto it.

Today's farm economy is very strong, and that is something to celebrate. It is also an appropriate time to better target subsidies and put forth real reform. Farm income is expected to exceed the 10-year average by 50 percent this year, yet Congress's bill asks American taxpayers to subsidize the incomes of married farmers who earn $1.5 million per year. I believe doing so at a time of record farm income is irresponsible and jeopardizes America's support for necessary farm programs.

Congress claims that this bill increases spending by $10 billion, but the real cost is nearly $20 billion when you include actual Government spending that will occur if this bill becomes law. Instead of fully offsetting the increased spending, the bill resorts to a variety of gimmicks, such as pushing commodity payments outside the budget window. Adding nearly $20 billion in additional costs to the current 10-year spending level of approximately $600 billion is excessive, especially when net farm income is at a record high and food prices are on the rise. My administration clearly identified numerous reforms as essential to justify even a $10 billion increase in spending, yet this bill includes none of those reforms in full.

Crop prices have averaged a 20-percent increase since just last year. Still, Congress wants to raise payment rates for most crops and create new subsidies which can be triggered even at very high prices. The bill fails to stop the practice of collecting subsidies even when crops are sold later at a higher price; it restricts our ability to redirect food aid dollars for emergency use in the midst of a global food crisis; and it falls short of the administration's conservation proposals. By increasing trade-distorting subsidies, the bill undermines our ability to open foreign markets to American agricultural goods. The bill creates an egregious new sugar subsidy program that will keep sugar prices high for domestic consumers, while making taxpayers subsidize a handful of sugar growers. These are just a few of the reasons why I cannot support this bill.

In the absence of a good farm bill, I call on Congress to extend current law for at least 1 year. The administration's reform-minded proposal would be preferable to current law, but in light of the bill produced by conferees, an extension is now the better policy for American agriculture and American taxpayers. It is a far superior option than supporting a bill that increases farm subsidy rates, spends too much, and fails to reform farm programs for the future.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony in Tel Aviv, Israel

May 14, 2008

Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister, Mrs. Olmert, thank you very much for your warm welcome. It's good to be back again. We're proud to reaffirm the friendship of our peoples, and we're delighted to join you in celebrating the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel.

Our two nations both faced great challenges when they were founded, and our two