

200,000-plus people there in a town square that had come to hear the President of the United States say these words: “An attack on one is an attack on all.” That happens to be Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. This country had emerged from communism, had been admitted into NATO, and they were anxious to see the President basically say, “We’re allies and we’ll protect each other from harm.”

This is a square that was a pretty dimly lit square because it was raining. But there was one balcony that was lit very brightly, and so I asked the guy walking out there, I said, “What’s that balcony?” He said, “That’s the balcony where the tyrant Ceausescu had given his last speech.” And he and he wife were awful people; they were true tyrants. And it was lit because people always want to remember the difference between freedom and tyranny. So it’s kind of a memorial to that last speech.

President Iliescu introduced me; I walk up to the podium, and a full rainbow appears. I’m talking full-spectrum rainbow. And it was a startling moment, so I turned back to Laura, who was sitting behind me there, and I said, “Look at that.” Of course 200,000 heads whip around to look at it too. I was so amazed that my opening comment of the speech—I ad-libbed—was, “God is smiling on Bucharest,” because the rainbow ended exactly behind the balcony where the tyrant had given his last speech.

Now you can look at that any way you want to look at it. I’ll tell you how I looked at it, I looked at it as a sign that freedom is beautiful. That freedom brings peace; that freedom is not ours alone; that freedom is universal.

And it’s in the interest of the world, and the interest of the United States of America to fight and try to alleviate the tyranny of disease. And that’s why tomorrow I’m going to sign a bill that commits the United States to dealing with HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa—and dealing with malaria. There’s nothing more hopeless than somebody seeing their baby die because of a mosquito bite.

The tyranny of government—if you believe in the universality of freedom like I do, then you shouldn’t be surprised that when given a chance, people from all walks of life will do the hard work necessary to live in a free society.

We’re in an ideological conflict today between people who use murder as a weapon to impose their ideology versus those of us who believe in human rights and human dignity and the right for anybody to worship any way they see fit. And the way to defeat an ideology of hate is with an ideology of hope. And there’s no more hopeful ideology than one that’s based upon liberty.

We’re a blessed nation because we’re a free nation. We’re a blessed nation because we’re a nation that understands there are responsibilities in this world. So I saw that rainbow, and I said I’m the fortunate—most fortunate man to be the President of this fabulous country. And to the best of my ability I will protect us from harm. And the long way to do so is to help others realize the blessings of living under liberty.

It’s a huge honor to be here with you today. It’s a huge honor to represent our country. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:46 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to George D. Blankenship, vice president, Cleveland operations, Lincoln Electric Company; Mayor Bill Cervenik of Euclid, OH; Representative John A. Boehner of Ohio; and former President Ion Iliescu of Romania. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting

July 30, 2008

Good morning. I just finished a good Cabinet meeting, and I want to thank the members of my Cabinet for serving our country. We discussed the challenges facing our economy, amongst other things, and we spent time on the high gasoline prices. Every one of our citizens who drives to work or runs a small business is feeling the squeeze of rising prices at the pump, and they expect their elected leaders in Washington to take some commonsense action.

To reduce pressure on prices, we need to increase the supply of oil, especially here at home. So in June, I called on Congress to lift the legislative ban that prevents offshore

exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf. Unfortunately, Democratic leaders in Congress have refused to allow a vote. And now Congress is about to leave for its August recess without taking any action on this vital priority for the American people.

There is now a growing agreement across our country that the Government should permit the exploration and development of these offshore oil resources.

Exploration of the OCS would increase our supply of oil here at home. Experts believe that currently restricted areas of the OCS could eventually produce up to about 18 billion barrels of oil; that's almost 10 years worth of America's current oil production.

Exploration of the OCS would also create jobs for our citizens. Yesterday I visited the Lincoln Electric Company in Cleveland, Ohio; it's a business that produces welding products used for offshore exploration. If Congress were to permit exploration of the OCS, it would mean jobs at businesses such as these. American drivers on—are counting on Congress to lift the ban on offshore exploration, and so are American workers.

Bringing OCS resources on line is going to take time, and that means that the need for congressional action is urgent. So I've lifted the executive restrictions on offshore exploration. I've done my part. And that means the only thing now—standing now between the American people and these vast oil resources is the United States Congress. The sooner Congress lifts the ban, the sooner we can get this oil from the ocean floor to your gas tank.

Some Members of Congress say they object to exploration of the OCS, but they are in favor of other actions, such as taking oil out of the Nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Well, if you agree that we need more oil, it makes no sense to say you're for draining our Nation's limited strategic reserve, but against tapping into the vast resources of the Outer Continental Shelf.

America needs to take every reasonable and responsible step we can do to reduce pressure on gasoline and energy prices. That's precisely what my administration is doing. We're working to expand domestic oil production. And at the same time, we're working to speed the development of new

clean and alternative energy resources. We're raising fuel efficiency standards, expanding the use of alternative fuels, and investing in next-generation fuels such as cellulosic ethanol and biodiesel. We're investing in new advanced batteries and plug-in hybrids and hydrogen fuel cells. We're working to expand the use of clean, safe nuclear power, solar and wind power, and clean coal technology. With these steps, we're enhancing America's energy security, and increasing the supply of clean, safe energy made right here in the United States of America.

The time for action is now. This is a difficult period for millions of American families. Every extra dollar they have to spend because of high gas prices is one less dollar they can use to put food on the table, or to pay the rent, or meet their mortgages. The American people are rightly frustrated by the failure of Democratic leaders in Congress to enact commonsense solutions, like the development of the oil resources on the Outer Continental Shelf.

There are now just a couple of days left before Congress leaves for its August recess. Legislation to open up this offshore exploration is pending in both the House and the Senate, and all the Democratic leaders have to do is to allow a vote. They should not leave Washington without doing so.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:59 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks on Signing the United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008

July 30, 2008

Thank you. Thank you for the kind introduction. [*Laughter*] And welcome to the White House for what has got to be an historic and joyous day.

I am about to sign the United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, and I'm looking forward to it. [*Laughter*] This act is—it's going to save millions of people, and it's—honors the memory of