

But if he fails to cooperate with them, if he fails to do all he can—and it is within his power—to help that process of disarmament through the United Nations, then he will be disarmed by force. And that is the clear will of the international community. And I think you will find now that there is a consensus for that position virtually right across the civilized world.

Q. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Sure. I'm glad to answer your every request. [*Laughter*]

Q. How about our every question?

President Bush. I don't want you to get used to asking too many questions. I've been answering them all the whole time I've been here, question after question after question. If you were to ask a question, Stretch, what would it have been, so I can think about it for tomorrow? I won't answer it now.

Usama bin Laden

Q. What's your reaction to the confirmation of bin Laden being alive on the tape?

President Bush. Thank you. I've got a formulated answer. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:07 a.m. at the Prague Congress Center. In his remarks, he referred to Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the North Atlantic Council Summit in Prague

November 21, 2002

America is very pleased by today's decision. We believe it strengthens our Nation's most important alliance, NATO. By welcoming seven members, we will not only add to our military capabilities; we will refresh the spirit of this great democratic Alliance.

We believe today's decision reaffirms our commitment to freedom and our commitment to a Europe which is whole and free and at peace.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:03 a.m. at the Prague Congress Center.

Proclamation 7628—Thanksgiving Day, 2002

November 21, 2002

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In celebration of Thanksgiving Day 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt wrote, "Rarely has any people enjoyed greater prosperity than we are now enjoying. For this we render heartfelt and solemn thanks to the Giver of Good; and we seek to praise Him—not by words only—but by deeds, by the way in which we do our duty to ourselves and to our fellow men." President Roosevelt's words gracefully remind us that, as citizens of this great Nation, we have much for which to be thankful; and his timeless call inspires us to meet our responsibilities to help those in need and to promote greater understanding at home and abroad.

As the Pilgrims did almost four centuries ago, we gratefully give thanks this year for the beauty, abundance, and opportunity this great land offers. We also thank God for the blessings of freedom and prosperity; and, with gratitude and humility, we acknowledge the importance of faith in our lives.

Throughout the Thanksgiving holiday, let us renew our commitment to make our country and our world better. As we welcome new opportunities and face new challenges, we are thankful for the resolve and generosity of so many of our people who are touching countless hearts and souls through thoughtful acts of kindness. By answering the call to serve others, Americans are building a culture of service that strengthens our Nation. We also honor and salute the selfless sacrifice of the brave men and women of our Armed Forces who are defending our lives and liberty at home and abroad with skill, honor, and dedication.

This Thanksgiving, we recognize the ties of friendship and respect that bind us together. And we renew our pledge to uphold the timeless principles of freedom, equality, and opportunity that have made our country into a great Nation. By working together, we will continue to build mutual trust, peace,

and hope for all across this land and around the world.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 28, 2002, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I encourage Americans to gather in their homes, places of worship, and community centers to share the spirit of understanding and unity, and of prayer, as we express our thanks for the many blessings we enjoy. I also encourage Americans to reach out in friendship to the larger family of humankind.

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

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:47 a.m., November 25, 2002]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 22, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on November 26.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Vladimir Putin of Russia and an Exchange With Reporters in St. Petersburg, Russia

November 22, 2002

President Putin. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. In your presence may I once again cordially welcome the President of the United States and his team to Russia.

We are very pleased that Mr. President accepted our invitation. And let me say that our conversations—and this is exactly the way I'd like to quote this meeting—our conversation on the whole range of our bilateral issues and our cooperation in the international arena have been very productive and very, very frank.

And we discussed practically everything between the sky and the Earth. We discussed our cooperation in the energy sector, our en-

ergy dialog. We discussed our cooperation in the high technology sector. We also—[*inaudible*]*—*the problem of NATO expansion and the development of relations between Russia and NATO. And of course, we also addressed the problem of terrorism. And of course, we also discussed the prospects for our cooperation on the matters of strategic stability.

I think that Mr. President will agree with me—and he'll have an opportunity to say what he thinks on this—but I think he'll agree with me that our meeting, in this point a very frank meeting, without prepared statements, has been very productive and has been very fruitful.

President Bush. Yes, it has. I consider Vladimir Putin one of my good friends.

Are you going to translate?

Like other good friends I've had throughout my life, we don't agree 100 percent of the time. But we always agree to discuss things in a frank and—in a frank way.

Every time I come to St. Petersburg, he keeps showing me more and more beautiful rooms. So I'm coming back next May. I always enjoy our conversations.

I have just come from NATO. My visit with Vladimir was my first stop after Prague. The mood of the NATO countries is this: Russia is our friend; we've got a lot of interests together; we must continue our cooperation in the war on terror; and the expansion of NATO should be welcomed by the Russian people. After all, there are new nations on our border that are members of—nations that are new members of NATO but nations pledged to peace and pledged to freedom.

But the President was right, we had a—we discussed a lot of issues. And I would define our bilateral relations as very good.

We might answer a couple of questions.

Q. This is a question to both Presidents.

President Bush. Okay, fine. Fire away.

Russia-U.S. Relations/NATO

[*At this point, a question was asked in Russian, and no translation was provided.*]

President Putin. As regards partnership, it is on a very high level. And it is very pleasant for me to note that we not only have lost nothing of what has been generated, has been produced by the previous generations