

the President referred to President Hu Jintao of China; President Dmitry A. Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin of Russia; former U.S. Olympic athlete Joey Cheek; and President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan. He also referred to his sister, Dorothy Bush Koch; his daughter Barbara P. Bush; and his brother Marvin P. Bush. Bob Costas referred to Alan “Al” Michaels, reporter, NBC Sports; former U.S. Olympic athlete Marion Jones-Thompson; and former Major League Baseball players Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens.

Remarks on the Situation in Georgia *August 11, 2008*

I just met with my national security team to discuss the situation in Georgia.

I am deeply concerned by reports that Russian troops have moved beyond the zone of conflict, attacked the Georgian town of Gori, and are threatening Georgia’s capital of Tbilisi. There’s evidence that Russian forces may soon begin bombing the civilian airport in the capital city.

If these reports are accurate, these Russian actions would represent a dramatic and brutal escalation of the conflict in Georgia. And these actions would be inconsistent with assurances we have received from Russia that its objectives were limited to restoring the status quo in South Ossetia that existed before fighting began on August the 6th.

It now appears that an effort may be underway to depose Russia’s [Georgia’s]° duly elected Government. Russia has invaded a sovereign neighboring state and threatens a democratic government elected by its people. Such an action is unacceptable in the 21st century.

The Georgian Government has accepted the elements of a peace agreement that the Russian Government previously said it would be willing to accept: an immediate cease-fire; the withdrawal of forces from the zone of conflict; a return to the military status quo as of August 6th; and a commitment to refrain from using force. There are representatives of the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe currently in Moscow seeking Russia’s agreement to this peace plan.

° White House correction.

Russia’s Government must respect Georgia’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. The Russian Government must reverse the course it appears to be on and accept this peace agreement as a first step toward resolving this conflict.

Russia’s actions this week have raised serious questions about its intentions in Georgia and the region. These actions have substantially damaged Russia’s standing in the world, and these actions jeopardize Russians’ relations—Russia’s relations with the United States and Europe. It is time for Russia to be true to its word and to act to end this crisis.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:21 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks to the Coalition for Affordable American Energy *August 12, 2008*

I want to thank members of the Coalition for Affordable American Energy for joining me today. We just had a very interesting and informative discussion. I heard from businesses, large and small. They—these folks are representing a lot of workers, people who are really concerned about the energy situation here in America, a lot of people wondering why their Government is not doing something about the supply of crude oil.

One of the things that came out in this discussion was, there’s a lot of folks in our country who understand we could be doing something about the high price of gasoline, and we’re not. Obviously, we need to be wise about conservation, but we’ve got to be wise about increasing the supply of oil here in America. If you’re concerned about the price of gasoline, one way to affect that price of gasoline is to increase oil supplies.

And one of these things these workers know that I fully understand as well, I’d rather our consumers be buying gasoline made from oil here in America than gasoline from oil being made overseas. We want our dollars, to the extent possible, to be here at home, staying here at home.

And so, we discussed a variety of strategies about how to affect the supply of oil, and one way that we can affect the supply of oil is to increase access to offshore exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf.

Congress has restricted access to key parts of the Outer Continental Shelf since the early 1980s. Experts believe that these restricted areas could eventually produce nearly 10 years worth of America's current oil production. People have analyzed what's possible there, and they believe that it's—we can find a lot of oil, American-produced oil, oil that will mean our dollars are staying here and not going overseas. Advances in technology have made it possible to conduct oil exploration in the Outer Continental Shelf that is out of sight, that protects coral reefs, and protects against oil spills.

Last month, I acted and I lifted an executive branch restriction on offshore oil exploration. And then I called on Congress to join me and to lift the legislative ban—to end the legislative ban. Unfortunately, the Democratic leadership in Congress decided to go on a 5-week vacation, a recess, rather than act on behalf of the American consumer, the American small-business owner.

Members have now had an opportunity to hear from their constituents, and if they listen carefully, I think they'll hear what I heard today, and that is a lot of Americans from all walks of life wonder why we can't come together and get legislation necessary to end the ban on offshore drilling. And so, today I join House Republicans in urging the Speaker of the House to schedule a vote on offshore oil exploration as soon as possible.

Now, the way ahead is this: The moratorium on offshore drilling is included in the provisions of the Interior appropriations bill. When Congress returns, they should immediately bring this bill to the House floor and schedule an up-or-down vote on whether to lift the moratorium on offshore drilling. Our goal should be to enact a law that reflects the will of the overwhelming majority of Americans who want to open up oil resources on the Outer Continental Shelf.

And so, the Democratic leadership should bring up a clean bill, give the Members a chance to vote up or down on whether or not we should proceed with offshore drilling,

and not insert any legislative poison pills. Those would be provisions that they know will never be enacted and are added only for the purpose of killing the effort to open up the off—the Outer Continental Shelf to drilling.

Congress can do some more. Once they solve this problem, they can allow us to drill in northern Alaska, which we can do in environmentally friendly ways. They should allow us to tap into the extraordinary potential of oil shale. And we need to expand our refining capacity here in America. These are all steps that the Congress can take to show the American people that we can move forward in a positive way to affect the price of gasoline. And there's a lot of Members of Congress who want a up-or-down vote. And the Democratic leadership has got to listen to the people on this issue.

Now, this is part of a comprehensive strategy. Everybody in this room understands that expanding oil and gas production is a part of a comprehensive strategy. Obviously, we need to expand conservation measures. We need to develop alternative energy technologies such as advanced batteries, plug-in hybrids, hydrogen fuel cells. We need to expand clean, safe, nuclear power, clean coal technology, solar, and wind power. There's not a single answer to our energy problems. But a part of solving the dilemma that our consumers are facing, that the hard-working Americans face, and that is high price of gasoline, we need to get after exploration here in America. And we can do it in a way that protects the environment.

So, when Congress comes back, they need to act. And they don't need to gimmick up the legislation; they need to allow there to be an up-or-down vote, and let the Members express the will of their constituents.

I appreciate the—your work on this issue. I appreciate you represent a lot of hard-working people, people who simply want to put food on the table and be able to make it to work; people who are concerned about the price of gasoline; people who have told you to tell me that they want to see more oil drilled, more exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf; people who told you to tell me they want to see us drilling in Alaska; people

who told you to tell me they want a common-sense energy policy right here in Washington, DC. And I agree with them.

Thank you for your time. Thank you for our conversation. Appreciate it. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Remarks on the Situation in Georgia *August 13, 2008*

Good morning. I've just met with my national security team to discuss the crisis in Georgia. I've spoken with President Saakashvili of Georgia and President Sarkozy of France this morning. The United States strongly supports France's efforts, as President of the European Union, to broker an agreement that will end this conflict.

The United States of America stands with the democratically elected Government of Georgia. We insist that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia be respected.

Russia has stated that changing the Government of Georgia is not its goal. The United States and the world expect Russia to honor that commitment. Russia has also stated that it has halted military operations and agreed to a provisional cease-fire. Unfortunately, we're receiving reports of Russian actions that are inconsistent with these statements. We're concerned about reports that Russian units have taken up positions on the east side of the city of Gori, which allows them to block the east-west highway, divide the country, and threaten the capital of Tbilisi.

We're concerned about reports that Russian forces have entered and taken positions in the port city of Poti, that Russian armored vehicles are blocking access to that port, and that Russia is blowing up Georgian vessels. We're concerned about reports that Georgian citizens of all ethnic origins are not being protected. All forces, including Russian forces, have an obligation to protect innocent civilians from attack.

With these concerns in mind, I have directed a series of steps to demonstrate our solidarity with the Georgian people and bring

about a peaceful resolution to this conflict. I'm sending Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to France, where she will confer with President Sarkozy. She will then travel to Tbilisi, where she will personally convey America's unwavering support for Georgia's democratic Government. On this trip, she will continue our efforts to rally the free world in the defense of a free Georgia.

I've also directed Secretary of Defense Bob Gates to begin a humanitarian mission to the people of Georgia, headed by the United States military. This mission will be vigorous and ongoing. A U.S. C-17 aircraft with humanitarian supplies is on its way. And in the days ahead, we will use U.S. aircraft as well as naval forces to deliver humanitarian and medical supplies.

We expect Russia to honor its commitment to let in all forms of humanitarian assistance. We expect Russia to ensure that all lines of communication and transport, including sea-ports, airports, roads, and airspace, remain open for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and for civilian transit. We expect Russia to meet its commitment to cease all military activities in Georgia. And we expect all Russian forces that entered Georgia in recent days to withdraw from that country.

As I have made clear, Russia's ongoing action raise serious questions about its intentions in Georgia and the region. In recent years, Russia has sought to integrate into the diplomatic, political, economic, and security structures of the 21st century. The United States has supported those efforts. Now Russia is putting its aspirations at risk by taking actions in Georgia that are inconsistent with the principles of those institutions. To begin to repair the damage to its relations with the United States, Europe, and other nations and to begin restoring its place in the world, Russia must keep its word and act to end this crisis.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, in his capacity as President of the European Council. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.