

Services Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio and his wife, Hope; and Jane Portman, wife of Representative Portman, and their son Jed.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Peter Medgyessy of Hungary and an Exchange With Reporters

June 22, 2004

President Bush. Before I welcome the Prime Minister to the Oval Office, I will have a statement; he will have a statement; we'll answer two questions per side.

Q. Mr. President—

President Bush. Hold on a second, please. I'll have a statement; he will have a statement; and then we'll have two questions per side. I'll call upon an American reporter, and he'll call upon a Hungarian reporter.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome.

We have just had another meaningful discussion about a lot of issues, starting with our bilateral relations. Relations between Hungary and the United States are strong, and I want to thank the Prime Minister for that and for your friendship.

I told the Prime Minister I appreciate a man who sticks by his word. When the Prime Minister gives you his word, he means it. He is a strong leader for Hungary. He is a strong ally for the United States. More importantly, he is a strong visionary for free and peaceful societies.

I appreciate very much, Mr. Prime Minister, the sacrifices of the Hungarian people when it comes to making the world more secure and peaceful. Your great country lost a brave soldier. I extend the deepest condolences to the family of that soldier from the United States of America. I appreciate his sacrifice, and I want his folks to know that we will complete our task and the world will be more peaceful and more free because Iraq will be free and peaceful. I want to thank you very much for understanding the hopes and aspirations of the Iraqi people.

I also appreciate our discussion about NATO. We're Allies in an important Alliance, and our jobs are to make sure that NATO fulfills its mission, which is a hopeful

mission, to bring stability and peace throughout the world.

I want to thank you for your briefing of the recent EU meetings. As you know, I'm going to Ireland to visit with the leadership of the EU, and I want to thank you for giving me a good, strong briefing on the EU.

And finally, we had a really interesting discussion about the Hungarian economy. The Prime Minister has got a very good vision about making sure that the Hungarian workforce is educated for the jobs of the 21st century. We talked about how we can work together on high-tech transfers and educational transfers. I told the Prime Minister that the decisions he's making for his economy are very important in attracting U.S. capital, that Hungary is a place that is a stable country based upon rule of law and transparency and that we look forward to working together to make sure our trade is vibrant as well as travel between our countries is expedited.

We have talked about a visa policy that, admittedly, has created a problem in Hungary. The Prime Minister came and told me directly he expects me and my administration to do everything we can to expedite travel between Hungary and the United States—I appreciated your very strong statement on behalf of the Hungarian people—and I assured him that we will work as best we can to make sure the visa system works like we want it to work, because in America we welcome people from all parts of the world. We welcome your business leaders. We welcome your students. We welcome your artists. It's in our Nation's interest that we have a full interchange and exchange with the Hungarian people.

So I want to thank you for coming, Mr. Prime Minister. You're a good, strong leader and a good friend, and welcome.

Prime Minister Medgyessy. Thank you very much, Mr. President, for the opportunity that just within 2 years, this is the second opportunity to meet. American-Hungarian relations can enter a new stage now. The past 2 years could prove that we are reliable and predictable partners, and we can step beyond that now.

And as it's been mentioned by the President right now, we can make real progress

in terms of technology cooperation, technology transfer, research and development, education. And the good development of economic relations is extremely important for Hungary.

Thank you very much, Mr. President, for bringing up the visa issue. I especially requested the President to look into this matter, how this can be expedited. American-Hungarian relations are entering a new dimension now, because we have become members of the European Union, which means—which represents a new equality.

I was truly delighted to see that in the European Council meeting, transatlantic relations were very important. And there is a true intention on the part of Europe to find the fastest possible solution for the Iraq issue, and I could feel in that issue that everybody is looking forward now.

Mr. President referred to the death of the Hungarian soldier which is, of course, very painful to all of us. Nevertheless, I could confirm to the President that Hungary's commitment to the presence in Iraq is unchanged, and we want to promote stabilization. Our troops will not be removed before their term, and we are more than happy to participate in processes that can promote the transfer of stabilization, democratization—[inaudible].

I thank you very much, Mr. President, once again for the opportunity, because this can give another impetus, a new impetus to American-Hungarian relations.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

Scott [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press].

Treatment of Prisoners

Q. Thanks, Mr. President. Secretary Rumsfeld expressed some concern last week that a perception might be taking hold that your administration had condoned or authorized torture of prisoners. Specifically, he worried that might give other countries an excuse to torture American civilians, American soldiers. I'm wondering if that's what prompted you to release these memos, these documents, and your deliberations? And also do you think we need an independent commission to look into this whole thing?

President Bush. Let me make very clear the position of my Government and our country. We do not condone torture. I have never ordered torture. I will never order torture. The values of this country are such that torture is not a part of our soul and our being.

The Prime Minister brought up the Abu Ghraib situation. I assured him that these soldiers do not represent what Americans think. And I also assured him that unlike a society run by a tyrant, the world will see a open, fair trial for those accused of breaking U.S. military law.

Hungary's Role in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, Prime Minister, what is the value of the contribution of the small countries to the—[inaudible]? Why is it important that they be there in the coalition?

President Bush. In Iraq? The—what's important for the Iraqis to know is that the world stands with them as a free society emerges. Hungary is a society which is a free society. It's a society which has rejected totalitarianism and has now welcomed democracy and rule of law and human rights and human dignity. And it's very important for the Iraqi people to be able to share those values with people beyond just the United States. I mean, Hungary is such a great example of what is possible in a free society. And plus, it helps to have troops fulfill certain missions as we help rebuild Iraq. It's more than just a symbol. These troops are providing a very important role as Iraq emerges from a society run and brutalized by a tyrant to a society in which people are able to realize their hopes and aspirations.

And it's happening. I told the Prime Minister I was very pleased with Prime Minister Alawi's strength and his vision and his strong statements, particularly in the face of these brutal terrorist attacks. He's not going to be intimidated by these killers, you see. He understands what a free society will mean. We're not going to be intimidated by the killers, either. Freedom is too precious and too valuable. And free societies will end up making the world a more peaceful place, which is my hope, and it's the Prime Minister's hope as well.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

South Korea's Role in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, in the wake of the beheading of the South Korean national, what are you doing to ensure South Korea sticks to its plan to send 3,000 troops to Iraq?

President Bush. I haven't had a chance to speak to President Roh yet, but I would hope that President Roh would understand that the free world cannot be intimidated by the brutal action of these barbaric people.

See, what they're trying to do is they're trying to shake our will and our confidence. They're trying to get us to withdraw from the world so that they can impose their dark vision on people, and remember what their dark vision is like. Remember what it was like for a young girl to grow up with the Taliban in Afghanistan. This was a society where young girls weren't even allowed to go to school. It's a society where people were humiliated in public. This is a society where people couldn't worship freely. This was a dark and dismal society. And that's their vision of the world. In order to impose their vision, they want us to leave. They want us to cover in the face of their brutal killings.

And the United States will not be intimidated by these people because we believe strongly in freedom and liberty and human rights and human dignity, freedom to worship as you see fit, freedom to speak your mind. And I believe President Roh understands that.

Prime Minister Medgyessy. And we share the same values with the United States.

Hungarian Troops in Iraq/U.N. Security Council Resolution on Iraq

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, has it been brought up that perhaps the mandate of Hungarian troops would be prolonged after the 31st of December? Did you touch upon that issue?

Prime Minister Medgyessy. We were talking about how delighted we were about the Security Council resolution both in Europe and everywhere else, that we welcome the intention that gradually the conditions are created for the Iraqi people to take over control over the government. And in the fairness of that process, we shall decide whatever should happen with Hungarian soldiers there.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:54 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Ayad al-Alawi of the Iraqi interim government; and President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea. Prime Minister Medgyessy spoke in Hungarian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Reception for Black Music Month

June 22, 2004

Thanks for coming, and welcome to the White House. Laura and I really appreciate you coming to join us today to celebrate Black Music Month, and we're glad you're here.

Our Jazz Masters and students from the Jazz in the New Generation program will perform for us soon, and we thank them for being here as well. I think you're going to like it. [Laughter] It's actually one of the great advantages of being the President is you get some great musicians to play for you in your living room. [Laughter]

We want to thank Dana Gioia for coming here. He's the chairman of the National Endowment of Arts. He's doing a fine job. I appreciate you being here.

I see members of my Cabinet who are here. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman is joining us. Thank you, Ann, for coming. And the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Alphonso Jackson and his wife, Marcia, I appreciate you both being here. I want to thank Congressman Chris Shays from the great State of Connecticut for joining us. Thank you, and thank you for bringing Laura back safely last night. [Laughter]

I appreciate Bill Coleman, the former Secretary of Transportation under Gerald Ford, for joining us today. Mr. Secretary, thank you for coming.

I want to thank Dr. Billy Taylor, Jazz Master 1988, and the Billy Taylor Trio for being here today. Thank you all for coming. Honored you're here. I want to thank Jazz Master 2004, Chico Hamilton, for joining us today. Thank you for coming. James Moody, Jazz Master 1998, thank you for coming. Of