

decision. I can understand people not liking that. But I would hope people in Europe would understand that freedom is not owned only by Europeans, that people around the world deserve to be free. And as we act in our self-interest to fight terrorists, as we work to make sure terrorists can't get weapons of mass destruction to cause great harm, that we will also work to free people. After all, the people of Latvia, of all people, ought to understand what it means to live under the subjugation of a doctrine that doesn't allow for freedom, communism.

And here people are living in the Middle East, for example, under the brutal reign of tyrants, huge mass graves, massive death, people tortured. And now they're living free. And when 8½ million people went to vote in Iraq, it sent a clear message that said, "We will not let the terrorists intimidate us; we want to be free, just like people in the Balkans used to speak, we want to be free."

You know, our country had a great history with the Baltics, that we said, "Your Embassies will remain little havens for freedom." We never recognized the lack of independence in the Baltics. We always believed that you should be free. And I hope over time, the young people of Latvia understand that that's what we stand for in America. We stand for freedom. We don't believe freedom is America's gift. We believe there's universal desire to be free. And the world will be more peaceful.

The hard decisions I've made I am confident will make this world a more peaceful place.

Q. Thanks very much, Mr. Bush.

The President. Welcome.

Q. I hope it's a good visit.

The President. I'm confident it will be. I'm looking forward to it.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 2:06 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast and was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 6. In his remarks, the President referred to President Vaira Vike-Freiberga of Latvia; President Valdimir Putin of Russia; and President Aleksandr Lukashenko of Belarus.

Interview With NTV of Russia

May 5, 2005

World War II

Q. Good morning, Mr. President, although it's good evening for Russian audience because of the time change. [*Laughter*] Your father is a World War II hero, the youngest Navy pilot. So how important the D-day is for you, personally, and for your family?

The President. Well, thank you for asking about my dad. He is—he was a—like many in America and in Russia that were called upon to defend the world against nazism. And fortunately, he came home.

And today, the celebration in Russia will remind us all about the sacrifices of, in my case, an individual I love, but also a generation, a generation of men and women who made extraordinary efforts, in Russia's case to defend the homeland, in America's case to work with allies to defeat Adolf Hitler as well as the Japanese.

And so it's a special day for me, personally, because it reminds me of the willingness of a young kid to go fight. But it also reminds me of the duty of my generation to work together to make the world a better place.

Eastern Europe After World War II

Q. The after-war Europe has been reshaped according to the Yalta Conference of 1943, by the decision of three very important personalities of this time, Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Churchill, and Mr. Stalin. How fair is it to hold only Russia responsible for all the misfortunes of Eastern Europe and Baltic States over the last—[*inaudible*]?

The President. Now, that's a very fair question. Obviously, it was a decision made at the end of the war. I think that the main complaint would be that the form of government that the Baltics had to live under was not of their choosing. But no, there's no question three leaders made the decision.

Q. So not only Russia the bad guy of history?

The President. Well, I think everybody ought to bear the—as historians look back at Yalta—got to recognize that it was—you're rightly so in pointing it out—it was not only

the Russian leader but the British and American leader were at the table and agreed on the agreement.

Baltic States

Q. In Russia, we're very concerned on the rise of neo-nazism in Baltic States when Russian war veterans are humiliated publicly, when monuments to Russian soldiers are vandalized, and at the same time, where, on May 8th, there is a plan to open the monument to Nazi Brigade, that is well known only for fighting—not only for fighting against Russians but also for quite ugly things that were common for SS troops.

The President. Yes. Well, look, there is—I've got a message when I go to the Baltics, and that is it's important to respect democracy but, also, the respect of democracy is respect for minority rights. In other words, a true democracy is one that says minorities are important and that the will of the majority can't trample the minority.

And as to whether or not nations are honoring nazism, I mean, of course that should be rejected. Nazism was defeated. We're celebrating the defeat of nazism. We don't want to see nazism return. It's an extremist point of view that believes that you should be able to trample the rights of minorities. It was the Nazis who annihilated millions of Jews, for example, and there's a classic example of the rights of minorities being trampled. And we must never forget the lessons of why we fought together in World War II. And so I'm looking forward to delivering that message of tolerance.

Gasoline Prices

Q. There is a question that has nothing to do with your visit to Russia but is very important to our country as an oil-producing country. Once you mentioned that you'll be happy to find a magic wand and to cut the price on oil. So what oil price will be acceptable for the United States, and what do you think is the chance of finding this magic wand?

The President. Well, I appreciate—no, there is no magic wand. A soldier asked me, he said, "Why don't you lower gasoline prices," as if the government controlled price. And in our country, the Government

doesn't control price. And I told him, I said, "If I had a magic wand, I would wave it and lower your price." But I—that's not the way it works. This is a world based—the price based upon supply and demand. And demand has been going up relative to supply, which has been beneficial for oil-producing countries like Russia.

And I don't know what the right price is. Obviously, the lower the better for our economy, because every time the money—the dollars go up on the gasoline price, money leaves the pocketbooks of the working people. But that's the way the economy works. Hopefully, higher price will stimulate more production. More production will then help the price reach an equilibrium.

And the market is what it is. That's—the markets decide, not governments. I would hope that Russia would encourage a lot of investment, to open up the vast reserves she has. We need to do more exploration here. I spoke to the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia who assured me that he is trying to put more—to find more oil. And that's what high prices do. But people who have got oil have got to understand if the price gets too high, it could wreck economies, which will mean there's less purchasing power for the product.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President, and welcome to Moscow.

The President. Looking forward to it. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 9:58 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast and was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 6. In his remarks, the President referred to Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.

Interview With Rustavi 2 Television of Georgia

May 5, 2005

President's Upcoming Visit to Georgia

Q. Mr. President, let me thank you very much for this opportunity to interview you. And on behalf of Georgian people, let me welcome you to Georgia.