

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia and an Exchange With Reporters in Toyako

July 7, 2008

President Bush. I want to thank the President for a good, meaningful discussion. It's the first time Dmitry and I met since he has become President of his big country, and we had a good discussion. We talked about Iran; we talked about a variety of issues. And while there's some areas of disagreement, there's also areas where I know we can work together for the common good.

I found him to be a smart guy who understood the issues very well. But I'm not surprised; after all, he has been very close to foreign policy issues up until his ascendancy to the Presidency. And he reminded me of our visit to the White House in 2005, where we discussed foreign policy then. And now it's my honor to discuss it face to face as Presidents of our respective countries.

Thank you, sir.

President Medvedev. Well, indeed, we had this exchange today with George concerning various issues at the agenda of our relationship, including those of domestic importance, trade and investments, and internationally related matters, including those conflicts and crisis tendencies in the world. And true that on certain matters, we do have differences originating from the previous background and differences are there. And on the others, we have absolutely similar positions. But what is really important, the dialog is there and there is a commonality of the overview on various things between us.

And the other thing which is also important is that I congratulated George on his birthday, which is also a very important thing; irrespective of summits out there, irrespective of our will, these dates occur in our life.

President Bush. Everybody has a birthday. Anyway, we'll answer one question apiece.

Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press].

Russia-U.S. Relations/Russian Leadership

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You're leaving; he's coming. There's not much time left.

Were you able to make any movement? Was there anything that you could accomplish in this thing—on issues like missile defense? And also, besides his intellect, what else did you see in the new President?

President Bush. Yes. I reminded him that, yes, I'm leaving, but not until 6 months, and I'm sprinting to the finish. So we can get a lot done together. And, you know, it's a lot of important issues. There is—you know, like Iran is an area where Russia and the United States have worked closely in the past and will continue to work closely to convince the regime to give up its desire to enrich uranium.

You know, I'm not going to sit here and psychoanalyze the man, but I will tell you that he's very comfortable; he's confident, and that I believe that when he tells me something, he means it. Sometimes in politics people tell you one thing and mean another. My judgment is that when he tells you something he means it, and that's going to be good for the world leaders to have somebody that you may not agree with what he tells you, but at least you know it's what he believes.

Russia-U.S. Relations

Q. What is your perspective of the further development of U.S.-Russia relationship?

President Medvedev. Well, yes, we have discussed these matters on the further development of a relationship between our two countries with George, and we are positive that they will develop further on. And we will build on the relationship with the new American administration. But we still have 6 months with the effective administration, and we'll try to intensify our dialog with this administration.

The other thing is that, yes, there are certain questions on our agenda where we agree, and these are the matters pertaining to Iran, North Korea. But then, certainly, there are others with respect to European affairs and this missile defense where we have differences. We would like to agree on these matters as well, and we also feel very comfortable in our dealings with George.

President Bush. Thank you. Thank you, sir.

President Medvedev. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:32 p.m. at the Windsor Hotel Toya Resort and Spa. President Medvedev and a reporter spoke in Russian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Following a Meeting With G-8 Africa Outreach Representatives in Toyako

July 7, 2008

President Bush. I'm really pleased to be standing with a really good friend of the American people and a great leader in Africa, President Kikwete of Tanzania. I just—first of all, I'd like to announce that he's coming to visit in late August. I'm really looking forward to having you to the White House; looking forward to giving you a good dinner. And we'll have a good visit.

President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of Tanzania. Looking forward.

President Bush. Yes. I am—you know, one of the things that's so impressive about his leadership in Tanzania is that the help of the American people is effective help, measurable in the number of people whose lives are being saved; babies are being helped with malaria. I mean, it's just unbelievable the job you've done there. And we're excited to welcome you to the country. I really want the American people to hear firsthand how successful their generosity has been, whether it be on HIV/AIDS or malaria. And Tanzania is a good example. But this success would not have taken place without your leadership—really important.

The other thing we discussed in the—we discussed a lot of issues with the African leaders here in the G-8, but one, of course, was Zimbabwe. You know, I care deeply about the people of Zimbabwe. I am extremely disappointed in the elections, which I labeled a sham election. And we, of course, listened very carefully. And, President Kikwete, as the head of the AU, has been very involved in this issue. I'm not going to put words in his mouth—he can express his own self—but it was—this issue of Zimbabwe took a fair amount of time—

President Kikwete. It did; it did.

President Bush. —and rightly so. Anyway, thank you for agreeing to come to the

States. And I'm really looking forward to having you.

President Kikwete. President, let me thank you for the invitation. I'm really looking forward too. We enjoyed your visit there. I think I've been around for some time. I think one—that was one of Tanzania's biggest visits.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Kikwete. You saw how people came out into the streets to receive you. It's a measure of our appreciation of what the United—the people of the United States have done to—[inaudible]—in many things. Many lives have been saved through that—those programs in support of malaria, for to HIV/AIDS, but there are so many other programs that are building our—capacity of our people to measure—to marry their own development, which we highly appreciate.

Well, of course we see eye to eye on many international issues. Of course, we have discussed the issue of Zimbabwe, where we understand your concerns. But I want to assure you that the concerns that you have expressed are indeed the concerns of many of us in the African Continent. At the last summit of the African Union, many leaders expressed their dissatisfaction at the way things happened, but also, we agreed on the way forward.

The only area that we may differ is on the way forward. You see differently, but for us in Africa we see differently. But I think, again, there is still room for us for discussions. We are saying no party can govern alone in Zimbabwe, and therefore, the parties have to work together to come out, work together in a government, and then look at the future of their country together.

So this is what we—the way we see it. I don't think that there is much divergence there. You would have liked to see us do a bit—some things; we would also like to see you do some things. But we'll continue to discuss all these issues, and as friends at the end of the day, we'll come to an understanding.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Looking forward to having you in Washington.

President Kikwete. Thank you.

President Bush. Some of these very same people will be there yelling questions there