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## President Bush Meets with President Adamkus of Lithuania

Oval Office

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11:02 A.M. EST

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** It's my honor to welcome a personal friend and a friend of freedom and peace to the Oval Office. Mr. President, I respect you, I respect your country. Lithuania has been a country whose history has been one of great tragedy. You, yourself, have lived through that tragedy. And it's so refreshing for a person like me to talk to somebody and to strategize with somebody who knows the great blessings of living in a free society.

The example of your country is an important example for the world, and that is that freedom is universal, that those of us who have the benefits of living in a free society must prevent a country such as yours from ever again being subjected to the tyranny of a few. You know full well the suffering that your relatives went through.

And, therefore, I find it -- I'm not surprised that in a struggling democracy like Afghanistan, your country has stood up bravely to support the Karzai government and the people of Afghanistan. And I thank you. And I thank the citizens of your country for your willingness to contribute to peace by helping a young democracy survive. I thank you very much for your support for the people of Iraq. It's hard work in Iraq. But, nevertheless, it is inspiring to know that Lithuania has said, we want to help the people realize the blessings of a free society.



We talked about a lot of issues. We talked about energy independence. I was very pleased by the strategy that you and others in the Baltics are working to achieve to achieve energy independence. We share the same objectives here in America, and I look forward to working with you as new technologies become available to make us all less dependent on oil and natural gas.

Secondly, the President was quite adamant about visa waiver. I can understand your strong position, Mr. President. I thank you very much for your clarity of thought. There should be no doubt that here in the Oval Office that President Adamkus represented the will of the majority of the Lithuanian people, when we discussed visa waiver and his desire for the people of his country to be treated like most of the other people in the European Union. I assured him we'll work with Congress to get a fair piece of legislation forward as quickly as possible so we can deal with this issue once and for all.

All in all, I'm so grateful that you and the First Lady came by to say hello here in the Oval Office. And I know Laura was very much looking forward to entertaining your good wife over there at the Residence. I thought the business session here went very well in a very constructive way. And, again, I welcome you back to the Oval Office.

**PRESIDENT ADAMKUS:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I believe the visit is just reconfirmation of the Lithuanian people for what we stand for. And I believe there is no doubt that our commitments -- international commitments, joining United States, actually based on the principles, principles which were the guiding light for us during the very difficult times of the Soviet occupation, almost for half of the century.

But at the same time, like I indicated to you, knowing what it means to be free and knowing, I mean, that this freedom still is not available in



some parts of the world, this is why we are with our, I would say, meager resources, but standing by you in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Kosovo. And definitely we are going to stand shoulder to shoulder just to make sure that the remaining Iraq people who cannot even enjoy today those kind of privileges -- free speech, respect for human rights -- would be given to them.

So I want to just thank you once again, I mean, for the support we are receiving. We are going to work together, especially in developing situations like we just mentioned during our conversations here about the latest statements in Munich. I believe this is not going to sway away the free people from the -- I mean, its ideals, the direction we are going together, and I think that the final outcome will be this is what we dream about, this is for what the American people stand for, for centuries and the day is coming.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you, sir.

PRESIDENT ADAMKUS: Thank you very much.

END 11:07 A.M. EST

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