



For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
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## President Bush Meets with Prime Minister Popescu-Tariceanu of Romania

Victoria Palace  
Bucharest, Romania

[In Focus: NATO 2008](#)

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[Presidential Remarks](#)

[Audio](#)

2:03 P.M. (Local)

PRIME MINISTER POPESCU-TARICEANU: (As translated.) Hello, good day. Of course our discussion was a very useful and very pleasant one. We discussed both bilateral issues between Romania and the United States. I expressed to President Bush our gratitude for having had the trust to have Romania organize this important NATO summit in Bucharest.

The organization of the NATO summit in Bucharest was very symbolic. It is part of a much larger vision and concept, this vision being that to strengthen and to unify Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. And the idea was to foster, to strengthen the Alliance in the eastern and southeastern flank, from the Baltic Sea all the way to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. That is how we have to interpret the membership of Albania and Croatia to NATO, the future membership of Macedonia, and eventual Georgia and Ukraine membership, as well.

But our discussion was not limited to that. We also discussed other issues of political and economic relationship between our countries and about the U.S. investments in our country. And I shared with President Bush my ambition, my hope, and actually my dream that to see a very important industrial investment from the United States in Romania, an investment with which generate common interests and would foster even more our partnership. And I'm referring to the Ford company, and of course a common interest like this would make me feel, as a citizen and as a Prime Minister, much more protected by our common interests.

I would like to also mention another initiative which was announced by the President yesterday, which was the creation of an American-Romanian foundation which will set up educational programs and grants for Romanian students. I'm talking about seed money of \$150 million, which could be -- which in time will arrive at \$1 billion investment, which will create -- which would be an investment in the future, creating the future, Romanian ambassadors to United States or the American ambassadors to Romania, it would be our hope.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. We just had a great -- we had a good meeting, because we're good friends. Okay, I'll just keep going.

INTERPRETER: I was actually told that everyone speaks English, so I should not interpret.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Okay, fine. (Laughter.) Anyway, we had a very good meeting, Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you for your time. First of all, I want to congratulate the government, yourself, for hosting a very successful NATO summit. It's not easy to host as many automobiles, body guards, world leaders, hanger-oners as you did. And yet you did it, and you organized well. Everybody who came to the summit was most impressed. I really do want to thank you. And I want to thank the people of Bucharest for their patience. I apologize for the inconvenience, but I do think it was a good sign, it was important for your country to be the host of this important event. And it was a very successful summit.

We had good discussions about a successful bilateral relationship, as well. I told the Prime Minister, one reason why capital comes to a country is because people feel comfortable about taking risk. I also congratulated him on these big investments that are coming; it's a good sign. The people of Romania ought to be -- appreciate the fact that the conditions are such that people are willing to invest. And by the way, investment creates jobs, which is also -- will have a direct benefit for the people of Romania.

I also congratulate the Prime Minister on having a 16 percent flat tax. I'm a little envious. I would like to have been able to achieve the same objective for our tax code, and it was a smart thing to get done, because I think those kinds of policies will enable the Romanian folks to have a bright future.

We talked about energy. But we also talked about visas. There is a real contradiction here that's hard for the people of Romania to understand, in that on the one hand, how can certain people within the EU be treated one way, and Romanians be treated another way when it comes to visas. And I fully understand that contradiction, Mr. Prime Minister. Our Congress passed new law -- it frankly wasn't as good as I thought it should be, but nevertheless, it is the law of the land, because I signed it into law.

And we will work with your government on a couple of matters, one, to figure out why the rejection rate is so high. There needs to be more transparency, and the Prime Minister made it very clear that we have an obligation to explain why certain folks are not getting visas. And we'll do that. The other thing is, obviously, we've got law on our books that we need to work with you, to help everybody understand in the process what compliance means.

Overall, the trip here has been great. This is the second time I've come. I didn't have quite the dramatic rainbow scene this time as I did the first time I came, but clearly there's been a lot of progress. The city looks different to me. The spirit is still strong. Freedom has taken hold, and I congratulate you, the government, and all involved for the progress you've made.

END 2:12 P.M. (Local)

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