

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Vaclav Klaus and Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek of the Czech Republic in Prague, Czech Republic

April 5, 2009

Hello, everybody. It is—let me begin by thanking the President and First Lady for their extraordinary hospitality in this spectacular setting, in this beautiful city, in a country that is one of America's greatest friends. And I am thrilled to be in Prague, Michelle is thrilled to be in Prague. And everybody has been extraordinarily gracious. So the main message I have, first of all is, thank you for the friendship, for the cooperation, for the strategic partnership that exists between our two countries.

I do want to make a brief statement about some news that was made today. North Korea made a launch this morning that defies U.N. Security Council resolutions, that harms peace and stability for Northeast Asia. Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Rice have already begun reaching out to our friends and allies to coordinate ahead of the Security Council meeting that's been scheduled for this afternoon.

The launch only underscores the urgency of the agenda that I will be laying out in my speech later this morning. I call on North Korea to honor its commitment to abandon all nuclear weapons programs, to abide by recognized norms of international relations, and to work to promote peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

North Korea's development of a ballistic missile capability, regardless of the stated purpose of this launch, is aimed at providing it with the ability to threaten countries near and far with weapons of mass destruction. This action demands a response from the international community, including from the United Nations Security Council to demonstrate that its resolution cannot be defied with impunity.

Thank you very much. Again, I want to thank the President and First Lady and the entire Czech delegation for their extraordinary hospitality and the warm friendship between our two countries.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:16 a.m. at Prague Castle. In his remarks, he referred to Livia Klausová, wife of President Klaus; Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan E. Rice. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Czech Republic :: Prime Minister Topolánek; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Czech Republic :: President Klaus.

Locations: Prague, Czech Republic.

Names: Clinton, Hillary Rodham; Klaus, Vaclav; Klausová, Livia; Obama, Michelle; Rice, Susan E.; Topolánek, Mirek.

Subjects: Czech Republic : President; Czech Republic : President Obama's visit; Czech Republic : Prime Minister; Czech Republic : Relations with U.S.; North Korea : Ballistic missiles, testing; North Korea : Nuclear weapons development; State, Department of : Secretary.

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