

**GEORGE W. BUSH**

May 18, 2000

His Excellency Valdas Adamkus
President of the Republic of Lithuania
Office of the President
Daukanto 3
Vilnius, Lithuania

Dear Mr. President:

On the occasion of the Vilnius Conference, I wish to express my support for the many distinguished leaders who have come to Lithuania to consider NATO's role in the future of Europe. The security of the United States is inseparable from the security of Europe, and a strong NATO is the foundation of peace.

It is in America's interest that the new European democracies become fully integrated into the economic, political and security institutions of the transatlantic community. These countries today are making progress toward developing market economies and democratic political systems that are the best way to ensure both their long-term stability and their security.

I believe that the enlargement of NATO to include other nations with democratic values, pluralist political systems and free market economies should continue. I also believe that the development of a democratic and stable Russia is in the interest of all of Europe, and we do not see Russia as an enemy. But Russia must never be given a veto over enlargement.

I am proud that 50 years of American commitment to freedom was rewarded in 1989 when Europe once again became whole and free. In the new era that resulted, some of America's strongest friends and allies have been the democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. In their recent histories, these nations have shown their commitment to the values shared by members of the transatlantic community. Many have already made a real contribution to the defense of these values in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for the success of the conference, which unites so many gifted statesmen and valued friends.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George W. Bush".

George W. Bush