



## Latvijas Republikas Valsts prezidenta kanceleja Prezidenta preses dienests

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### **Opening address of the State President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga before President Bush's remarks in Small Guild**

President Ritel!

President Adamkus!

Excellencies!

Ladies and gentlemen!

This is a historic moment for Latvia, for the Baltic States and for the whole Europe. We are standing here in a city in which eight hundred years of written history looks down at us. For hundreds of years, for centuries this city and this country are seen a lot of strike, a lot of struggle, a lot of bloodshed and a lot of suffering. But most of all there had been man-made conflicts, in which again and again one generation destroyed what had been done by the previous.

The Republic of Latvia was born in 1918 after the collapse of the czarist empire along with other countries that were born after the collapse of earlier empires in Europe. Unfortunately this liberty did not last long as the Second World War tore Europe apart again and the nations on whose soil the battles went on suffered large losses in life and property that was completely destroyed. We are now looking back at the 60th anniversary of the end of this conflict, the conflict that brought freedom and liberty for one part of Europe after the collapse of Nazi Germany and fascism Italy. But it did not bring freedom to other nations behind the iron curtain. The freedom came to us only with the singing revolutions in the three Baltic countries. Then came the moment when we recovered our freedom and our liberty and our sovereignty. Through these processes the United States has been a strong supporter of the strivings for the liberty of people. We have been beneficiaries of this support and we are grateful for it. Today again there is an opportunity to the United States to show its support for Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia in its understanding of history and its desire to support the development of civil society and most of all, all of us together to build a better future than the one of the centuries before.

Ladies and gentlemen!

This is a great privilege to me at the moment as a President of the Republic of Latvia to introduce the 43rd President of the United States of America my friend George W. Bush.