

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States
Military Forces in Response to Security Concerns for United States
Embassy Personnel in Liberia and Mauritania

June 9, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Clashes between Liberian government and rebel forces in the vicinity of the United States Embassy in Monrovia, Liberia and the potential for further deterioration of the security environment in Liberia render the safety of the United States Embassy and its occupants uncertain.

On June 7, 2003, an assessment team and standby response and evacuation force of approximately 35 U.S. military personnel from the U.S. European Command were pre-positioned in Freetown, Sierra Leone. On June 8, 2003, these forces moved into Monrovia, Liberia to augment the Embassy security forces and to aid in the evacuation of U.S. citizens from Liberia if required.

Additionally, on June 8, 2003, a coup attempt occurred in Mauritania. Fighting has been reported in the vicinity of the United States Embassy. This fighting continued during the morning of June 9 in the center of Nouakchott, about three kilometers from the Embassy. At the request of the United States Embassy, an assessment team and standby response and evacuation force of an estimated 34 U.S. military personnel from the U.S. European Command are being sent to Nouakchott, Mauritania and are expected to arrive on June 10, 2003. Their mission is to augment the Embassy security forces and to aid in

the evacuation of American citizens from Mauritania if required.

In addition to the forces noted above, several fixed wing aircraft and their aircrew have been pre-positioned in Dakar, Senegal in order to shorten the response time should an evacuation of American citizens from either Liberia or Mauritania be required.

Although in both cases the U.S. forces are equipped for combat, these movements were undertaken solely for the purpose of protecting American citizens and property. United States forces will redeploy as soon as it is determined that the threats to the Embassy compounds have ended or an evacuation, if necessary, is completed.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution.

I appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Ted Stevens, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks on Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act
June 10, 2003

Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thanks a lot. Welcome to the White

House and the beautiful Rose Garden. I want to thank you for coming today to help

us mark progress, significant progress, toward making sure our public schools meet our objective, which is every single child in America gets a high-quality education.

Last year, I had the honor of signing into law some historic reforms. The No Child Left Behind Act sets a clear objective for American education. Every child in every school must be performing at grade level in the basic subjects that are key to all learning, reading and math. The ambitious goal is the most fundamental duty of every single school, and it must and it will be fulfilled.

In order to ensure this goal is met, the No Child Left Behind Act requires every State in our country to submit an accountability plan that leads to measurable gains in student performance. As of today, all of the States, plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, have now submitted those plans. And that's why we're meeting.

The era of low expectations and low standards is ending; a time of great hopes and proven results is arriving. And together, we are keeping a pledge: Every child in America will learn, and no child will be left behind.

I want to thank our Secretary of Education for his service to our country. I first got to know him as a superintendent in Texas. He was the superintendent of the Houston Independent School District, and I figured if he could handle that—[laughter]—he could handle whatever Washington threw his way. But he's doing a great job, and so is his staff. I want to thank the chief State school officers who are with us today. Thank you for your setting high standards. Thank you for your care and concern for our Nation's children.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here today. I see quite a few Senators and House Members. I particularly want to pay my respects to the two chairmen that made the bill happen, Chairman Judd Gregg, Chairman John Boehner—Judd of the Senate, John of the House. I want to thank you for your leader-

ship. When we had our negotiations on the bill and discussions on the bill, I can't remember which one of the two said, "Are you going to follow through?" I said, "Yes, we'll follow through." We're following through, just the way you wanted us to. And I thank you for being here.

Of course, I see Chairmen Regula, Specter, Hatch, Alexander, Murkowski—I'd better stop. But anyway, thank you all for being here.

For too many years, education reform seemed like a losing battle. Fads came and fads went while students were passed from grade to grade, no matter what they did or did not learn. And as a result, national tests showed that fewer than 1 in 3 fourth graders were reading well and that only 4 in 10 high school seniors were skilled at reading. Because we were just simply shuffling kids through the system, we began to pay a serious price.

But fortunately, we recognized the problem, and we acted. I say "we"—it's not only Republicans but Democrats. All of us came together to focus on a significant problem for our country. We are now directly challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, every student in this country will be held to high standards, and every school will be held accountable for results. Teachers will get the training they need to help their students achieve. Parents will get the information and choices they need to make sure their children are learning. And together we will bring the promise of quality education to every child in America.

Part of the answer is funding, and we are meeting our obligations here in Washington, DC. The Federal Government is investing more money in elementary and secondary education than at any other time in American history. The budget for next year boosts education funding to \$53.1 billion and an increase of nearly \$11 billion since I took office. And it wasn't all that long ago that I took office. Funding for

Title I, a program that helps our most disadvantaged students, has increased 33 percent to \$11.6 billion. And since I took office, we've tripled the amount we're spending on effective reading programs to more than \$1 billion.

At the Federal level, we are putting money into the system. It is also important for our fellow citizens to understand that there is money available for States to put in accountability systems, for States to train teachers in the methods that work, and for States to provide extra help to students who need it.

But it's also important to recognize that pouring money into systems that do not teach and refuse to change will not help our children. We help children by measuring the educational progress of every single child and by insisting on change when progress is not made. We're spending more money on schools, but the change is we're now asking for results. And those results must be proven, and those results must be measured every single year.

Success comes when we've got strong leadership in our schools, leaders who seek the truth, leaders who are willing to confront reality, and leadership who believes in the worth of every single child. And we have such a leader with us today. Linda Reksten is with us today. Linda is the principal of Disney Elementary School in Burbank, California. It's a Title I school where half the students are not fluent in English and nearly two-thirds come from low-income families.

Four years ago, her students scored at the 40th and 44th percentiles for reading comprehension and math on the State tests. And her school wound up on a list of underperforming schools. At first, Linda said she and her teachers felt powerless, felt overwhelmed. But they overcame their discouragement and got to work.

And here's what Disney School did. They began a rigorous testing program to measure the progress of every child several times a year. Teachers who had initially

been skeptical of the tests—and I'm sure the State leaders here have heard of that skepticism before—learned how to use test results to tailor their lessons plans and to make sure every child excelled. Morale when up. Discipline problems went down. And last year, Disney students scored at the 58th percentile in reading comprehension and the 71st percentile in math. And that is tremendous progress.

And let me tell you what Linda said. She said, "It is this constant assessment that tells us what to do next. Once we have the test data and we know where the gaps are, we go after the gaps. We know where every child is." Linda is right. She has shown what works in education. She is the model of education reform. I'm proud you're here. Thank you for your leadership, and thank you for your heart.

The core of the No Child Left Behind legislation is that every child must be tested on the basics, starting early, because testing shows what children are learning and where they need help. We also need to train the teachers in scientifically proven methods of teaching the basics so that their students can make progress. And if the basics are not being taught and our children are not meeting standards, schools must be held to account. There must be a consequence. The status quo, if a school is mediocre, is not acceptable.

We're making good progress in terms of the implementation of our accountability systems. In the past 5 months, we have approved the accountability plans of 33 States, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. And today we mark an historic milestone of accountability: This morning, Secretary Paige has approved the plans of 17 more States, bringing us to a total of 100 percent of the accountability plans in place.

I want to thank the Secretary again and his staff and education chiefs for helping this Nation make great progress when it comes to education reform. Keep in mind that in January of 2001, only 11 States were

in compliance with a 1994 education law. Every State, plus Puerto Rico and the District, are now complying with the No Child Left Behind Act after one year.

Educators are embracing a new level of accountability, which is creating a new culture for our Nation's schools, a culture of achievement, a culture of results over process. In this new culture, accountability plans are driving reform. They contain timelines and projections to show how the States will bring all students up to grade level in reading and math by the year 2014. All students will be tested—tests designed by the States, not the Federal Government. Schools are required to disaggregate the testing data, separating the results by race and background to make sure all groups of children are learning. All schools must release report cards with these results to the parents and to the public, so we know which schools are succeeding and which schools are not.

Though the plans have these common elements, each plan is unique because each State and its communities are unique. Local people are getting the tools they need to find out if children are learning and if their schools are working. Local people are charting the path to excellence, and that is important because local people know what is best for their own children and their own schools.

The development of these plans involved a lot of hard work. Governors stepped up to the line, along with their education chiefs. I also want to thank the principals and teachers and parents on the frontlines who are working so hard to improve our public schools. Instead of throwing up your hands in despair, you decided to challenge the status quo and to help each child. On behalf of the Nation, I want to thank all who are involved in America's public schools, all who demand excellence, for your service to our country.

And now we look forward to the next phase of school reform. The law requires every State to release a list of its schools

in need of improvement before the start of the school year. The schools on those lists are immediately eligible for State assistance that can help them improve. The school remains on the list for 2 years. Parents will have the option of moving their children to other public schools in the same district. If a school stays on the list for 3 years, a parent will be given a choice of tutoring programs with proven track records, programs in which they can enroll their children at no cost.

The No Child Left Behind Act gives parents and students alternatives when schools do not measure up. Some of those schools will undoubtedly have to make difficult choices. That's okay. Remember what's at stake. When a student passes from grade to grade without knowing how to read and write, add and subtract, the damage can last a lifetime. We must not tolerate a system that just gives up on a child early. We must not tolerate tired excuses. We must challenge persistent failure. And that is precisely what this Nation is going to do. We are insisting on high standards and high achievement for every school in every corner of America because we have a fundamental belief that every child can learn in this country.

It's an exciting time for American education; it really is. We're facing challenges, but we have the blueprint for success. The No Child Left Behind Act charts the way for a better tomorrow. We've also got a greater advantage than the law. We have got the will and the character of the American people. Parents and teachers and principals and education chiefs are making good on our promise to leave no child left behind. We will continue to stand with them as they help the next generation realize the greatness of our country.

And we do live in a great country, a country of great values, a country of hope, a country that believes in the best for every single citizen who lives in our land.

May God bless your work, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Title I of the Improv-

ing America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law No. 103-382), which amended Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public Law No. 89-10). The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda June 10, 2003

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome President Museveni back to the White House. Mr. President, you have shown extraordinary leadership on a lot of issues, but the one issue that's really captured the imagination and the hearts of the American people is your extraordinary leadership on HIV/AIDS in your country. You've shown the world what is possible, and I want to congratulate you for that leadership.

I also want to thank you for your steadfast support on the war against terror. And I'm glad you're here.

Before we begin our discussions I do want to say something on the Middle East. I am troubled by the recent Israeli helicopter gunship attacks. I regret the loss of innocent life. I'm concerned that the attacks will make it more difficult for the Palestinian leadership to fight off terrorist attacks. I also don't believe the attacks help Israeli security. We have been in touch with all parties in the region. I am determined to keep the process on the road to peace. And I believe, with responsible leadership by all parties, we can bring peace to the region. And I emphasize, all parties must behave responsibly to achieve that objective.

So, Mr. President, I'm glad you're here. Welcome. I'd like for you to make a few comments, please, sir.

President Museveni. Thank you so much. I'm very glad that I'm here. First of all, I congratulate President Bush for his leadership in fighting terrorism. Terrorism is a very irresponsible way of expressing one's dissatisfaction. It uses indiscriminate violence. They don't discriminate between combatants and noncombatants. That's why we oppose terrorism.

We fought with guns for the freedom of our countries. I fought for many years, but I've never used terrorist means. Freedom fighting is not the same thing as terrorism. If you must use violence, you should assure that violence is targeted at the combatants, not at the noncombatants.

Secondly, I salute President Bush for his decision a few years ago to open American markets to African value-added products. You hear so much of poverty in Africa, but in fact, Africa is a very rich continent. The only problem with that, we must—*[inaudible]*—lose value to the outside. We export only raw materials; we don't export value-added products. So I'm very glad that President Bush opened the American market for our goods.

I'm also glad that he set up the Millennium Challenge Account. That money should be used to aid trade. I don't believe in aid as an end in itself. I believe in trade. Trade is the one that can lead to mutual benefits for all countries in the world.