

The President. Oh, Pam, of course—[inaudible]. How do I respond?

Q. How do you respond to criticism that you are asking for \$20 billion in aid to reconstruct Iraq at a time when a lot of domestic work, such as the No Child Left Behind and the Help America Vote Act are not being fully funded?

The President. Well, I will start with—by responding this way: The No Child Left Behind funding is the largest increase in elementary and secondary school funding in a long time. And the Title I part of the Elementary and Secondary School Act funding is a large increase as well—historic increases.

Secondly, that it is vital that we succeed in Iraq, that a free Iraq will make America

more secure. A free Iraq will change the dynamics of the Middle East, which will be important for peace. And I appreciate the support of Congress and the understanding of Congress that we will succeed in Iraq. And so the \$20 billion is to help rehabilitate that country, so that the people of that country can live a free and hopeful life.

Listen, thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:48 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and USAID officer Laurence Foley, who was killed in Amman, Jordan, on October 28, 2002.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Supplemental Appropriations Request for Ongoing Military and Intelligence Operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Elsewhere *September 17, 2003*

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Two years ago, we responded to attacks on America by launching a global war against terrorism that has removed gathering threats to America and our allies and has liberated the Iraqi and Afghan people from oppression and fear.

America is making steady progress in the war on terror. Nearly two-thirds of al Qaeda's leadership has been captured or killed. In Afghanistan, we removed the Taliban from power and shut down terrorist training camps. In Iraq, we led a coalition that removed a dangerous tyrant who sponsored terror, possessed and used weapons of mass destruction, and for 12 years defied the clear demands of the United Nations Security Council.

Today, I am submitting a request for 2004 supplemental appropriations for ongoing military and intelligence operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Our men

and women in uniform, alongside our coalition partners, are bringing peace and stability to Iraq and fighting the terrorist threat. In Afghanistan, our Armed Forces continue to track down terrorists and provide security as the Afghan people rebuild their nation. Our commitment to ongoing operations against terrorism is worthy of our country and critical to our security.

My request also supports the Coalition Provisional Authority's reconstruction operations in Iraq and supports reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. These reconstruction funds are essential to secure the transition to self-government and to create conditions for economic growth and investment. By helping the Iraqi and Afghan people build free and democratic nations, America and our allies are bringing freedom and hope to a troubled region, and undermining a key base of operations for terrorists. The

sooner we achieve these conditions, the sooner our troops will return home.

This request reflects urgent and essential requirements. I ask the Congress to appropriate the funds as requested, and promptly return the bill to me for signature. I hereby designate the specific proposals in the amounts requested herein as emergency requirements. I urge the Congress not to at-

tach items that are not directly related to the emergency abroad.

The details of the request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

The President's News Conference With King Abdullah II of Jordan at Camp David, Maryland *September 18, 2003*

President Bush. Thanks for coming. His Majesty and I will answer some questions after a couple of statements.

First, I'm so pleased to welcome my friend King Abdullah and Queen Rania to Camp David. I want to thank them so very much for rearranging their schedules to get up here ahead of Hurricane Isabel. Laura and I look forward to spending some quality time with two really fine people.

We're going to have some serious discussions today. Then we'll have a nice lunch, and then we'll batten down the hatches and spend a good evening with our friend. The King is a good friend, and I say with certainty he is a fine man. He's a reformer who's working to build a country that is tolerant and modern and prosperous. He cares deeply for the people of Jordan. I know firsthand. I have seen his passion for the people in that important country. He suffers when people suffer. He exults when people succeed. He's a leader who takes risk for peace. He's a peaceful man.

King Abdullah and I last met more than 3 months ago in Aqaba, Jordan. He hosted a very important meeting. It was a moment of great hope for the people of the Middle East. At that meeting, Prime Minister Abbas—former Prime Minister Abbas strongly condemned terror. Prime Minister

Sharon committed Israel to supporting the emergence of a viable Palestinian state. The King affirmed the commitment of his country to help forge a lasting peace.

In the weeks that followed, there was good progress. Israel withdrew from Gaza City and Bethlehem and turned responsibility for security in—there over to the Palestinian Authority. Hundreds of prisoners were released. Checkpoints were removed. Some unauthorized outposts were taken down.

And on the Palestinian side, Prime Minister Abbas made a good-faith effort to meet the commitments made at Aqaba. Yet, at every turn, he was undercut by the old order. I remain committed, solidly committed, to the vision of two states living side by side in peace and security. Yet, that would only happen with new Palestinian leadership committed to fighting terror, not compromised by terror.

I look forward to discussing with His Majesty how we can encourage Palestinian reform, how we can work together to fight off the terrorists who want to destroy the hopes of many, and how we can move forward to peace, peace in a region that needs peace.

I appreciate the King's cooperation in the critical efforts to build a stable Iraq. The