

*May 12 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2004*

former manager, Reading Department, Houston Independent School District; and

Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., and Lt. Gov. Michael S. Steele of Maryland.

## Statement on the Panama-United States Proliferation Security Initiative Ship-Boarding Agreement

*May 12, 2004*

The United States welcomes Panama's signing today of a ship-boarding agreement that supports the efforts of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) to stop the trade in deadly weapons and materials.

The agreement establishes streamlined procedures for American officials to request and board ships registered to Panama if those ships are suspected of carrying weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, or related materials. More ships sail under the Panamanian flag than that of any other nation. This agreement sends a strong signal to proliferators that the free nations

of the world are determined to protect their people and preserve the peace.

This is the second bilateral ship-boarding agreement signed to support PSI. The United States and the Government of Liberia signed a similar agreement on February 11, 2004. Together, Panama and Liberia account for roughly 30 percent of the world's commercial shipping tonnage. We welcome this historic decision by the Government of Panama. And we urge other nations with large commercial shipping registries to follow the lead of Panama and Liberia to make a stand against proliferation.

## Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Amendment To Establish a Contingent Emergency Reserve Fund To Support Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan

*May 12, 2004*

*Dear Mr. Speaker:*

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2005 budget amendment to establish a \$25 billion contingent emergency reserve fund to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Although we do not know the precise costs for operations next year, developments on the ground in Iraq indicate the need to plan for contingencies. We plan to pursue a full FY 2005 supplemental request when we can better estimate precise costs. In the meantime, this reserve fund

will ensure that our men and women in uniform continue to have the resources they need when they need them.

I have pledged to our troops that they will have all the resources they need to accomplish this vital mission, and I urge the Congress to approve this reserve fund.

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

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

Remarks in a Discussion at Parkersburg South High School in Parkersburg,  
West Virginia  
May 13, 2004

*The President.* Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Please be seated. First, thanks for the invite. You all got the best seat in the house. At least you got the best view of me. [*Laughter*] I really want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank our panelists for being here, because we're about to have a discussion on how to make sure every person in America can realize their dreams. That's what we're here to talk about: Dreams and how they can be realized; how to make sure the education system works the way every mom and dad, every teacher, every principal, every concerned citizen wants it to work.

And this is the perfect place to come and have a discussion about education, because Parkersburg South is educating the kids. They're doing a fine job here. Tom, I want to thank you. I've spent a lot of time at schools, and there's always a common denominator in excellent schools, and that is you've got a good principal, see—somebody who listens to the teachers, somebody who interfaces with the parents, but somebody who sets high standards, somebody who believes in the best for every child. And I appreciate you taking on a tough job, and I appreciate you doing it well.

I want to thank Bill Niday as well. He's the superintendent here in Wood County. I know something about superintendents, and I know how important they are for education. See, I picked a superintendent of schools to run the Department of Education, the superintendent from Harris County, which is Houston, Texas. I mean, the superintendent is on the frontline of education. They're involved with all aspects of local education. So I picked a man who understands how it works. And the reason I brought a superintendent in from Texas to Washington, because I believe in local

control of schools. I want the people at the local level running the schools.

I appreciate Barbara Fish, from the State board here in West Virginia, for coming. Where are you, Barbara? Thank you for coming. I'm honored you are here. I appreciate what you said. Barbara said to me—I'm going to talk a little bit about No Child Left Behind here in a second. She said, "I love the spirit of No Child Left Behind." See, I love the spirit of Barbara, who understands that by setting high standards and measuring and making sure curriculum works and making sure your dollars are well spent, that we can make sure no child is left behind in America. So thank you for your vision, and thank you for your care.

They're telling me Jimmy Colombo is here, the mayor. Where are you, Mr. Mayor? There you are. I appreciate you coming. Who you got with you? There he is. We'll try to get you a better seat next time, Mayor. [*Laughter*] But thank you for being here. I'm proud you're here. I really appreciate so many of the citizens of this good city coming out and waving, and it means a lot to me. And Mayor, the fact that you're here means a lot too. I appreciate you serving your community. Just make sure you fill the potholes. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate the Patriots. All of the Patriots are here. Thank you for hosting us. I want to congratulate the seniors who are getting ready to graduate. Make sure you don't take the foot off the gas pedal too soon—isn't that right? Keep studying until the final bell rings. But good luck to you.

Today I had the honor of meeting Heather Stout. She came out to the airport. She's a sophomore at West Virginia University in Parkersburg. I'll tell you why I mention her. Where are you, Heather? She's somewhere. Oh, there you are, right there. I'm sorry. I beg your pardon. You know