

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