

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the
“U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans’ Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq
Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007”

May 1, 2007

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 1591, the “U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans’ Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007.”

This legislation is objectionable because it would set an arbitrary date for beginning the withdrawal of American troops without regard to conditions on the ground; it would micromanage the commanders in the field by restricting their ability to direct the fight in Iraq; and it contains billions of dollars of spending and other provisions completely unrelated to the war.

Precipitous withdrawal from Iraq is not a plan to bring peace to the region or to make our people safer here at home. The mandated withdrawal in this bill could embolden our enemies—and confirm their belief that America will not stand behind its commitments. It could lead to a safe haven in Iraq for terrorism that could be used to attack America and freedom-loving people around the world, and is likely to unleash chaos in Iraq that could spread across the region. Ultimately, a precipitous withdrawal could increase the probability that American troops would have to one day return to Iraq—to confront an even more dangerous enemy.

The micromanagement in this legislation is unacceptable because it would create a series of requirements that do not provide the flexibility needed to conduct the war. It would constrict how and where our Armed Forces could engage the enemy and

defend the national interest, and would provide confusing guidance on which of our enemies the military could engage. The result would be a marked advantage for our enemies and greater danger for our troops, as well as an unprecedented interference with the judgments of those who are charged with commanding the military.

Beyond its direction of the operation of the war, the legislation is also unacceptable for including billions of dollars in spending and other provisions that are unrelated to the war, are not an emergency, or are not justified. The Congress should not use an emergency war supplemental to add billions in spending to avoid its own rules for budget discipline and the normal budget process. War supplemental funding bills should remain focused on the war and the needs of our men and women in uniform who are risking their lives to defend our freedoms and preserve our Nation’s security.

Finally, this legislation is unconstitutional because it purports to direct the conduct of the operations of the war in a way that infringes upon the powers vested in the Presidency by the Constitution, including as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. For these reasons, I must veto this bill.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
May 1, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 2.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia

May 2, 2007

President Bush. It's been my honor to welcome a true democrat, a strong leader, and a friend, the President of Colombia. We had a long discussion.

First, Mr. President, Laura and I remember fondly our trip to your beautiful country. It was my second trip to Colombia, my first to your capital, and it was a very special occasion. And we thank you and the First Lady for such gracious hospitality.

Secondly, we had a discussion today about an important vote that our Congress must take, and that is a vote to confirm a free trade agreement with Colombia. This agreement is good for the United States. It's good for job creators, farmers, workers. This agreement is good for Colombia. It's good for job creators and workers and farmers.

This agreement has strategic implications. It is very important for this Nation to stand with democracies that protect human rights and human dignity, democracies based upon the rule of law. So the free trade agreement with Colombia and Peru and Panama, these agreements are more than just trade votes, they're signals to South America that we stand with nations that are willing to make hard decisions on behalf of the people.

The President is here to speak strongly about his record, and it's a good, solid record. I thank the Members of Congress for giving him a hearing. We expect them to be openminded, to listen to his record. And I urge the Congress to pass a trade agreement with Colombia and Peru and Panama because it's in our interest that they do so.

And so, Mr. President, it's great to see you. *Bienvenidos.*

President Uribe. *Muchas gracias, Presidente.*

Good morning, distinguished journalists. I want to thank President Bush for the new meeting. It has been, as always, very constructive. This meeting has given my team and myself the opportunity to reiterate our commitment with democracy.

We have three main objectives in our administration: to consolidate democratic security, to create more and more confidence in Colombia for people to invest in our country, and to fulfill very important social goals, to fulfill social goals before the deadline of the social millennium goals.

Many people ask me, why you call your policy on security democratic security? Because it is security with human rights, because it is security for all Colombians, because it is security for trade union leaders, for those member of the opposition, for those who agree in their ideas with my Government, security for all Colombians.

During my 5-year term, we have healthy elections, and Colombians have enjoyed effectiveness of our freedoms because of our policy on security. Before my administration, many Colombians had the idea that the only way for my country to reach peace, it was by private criminal organizations. Today, because of the efficacy of our administration, the vast majority of Colombians are convinced that we will defeat terrorists by institutional ways, that the only way Colombia has for the future is the way of our democratic institutions.

It is very important that the United States considers the necessity to advancing Plan Colombia. We haven't won yet in eradicating illicit drugs, but we are winning. And it is very important, the free trade agreement. I will explain in Capitol Hill, and I will explain to the American citizens the same I explain to President Bush this morning: The more our country can export, the better for my country to have high-