

Remarks Following a Visit With Wounded Troops and Their Families at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland

May 25, 2007

First, I applaud the bipartisan effort to get a emergency supplemental bill to my desk. The Speaker and the leader said they would get it done by Memorial Day recess, and they have, and I appreciate that very much.

You know, this effort shows what can happen when people work together. We set a good bill that didn't have timetables or tell the military how to do its job, but also sent a clear signal to the Iraqis that there's expectations here in America, expectations that we expect—about how to move forward. I look forward to continuing to work with the Prime Minister and his Government in meeting those expectations.

I also am honored to be here at this place of compassion and healing on Memorial Day weekend. It's a weekend which gives us a chance to honor those who have served this country, whether it be in this war or in previous wars.

In being here, I also want to honor the healers here at Bethesda. It's—health care here is remarkable. They're dealing with some of the very tragic injuries in this war. People come here without much hope, and they leave, in many cases, healed and ready to move on with their lives. So I thank the doctors and the nurses.

I also thank the soldiers and their families who I met here, people who are remarkably brave and courageous. I'm constantly amazed at the strength of character of those who wear the uniform. To be the Commander and Chief of such men and women is really an awesome honor.

And so to our troops and their families: May God bless you. And may God continue to bless our country.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:36 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

Statement on Congressional Passage of Emergency Supplemental Appropriations

May 25, 2007

Congress voted yesterday to provide our troops with the funding and flexibility they need to protect our country, and I was pleased to sign the bill today. Rather than mandate arbitrary timetables for troop withdrawals or micromanage our military commanders, this legislation enables our service men and women to follow the judgment of commanders on the ground.

This important bill also provides a clear roadmap to help the Iraqis secure their country and strengthen their young democracy. Iraqis need to demonstrate measur-

able progress on a series of benchmarks for improved security, political reconciliation, and governance. These tasks will be difficult for this young democracy, but we are confident they will continue to make progress on the goals they have set for themselves.

I am pleased that Congress removed billions of dollars in unrequested spending. I would like to have removed even more, but this package was part of the effort to move forward and ensure our troops in harm's way have the resources they need.