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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 attach 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.

Proclamation 7706—National Hispanic Heritage Month, 2003

September 17, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America's diversity has always been a great strength of our Nation. As we celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month, we recognize and applaud the extraordinary accomplishments of Hispanic Americans.

From America's beginning, Hispanic Americans have served as leaders in business, government, law, science, athletics, the arts, and many other fields. In 1822, Joseph Marion Hernandez became the first Hispanic to serve as a member of the United States Congress, representing the newly established territory of Florida. Businessman Roberto Goizueta, a refugee from Cuba who rose to become the CEO of one of America's largest corporations, is an inspiring example of what immigrants to America can achieve through hard work and character. Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Roberto Clemente's athletic skills, generosity, and charity made him a legend on and off the baseball field. Through memorable recordings and performances, singer Celia Cruz celebrated her heritage and helped introduce salsa music to the United States.

Hispanic Americans have sacrificed in defense of this Nation's freedom, serving in every major American conflict. More than three dozen Hispanic Americans have earned the Medal of Honor. Today, more than 125,000 Hispanic Americans serve in the Armed Forces, approximately 9 percent of our active-duty military. As we work to advance peace, freedom, and opportunity abroad, we are grateful to all of the brave men and women who serve our Nation, and to their families.

During Hispanic Heritage Month, I join with all Americans in recognizing the many contributions of Hispanic Americans to the United States, and in celebrating Hispanic

heritage and culture. To honor the achievements of Hispanic Americans, the Congress, by Public Law 100–402 as amended, has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating September 15 through October 15, as "National Hispanic Heritage Month."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 15 through October 15, 2003, as National Hispanic Heritage Month. I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:38 a.m., September 22, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 18, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 23. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this proclamation.

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 hearts of the American people go out to the people of Jordan for the ruthless attack on the Embassy in Baghdad. That attack just once again shows the nature of terror, indiscriminate killing of innocent people, all trying to intimidate and create fear.