

for our troops to receive care for this disorder, and it will help affected service members to move forward with their lives.

The need to enact these reforms into law is urgent, and I call on both Republicans and Democrats in Congress to come together and pass a good bill that I can sign into law. We also need to complete the Veterans Affairs appropriations bills that funds veterans' benefits and other ongoing programs. I fully recognize Congress and I have our differences on other appropriations bills, but the Veterans Affairs bill is one where we agree. I ask the House and Senate to work together to pass a bill that I can sign, and send it to my desk by Veterans Day.

As we work with Congress on this legislation, my administration will continue to institute the recommendations of the Dole-Shalala Commission that do not require congressional approval. We're acting on the Commission's recommendations to form a new corps of well-trained recovery coordinators. These coordinators will work with families to establish recovery plans and monitor the healing process, facilitate the transition to civilian life, and ensure wounded service members do not get lost in the system.

We're also acting on the Commission's recommendations to ensure health professionals working at the Defense Department and Veterans Affairs facilities can easily share patient information. This will allow us to provide patients with better care as they move through the system. We're also developing a new secure web portal, where service members will be able to access all their medical files and benefit information in one place.

We're acting on the Commission's recommendation to create incentives for medical professionals and administrators to work at Walter Reed. One out of every five wounded service members passes through this hospital. And while Walter Reed is set to close at 2011, we will ensure it remains a state-of-the-art facility until the last day of operation.

By taking these steps, we'll honor a shared commitment to care for those who defend our freedom. One of those people is Ryan Groves. While serving with the Marines in Iraq in 2004, he lost his left leg and severely injured his right leg in a rocket attack. Today,

he refuses to allow his disability to stop him from living his life. He's going to Georgetown. He wants to be a lawyer. He travels using the Segway. He's an amazing fellow. He's an inspiration for all Americans. And we need to build a system of care that is worthy of the sacrifice that he and others have made.

I look forward to working with Congress to achieve this goal. Together we can give our wounded warriors the best possible care and help them build their lives of hope and promise.

And now it's my honor to introduce Secretary Donna Shalala.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:25 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator Bob Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Coauthors, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Coauthors Dole and Shalala.

Memorandum on Provision of United States Drug Interdiction Assistance to the Government of Brazil

October 16, 2007

Presidential Determination No. 2008-03

Memorandum for the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Provision of U.S. Drug Interdiction Assistance to the Government of Brazil

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 1012 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1995, as amended (22 U.S.C. 2291-4), I hereby certify, with respect to Brazil, that (1) interdiction of aircraft reasonably suspected to be primarily engaged in illicit drug trafficking in that country's airspace is necessary because of the extraordinary threat posed by illicit drug trafficking to the national security of that country; and (2) that country has appropriate procedures in place to protect against innocent loss of life in the air and on the ground in connection with such interdiction, which shall at a minimum include

effective means to identify and warn an aircraft before the use of force is directed against the aircraft.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register* and to notify the Congress of this determination.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 17.

The President's News Conference

October 17, 2007

The President. Good morning. We're now more than halfway through October, and the new leaders in Congress have had more than 9 months to get things done for the American people. Unfortunately, they haven't managed to pass many important bills. Now the clock is winding down, and in some key areas, Congress is just getting started.

Congress has work to do on health care. Tomorrow Congress will hold a vote attempting to override my veto of the SCHIP bill. It's unlikely that that override vote will succeed, which Congress knew when they sent me the bill. Now it's time to put politics aside and seek common ground to reauthorize this important program. I've asked Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt, National Economic Council Director Al Hubbard, and OMB Director Jim Nussle to lead my administration's discussions with the Congress. I made clear that if putting poor children first requires more than the 20-percent increase in funding I proposed, we'll work with Congress to find the money we need. I'm confident we can work out our differences and reauthorize SCHIP.

Congress has work to do to keep our people safe. One of the things Congress did manage to get done this year is pass legislation that began modernizing the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. FISA is a law that our intelligence professionals use to monitor the communications of terrorists who want to do harm to our people. The problem is that Congress arranged for the measure they

passed to expire this coming February. In addition, the House is now considering another FISA bill that would weaken the reforms they approved just 2 months ago. When it comes to improving FISA, Congress needs to move forward, not backward, so we can ensure our intelligence professionals have the tools they need to protect us.

Congress has work to do on the budget. One of Congress's basic duties is to fund the day-to-day operations of the Federal Government. Yet Congress has not sent me a single appropriations bill. Time is running short, so I urge the Speaker and the leader of the Senate to name conferees for six of the annual appropriations bills that have already passed the House and the Senate. The two Houses need to work out their differences on these bills and get them to my desk as soon as possible. They also need to pass the remaining spending bills, one at a time and in a fiscally responsible way.

Congress has work to do on education. As we saw from the recent Nation's Report Card, the No Child Left Behind Act is getting results for America's children. Test scores are rising. The achievement gap is beginning to close. And Congress should send me a bipartisan bill that reauthorizes and strengthens this effective piece of legislation.

Congress has work to do on housing. Back in August, I proposed a series of reforms to help homeowners struggling with their mortgage payments. More than 6 weeks later, Congress has yet to finish work on any of these measures. These are sensible reforms that would help American families stay in their homes, and Congress needs to act quickly on these proposals.

Congress has work to do on trade. Earlier this year, my administration reached out to the Congress, and we forged a bipartisan agreement to advance trade legislation. Now Congress needs to begin moving on trade agreements with Peru, Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. These agreements expand access to overseas markets; they strengthen democratic allies; and they level the playing field for American workers, farmers, and small businesses.