

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the “Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004”

December 6, 2004

Dear Leaders and Conferees:

My most solemn duty is protecting the American people, and reforming and strengthening our Nation’s intelligence capabilities will help ensure the safety of our country. I call on Congress to pass an intelligence reform bill this week. An overarching principle for these needed reforms has been to create a strong Director of National Intelligence with full budget authority while preserving the chain of command within departments and agencies. We are very close to a significant achievement that will better protect our country for generations to come, and now is the time to finish the job for the good of our national security. Therefore, I want to reiterate my views on some issues of concern to Members.

When I met with the Congressional Bipartisan Leadership at the White House on September 8, 2004, I stated that the country needed a strong Director of National Intelligence with full budget authority. At the same time, I have stated that we need a bill that respects the chain of command within departments and agencies, including the Department of Defense, so as to ensure that all of the war-fighters’ needs will be met. As Commander-in-Chief, it is ultimately my responsibility to ensure that both of these goals are realized, and they are captured in the attached formulation.

Accordingly, in developing implementing guidelines and regulations for this bill, it is my intention to ensure that the principles of unity of command and authority are fully protected. It remains essential to preserve in the heads of the executive departments the unity of authority over and accountability for the performance of those departments. In particular, as we continue to prosecute the global war on terrorism, the integrity of the military chain of command

and the principle of battlefield unity of command must continue to be respected and in no way abrogated. These guidelines will also honor my commitment to provide the Director of National Intelligence full and meaningful budget authority over the National Intelligence Program. This is critical to make certain that the intelligence community is more effectively managed. The guidelines will also help ensure that the Director of National Intelligence has enhanced management authorities, including the ability to oversee and integrate all the foreign and domestic activities of the intelligence community, to achieve the unity of purpose needed to win the global war on terrorism.

With regard to other provisions in the legislation, I want to congratulate the Conference for adopting important and time-sensitive law enforcement provisions that:

- Strengthen current laws to make certain we can arrest those aiding terrorists, including those who have received military-style training in terror camps.
- Increase our ability to target terrorism financing.
- Ensure that dangerous terrorists are lawfully detained while awaiting trial.
- Help prevent attacks by shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles, known as MANPADs, and weapons of mass destruction by mandating appropriate penalties.
- Provide authority to help stop “lone wolf” terrorists.
- Expand our jurisdiction to prosecute those who seek weapons of mass destruction.
- It is imperative that Congress act this week to guarantee these vital tools become part of our arsenal immediately.

I also believe the Conference took an important step in strengthening our immigration laws by, among other items, increasing the number of border patrol agents and detention beds. There were other measures proposed that were not incorporated into the bill. My positions on these provisions were detailed in a letter from the Office of Management and Budget to Conferees on October 17, 2004. However, these omissions from the final bill should not prevent the Congress from passing this historic legislation now. I look forward to working with the Congress early in the next session to address these other issues, including improving our asylum laws and standards for issuing driver's licenses.

I appreciate all the work done to date by this Congress and the September 11th

Commission. These are some of the most challenging, complicated, and important issues facing our government. The Leaders and Conferees deserve great credit for working together to protect the safety of the American people.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: The letter made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included an attachment listing guidelines to ensure the effective implementation within the executive branch of the authorities granted to the Director of National Intelligence. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter. The letter referred to S. 2845.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Providing Notification of the Proposed Reimbursement of the District of Columbia for Costs of Public Safety Expenses

December 6, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with title I of the District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 2005, Public Law 108-335, I am notifying the Congress of the proposed use of \$10,288,548 provided in title I under the heading "Federal Payment for Emergency Planning and Security Costs in the District of Columbia." This will reimburse the District for the costs of public safety expenses related to security events and responses to terrorist threats.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 7.

Remarks at Camp Pendleton, California

December 7, 2004

Thank you all. Thank you for the warm welcome. It was getting a little quiet back

at the White House—[laughter]—so I decided to drop in on the Devil Dogs. Thank