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Proclamation 7623—Veterans Day, 2002

November 6, 2002

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America was founded on the principles of liberty, opportunity, and justice for all, and on Veterans Day we recognize the men and women of our Armed Forces who have valiantly defended these values throughout our Nation's history. These remarkable individuals have helped to make our Nation secure and to advance the cause of freedom worldwide. By answering the call of duty and risking their lives to protect their fellow countrymen, these patriots have inspired our Nation with their courage, compassion, and dedication.

There are currently more than 25 million living American veterans, many of whom put their lives on the line to preserve our freedoms. Our veterans served on the land, at sea, and in the air, from the shores of Omaha Beach and the jungles of Vietnam, to the sands of the Persian Gulf, the mountains of Afghanistan, and many other battlefields around the globe. Through each of these challenges, the members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard have protected our country and liberated millions of people around the world from the threats of tyranny and terror.

Our proud veterans have also helped to shape the American character. They have given us an extraordinary legacy of patriotism and honor, and their service represents the highest form of citizenship. So that young Americans can better understand the commitment and sacrifice of these heroes in securing the blessings of liberty, I ask all schools to observe November 10 through November 16, 2002, as National Veterans Awareness Week. I encourage educators to invite veterans to teach our young people about their experiences. By sharing their knowledge on some of the most proud and dramatic moments in our history, they can help educate and inspire a new generation of Americans.

On the observance of Veterans Day in 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower called on all citizens to not only remember "the sacrifices of all those who fought so valiantly . . ." but also to rededicate themselves "to the task of promoting an enduring peace . . . ." Today, almost 50 years later, we remember the dedication of our veterans, and resolve ourselves to upholding their legacy of justice, liberty, and opportunity for all.

In recognition of the contributions our service men and women have made to the cause of peace and freedom around the world, the Congress has provided (5 U.S.C. 6103(a)) that November 11 of each year shall be set aside as a legal public holiday to honor veterans.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim November 11, 2002, as Veterans Day and urge all Americans to observe November 10 through November 16, 2002, as National Veterans Awareness Week. I urge all Americans to recognize the valor and sacrifice of our veterans through appropriate public ceremonies and private prayers. I call upon Federal, State, and local officials to display the flag of the United States and to encourage and participate in patriotic activities in their communities. I invite civic and fraternal organizations, places of worship, schools, businesses, unions, and the media to support this national observance with suitable commemorative expressions and programs.

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

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:29 a.m., November 8, 2002]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on November 12.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Military and Civilian Personnel in Colombia Supporting Plan Colombia

November 6, 2002

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

Pursuant to section 3204(f), title III, chapter 2 of the Emergency Supplemental Act, 2000 (the "Act"), as enacted in the Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2001, Public Law 106–246, I am providing a report prepared by my Administration. The report provides "the aggregate number, locations, activities, and lengths of assignment for all temporary and permanent U.S. military personnel and U.S. individual civilians retained as contractors involved in the antinarcotics campaign in Colombia."

In so doing, I note and appreciate the continued strong bipartisan support given to U.S. programs assisting Colombia in the Act and elsewhere.

This report is classified because of force protection considerations and the high level of terrorist threat in Colombia. However, the aggregate numbers given below are unclassified.

The report indicates that as of September 13, 2002, the end of this reporting period, there were 138 temporary and permanent U.S. military personnel and 250 U.S. civilians retained as individual contractors in Colombia involved in supporting Plan Colombia. This report further indicates that during July, August, and September 2002, these figures never exceeded the ceilings established in section 3204(b) of the Act, as amended.

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 November 7.

The President's News Conference

November 7, 2002

The President. Thank you. Good afternoon. Thanks for coming. This is an important week for our country and for the world. The United Nations will vote tomorrow on a resolution bringing the civilized world together to disarm Saddam Hussein. Here at home, our citizens have voted in an election that I believe will strengthen our ability to make progress for all the American people.

I congratulate the men and women, Republicans and Democrats, who were elected this week to public office all across America. I appreciate their willingness to leave their private lives and to serve their communities and to serve our Nation.

I also commend the millions of voters across America and across the political spectrum who went to the polls. At a time when our freedoms are under attack, it is more important than ever that our citizens exercise the rights and responsibilities of our democracy.

Now that the voters have spoken, I urge the members of both political parties to come together to get things done for the American people. I've talked to leaders of both parties and assured them I want to work with them. I talked to Senator Daschle yesterday and said that, although the Republican Party now leads the Senate, I still want to work with him to get things done for the American people. I talked to Leader Gephardt as well.

I look forward to working with Members of the Congress and the newly elected Governors to make America's families safer in their homes and their communities, to make our economy stronger so people can find work, to make our country a better and more compassionate place. Members of the new Congress will take office in January, and they'll have a full agenda. The current Congress, however, will return in just a few days to take up some unfinished business.

We have a responsibility to protect the American people against threats from any source. I'm grateful to the Members of the Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, that came together to support the war against terror and authorize, if need be, the use of force to disarm Iraq. We must bring the same spirit of bipartisan cooperation to the urgent task of protecting our country from the ongoing threat of terrorist attack.

The single most important item of unfinished business on Capitol Hill is to create