

goal. Nothing in this directive shall limit the authority of the Secretary of Defense with regard to the command and control, training, planning, equipment, exercises, or employment of Department of Defense forces, or the allocation of Department of Defense resources.

(21) The Secretary, in coordination with other appropriate Federal civilian departments and agencies, shall develop and maintain a Federal response capability inventory that includes the performance parameters of the capability, the timeframe within which the capability can be brought to bear on an incident, and the readiness of such capability to respond to domestic incidents. The Department of Defense will provide to the Secretary information describing the organizations and functions within the Department of Defense that may be utilized to provide support to civil authorities during a domestic crisis.

Citizen Participation

(22) The Secretary shall work with other appropriate Federal departments and agencies as well as State and local governments and the private sector to encourage active citizen participation and involvement in preparedness efforts. The Secretary shall periodically review and identify the best community practices for integrating private citizen capabilities into local preparedness efforts.

Public Communication

(23) The Secretary, in consultation with other Federal departments and agencies, State and local governments, and non-governmental organizations, shall develop a comprehensive plan to provide accurate and timely preparedness information to public citizens, first responders, units of government, the private sector, and other interested parties and mechanisms for coordination at all levels of government.

Assessment and Evaluation

(24) The Secretary shall provide to me through the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security an annual status report of the Nation's level of preparedness, including State capabilities, the readiness of Federal civil response assets, the utilization of

mutual aid, and an assessment of how the Federal first responder preparedness assistance programs support the national preparedness goal. The first report will be provided within 1 year of establishment of the national preparedness goal.

(25) Nothing in this directive alters, or impedes the ability to carry out, the authorities of the Federal departments and agencies to perform their responsibilities under law and consistent with applicable legal authorities and presidential guidance.

(26) Actions pertaining to the funding and administration of financial assistance and all other activities, efforts, and policies in this directive shall be executed in accordance with law. To the extent permitted by law, these policies will be established and carried out in consultation with State and local governments.

(27) This directive is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch of the Federal Government, and it is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the United States, its departments, agencies, or other entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

George W. Bush

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on Providing Funds for the Department of the Treasury's Counterterrorism Fund

December 17, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In accordance with provisions of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001 (Public Law 106-554), I hereby request and make available \$7 million for the Department of the Treasury's Counterterrorism Fund. I hereby designate this \$7 million as an emergency requirement pursuant to Public Law 106-554.

These funds would support Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Service Agents in overseas and domestic counterterrorism efforts.

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

**Remarks to Medical Personnel at
Walter Reed Army Medical Center
December 18, 2003**

Thank you all very much. Thanks for the warm welcome. Laura and I are thrilled to be here at the Army Medical Center. We're thrilled because this is a place of love and healing and great compassion. This center has a great history and an important mission, and that is, you are serving those who serve our country. In this time of war—and we are at war with an enemy that hates what America stands for—the good people of Walter Reed are giving the best of care to the men and women who have been wounded in action. During a difficult time in their lives, they count on you. You give them the kind, professional care and decency and hope they deserve. And on behalf of America, I thank you for your service.

Laura and I have had a great visit here. I know I'm not supposed to get out of my lane and give medical reports—[laughter]—but I can report that Colin Powell received great health care here and he is doing very well.

I want to thank General Kiley and Babs for your hospitality again. I appreciate Colonel Jaffin. I appreciate Colonel B.J. Mielcarek. She is—she's been kind of looking after my body on occasion too. [Laughter] Fortunately, she's got a lot to work with. [Laughter] But she's in charge of the physical therapy services. We've just come from her department where we saw some incredible work being done and some brave soldiers who are working hard to get to 100 percent.

I appreciate Colonel Saulsbery, deputy commander for nursing; Colonel Greenwood; Colonel Fitzpatrick. And thank you all. I really appreciate the hard-working staff, the docs, the nurses, the people who make this fantastic facility operate in a way that makes me proud and in a way that will make every American proud when they learn your story.

Each one of you has got a demanding job, and it's a tough job here. I've seen your work firsthand. I know how tough it is. But I also know that you count it as a privilege to look after some exceptional Americans, people who are willing to sacrifice for their country.

When I spend time with members of our military, I'm impressed by the idealism and the concern for each other and the strong sense of duty that our soldiers feel. Members of the Armed Forces are now serving in a great cause, serving in an historic time. Peace and security of our fellow citizens depend upon their bravery and their willingness to serve. In so doing, our soldiers accept the dangers and the hardships that this cause sometimes requires. You know them well. I'm coming to know them. They're the finest of our citizens.

If you spend any time with these young men and women, you know that whether it's on the battlefield or in the hospital, our men and women are always thinking of one another. Even after being wounded, they often speak about returning to their units. And these aren't idle words. These are words that come from people who have seen the true nature of combat. I'm proud to be their Commander in Chief. I'm proud to lead such fine men and women who are willing to sacrifice for their country.

There's something else the wounded say, and they say it often, and they say it clearly. They praise you all, and they praise the incredible health care they receive here at Walter Reed. The doctors and nurses here are superb and dedicated and tireless. The administrative staff and the patient advocates and the chaplains are incredibly committed Americans and compassionate souls. You show concern for the patients, and you love their families as well. You give attention to the medical needs, to the emotional needs, and to the spiritual needs of those recently removed from the battlefield.

I want to thank the volunteers at Walter Reed. Many of you are veterans. Many of you have known war injuries of your own. You're a source of inspiration and your good advice for people who are in recovery. The country is grateful for your service in the past, and your country is very grateful for your continued service to help lift the spirits