

Security Initiative (PSI) to stop the trade in deadly weapons and materials.

The agreement establishes streamlined procedures for American officials to request and board ships registered to Panama if those ships are suspected of carrying weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, or related materials. More ships sail under the Panamanian flag than that of any other nation. This agreement sends a strong signal to proliferators that the free nations of the world are determined to protect their people and preserve the peace.

This is the second bilateral ship-boarding agreement signed to support PSI. The United States and the Government of Liberia signed a similar agreement on February 11, 2004. Together, Panama and Liberia account for roughly 30 percent of the world's commercial shipping tonnage. We welcome this historic decision by the Government of Panama. And we urge other nations with large commercial shipping registries to follow the lead of Panama and Liberia to make a stand against proliferation.

**Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Budget Amendment To Establish a Contingent Emergency Reserve Fund To Support Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan**

*May 12, 2004*

*Dear Mr. Speaker:*

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2005 budget amendment to establish a \$25 billion contingent emergency reserve fund to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Although we do not know the precise costs for operations next year, developments on the ground in Iraq indicate the need to plan for contingencies. We plan to pursue a full FY 2005 supplemental request when we can better estimate precise costs. In the meantime, this reserve fund will ensure that our men and women in uniform continue to have the resources they need when they need them.

I have pledged to our troops that they will have all the resources they need to accom-

plish this vital mission, and I urge the Congress to approve this reserve fund.

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

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

**Remarks in a Discussion at Parkersburg South High School in Parkersburg, West Virginia**

*May 13, 2004*

*The President.* Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Please be seated. First, thanks for the invite. You all got the best seat in the house. At least you got the best view of me. *[Laughter]* I really want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank our panelists for being here, because we're about to have a discussion on how to make sure every person in America can realize their dreams. That's what we're here to talk about: Dreams and how they can be realized; how to make sure the education system works the way every mom and dad, every teacher, every principal, every concerned citizen wants it to work.

And this is the perfect place to come and have a discussion about education, because Parkersburg South is educating the kids. They're doing a fine job here. Tom, I want to thank you. I've spent a lot of time at schools, and there's always a common denominator in excellent schools, and that is you've got a good principal, see—somebody who listens to the teachers, somebody who interfaces with the parents, but somebody who sets high standards, somebody who believes in the best for every child. And I appreciate you taking on a tough job, and I appreciate you doing it well.

I want to thank Bill Niday as well. He's the superintendent here in Wood County. I know something about superintendents, and I know how important they are for education. See, I picked a superintendent of schools to run the Department of Education, the superintendent from Harris County, which is Houston, Texas. I mean, the superintendent is on the frontline of education. They're involved with all aspects of local education. So