

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Plan Colombia

September 23, 2002

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 3204(e), of Public Law 106-246, I am providing a report prepared by my Administration detailing the progress of spending by the executive branch during the first two quarters of Fiscal Year 2002 in support of Plan Colombia.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 23, 2002.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 24.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters

September 24, 2002

The President. Thanks for coming. We just had a very productive Cabinet meeting. We realize there's little time left in—before the Senate and the House goes home, but we're optimistic a lot can get done between now and then. Congress must act now to pass a resolution which will hold Saddam Hussein to account for a decade of defiance.

It's time to get a homeland security bill done, one which will allow this President and this administration, and future Presidents—give us the tools necessary to protect the homeland. And we're working as hard as we can with Phil Gramm and Zell Miller to get this bill moving. It's a good bill. It's a bill that both Republicans and Democrats can and should support.

My message, of course, is that, to the Senators up here that are more interested in special interests, you better pay attention to the overall interests of protecting the American people.

We can get budget going. I need a defense bill. The Senate needs to get and the House needs to get their differences reconciled and get a defense bill to my desk before they go home. That's a very important signal to send. And at the same time, since there is no budg-

et in the Senate, they've got to be mindful of overspending, very important for those up there who keep talking about budget—balanced budget and all that—to not overspend. If they're truly that concerned about the deficit, then one way they can help is to be fiscally sound with the people's money.

We talked about the need to get pension reform and an energy bill, terrorism insurance. There's time to get all this done, and we look forward to working with the Members of Congress to get it done.

I'll answer a couple of questions, starting with Fournier [Ron Fournier] of the AP.

British Dossier on Iraq/Al Gore

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Can I have your reaction to two recent assessments on the situation in Iraq? First, Tony Blair said today that Saddam has tried to acquire significant quantities of uranium and can quickly deploy chemical and biological weapons. But there seems to be little new information in the dossier. Secondly, former Vice President Al Gore—

The President. That might explain why.

Q. Pardon me, sir?

The President. Explain why he didn't put new information—to protect sources. Go ahead.

Q. If you could explain why, I'd appreciate it. And secondly, Vice President Al Gore—

The President. That's right, I forgot our different roles. [*Laughter*]

Q. I couldn't even get on the ballot. [*Laughter*]

The President. Did that have something to do with the background check? [*Laughter*]

Q. When I have something on that, I'll let you know, sir. [*Laughter*]

The Vice President yesterday said that you've managed to replace the world's sympathy on Iraq with fear, anxiety, and uncertainty. And you're using the issue to steer attention away from the inability to get Usama bin Laden.

The President. I'm confident that a lot of Democrats here in Washington, DC, understand that Saddam is a true threat to America. And I look forward to working with them to get a strong resolution passed.

Prime Minister Blair, first of all, is a very strong leader, and I admire his willingness