

**Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Budget Amendment for International Assistance Programs**

September 24, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2004 budget amendment for International Assistance Programs. This amendment would not increase the budgetary resources proposed in my FY 2004 Budget.

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

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 25.

**Remarks Following a Meeting With the Congressional Conferees on Medicare Modernization and an Exchange With Reporters**

September 25, 2003

**The President.** Listen, thank you all for coming. Today we met with the conferees on Medicare and had a good and frank discussion about the need to work together to get a Medicare bill that modernizes the system, that fulfills the promises to America's seniors, that uses the latest technology to improve the health care of our elderly.

And in my judgment, the sentiment was optimistic. I believe people know it's possible to get it done. And there's a lot of work to get done, but fortunately, we're surrounded here by conferees that are plenty capable, plenty smart, and care deeply about the future of the country.

And so I want to thank them for coming. I want to thank you for your commitment to our seniors, and I look forward to working with you to get a good bill out of both bodies and to my desk before you go home this fall.

I'd like to take a couple of questions. Terry [Terry Hunt, Associated Press].

**Medicare Reform Legislation**

**Q.** Mr. President, with huge Federal budget deficits, do you have any qualms about spending \$400 billion on Medicare prescription drugs?

**The President.** First of all, no, I don't. I think it's the right thing to do. We have an obligation to our seniors. Secondly, we've proposed a plan that reduces the deficit in half by 5 years—within 5 years. I absolutely believe we're doing the right thing.

**Iran/Meeting With President Vladimir Putin of Russia**

**Q.** Sir, what did you think of the discovery of traces of weapons-grade uranium—

**The President.** Do what now?

**Q.** What did you think of the discovery of weapons-grade—traces of weapons-grade uranium in Iran? And will this be on your agenda with President Putin this weekend?

**The President.** It was on my agenda—it will be on my agenda with President Putin this weekend. It was on my agenda with many of the world leaders I met with in New York. It is very important for the world to come together to make it very clear to Iran that there will be universal condemnation if they continue with a nuclear weapons program. And I will tell you, the response was very positive. People understand the danger of the Iranians have a nuclear weapons program. But you bet; I'll talk to President Putin about it this weekend.

**Saddam Hussein/Lessons of 9/11**

**Q.** Sir, in February of 2001, your Secretary of State said that the sanctions against Iraq had prevented Saddam from developing any significant capability with respect to weapons of mass destruction. A year-and-a-half later, before the U.N., you called Saddam a grave and gathering danger. And I'm wondering, what changed in that time? Was it the nature of the threat? Did you get new intelligence? Or did 9/11 put a new—set a new playing field for those—

**The President.** Yes, the Secretary of State said the same thing as well, that Saddam was a threat. Nine-eleven changed my calculation. It made it really clear we have to deal with threats before they come on our shore. You know, for a long period of time we

thought oceans could protect us from danger, and we learned a tough lesson on September the 11th. It's really important for this Nation to continue to chase down and deal with threats before they materialize, and we learned that on September the 11th.

### **OPEC Production Cuts/National Economy**

**Q.** Mr. President?

**The President.** Yes.

**Q.** OPEC yesterday announced an agreement to cut oil production by 3.5 percent.

**The President.** Yes.

**Q.** What is your reaction to that? What do you think of it? And what are the consequences for the U.S. economy?

**The President.** My reaction is, is that I would hope our friends in OPEC don't do things that would hurt our economy.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:19 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### **Statement on the National Do Not Call Registry**

*September 25, 2003*

Unwanted telemarketing calls are intrusive, annoying, and all too common. When Americans are sitting down to dinner or parents are reading to their children, the last thing they want is a call from a stranger with a sales pitch.

For that reason, I have strongly supported the actions of the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission to establish a National Do Not Call Registry and protect consumers.

The millions of people who have signed up for the list have the right to reduce unwanted telephone solicitations. I commend Congress for its rapid action to support the Registry, and I look forward to signing this legislation.

### **Proclamation 7708—National Farm Safety and Health Week, 2003**

*September 25, 2003*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Almost half of the land in the United States is used for agricultural production, and our Nation depends on our hard-working farm and ranch families for food, fiber, and the good stewardship of our environment. As we celebrate National Farm Safety and Health Week, we give thanks for their dedication, sacrifice, and contributions to our country, and we renew our commitment to the health and livelihoods of American farm and ranch families.

America must continue to promote the safety of our farmers and ranchers. Farming and ranching can be dangerous work; in 2002, the agriculture industry had the second-highest rate of deaths due to accidents. Proper education and training are critical to protecting the safety of farmers and ranchers. By working together to encourage careful use of equipment and facilities, America helps our farm and ranch families remain healthy and more productive than any other farmers in the world.

This year's theme for National Farm Safety and Health Week, "Secure Your Farming through Safety and Health," also encourages farmers and ranchers to focus on farm security issues. Farm and ranching communities play a vital role in protecting America's food supplies, water resources, and farm chemicals. Their efforts are important to the safety and security of our citizens.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 21 through September 27, 2003, as National Farm Safety and Health Week. I call upon the agencies, organizations, and businesses that serve America's agricultural workers to strengthen their commitment to promoting farm safety and health programs. I also urge