

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on Reallocation of Emergency Response Fund

June 10, 2005

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am notifying the Congress of my intent to reallocate funds previously transferred from the Emergency Response Fund (ERF).

At this time, \$1.074 million of ERF funds will be reallocated within the Department of the Treasury to strengthen the physical protection of the main Treasury building.

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

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 13.

Remarks at “An American Celebration at Ford’s Theatre”

June 12, 2005

The President. Jeff, thanks for the warm introduction. I like a good, long introduction. [Laughter] Say, listen, if you’re ever looking for work, Laura is looking for some new material. [Laughter]

We’ve had a wonderful time this evening. Thank you all very much. I particularly want to thank the entertainers tonight: Debbie Allen and Geena Davis, Hilary Duff, Josh Gracin, Denyce Graves, Jesse McCartney. Thanks for dedicating a song to Laura, Jesse.

The First Lady. Thank you very much, Jesse.

The President. Pendragons—how about the Pendragons—and Julie Roberts. Thank you all so very much for being here.

I also want to thank our gala chair, Catherine Reynolds, as well as the general co-chairs who are here, Karyn Frist, Landra Reid, Abby Blunt, and Debbie Dingell. Laura and I thank the Ford’s Theatre Society and to the producing director, Paul Tetreault.

Since we moved to Washington, Laura and I have been guests of Ford’s Theatre a number of times, and we appreciate the vital work

it is doing. As a working stage, Ford’s Theatre provides an important venue for the arts right here in the heart of our Nation’s Capital.

I’m really grateful to the members of the Armed Services who participated in tonight’s celebration. Our military is defending America and advancing the cause of freedom and peace around the world. We are privileged to be citizens of a country served by our brave troops, and we thank them for their service.

We appreciate the military families who are with us tonight. It’s not easy being left behind when a loved one goes to war. By loving and supporting a man or woman in uniform, our military families also serve our Nation, and America is grateful to all of them for their support and sacrifice.

Once again, we thank all the entertainers and the supporters of the Ford’s Theatre who have made this evening one to remember. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless the United States.

NOTE: The President’s remarks were videotaped at approximately 8:45 p.m. at Ford’s Theatre for broadcast on July 4 on the ABC Television Network. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers Jeff Foxworthy, the Pendragons, and Julie Roberts. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 13.

Remarks on the African Growth and Opportunity Act

June 13, 2005

Thank you all for coming. Welcome to the White House. I want to thank the five Presidents who are with us today: President Mogae of Botswana, President Kufuor of Ghana, President Guebuza of Mozambique, President Pohamba of Namibia, and President Tandja of Niger.

We just had a great discussion. I consider these men friends. I consider them to be strong patriots of their respective countries, and I consider them to be democrats.

I want to thank Secretary of State Condi Rice for joining us today, and she was in the discussions we had earlier. I’m honored that the members of the diplomatic corps have joined us. I thank the Ambassadors for being here.

I appreciate Members of the Congress being here: Senator Bill Frist, the majority leader is with us; Congressman Bill Thomas, Congressman Charlie Rangel of the Ways and Means Committee, two fine Members, and I appreciate you being here as a symbol of unity and support for—[laughter]—for moving the trade agenda forward. I appreciate Congressman Jim Kolbe from Arizona for being here as well. Thank you all for coming, really are honored you're here, and I know the Presidents are as well.

All the Presidents gathered here represent countries that have held democratic elections in the last year. What a strong statement that these leaders have made about democracy and the importance of democracy on the continent of Africa. All of us share a fundamental commitment to advancing democracy and opportunity on the continent of Africa, and all of us believe that one of the most effective ways to advance democracy and deliver hope to the people of Africa is through mutually beneficial trade.

That was certainly the idea behind the African Growth and Opportunity Act, a bipartisan act, an act of the United States Congress that recognized this fact. You see, AGOA is promoting democratic reform in Africa by providing incentives for these nations to extend freedom and opportunity to all of their citizens. Under this law, African nations can obtain greater access to our markets by showing their commitment to economic and political reform, by respecting human rights, tearing down trade barriers, and strengthening property rights and the rule of law, which is precisely what the leaders of these five nations are doing.

Because AGOA is producing results, I've twice signed into law provisions that build on its success and extend its benefits long into the future. My predecessor worked with the Congress to get the law passed. I have been honored to work with the Congress to extend the good law. And the reason why I feel confident in going to the Congress is because it has worked. It's a good piece of legislation that has made a difference in people's lives.

In 2004, we saw dramatic evidence of the results that this new engagement between the United States and Africa is helping

produce. Last year, exports to the United States from AGOA nations were up 88 percent over the year before, and non-oil exports were up by 22 percent. In other words, we pledged to open our markets; we have opened our markets; and people are now making goods that the United States consumers want to buy. And that's helpful. That's how you spread wealth. That's how you encourage hope and opportunity.

Over the same period, interestingly enough, U.S. exports to sub-Saharan Africa were up 25 percent. In other words, this is a two-way street. Not only have folks in Africa benefited by selling products in the United States; American businesses, small and large, have benefited through the opening of the African market as well. Across sub-Saharan Africa, economic growth increased to an 8-year high. Real per capita income increased by 2.7 percent, and this growth is expected to continue in 2005. By creating jobs and lowering prices and expanding opportunity, AGOA is today developing benefits for Americans and Africans alike, and that's important for our fellow citizens to understand. Trade is beneficial for the working people here in America, just like it's beneficial for people on the continent of Africa.

We'll continue to work for policies that build on these impressive results. In December, I announced that 37 African countries are now eligible for AGOA benefits, and next month in Senegal, senior ministers from my administration will meet with government ministers from these 37 AGOA nations to build on this progress. These representatives will be joined by hundreds of American and African businesses and private organizations who will discuss ways to promote development and strengthen civil society.

As we expand our trade, the United States is committing to expanding our efforts to relieve hunger, reduce debt, fight disease on the African continent. One thing we discussed was the Millennium Challenge Account, and I assured the leaders we will work harder and faster to certify countries for the MCA, so that MCA countries and the people in the MCA countries can see the benefit of this really important piece of legislation and funding.

I also announced last week that the United States will provide about \$674 million of additional resources to help alleviate humanitarian emergencies in African nations, especially the growing famine in parts of Africa. On Saturday, we also announced an agreement worked out through the Group of Eight industrialized nations that will cancel \$40 billion in debt owed by 18 of the world's poorest nations, including 14 in Africa. The countries eligible for this relief are those that have put themselves on the path to reform. We believe that by removing a crippling debt burden, we'll help millions of Africans improve their lives and grow their economies.

Finally, one of the greatest causes of suffering in Africa is the spread of HIV/AIDS. I appreciate Randy Tobias being here. I made fighting this terrible disease a top priority of my administration by launching an emergency plan for AIDS relief. Working with our African partners, we have now delivered lifesaving treatment to more than 200,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa, and we're on our way to meeting an important goal—an important 5-year goal—of providing treatment for nearly 2 million African adults and children.

The United States of America is firmly committed to working with governments to help fight the pandemic of AIDS. It is—this crisis is one that can be arrested. And I want you all to know that when America makes a commitment, we mean what we say, and this Government means what it says, and this Congress means what it says, and we'll work together to fight HIV/AIDS.

These are just some of the initiatives that we're pursuing to help Africa's leaders bring democracy and prosperity and hope to their people. The reason I ask these Presidents to join us today is because I applaud their courage; I appreciate their wisdom. I appreciate them being such good friends that they're able to feel comfortable in coming to the White House to say, "Mr. President, this is going well, and this isn't. How about working together to make this work better?" That's how we solve problems. We solve problems by having a frank and open dialog.

We believe Africa is a continent full of promise and talent and opportunity, and the United States will do our part to help the

people of Africa realize the brighter future they deserve.

Again, I'm honored you all are here. Thank you all for coming. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. in Room 450 in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to President Festus Gontebanye Mogae of Botswana; President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana; President Armando Guebuza of Mozambique; President Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia; and President Mamadou Tandja of Niger.

Remarks to Students From the Partnerships for Learning, Youth Exchange and Study

June 13, 2005

Nice and warm today, isn't it? I'm glad you're here. Almost a year living and studying in America—I hope you've come to realize this isn't my house; this is the people's house. And Laura and I are just temporary residents here. That's how democracy works.

I really think you're part of an important program that is bringing students from Muslim countries to the United States. I think it's important, and I hope you think it's important too. I'm amazed by the number of countries represented amongst you all: Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, West Bank, Gaza, Arab communities in Israel. You represent a lot of countries and a lot of people. Here's what I think. I think your generation is going to help shape one of the most exciting periods of history in the broader Middle East and the world. It's a period of time when the hope of liberty is spreading to millions.

And I've heard your stories, and people who know your program have talked to me about your experiences and your attitudes. So let me make a prediction, that I should be able to say to the world, I have confidence in the spread of freedom because there's a young group of people who love freedom and want to do something about seeing freedom spread. That's what I think.

I'm really pleased that Dina Powell is here. Dina is the—Egyptian American, by the