

to renew the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and reaffirm our commitment to securing the voting rights of all Americans. My Administration will continue to protect the rights won through the sacrifice of Dr. King and other civil rights leaders, and our country will never rest until equality is real, opportunity is universal, and all citizens are empowered to realize their dreams.

As we observe Dr. King's birthday, I encourage all Americans to celebrate his memory by performing acts of kindness through service to others. Let us live out Dr. King's teachings as we continue to work for the day when the dignity and humanity of every person is respected.

**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 January 21, 2008, as the Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday. I encourage all Americans to observe this day with appropriate civic, community, and service programs and activities in honor of Dr. King's life and legacy.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:51 a.m., January 18, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 22.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996**

*January 16, 2008*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-114)(the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond February 1, 2008, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act

is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Joseph R. Biden, chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Robert C. Byrd, chairman, and Thad Cochran, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Tom Lantos, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; and David R. Obey, chairman, and Jerry Lewis, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

**Remarks Following a Meeting With Special Envoy for Sudan Richard S. Williamson**

*January 17, 2008*

**The President.** I've just had an extensive visit with Madam Secretary and members of my national security team, Rich Williamson, who is the Presidential Envoy—Special Envoy to Sudan.

We talked about our common commitment and the commitment of this Government to help the suffering of citizens in Sudan who, you know, suffer deprivation, rape. My administration called this a genocide. Once you label it genocide, you obviously have to do something about it.

Our discussion centered upon our mutual desire to develop a strategy that will help the United Nations become more effective. The United Nations considers the Darfur issue a central issue, and it's on its agenda. And we agree. The United States can help what has been a process, frankly, that has unfolded a little too slow for our liking. And we can help.

And secondly, we want to make sure that the peace agreement negotiated through this administration by Ambassador Danforth, between the north and south, holds. So Rich is going to report back to me quickly. You know, I plan to accelerate our efforts.

You know, America is probably wondering why, why do you care? And one reason we care about the suffering in Sudan is because we care about the human condition all across

the face of the Earth. And we fully understand that when people suffer, it is in our interest to help. And we also understand that when people suffer, it makes it more likely that some may turn to the ideology of those who use murder as a weapon. So it's in our national security interest and it's in our—in the interest of our conscience to confront this, what we have called a genocide. And I want to thank you for taking this on.

**Ambassador Williamson.** Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President.** It's a big deal; you've got my full support.

**Ambassador Williamson.** I appreciate it. Thank you, sir.

**The President.** Yes, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:56 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John C. Danforth.

### **Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Request for Additional Funds for Veterans Resources**

*January 17, 2008*

*Dear Madam Speaker:*

My Administration is committed to providing the resources needed to ensure that veterans, including those returning from current combat operations, receive the quality care and services they deserve.

In the FY 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act, Public Law 110–161, \$3,691,391,000 was designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement contingent upon a formal budget request by me that includes designation of the entire amount as an emergency requirement. While I believe that these funds should have been considered as regular appropriations, the men and women who have sacrificed for our country should not be held hostage to budgetary wrangling in Washington. Therefore, to provide these funds in a timely manner I hereby request and designate as an emergency requirement the \$3,691,391,000, consistent with Public Law 110–161.

Additional information on this action is set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

### **Remarks on the National Economy**

*January 18, 2008*

Over the past several months, I've held a series of meetings with my economic team on the outlook for the U.S. economy. And before I left for the Middle East, I directed them to conduct a thorough assessment of our economic condition, consult with Members of Congress, and provide me with their recommendations about any actions we might need to take.

The economic team reports that our economy has a solid foundation, but that there are areas of real concern. Our economy is still creating jobs, though at a reduced pace. Consumer spending is still growing, but the housing market is declining. Business investment and exports are still rising, but the cost of imported oil has increased.

My administration has been watching our economy carefully. My advisers and many outside experts expect that our economy will continue to grow over the coming year, but at a slower rate than we have enjoyed for the past few years. And there is a risk of a downturn. Continued instability in the housing and financial markets could cause additional harm to our overall economy and put our growth and job creation in jeopardy.

In recent months, we've taken steps to shore up the housing market, including measures to help struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure and to keep their homes. I've also—have asked Congress to pass legislation to modernize the Federal Housing Administration and enable it to provide additional assistance to struggling homeowners. The House passed a bill, and the Senate passed a bill, and now they need to get together and get a bill to my desk as quickly as possible.

After careful consideration and after discussions with Members of the Congress, I have concluded that additional action is needed. To keep our economy growing and