

Mar. 23 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

Statement on the Situation in Macedonia *March 23, 2001*

The United States joins its allies and the United Nations in strongly condemning the violence perpetrated by a small group of extremists determined to destabilize the democratic, multi-ethnic Government of Macedonia. The United States and its allies have a longstanding commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Macedonia.

The insurgents in Macedonia claim to be advancing the cause of the Albanian minority. They are not. In fact, their violent methods are hurting the long-term interests of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, Kosovo, and throughout the region. We support instead those political leaders in Macedonia and the region who have rejected violence and terror in favor of democracy and dialog as a way to achieve political change.

I strongly support the efforts of President Trajkovski and the Macedonian Government to uphold democracy and the rule of law. We encourage the Government to act with restraint and to work closely with elected representatives of the Albanian community to address legitimate concerns, while taking the necessary steps to prevent further violence.

The United States is working with its allies and friends in the region to assist the Macedonian Government in countering the violence perpetrated by the extremists. We support NATO's effort to assess Macedonia's immediate security needs. We are already providing surveillance information to the Macedonian Government, and our Defense Department is dispatching Predator unmanned aerial vehicles to assist in this effort. KFOR patrols have been increased along Kosovo's border with Macedonia in order to improve border security and curtail the insurgents' activities.

Macedonia is a close friend, a partner country of NATO, and a successful example of a democratic, multi-ethnic state in the Balkans. As the United States knows only too well, perfecting such a state—and addressing the legitimate concerns of minorities—is a continuous process. It can only be done through dialog and democracy—and never through violence. That is why we call on all those who seek political change in Macedonia to work through the democratic political process.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Boris Trajkovski of Macedonia.

The President's Radio Address *March 24, 2001*

Good morning. Just over 2 weeks ago, the House of Representatives passed a large part of my tax relief plan. Now the House is about to vote on my budget, the funding we provide for the needs and goals of our Government. I have sent the Congress a budget plan that reflects our values as a people.

My budget is compassionate. It dedicates \$238 billion to Medicare next year alone, enough to fund all current programs and to begin a new prescription drug benefit for low-income seniors. It protects all 2.6 trillion of the Social Security surplus for Social Security and for Social Security alone. It increases spending on education substantially. It provides tax credits to help