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going to come a peaceful world and a more compassionate society, because this is the greatest nation, full of the finest people, on the face of the Earth.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:36 p.m. in the Imperial Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency. In his remarks, he referred to Sandy Cornyn, wife of candidate John Cornyn, and their daughters, Haley and Danley; Gov. Rick Perry of Texas; Ramzi bin al-Shibh, an Al Qaida operative suspected of helping to plan the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, who was captured in Karachi, Pakistan; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Military Forces in Cote d'Ivoire
September 26, 2002

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On September 19, 2002, a mutiny and rebellion took place in the West African country of Cote d'Ivoire that threatened American citizens living there. Fighting erupted between the mutineers and government forces.

On September 24, 2002, a standby evacuation force of U.S. military personnel from the U.S. European Command was pre-positioned in Accra, Ghana, to assist with the evacuation of U.S. citizens from Cote d'Ivoire and with any other contingencies that might emerge. These forces initially included approximately 180 soldiers, fixed-wing aircraft, and equipment.

On September 25, 2002, U.S. forces moved into Cote d'Ivoire to assist French forces with the evacuation of American citizens and third country nationals from Bouake. This included children from the International Christian Academy as well as Peace Corps Volunteers, faculty, and missionaries. United States forces will also assist in the evacuation of other American citizens and third country nationals in Cote d'Ivoire, should their evacuation become necessary.

Although U.S. forces are equipped for combat, this movement was undertaken solely for the purpose of protecting American citizens and property. United States forces will redeploy as soon as it is determined that this mission is completed.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution.

I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action in Cote d'Ivoire.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 27.