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support of SFOR. This includes approximately 500 U.S. military personnel presently deployed to Hungary, Croatia, and Italy in order to provide logistical and other support. The U.S. forces continue to support SFOR efforts to apprehend persons indicted for war crimes. In the last 6 months, U.S. forces have not sustained any combat-related fatalities.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in these operations 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 fully informed about developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other states in the region. I will continue to consult closely with the Congress regarding our efforts to foster peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia. 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 July 25.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

July 25, 2001

The President. It's my honor to welcome to the White House Members from the Senate and the House, Members who are concerned about American foreign policy, to give them a briefing about my trip to Europe.

I'm going to talk about how we agreed that we need to expand trade, how we also agreed how we need to help nations who are less fortunate than our Nation. I look forward to having a very confidential briefing about my meeting with President Putin and the hope and promise I see for a constructive relationship.

I also am aware that there are some foreign policy matters in the Congress. And I urge Congress to deal fairly with Mexico and to not treat the Mexican truck industry in an unfair fashion, that I believe strongly we can have safety measures in place that will make sure our highways are safe. But we should not single out Mexico. Mexico is our close friend and ally, and we must treat them with respect and uphold NAFTA and the spirit of NAFTA.

I also fully understand that foreign policy is best when conducted in a bipartisan fashion, and I so very much appreciate the chairman, I spoke to the chairman—both chairmen—before my trip overseas this time and before my trip last time overseas. And I take their advice very seriously and counsel very seriously. It helps for us to continue to communicate, particularly when it comes to foreign policy.

So thank you all for coming. I'll be glad to answer maybe one or two questions.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Q. Mr. President, on the Patients' Bill of Rights there is some talk that the House Republicans are now planning to schedule a vote later, perhaps as late as September. Is that a recognition on the part of the party and its leadership that you don't have the votes to get what you want on that issue?

The President. I am hopeful we'll get a bill I can sign. And I appreciate so very much the hard work that's going on, particularly now in the House of Representatives, to bring a bill that is fair to patients. There seems to be a—there was a lot of negotiations going on when I was gone, and there still seems to be a lot of talk. And obviously, we'd like to get this bill finished and on my desk and a bill I can sign.

I laid out the principles that would allow me to sign a bill, and I still stand by those principles. But I can report we're making pretty good progress, it seems like.

Yes, Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Oil Prices

Q. Mr. President, OPEC is about to cut production by a million barrels a day. What is that going to do to the already struggling economy?

The President. Steve, it is very important for there to be stability in a marketplace. I read some comments from the OPEC ministers who said this was just a matter to make

sure the market remains stable and predictable. Obviously, if it's an attempt to run the price of oil up, we'll make our opinions very clear and known, that that would hurt America and hurt the marketplace. Our economy is bumping along right now and a runup in energy prices would hurt. And surely, the OPEC leaders understand that. I think they do.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Proclamation 7457—National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, 2001

July 25, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The sounds of war thundered as a furious struggle took place 51 years ago in a country unknown to many Americans. The battleground that was Korea in the years 1950 to 1953 tested the resolve, courage, and commitment of an America barely 5 years beyond the tremendous sacrifices of World War II. Undaunted, America again marshaled her forces to defend a population facing tyranny and aggression.

Freedom for the Republic of Korea was purchased with deep sacrifice and with honor. In 38 months of intense fighting, 33,665 Americans gave their lives in battle. Our Nation's highest military award, the Medal of Honor, was awarded to 131 members of the U.S. Armed Forces, more than 90 of them posthumously. Yet the challenge of Korea was not just a formidable adversary, but also a harsh and forbidding climate. The 1.8 million service men and women who served there suffered bitter winters that would claim casualties approaching those inflicted by guns, shrapnel, and bayonets. When the Military Armistice Agreement, effective 48 years ago, silenced the guns on the Korean peninsula, it marked the end of the world's first determined stand against Communist aggression. It signaled the beginning of the Cold War, and foreshadowed the eventual dismantling of global Communism.

Today, the liberties defended there half a century ago are the inheritance of 47 million citizens of a democratic, prosperous, and progressive Republic of Korea. The young Americans who fought and died there kept faith with a just cause, and in so doing, kept faith with the principles and ideals on which our Nation was founded. They immeasurably blessed the Republic of Korea and brought great honor to our Nation as a defender of freedom. Because of these truths, we recognize the Korean War for what it was and is—not a "forgotten war," but a remembered victory.

The Congress, by passing Public Law 104–19 (36 U.S.C. 127), has designated July 27, 2001, as "National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim July 27, 2001, as National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities that honor and give thanks to our distinguished Korean War veterans. I also ask Federal departments and agencies and interested groups, organizations, and individuals to fly the flag of the United States at half-staff on July 27, 2001, in memory of the Americans who died as a result of their service in Korea.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of July, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-sixth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:47 a.m., July 27, 2001]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on July 30.