

Week Ending Friday, November 30, 2001

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Reporting on the Deployment of
United States Military Personnel as
Part of the Kosovo International
Security Force**

November 18, 2001

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

In my report to the Congress of May 18, 2001, I provided information regarding the continued deployment of combat-equipped U.S. military personnel as the U.S. contribution to the NATO-led international security force in Kosovo (KFOR) and to other countries in the region in support of that force. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo.

As noted in previous reports, the U.N. Security Council authorized member states to establish KFOR in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999. The mission of KFOR is to provide a military presence in order to deter renewed hostilities; verify and, if necessary, enforce the terms of the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY); enforce the terms of the Undertaking on Demilitarization and Transformation of the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA); provide day-to-day operational direction to the Kosovo Protection Corps; and maintain a safe and secure environment to facilitate the work of the U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Currently, the U.S. contribution to KFOR in Kosovo is approximately 5,500 U.S. military personnel. An additional 500 U.S. military personnel are deployed as the National Support Element in Macedonia, with an occasional presence in Albania and Greece. In the last 6 months, all 19 NATO nations and 19 others, including Russia, have provided military personnel and other support per-

sonnel to KFOR in Kosovo and other countries in the region.

In Kosovo, the U.S. forces are assigned to a sector principally centered upon Gnjilane in the eastern portion of Kosovo. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, maintaining a safe and secure environment remains the primary military task. United States forces conduct security patrols in urban areas and in the countryside throughout their sector. Approximately 79 percent of KFOR soldiers are dedicated to patrolling, manning checkpoints, and mounting border and boundary patrols. The KFOR forces operate under NATO command and control and rules of engagement.

The UNMIK continues to make progress in establishing the necessary structures for provisional democratic self-government in Kosovo, including through adoption of the Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government, and preparations for Kosovo-wide elections scheduled to occur on November 17, 2001. The KFOR coordinates with and supports UNMIK at most levels, and is represented at the Joint Implementation Commission. Also, KFOR support includes providing a security presence in towns, villages, and the countryside, and organizing checkpoints and patrols in key areas of Kosovo to provide security, protect minorities, resolve disputes, and help instill in the community a feeling of confidence. Finally, KFOR is supporting, within its means and capabilities, the provision of humanitarian relief, public safety and order, and the maintenance of essential civic works resources.

NATO continues formally to review KFOR's mission at 6-month intervals. The most recent 6-month review will be completed this month, and presented to the North Atlantic Council in December 2001. These reviews provide a basis for assessing current force levels, future requirements, force structure, force reductions, and the eventual withdrawal of KFOR. The KFOR

has transferred full responsibility for its public safety and policing responsibilities to the UNMIK international and local police forces in every area except Kosovska Mitrovica, where the responsibility is shared due to security concerns.

The continued deployment of U.S. forces has been undertaken pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I appreciate the continued support of the Congress in these actions.

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 item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

November 24, 2001

Good morning. Thanksgiving this year comes 72 days after a terrible national shock, an act of evil that caused, and continues to cause, so much suffering. Yet, the evil the terrorists intended has resulted in good they never expected. And this holiday season, Americans have much to be thankful for.

We're thankful for the character of our fellow citizens who are flying flags and donating to charity and comforting those who grieve. Americans have aided the families of victims and the starving children of Afghanistan, half a world away. This country has a good and generous heart.

We're thankful for the decency of the American people who have stood for the American tradition of tolerance and religious liberty, a tradition that has welcomed and protected generations of immigrants from every faith and background.

We are thankful for new heroes, police officers and firefighters and emergency workers, who have renewed our respect for public service and provided lasting lessons in courage.

We're thankful for the men and women of our military, who are defending our lives and liberty with such skill, honor, and success.

We're thankful, this year even more intensely, for our lives and our families and the love of those around us. Americans are remembering what really matters—holding our children more closely, giving them more time.

And we're thankful to God, who turned suffering into strength and grief into grace. Offering thanks in the midst of tragedy is an American tradition, perhaps because in times of testing, our dependence on God is so clear.

The Pilgrims gave thanks even after the many deaths of a bitter winter. Abraham Lincoln proclaimed days of national thanksgiving even during a bloody Civil War. Lincoln asked God to heal the wounds of the Nation and to restore it, as soon as it may be consistent with the divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility. We pray for this goal, and we work for it.

In America, blessings are meant to be shared, and our Thanksgiving is revealed in concern for others. At this season, Laura and I hope you'll find ways to reach out and share your blessings and talents in your own communities: Tutor or mentor a child; volunteer in a hospital; support our troops by becoming active in the USO; comfort those who feel afraid; show your kindness to a Muslim neighbor; help someone in need of shelter or food or words of hope; and continue to pray for America.

We will face difficult times ahead. The fight we have begun will not be quickly or easily finished. Our enemies hide and plot in many nations. They are devious and ruthless. Yet we are confident in the justice of our cause. We will fight for as long as it takes, and we will prevail.

May God grant us patience, resolve, and wisdom in all that is to come. Happy Thanksgiving, and thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:50 a.m. on November 21 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of the address.