

In accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244, UNMIK continues to transfer additional competencies to the Kosovar Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, which includes the President, Prime Minister, multiple ministries, and the Kosovo Assembly. The UNMIK retains ultimate authority in some sensitive areas such as police, justice, and ethnic minority affairs.

NATO continues formally to review KFOR's mission at 6-month intervals. These reviews provide a basis for assessing current force levels, future requirements, force structure, force reductions, and the eventual withdrawal of KFOR. NATO has adopted the Joint Operations Area plan to regionalize and rationalize its force structure in the Balkans. The UNMIK international police and the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) have full responsibility for public safety and policing throughout Kosovo. The UNMIK international police and KPS also have begun to assume responsibility for guarding patrimonial sites and established border-crossing checkpoints. The KFOR augments security in particularly sensitive areas or in response to particular threats as needed.

NATO Headquarters in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Pursuant to the June 2004 decision made by NATO Heads of State and Government, and in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1575 of November 22, 2004, NATO concluded its Stabilization Force operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and established NATO Headquarters-Sarajevo to continue to assist in implementing the Peace Agreement in conjunction with a newly established European Force. The NATO Headquarters-Sarajevo, to which approximately 250 U.S. personnel are assigned, is, with the European Force, the legal successor to SFOR. The principal tasks of NATO Headquarters-Sarajevo are providing advice on defense reform and performing operational supporting tasks, such as counterterrorism and supporting the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to con-

duct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to these deployments, and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Remarks at the Congressional Picnic *June 15, 2006*

Thank you all for coming. Welcome to the South Lawn. Laura and I are thrilled you're here. This is called "Rodeo on the South Lawn." [*Laughter*] And we've—first of all, I want to thank all the Members of the Congress and the Senate who are here. Thanks for serving the country.

I always take this opportunity to thank your families on your behalf. I know you do it all the time, but I know you couldn't serve without the support of your loved ones. And so, for all the family members who are here, the wives and the husbands and the children and the grandchildren, welcome. Thanks for serving the country too.

We got some interesting entertainment for you tonight. We got some people who can play music and some people who think they can play music. [*Laughter*] We got three bands, one—the first band will be called The Compassionates. The leader of that band is my Chief of Staff, Josh Bolten. Yes. Then we've got—The Second Amendments will be playing tonight. That would be Congressman Collin Peterson, Dave Weldon, Kenny Hulshof, Thaddeus McCotter—he's that rock and roll dude, Thaddeus McCotter—and Congressman Jon Porter. Once you get through those two bands, then a real group of musicians will be here, and we're fortunate Riders in the Sky will be playing for you tonight.

I hope you enjoy this as much as Laura and I enjoy it. We're really glad you're here. God bless you all, and God bless our great country. Please welcome The Compassionates.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:50 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Message on the Observance of Juneteenth

June 12, 2006

I send greetings to all those observing Juneteenth.

President Lincoln called the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 the “central act” of his administration and “the greatest event of the nineteenth century.” The joyous news of freedom did not reach Galveston, Texas, until two and a half years after emancipation when Major General Gordon Granger arrived and announced that the Civil War was over and all slaves were free. Ever since, Americans have marked June 19th with special celebrations and traditions commemorating this historic moment.

On this day, we honor the vision of President Lincoln, and we will keep striving to build a Nation where the dignity of every person is respected, where people are judged by the content of their character, and where the hope of the American dream reaches every neighborhood and every citizen. Together, we can continue to advance the ideals of liberty and justice that make our country strong and help more Americans realize the full promise of this great Nation.

Laura and I send our best wishes on this special occasion. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message. This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 16.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President’s public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

June 10

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

June 11

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

June 12

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, on the North Portico, he participated in a photo opportunity with members of the World Cup Youth Delegation.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Camp David, MD, where he met with the Interagency Team on Iraq, some participating through video teleconference.

In the afternoon, the President met with the Interagency Team on Iraq.

In the evening, the President traveled to Baghdad, Iraq, arriving the following afternoon.

June 13

In the morning, while en route to Baghdad, Iraq, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, the President met with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. Later, the President met with Prime Minister Maliki, the Iraqi Cabinet, and his Cabinet, participating from Camp David, MD, through video teleconference. Later, the President had separate meetings with President Jalal Talabani and Speaker of the Council of Representatives Mahmoud al-Mashhadani of Iraq and Iraqi business, cultural, and education leaders.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving the next morning. While en route aboard Air Force One, he participated in an interview with radio and television reporters.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Bush will accompany Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan to Memphis, TN, on June 30 following Prime Minister Koizumi’s visit to the White House on June 29.