

 [CLICK HERE TO PRINT](#)

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
November 15, 2002

Presidential Letter on Peacekeeping Operations in Kosovo

November 15, 2002

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

In my report to the Congress dated May 17, 2002, 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 prepared by my Administration, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148), to help ensure that the 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 4,350 U.S. military personnel, or approximately 15 percent of KFOR's total strength. An additional 266 U.S. military personnel are deployed as the National Support Element in Macedonia, with an occasional presence in Albania and Greece. In the past 6 months, 19 non-NATO contributing countries have joined NATO forces in providing military personnel and other support personnel to KFOR.

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 60 percent of KFOR personnel 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. The Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, including a President, Prime Minister, and Kosovo Assembly, have been in place since March 2002, and municipal elections were successfully held for a second time on October 26, 2002. The KFOR coordinates with and supports UNMIK at most levels, provides a security presence in towns, villages, and the countryside, and organizes 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. Intensified, robust KFOR patrolling on the Macedonia/Kosovo border was a key factor in reducing violence in Macedonia and ensuring successful elections. At the same time, 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. 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 Operational Area plan to regionalize and rationalize its force structure in the Balkans. The KFOR has transferred full responsibility for public safety and policing to the UNMIK international and local police forces in every area except Kosovska Mitrovica, where the responsibility is shared due to security concerns. The UNMIK international police and local police forces have also begun to assume responsibility for guarding patrimonial sites and established border-crossing checkpoints.

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

###

Return to this article at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/11/20021115-7.html>

 [CLICK HERE TO PRINT](#)