WASHINGTON, Dec. 14, 2007 – President Bush reported to Congress today on the scope of overseas deployments to support the war on terror, emphasizing that he’ll direct additional measures as necessary to ensure the United States can protect its citizens and interests.

The president described in letters to Rep. Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the House, and Sen. Robert C. Byrd, the Senate’s president pro tempore, the scope of ongoing operations he has authorized in the Central, Pacific, European and Southern Command areas. He also reported on U.S. forces supporting the peacekeeping mission in Kosovo.

Bush cited deployments under way that support these missions:

- Some 25,900 U.S. troops are serving in Afghanistan, with 15,180 of them assigned to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force. The ISAF mission, authorized by the U.N. Security Council, includes 37 nations working together to support reconstruction and help the Afghan government extend its reach, Bush wrote.

- About 159,529 U.S. troops are deployed to Iraq as part of Multinational Force Iraq, where they are helping to build the capability of Iraqi security forces and institutions. Bush noted that the number of troops assigned to this mission, being carried out in accordance with U.N. Security Council resolutions, fluctuates depending on commanders’ assessment of conditions on the ground.

- Combat-equipped and combat-support forces are deployed to Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, where they are conducting secure detention operations for enemy combatants. Bush noted that the United States continues to detain several hundred al Qaeda and Taliban fighters believed the pose a risk to the United States and its interests.

- U.S. forces are operating in the Horn of Africa region to bolster friends and allies’ counterterrorism capabilities, the president reported. Bush told Pelosi and Byrd this effort furthers U.S. efforts against “terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the United States, its friends and allies.”

- Additional U.S. servicemembers are conducting maritime interception operations on the high seas around the world in every geographic combatant commanders’ areas of responsibility. Bush said these operations aim to stop the movement, arming or financing of international terrorists.

Bush told the Congress members he will deploy additional troops as required. “I will direct additional measures as necessary in the exercise of the U.S. right to self-defense and to protect U.S. citizens and interests,” he said.

These measures could include short-notice deployments of special operations and other forces for sensitive operations throughout the world that Bush said can’t be predicted. “It is not possible to know at this time the precise scope or the duration of the deployment of U.S. armed forces necessary to counter the terrorist threat to the United States,” Bush wrote.

Meanwhile, the United States is contributing about 1,498 troops, or about 10 percent of the NATO-led Kosovo Force, the president reported. Operating in Kosovo’s eastern region, the U.S. troops are focused on maintaining a safe and secure environment as they operate under NATO command and control and rules of engagement.

Bush noted the mission shift since a U.N. Security Council resolution established KFOR in 1999. Its original mission was to monitor, verify and, when necessary, enforce compliance with the military technical agreement between NATO and Serbia while maintaining security, he said.

Today, KFOR deters renewed hostilities as it works with local authorities and international police to maintain an environment in which the U.N. Mission in Kosovo can operate, he said.

Meanwhile, Bush signed a temporary spending bill today to keep the government open for another week until Congress passes longer-term funding legislation.

Speaking with reporters in the White House Rose Garden, the president said he’s encouraged by signs that Congress is making headway in putting together a package that will fund the war in Iraq as well as federal programs.

He urged Congress to pass a one-year continuing resolution that doesn’t include wasteful spending, tax hikes or timetables for troop withdrawals from Iraq. “And they must ensure that our troops on the front lines have the funds and resources they need to prevail,” he said.