

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 con-

stitutional 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.

Remarks on Signing the Aviation and Transportation Security Act *November 19, 2001*

Thank you all very much. Today we take permanent and aggressive steps to improve the security of our airways. The events of September the 11th were a call to action, and the Congress has now responded.

The law I will sign should give all Americans greater confidence when they fly. All Members of Congress care deeply about this issue. Despite divergent views, the Congress worked closely with my administration to develop a bipartisan conclusion that will help protect American air travelers.

I want to thank the House and Senate leadership for their patience in this issue. I want to thank the Speaker and the minority leader, the leader of the Senate, Senator Lott, for working hard to make sure this bill came to fruition.

I also want to thank Chairman Don Young and John Mica and Jim Oberstar who have joined us today from the House. I want to thank you for your hard work. And I want to thank Members of the United States Senate: Chairman Hollings and John McCain and Kay Bailey Hutchison for their hard work.

I appreciate so very much the Secretary of Transportation and his steadiness and

his ability to bring confidence to the process. I picked a good man in Norm Mineta, who is rising to the occasion.

I also want to thank his deputy, Michael Jackson, for his hard work. As well, I appreciate Jane Garvey joining us up here today. I see other Members of Congress who are here. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate you doing the right thing for America.

I also want to thank the pilots and flight attendants and the people of the airline industry who have joined us today. I want to thank you for your courage in the face of terror. I want to thank you for inspiring confidence amongst the American people.

The broad support for this bill shows that our country is united in this crisis. We have our political differences, but we're united to defend our country. And we're united to protect our people. For our airways, there is one supreme priority: security.

Since September the 11th, the Federal Government has taken action to raise safety standards. We've made funds available to the aviation industry to fortify cockpits. More Federal air marshals now ride on our

airplanes. The Department of Transportation instituted a zero-tolerance crackdown on security breaches.

Our National Guard protects us in our airports. And I want to thank the National Guards men and women who will be working the holiday season. I want to thank them for being away from their families, thank them for providing more security for people who travel.

I appreciate the work the airlines have done with the Federal Aviation Administration. The airlines have started intense nighttime security sweeps of aircraft. They've tightened background checks for employees and implemented nondiscriminatory government-approved criterion for identifying passengers who require additional security.

Now, we take the next important step. For the first time, airport security will become a direct Federal responsibility overseen by a new Under Secretary of Transportation for Security. Additional funds will be provided for Federal air marshals, and a new team of Federal security managers, supervisors, law enforcement officers, and screeners will ensure all passengers and carry-on bags are inspected thoroughly and effectively. The new security force will be well trained, made up of U.S. citizens. And if any of its members do not perform, the new Under Secretary will have full authority to discipline or remove them.

At the same time, we will adopt strict new requirements to screen checked baggage, to tighten security in all other areas of airports, and to provide greater security for travelers by bus and by train. This bill

sets a one-year deadline for the transition to the new system. It gives my administration the flexibility we need to make that transition work.

Ultimately, this bill offers local authorities the option to bring in outside experts—a method that's worked well in Israel and Western Europe—provided those outside experts can meet our rigorous new safety standards and requirements.

Security comes first. The Federal Government will set high standards, and we will enforce them. These have been difficult days for Americans who fly and for American aviation. A proud industry has been hit hard. But this Nation has seen the dedication and spirit of our pilots and flightcrews and the hundreds of thousands of hard-working people who keep America flying. We know they will endure. I'm confident this industry will grow and prosper.

The holidays will soon be here. Even after the last few months, we have much to be thankful for. We have a great country. We're a great people. We have our faith, our families, and our friends. And, thanks to this bill, we have a new commitment to security in the air. And that's good news, as Americans travel to celebrate this season with their loved ones.

It is now my honor to sign this important piece of legislation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. in the lobby of Terminal A at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. S. 1447, approved November 19, was assigned Public Law No. 107-71.

Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony *November 19, 2001*

Thank you all. Please be seated. Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House. I'm not going to speak too long,

because our guest of honor looks a little nervous. Nobody's told him yet that I'm going to give him a pardon.