

I appreciate you coming out to say hello. And I ask for God's blessings on your families and on our country. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. at McConnell Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to Vicki Tiahrt, wife of Rep. Todd Tiahrt of Kansas.

Remarks at the Boys & Girls Club of South Central Kansas—21st Street Club in Wichita

June 15, 2007

The President. I have come to this fantastic facility to, first of all, thank the people that have supported the programs that exist here. I like the idea of mentors reaching out to children to set good examples and to encourage them to achieve big goals in life. And that's what happens here in this Boys and Girls Club in Wichita. This is a place where dreams are fostered and skills are given so that people can realize their dreams.

This is a community-based program. It gets some help from the government, but it gets a lot of help from the local community. And I think it's very important for the people of Wichita to support program such as this. After all, we can change our country one heart and one soul at a time. So I'm really pleased to be here. It's a beautiful facility full of beautiful people.

And so thank you for giving me a chance to come by and say hello. Yes, you won an award didn't you?

Ciera Ivy. Yes.

The President. What award did you win?

Ms. Ivy. Youth of the Month.

The President. Youth of the Month. That's good. Congratulations to you.

Ms. Ivy. Thank you.

The President. I want to thank the counselors who are here and all the adults that are working with the boys and girls.

Anyway, nice to see you all. Thanks for coming by. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployments of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces Around the World

June 15, 2007

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. combat-equipped Armed Forces around the world.

This supplemental report covers operations in support of the war on terror and Kosovo.

THE WAR ON TERROR

Since September 24, 2001, I have reported, consistent with Public Law 107-40 and the War Powers Resolution, on the combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qaida terrorists and their Taliban supporters, which began on October 7, 2001,

and the deployment of various combat-equipped and combat-support forces to a number of locations in the Central, Pacific, European (KFOR), and Southern Command areas of operation in support of those operations and of other operations in our war on terror.

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. Such measures may include short-notice deployments of special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations throughout the world. It is not possible to know at this time either the precise scope or duration of the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter the terrorist threat to the United States.

United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, continue to conduct the U.S. campaign to pursue al-Qaida terrorists and to eliminate support to al-Qaida. These operations have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qaida's training capabilities. United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, ended the Taliban regime and are actively pursuing and engaging remnant al-Qaida and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. The total number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is approximately 25,945, of which approximately 14,340 are assigned to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The U.N. Security Council authorized the ISAF in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 of December 20, 2001, and has reaffirmed its authorization since that time, most recently, for a 12-month period from October 13, 2006, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1707 of September 12, 2006. The mission of the ISAF under NATO command is to assist the Government of Afghanistan in creating a safe and secure environment that allows reconstruction and the reestablishment of Afghan authorities. Currently, all 26 NATO nations contribute to the ISAF. Twelve non-NATO contrib-

uting countries also participate by providing military and other support personnel to the ISAF.

The United States continues to detain several hundred al-Qaida and Taliban fighters who are believed to pose a continuing threat to the United States and its interests. The combat-equipped and combat-support forces deployed to Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in the U.S. Southern Command area of operations since January 2002 continue to conduct secure detention operations for the enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay.

The U.N. Security Council authorized a Multinational Force (MNF) in Iraq under unified command in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1511 of October 16, 2003, and reaffirmed its authorization in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546 of June 8, 2004. In U.N. Security Council Resolution 1637 of November 8, 2005, the Security Council, again noting the Iraqi government's request to retain the presence of the MNF, extended the MNF mandate for a period ending on December 31, 2006. In U.N. Security Council Resolution 1723 of November 28, 2006, the Security Council extended the MNF mandate until December 31, 2007. Under Resolutions 1546, 1637, and 1723, the mission of the MNF is to contribute to security and stability in Iraq. These contributions have included assisting in building the capability of the Iraqi security forces and institutions as the Iraqi people drafted and approved a constitution and established a constitutionally elected government. The U.S. contribution to the MNF is approximately 153,553 military personnel.

In furtherance of our efforts against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the United States, our friends and allies, and our forces abroad, the United States continues to work with friends and allies in areas around the globe. These efforts include the deployment of U.S. combat-equipped and combat-support forces to

assist in enhancing the counterterrorism capabilities of our friends and allies. United States combat-equipped and combat-support forces continue to be located in the Horn of Africa region, and U.S. forces conducted air and sea-launched strikes against al-Qaida targets in Somalia.

In addition, the United States continues to conduct maritime interception operations on the high seas in the areas of responsibility of all of the geographic combatant commanders. These maritime operations have the responsibility to stop the movement, arming, or financing of international terrorists.

NATO-LED KOSOVO FORCE (KFOR)

As noted in previous reports regarding U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo, the U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish KFOR in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999.

The original mission of KFOR was to monitor, verify, and when necessary, enforce compliance with the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) between NATO and Serbia (formerly the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), while maintaining a safe and secure environment. Today, KFOR deters renewed hostilities and, with local authorities and international police, contributes to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment that facilitates the work of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Currently, there are 24 NATO nations contributing to KFOR. Eleven non-NATO contributing countries also participate by providing military personnel and other support personnel to KFOR. The U.S. contribution to KFOR in Kosovo is about 1,584 U.S. military personnel, or approximately 10 percent of KFOR's total strength of approximately 15,498 personnel.

The U.S. forces have been assigned to the eastern region of Kosovo. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, maintaining a safe and secure environment

remains the primary military task. The KFOR operates under NATO command and control and rules of engagement. 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 to provide security, protect minorities, resolve disputes, and help instill in the community a feeling of confidence.

In accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244, UNMIK continues to transfer additional competencies to the Kosovo 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.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct 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 Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate.

The President's Radio Address *June 16, 2007*

Good morning. This week, Congress began to debate its annual spending bills. The American people expect us to spend their tax dollars wisely, or not at all, and to pursue progrowth economic policies that will allow us to reduce the deficit while keeping our economy strong.

Since my administration's tax relief was implemented 4 years ago, our economy has added more than 8 million new jobs, and we've experienced 45 months of uninterrupted job growth. With more Americans working and more businesses thriving, our economy has produced record tax revenues. The Treasury Department recently reported that this year's Federal revenues are up 8 percent over last year. As a result, our Nation's budget deficit is about one-third lower than it was at this time last year.

In addition to pursuing progrowth tax relief, my administration is working to reduce the Federal deficit through strict fiscal discipline. Over the past 3 years, we have met the urgent needs of our Nation while holding the growth of annual domestic spending close to 1 percent, well below the rate of inflation. I've also proposed policies that would slow the unsustainable growth of our most serious long-term fiscal challenge: entitlement spending. By keeping taxes low and restraining Federal spending, we can meet my plan to have a balanced budget by 2012.

The Democrats in Congress are trying to take us in a different direction. They've passed a budget that would mean higher taxes for American families and job cre-

ators, ignore the need for entitlement reform, and pile on hundreds of billions of dollars in new Government spending over the next 5 years. This tax-and-spend approach puts our economic growth and deficit reduction at risk.

For months, I've warned the Democrats in Congress that I will not accept an irresponsible tax-and-spend budget. I put Democratic leaders on notice that I will veto bills with excessive levels of spending. And I am not alone in my opposition. In the House, 147 Republicans have pledged to support fiscal discipline by opposing excessive spending. These 147 Members are more than one-third needed to sustain my veto of any bills that spend too much.

Another key area of difference between my administration and the Democratic leadership in Congress is my support for meaningful earmark reform. Earmarks are spending provisions that are slipped into bills by individual Members of Congress, often at the last hour and without discussion or debate. It's not surprising that this leads to unnecessary Federal spending. And the problem is growing. Over the last decade, the number of earmarks has more than tripled.

In January, I proposed reforms that would make the earmark process more transparent, end the practice of concealing earmarks in so-called report language that is never included in legislation, and cut the number and cost of earmarks by at least half. My administration has also developed the Government's first public database of earmarks, and we've posted them on a web