

cut off outside support for the rebels in Macedonia. That's why we need you to keep patrolling the border and cutting off the arms flow.

Each and every day your work is important to people of this region and for peace that NATO is committed to building here. America and allied forces came into Bosnia and Kosovo. We came in together, and we will leave together. Our goal is to hasten the day when peace is self-sustaining, when local democratically elected authorities can assume full responsibility, and when NATO forces can go home.

As well, you not only need to have a clear mission here, but you need to have a Commander in Chief with a clear vision, who sets clear goals for our military. And those goals are to be well equipped and well trained, to be able to fight and win war and, therefore, prevent war from happening in the first place.

I know how hard frequent deployments are on you and your families. I know that America owes you a decent quality of life. And those who wear America's uniform deserve America's full support, and you've got it.

I'm going to do something unusual here. I brought with me a piece of legislation, a supplemental spending bill to this year's defense budget. It's been passed by the House, passed by the Senate. Differences were reconciled. So I'm going to sign it here, because it contains \$1.9 billion for pay, benefits, and health care. And by the way, the tax cut is real, too.

I'm also pleased that next year's defense budget request includes an additional 2.2 billion for pay and benefits, beyond the supplemental I'm signing here today. And that will include housing as well as an additional 2.3 billion for improved health care. And it's important for the Congress to hear this message. It's important for Congress to start dealing with next year's defense budget now, to not only include the request we made initially but the amendment to the defense bill.

The Congress has got to keep in mind the needs of those who wear the uniform. And I expect quick response from the Members of the United States Congress. When I ran for promise—I promised America that help

is on the way for the men and women who wear our uniform. Today I'm proud to say, help is arriving. I'm committed that America does a better job of supporting you all.

For every one of you has dedicated yourself to something greater than yourself. You put your country ahead of your comfort. You've committed your lives to defending our Nation's highest ideals. And thanks to you, the march of freedom continues around the world.

It's an honor to be here. It's a huge honor to be the Commander in Chief. Thank you for your service to a great country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:08 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. William David, USA, Commander, Task Force Falcon. H.R. 2216, approved July 24, was assigned Public Law No. 107-20.

Statement on Signing the Supplemental Appropriations Act, FY 2001

July 24, 2001

Today I signed into law H.R. 2216, the "Supplemental Appropriations Act, FY 2001," which provides funding for the Department of Defense and other departments.

This important supplemental appropriation provides urgently needed resources to enhance defense readiness and operations and maintenance; to improve the morale of our service men and service women, and their families; to provide needed home energy assistance for low-income families; to aid victims of radiation exposures associated with the Government's nuclear weapons testing program; to provide a U.S. contribution for the global trust fund to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis; and for other purposes.

I commend the Congress for expeditiously providing critical resources needed to improve our support for our men and women in the military while maintaining a strict fiscal discipline. The Congress provided this additional funding within the budget agreement's discretionary spending limits. The resources I requested for the Department of Defense will help our military readiness and help lay the groundwork for further strengthening

after Secretary Rumsfeld's ongoing strategy review.

I applaud the Congress for passing this bill without resorting to the abusive use of the emergency designation. We have seen "emergencies" become a recurring part of the budget process, and become magnets for special-interest, non-essential spending.

I will continue to work with the Congress and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to see that FEMA meets its obligations to perform its extremely important role of disaster relief in a thorough and timely manner.

I hope the bipartisan approval of this bill is a harbinger of improved, more orderly deliberations for the remainder of the FY 2002 appropriations process. The fiscal discipline demonstrated in this Supplemental Appropriations Act, developed with collegiality and in a timely manner, sets a standard for how the Congress should handle spending bills for the next fiscal year.

George W. Bush

The White House,
July 24, 2001.

NOTE: H.R. 2216, approved July 24, was assigned Public Law No. 107-20.

Statement on the Balkans

July 24, 2001

Last month in Warsaw, I spoke about the importance of building a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace. I said that this new Europe must include the Balkans. A few years ago, that vision would have seemed fanciful. Today as I meet here with our forces at Camp Bondsteel, that vision is within our reach.

Croatia has become a responsible source of regional stability. The people of Yugoslavia have chosen democracy over dictatorship and have sent their former dictator to The Hague. Albania's recent elections, while less than perfect, were still a step forward in its democratic development. There are moderate governments in Bosnia-Herzegovina willing to work as serious partners with the international community in preparing their country for European integration. For the

first time in history, all the governments of the region are democratic, committed to cooperating with each other, and predisposed to joining Europe.

But difficult challenges remain. Civil institutions are weak and vulnerable to corruption. Organized crime is widespread, sometimes hiding behind narrow, nationalistic agendas. There is too much dependence on foreign assistance and not enough foreign investment. And ethnic extremists are still stoking the flames of intolerance and inciting violence, hoping to subvert democracy, redraw borders, or advance criminal pursuits.

The greatest challenge today is in Macedonia, where armed insurgents threaten peace and stability. Some here in Kosovo are trying to help the insurgents. Let me be clear: The United States stands against all who use or support violence against democracy and the rule of law. That's why American forces in Kosovo are interdicting the flow of arms into Macedonia. And that's why I imposed sanctions against individuals and organizations assisting the insurgents. The United States, EU, and NATO strongly back ongoing efforts to find a political settlement—one that addresses the legitimate grievances of the Albanian population while protecting Macedonia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, its political unity, and its democratic future. I call on all parties to maintain the cease-fire. And I call on the elected leaders to work with EU envoy Leotard and Ambassador Pardew to overcome the remaining differences to achieving a settlement that will keep Macedonia at peace and on the road to Europe.

Those here in Kosovo who support the insurgency in Macedonia are hurting the interests of ethnic Albanians throughout the region. The people of Kosovo should focus on Kosovo. They need to concentrate on developing civil institutions that work and a political climate that supports and sustains democracy, the rule of law, ethnic tolerance, and cooperation with neighbors. November's election will be an important step in that direction. We call on all people of Kosovo to participate, so that no one is denied the benefits of democracy. As the people and countries of the Balkans move closer to Europe,