

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 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

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. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

November 24, 2001

Good morning. Thanksgiving this year comes 72 days after a terrible national shock, an act of evil that caused, and continues to cause, so much suffering. Yet, the evil the terrorists intended has resulted in good they never expected. And this holiday season, Americans have much to be thankful for.

We're thankful for the character of our fellow citizens who are flying flags and donating to charity and comforting those who grieve. Americans have aided the families of victims and the starving children of Afghanistan, half a world away. This country has a good and generous heart.

We're thankful for the decency of the American people who have stood for the American tradition of tolerance and religious liberty, a tradition that has welcomed and protected generations of immigrants from every faith and background.

We are thankful for new heroes, police officers and firefighters and emergency workers, who have renewed our respect for public service and provided lasting lessons in courage.

We're thankful for the men and women of our military, who are defending our lives and liberty with such skill, honor, and success.

We're thankful, this year even more intensely, for our lives and our families and the love of those around us. Americans are remembering what really matters—holding our children more closely, giving them more time.

And we're thankful to God, who turned suffering into strength and grief into grace. Offering thanks in the midst of tragedy is an American tradition, perhaps because in times of testing, our dependence on God is so clear.

The Pilgrims gave thanks even after the many deaths of a bitter winter. Abraham Lincoln proclaimed days of national thanksgiving even during a bloody Civil War. Lincoln asked God to heal the wounds of the Nation and to restore it, as soon as it may be consistent with the divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility. We pray for this goal, and we work for it.

In America, blessings are meant to be shared, and our Thanksgiving is revealed in concern for others. At this season, Laura and I hope you'll find ways to reach out and share your blessings and talents in your own communities: Tutor or mentor a child; volunteer in a hospital; support our troops by becoming active in the USO; comfort those who feel afraid; show your kindness to a Muslim neighbor; help someone in need of shelter or food or words of hope; and continue to pray for America.

We will face difficult times ahead. The fight we have begun will not be quickly or easily finished. Our enemies hide and plot in many nations. They are devious and ruthless. Yet we are confident in the justice of our cause. We will fight for as long as it takes, and we will prevail.

May God grant us patience, resolve, and wisdom in all that is to come. Happy Thanksgiving, and thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:50 a.m. on November 21 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of the address.

**Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony
for Humanitarian Aid Workers
Rescued From Afghanistan and an
Exchange With Reporters**

November 26, 2001

The President. Good morning. I'm so honored to welcome two courageous souls to the Rose Garden to celebrate a story of joy and a story of hope, a story of two women who were rescued, a story about the faith that sustained them and a family that clearly loves them.

Heather Mercer and Dayna Curry decided to go to help people who needed help. Their faith led them to Afghanistan. One woman who knows them best put it this way: They had a calling to serve the poorest of the poor, and Afghanistan is where that calling took them.

And Heather and Dayna's faith in God sustained them throughout their ordeal. It's a wonderful story about prayer, about a faith that can sustain people in good times and in bad times. Their faith was a source of hope that kept them from becoming discouraged.

I talked to them right after their release, their freedom, and I sensed no bitterness in their voice, no fatigue, just joy. It was an uplifting experience for me to talk to these courageous souls.

Theirs is also a story about people who—in our country—who rallied for them. People prayed all around the country. I was particularly struck by the fact that Heather's dad offered to take her place in prison. I was struck by the fact that a country preacher out of central Texas flew to Afghanistan to lend his presence in any way that would help. I know there are a lot of people right outside of Crawford that were praying for these girls' release. And when they were, people all across Baylor University cheered. Something besides football became more important in their lives: life, itself.

This is a story of a military that is committed to achieving certain objectives. In my speech in front of the United States Congress, I said to the Taliban that one of the objectives was to release the humanitarian aid workers that were being detained against their will. We've achieved that objective. And I want to thank our military for rescuing

these girls. And I want to thank those on the ground in Afghanistan who helped with their rescue, as well.

So it's a joyous day to welcome two good souls to the Rose Garden. I'll ask them to say a few comments, and then I'll be glad to answer some questions, if you have any.

[*At this point, Heather Mercer and Dayna Curry made brief remarks.*]

The President. Good job.

Operation Enduring Freedom

Q. Mr. President, following up on the talk of the military's role in rescuing these two ladies, can you tell us why you have deployed 1,000 marines, at least 1,000 marines this weekend on the ground, what their mission is? How many more are coming? And how much more risky has their mission become with this advancement of the troops?

The President. Well, first, I'll let the Defense Department explain the mission. Well, first of all, we know the mission. The mission is to bring Al Qaida to justice and to make sure Afghanistan no longer serves as a haven for terrorists. And we've got a military strategy that we're implementing. I'll let the Secretary of Defense, in his daily briefing, go into the operational details as he sees fit.

But this is a dangerous period of time. This is a period of time in which we're now hunting down the people who are responsible for bombing America. I said a long time ago, one of our objectives is to smoke them out and get them running and to bring them to justice. We're smoking them out; they're running; and now we're going to bring them to justice. I also said we'll use whatever means is necessary to achieve that objective. And that's exactly what we're going to do.

The American people must understand that we've got a long way to go in order to achieve our objective in this theater. But we're patient; we're resolved; and we will stay the course until we achieve our objective.

National Economy

Q. Mr. President, what's your reaction, sir, to news that the U.S. economy has been in a recession since March?

The President. My reaction that—since March? Well, I knew that the economy was