

11th, because I now realize the stakes. I realize the world has changed. My most important obligation is to protect the American people from further harm. And I will do that.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:12 p.m. in the Cross Hall at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Prime Minister Blair referred to Hans Blix, Executive Chairman, United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission. A reporter referred to journalist Bob Woodward.

Statement on the Return of Governors Island to the People of New York

January 31, 2003

I am pleased to announce the return of Governors Island to the people of New York. Last April, I informed the Governor and the mayor of my intention to make this transfer, and today, the transfer is complete. Also, I am reaffirming our support for the Governors Island National Monument, which now will encompass approximately 22 of the Island's 172 acres, including historic Castle Williams and Fort Jay.

Governor Pataki and Mayor Bloomberg have shared with me their vision of a Governors Island dedicated to public and civic purposes. New York's stewardship of the island combined with the National Park Service's management of the monument will lead to the development of an outstanding resource for the people of New York and all who visit.

I commend the parties that worked together to make this historic transfer a reality, including the National Park Service, the General Services Administration, the United States Coast Guard, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and especially the State and City of New York.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Achieving Militarily Significant Benchmarks for a Sustainable Peace in Kosovo

January 31, 2003

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 1212 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001, Public Law 106-398, I hereby submit a report, prepared by my Administration, on the progress made in achieving the militarily significant benchmarks for conditions that would achieve a sustainable peace in Kosovo and ultimately allow for the withdrawal of the United States military presence in Kosovo.

The term "militarily significant" relates to tasks and objectives significant from a military standpoint that once accomplished, would allow for withdrawal of military forces from Kosovo. In the establishment of the Kosovo benchmarks, four critical tasks for NATO forces were identified: military stability; public security; border/boundary issues; and war crimes/support to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Objectives for these tasks were drawn from United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, the NATO Operations Plan, the Military Technical Agreement, and the Kosovo Liberation Army Undertaking.

I anticipate that Kosovo Force—and U.S. participation in it—will gradually reduce in size as public security conditions improve and Kosovars assume increasing responsibility for their own self-government.

George W. Bush

The White House,
January 31, 2003.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

January 25

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush attended an Alfalfa Club Dinner.

January 27

In the morning, the President had intelligence and FBI briefings and met with the National Security Council.

Also in the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain to discuss cooperation against terrorism and the situation in Iraq. He also had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende of the Netherlands to congratulate him on his January 22 electoral victory and to discuss the situation in Iraq.

In the afternoon, in his private dining room, the President had lunch with Vice President Dick Cheney. He then met with newspaper and magazine journalists to discuss his January 28 State of the Union Address.

During the day, the President continued preparations for his January 28 State of the Union Address.

The President announced his intention to designate Gordon England as Acting Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to designate Janet Hale as Acting Under Secretary for Management at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to designate Clark Kent Ervin as Acting Inspector General at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to designate Michael D. Brown as Acting Under Secretary for Emergency Preparedness and Response at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee: Joan Breton Connelly, James Lorand Matory, Nancy Clausen Wilkie, Meredith J. Long, James Wright Willis, Willard Lee Boyd, Jay I. Kislak, Aniko Gaal Schott, and Marta Araoz de la Torre.

January 28

In the morning, the President had intelligence and FBI briefings.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with network television journalists to discuss his State of the Union Address to be delivered that evening.

The White House announced that the President will host Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy for a meeting and luncheon at the White House on January 30.

January 29

In the morning, the President had intelligence and FBI briefings.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Grand Rapids, MI. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel to congratulate him on his January 28 electoral victory. In Grand Rapids, he participated in a roundtable discussion on Medicare and prescription drugs at Spectrum Health hospital.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael J. Garcia to be Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Border and Transportation Security).

The President announced his intention to appoint Col. Merdith Wyndham Bolling Temple, USA, as the Federal Member of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania) and the Federal Member of the Delaware River Basin Commission (Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania).

January 30

In the morning, the President had intelligence and FBI briefings.