

The White House,
October 20, 1998.

NOTE: H.R. 3381, approved October 19, was assigned Public Law No. 105-267.

Statement on Signing the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999

October 20, 1998

Today I have signed into law H.R. 3694, the "Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999." The Act authorizes Fiscal Year 1999 appropriations for U.S. intelligence and intelligence-related activities.

The Act is the product of the dedication and effort of many people in Congress and my Administration. I believe that the Act will help our Nation maintain a strong intelligence capability and preserve the safety and security of our country.

I am pleased that the Act provides enhanced protective authority for CIA personnel and family members. This is extremely important given the continuing terrorist threat against U.S. citizens and interests. I also note that the Act names the CIA Headquarters Compound in Langley, Virginia, the "George Bush Center for Intelligence." This is an appropriate and well-deserved tribute to former President Bush.

Sections 601 and 602 of the Act enhance significantly our ability to conduct effective counterintelligence and international terrorism investigations. In addition, section 604 expands the Government's ability to conduct wiretaps when investigating a broad range of Federal felonies. The Attorney General will develop comprehensive guidelines and minimization procedures for the use of this expanded authority and will amend procedures currently contained in the manual for United States Attorneys to provide appropriate protection for the rights of Americans. Until such guidelines and procedures are finalized, the Government will conduct wiretaps in accordance with the standards provided under current law. The Department of Justice will include statistics on the use of the expanded au-

thority in its annual wiretap report to the Congress.

Finally, I am satisfied that this Act contains an acceptable whistleblower protection provision, free of the constitutional infirmities evident in the Senate-passed version of this legislation. The Act does not constrain my constitutional authority to review and, if appropriate, control disclosure of certain classified information to the Congress. I note that the Act's legislative history makes clear that the Congress, although disagreeing with the executive branch regarding the operative constitutional principles, does not intend to foreclose the exercise of my constitutional authority in this area.

The Constitution vests the President with authority to control disclosure of information when necessary for the discharge of his constitutional responsibilities. Nothing in this Act purports to change this principle. I anticipate that this authority will be exercised only in exceptional circumstances and that when agency heads decide that they must defer, limit, or preclude the disclosure of sensitive information, they will contact the appropriate congressional committees promptly to begin the accommodation process that has traditionally been followed with respect to disclosure of sensitive information.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 20, 1998.

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