

doing what we can to help alleviate the suffering. In the month of November, the United Nations World Food Program, with our strong support, provided enough supplies to feed 4.3 million Afghans. And the Defense Department will continue to make sure that food is delivered in remote regions of that impoverished, poor, starving country.

The bill I sign today extends and strengthens our efforts. The Afghan Women and Children Relief Act commits the United States to providing education and medical assistance to Afghan women and children and to Afghan refugees in surrounding countries.

The overwhelming support for this legislation sends a clear message: As we drive out the Taliban and the terrorists, we are determined to lift up the people of Afghanistan. The women and children of Afghani-

stan have suffered enough. This great Nation will work hard to bring them hope and help. To the bill's sponsors, thank you from the bottom of our hearts. You show the true compassion of this great land.

May God bless the women and children of Afghanistan.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the Great Hall of the National Museum of Women in the Arts. In his remarks, he referred to Afghan human rights activist Farida; and Wilhelmina "Billie" Cole Holladay, founder and chair of the board, National Museum of Women in the Arts. S. 1573, approved December 12, was assigned Public Law No. 107-81. The proclamation of December 9 on Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Representative Richard K. Arney's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

December 12, 2001

The country, the people of Texas, and the Congress have been well served by Congressman Dick Arney. As a fellow Texan, I know his effective leadership firsthand.

When he was a sophomore lawmaker, and a member of the then minority party, Dick Arney proved his mettle by authoring and passing a major base closure initiative that was signed into law. As majority leader, he has skillfully guided legislation through Congress; his dedication to reforming Gov-

ernment, lowering taxes, and simplifying the tax system has deeply influenced public policy.

I know Dick's dedication to public service will remain strong, even during his retirement. His sense of humor, candor, and leadership will be sorely missed in Congress.

Laura and I extend our thanks to Dick, his wife, Susan, and their family, and we wish each of them the best in the future.