

congressional committees the initial report described in section 603 of the Act.

Furthermore, I hereby determine that it is in the national security interest of the United States to waive that sanction, pursuant to section 604 of the Act. This waiver shall be effective for a period of 180 days from the date hereof or until such time as the next report required by section 603 of the Act is transmitted to the Congress, whichever is later.

You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 4, 2002]

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 2, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on December 5.

### **Remarks on Signing the North American Wetlands Conservation Reauthorization Act**

*December 2, 2002*

**The President.** Please be seated. Thank you. Glad you're here. Welcome to the White House.

Today we're taking important action to conserve North America's wetlands, which will help keep our water clean and help provide habitat for hundreds of species of wildlife. Through this legislation, the Federal Government will continue its partnership with landowners, conservation groups, and States to save and improve millions of acres of wetlands. The North American Wetlands Conservation Reauthorization Act shows our concern for the environment and our respect for future generations of Americans.

I appreciate two members of my Cabinet who are here today. I'm honored the Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton, is with us, the Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman; thank you both for coming.

I appreciate the Ambassador, Ambassador Kergin from Canada, for being here as well. Mr. Ambassador, glad you're here. Thanks for coming.

I want to thank Bob Smith, Senator from New Hampshire, for being here and for his work on this bill. I want to thank Wayne Gilchrest from Maryland—he's got a big interest in wetlands as well as the Chesapeake Bay—for coming here. I appreciate so very much Robert Underwood, ranking member from Guam, for coming. I'm sorry that Jim Hansen is not with us today. He was the chairman of the House Committee on Resources, who helped write and sponsor and get this legislation passed through the Congress.

I appreciate Steve Williams, who is the director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, for coming today. Where are you, Steve? There you are. Thanks for coming.

And I want to thank the president of Ducks Unlimited, John Tomke; thanks for coming, John. I'm glad you all are here. And I want to thank you all for coming as well.

With this signature today, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act will be reauthorized for 5 years. The law authorizes Federal money to match donations from sportsmen, State wildlife agencies, conservationists, and landowners. Since 1991, more than \$462 million in Federal grants have helped to encourage \$1.3 billion in contributions from others.

Together these funds have restored streams and rivers, reestablished native plants and trees, acquired land that is home to more than a third of America's threatened and endangered species. Because about 75 percent of the wetlands are held privately, we need to encourage cooperation with our landowners. This legislation shows that when Government and landowners and conservationists and others work together, we can make dramatic progress in preserving the beauty and the quality of our environment.

I want to thank the Congress for supporting this legislation. And I ask the Members of the Congress and the two Cabinet members who are here today to join me as I sign this important piece of legislation.

[At this point, the President signed the bill.]

**The President.** Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred

to Canadian Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Kergin. H.R. 3908, approved December 2, was assigned Public Law No. 107-308.

**Remarks on Signing the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 in Arlington, Virginia**

*December 2, 2002*

Thank you all. Thank you all. Please be seated. Please be seated.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. And thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your candor. Thank you—you're doing a fabulous job on behalf of the American people. It's an honor for me to be here today with the leaders of our military, the good folks who are serving our country, to sign the 2003 defense authorization bill.

We're a nation at war. America must understand we're at war. But those who wear the uniform must understand how proud all of America is for your service to our great country. On behalf of a grateful nation, I'm here to thank you.

Our military is making good progress in this war. We've liberated an oppressed and friendless people. We're hunting down the terrorists all across the globe. We're performing our missions with speed and skill. You have the strong, united support of this great land, and this bill should reflect the strong and united support of the United States Congress.

And I want to thank the Members of the Congress who are here on stage, Senator Warner and Congressman Duncan Hunter. And Members of the Senate and the Congress who are with us, I want to thank you for your good work on this important legislation.

I appreciate so very much all those who work in the Secretary's office who worked hard on this bill. I want to thank the Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs who are here and the Vice Chairmen are with us and those who represent the enlisted personnel of our military.

Most of all, I want to say a word about Bob Stump, Chairman Stump, who couldn't be with us today, distinguished chairman of

the Armed Services Committee, who has served our Nation well. He's a dedicated public servant who has decided to retire. And as the Secretary said, this bill is appropriately named for this fine American. We will miss him, and we wish Bob and his family all the very best.

I want to thank the service Secretaries who are here with us. And I want to thank you all for coming.

The legislation I sign this afternoon was passed by Congress in a remarkable spirit of unity. It sets priorities of our Defense Department in a critical, critical period for our country. Our country has unprecedented challenges, and we're facing them with unmatched technology, careful planning, and the finest traditions of valor.

We're rewarding the service and sacrifice of our military families with higher pay, improved facilities, and better housing. We're procuring the best weapons we possibly can and the best equipment, while adding funds for operations and maintenance as well. We're investing in missile defenses and all new technologies we need to gain every advantage—every advantage—in the battlefields of the future.

And since intelligence is playing a critical role in our ability to achieve military victory, this new law creates a new high-level position within the Department of Defense called the Under Secretary for Intelligence.

This generation of Armed Forces has been given two difficult tasks, fighting and winning a war and, at the same time, transforming our military to win the new kind of war. In the first stages of our fight against terror, we've already seen the future face of warfare, forces that are more agile and mobile and lethal, along with weapons that are smarter and tactics that are more inventive. These priorities are reflected in this year's budget. You'll see them reflected in every military budget I submit and sign as your President.

America's military is strong. And that's the way it should be. Our Nation and the world are safer that way. Now and in the future, we will maintain a military that is second to none. And the greatest strength of America's military is the cause we all serve. That cause is freedom in a world at peace. Today, that