

customs officers tracked down child molesters in the United States, many of whom were molesting their own children and distributing the images of these children on the Internet. Authorities have identified 25 individuals involved in this ring, 14 of whom were Americans. Through Operation Hamlet, 65 children have been rescued.

We're taking aggressive steps to protect children from exploitation and victimization. And the United States Congress can help by passing the "Child Obscenity and Pornography Prevention Act." The House has passed this important bill, and I want to thank them for their good work.

The House passed a bill which makes it illegal for child pornographers to disseminate obscene, computer-generated images of children. It's an important piece of legislation. The Senate needs to act soon. The Senate needs to get moving and join the House in providing our prosecutors with the tools necessary to help shut down this obscenity, this crime—these crimes against children.

When a child's life or innocence is taken, a grave and unforgivable act has occurred. A parent's worst nightmare has come real. The people in this room are on the frontlines of a great struggle, determined to see that no parent is forced to live through a nightmare.

I'm tremendously grateful for the good works. I want to thank you all for being true patriots. I want you to know, at the Federal level, we're joining in the fight. We'll go after them, one person at a time, to make America a promising place for everybody who lives here.

May God bless your work, and may God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to the sniper attacks in the Washington, DC, area which began October 2 and left 10 dead and 3 injured. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Statement on Signing the Russian Democracy Act of 2002 *October 23, 2002*

I have today signed into law H.R. 2121, the "Russian Democracy Act of 2002." This Act seeks to promote democracy, the rule of law, and an independent media in the Russian Federation.

Section 3(b) of the Act purports to establish U.S. policy towards Russia. My approval of the Act does not constitute my adoption of the statements of policy in section 3(b) as U.S. foreign policy. Given the Constitution's commitment to the presidency of the authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs, the executive branch

shall construe such policy statements as advisory, giving them the due weight that comity between the legislative and executive branches should require, to the extent consistent with U.S. foreign policy.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
October 23, 2002.

NOTE: H.R. 2121, approved October 23, was assigned Public Law No. 107-246.