

Americans to extend a compassionate hand to a neighbor in need. The response has been strong. People are serving their Nation by supporting charities, faith-based groups, neighborhood healers that are changing America one life at a time. Policemen and firefighters and the people who wear our Nation's uniform remind us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than ourselves. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. All the tests of the last 3 years have come to the right nation. We're a

strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves.

Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

Thank you for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:55 p.m. at the Hanover Marriott. In his remarks, he referred to Christine Todd Whitman, former Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency.

Statement on Signing the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2004

December 1, 2003

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 2754, the "Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2004." The Act funds programs of the Department of Energy, the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers, and several other agencies, and provides funds to help protect the Nation's environment.

The executive branch shall construe provisions of the Act that direct the Secretary of a military department to perform the Secretary's duties through a particular military officer in a manner consistent with the statutory authority of the Secretary of Defense to exercise authority, direction, and control of the Department of Defense and the constitutional authority of the President to supervise the unitary executive branch and as Commander in Chief.

Provisions in sections 209 and 303 and under the heading "Construction, General"

in title I purport to require the approval of committees of the Congress before executive branch execution of aspects of the Act or to preclude executive branch execution of a provision of the Act upon the written disapproval of such a committee. The executive branch shall construe such provisions to require only notification to the Congress, as any other construction would contravene the constitutional principles set forth by the Supreme Court in *INS v. Chadha*.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,

December 1, 2003.

NOTE: H.R. 2754, approved December 1, was assigned Public Law No. 108-137.