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inspectors. He is actively hiding the weapons. And so the Security Council, earlier on, gave Saddam Hussein one final chance to disarm, and he's throwing that chance away.

If military force becomes necessary to disarm Iraq, this Nation, joined by others, will act decisively in a just cause, and we will prevail.

Military action is this Nation's last option. And let me tell you what's not an option: Trusting in the sanity and restraint of Saddam Hussein is not an option; denial and endless delay in the face of growing danger is not an option; leaving the lives and the security of the American people at the mercy of this dictator and his weapons of mass destruction, not an option.

America and our allies are called once again to defend the peace against an aggressive tyrant, and we accept this responsibility.

We defend the security of our country, but our cause is broader. If war is forced upon us, we will liberate the people of Iraq from a cruel and violent dictator. The Iraqi people today are not treated with dignity, but they have the right to live in dignity. The Iraqi people today are not allowed to speak out for freedom, but they have a right to live in freedom. We don't believe freedom and liberty are America's gift to the world; we believe they are the Almighty's gift to mankind. And for the oppressed people of Iraq, people whose lives we care about, the day of freedom is drawing near.

A free Iraq can be a source of hope for all the Middle East. Instead of threatening its neighbors and harboring terrorists, Iraq can be an example of progress and prosperity, in a region that needs both. If we liberate the Iraqi people, they can rest assure that we will help them build a country that is disarmed and peaceful and united and free.

The disarmament of Iraq will also demonstrate that free nations have the will and resolve to defend the peace. By defeating this threat, we will show other dictators that the path of aggression will lead to their own ruin. By defeating the threat of Iraq, we will show the world—we will show that the world is able and prepared to meet future dangers wherever they arise.

Our goal is peace, and achieving peace requires resolve and action by free nations. In a more peaceful world, the American people will not live in fear, and the Iraqi people will not live in oppression.

The United States of America, joined by many nations—by many nations—is committed to building a world at peace and bringing a better day. There is no question in my mind—no question in my mind—that because of the strength of this country, the heart and soul of the American people, the courage of the American people, the determination of the American people, and the values of the American people, that we can have a more peaceful world, a more just society, and a more hopeful America.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:58 a.m. in the school's gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Sonny Perdue of Georgia; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Signing the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003

February 20, 2003

Today I have signed into law H.J. Res. 2, the "Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003," which contains the remaining 11 annual appropriations acts for fiscal year 2003. The funds appropriated by this bill will provide valuable resources for priorities such as homeland security, military operations, and education.

I am very concerned that the Congress failed to provide over $1 billion in funds that my Administration requested for State and local law enforcement and emergency personnel, and that much of the funding that the Congress did provide is heavily earmarked for lower-priority programs that are not best designed to protect Americans against terrorism. As a result, the shortfall for homeland security First Responder programs is more than $2.2 billion. Funds that should have been made available to the Department of Homeland Security are being diverted to programs unrelated to higher-priority terrorism preparedness and prevention efforts. My Administration will use all the

tools at its disposal to ensure that as much of this funding as possible is directed toward terrorism preparedness and prevention.

Further, although the funding level in the bill is largely consistent with the agreed upon top line level that I urged the Congress to adopt, the bill is not fully consistent with the agreed upon non-defense discretionary funding levels due to the expanded use of budgetary mechanisms, such as advance appropriations. This bill includes an increase in advance appropriations of $2.2 billion, which should not be used to evade top line agreements on total discretionary funding.

Therefore, the FY 2004 congressional budget allocations should be reduced accordingly and the device should not be repeated in FY 2005. Finally, the bill includes $3.3 billion for unrequested drought aid and other assistance that is only partially offset by spending reductions in the recently enacted Farm Bill.

In addition, a number of provisions of H.J. Res. 2 are inconsistent with the constitutional authority of the President to conduct foreign affairs, command the Armed Forces, supervise the unitary executive branch, protect sensitive information, and make recommendations to the Congress. Other provisions unconstitutionally condition execution of the laws by the executive branch upon approval by congressional committees.

Thus, the executive branch shall construe as advisory the provisions of the bill that purport to: direct or burden the Executive's conduct of international negotiations, such as sections 514, 556, 576, and 577 in the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act; limit the President's authority as Commander in Chief, such as language under the heading "Andean Counterdrug Initiative" in the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act and section 609 of the Commerce Appropriations Act; or limit the President's authority to supervise the unitary executive branch, such as section 718 of the Agriculture Appropriations Act and the provisions relating to Office of Management and Budget review of executive branch orders, activities, regulations, transcripts and testimony in the Treasury Appropriations Act.

In addition, the executive branch shall construe provisions that mandate, regulate, or prohibit submission of information to the Congress or the public, such as sections 561(a), 568(a), and 574(d) of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act and sections 620 and 622 of the Treasury Appropriations Act, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to withhold information that could impair foreign relations, national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties. Also, the executive branch shall construe provisions that mandate or prohibit submission of recommendations to the Congress, such as section 723 of the Agriculture Appropriations Act and the provisions purporting to require submission of a request for a supplemental appropriation in the Interior Appropriations Act, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to submit for congressional consideration such measures as the President judges necessary and expedient.

Also, the executive branch shall construe as advisory, or as calling solely for notification, the provisions of this bill that purport to require congressional committee approval for the execution of a law. Any other construction would be inconsistent with the principles enunciated by the United States Supreme Court in *INS* v. *Chadha.* Such provisions include: provisions relating to the "Working Capital Fund," Food and Drug Administration fund transfers, and sections 704 and 719 relating to fund transfers in the Agriculture Appropriations Act; the provision relating to an expenditure plan for the entry-exit system in the Commerce Appropriations Act; and the provisions on transfer of United States Customs Service aircraft, automated commercial environment, business systems modernization, funds transfers within and among Treasury entities, Secret Service protective mission travel, museum construction, high-intensity drug trafficking area and other funding levels, building prospectus funding levels, use of the Federal building fund for emergency repairs and transfers with the fund, unobligated balances for salaries and expenses, office improvements, and law enforcement training facilities in the Treasury Appropriations Act.

Furthermore, the duty of the President under section 586 of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act to issue and provide copies of an order relating to consideration of the release of information is assigned to the Attorney General, who shall ensure that the section is implemented in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to withhold information, the disclosure of which could impair foreign relations, national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties.

Finally, to ensure proper respect for the distinct powers of the executive and legislative branches and to ensure effective coordination between them in emergencies, the Attorney General shall serve as the single officer within the executive branch authorized to receive requests from the Chief of the Capitol Police and to approve action by the executive branch in the implementation of section 1017 of the legislative branch Appropriations Act.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 20, 2003.

NOTE: H.J. Res. 2, approved February 20, was assigned Public Law No. 108–7.

Statement on Signing the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003

February 20, 2003

Today I signed into law H.J. Res. 2, an Omnibus appropriations bill funding the remaining 11 appropriations bills for FY 2003. The funds provided in this resolution will provide important and long overdue resources for our Nations priorities, including fighting the war on terrorism and educating our most vulnerable children.

This bill provides over $397 billion in discretionary budget authority, including $10 billion in reserve funding for the Department of Defense, and is largely consistent with the agreed upon overall funding level. My original budget request, made a year ago, asked for the War on Terror reserve. I had separately agreed to endorse new funds for election reform, a bill that was passed months after my budget was submitted.

Unfortunately, the Congress chose to circumvent the spending limit for FY 2003 by borrowing $2.2 billion in funding from FY 2004. This action must be corrected by adjusting both the 2004 budget allocations and appropriations, and holding advance appropriations constant with the level enacted last year. I will ask the Leadership to ensure this happens.

This bill allocates over $53 billion in total Education funding. The Congress provided increases for many of my high-priority programs, including programs for reading, disadvantaged students, special education, and Pell Grants.

The bill also includes $3.3 billion in unrequested drought and other assistance, which is only minimally offset by real reductions in existing farm spending. Ninety-five percent of purported savings are scheduled to come several years from now, after the expiration of todays farm bill, and may prove illusory.

Most troublesome, H.J. Res. 2 falls nearly $1 billion short of my request for State and local law enforcement and emergency personnel, and in particular underfunds terrorism preparedness for first responders. I requested $3.5 billion for the First Responders Initiative. The bill, however, provides only $1.3 billion for this purpose. Meanwhile the bill provides $2.2 billion for existing State and local grant programs, which are not directly related to higher-priority terrorism preparedness and prevention efforts. This is unsatisfactory, and my Administration will use every appropriate tool available to ensure that these funds are directed to the highest priority homeland security needs.

This belated agreement to last years appropriations process is not perfect, but it underscores the need to move quickly on this years priorities outlined in my 2004 budget request. I look forward to working with the Congress to continue funding the war on terror, strengthening our economy, and protecting the homeland.

George W. Bush

NOTE: H.J. Res. 2, approved February 20, was assigned Public Law No. 108–7. An original was