

The original documents are located in Box 38, “9/22/76 - Remarks Upon the Signing of H.R. 14262: The Defense Appropriations Act” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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SIGNING CEREMONY FOR THE DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

SEPTEMBER 22, 1976

I AM SIGNING INTO LAW THE DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

FOR 1977. THIS LEGISLATION REPRESENTS SUBSTANTIAL

PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE ESSENTIAL DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS

I RECOMMENDED TO THE CONGRESS. THIS BILL HELPS TO REVERSE

A STEADY DECLINE IN REAL RESOURCES DEVOTED TO NATIONAL

SECURITY WHICH HAD BECOME A PATTERN. AFTER EIGHT YEARS

OF DECLINE -- WE ARE PROVIDING FOR REAL GROWTH IN DEFENSE

SPENDING. I BELIEVE THIS BILL REFLECTS A NEW AWARENESS

THAT THIS COUNTRY CAN NO LONGER SHORT-CHANGE OUR NATIONAL

DEFENSE.

I COMMEND THE CONGRESS AND ITS LEADERSHIP FOR JOINING

WITH THE ADMINISTRATION IN REVERSING THIS TREND. I AM

CONVINCED THAT THIS NEW PATTERN MUST AND WILL BE SUSTAINED

IN FUTURE YEARS, ~~AND~~ I AM FULLY COMMITTED TO IT.

I WILL ENSURE THAT AMERICA'S MILITARY FORCES REMAIN

UNSURPASSED, AS THEY ARE TODAY.

BUT WHILE THIS BILL REPRESENTS REAL PROGRESS, THERE IS

MORE TO BE DONE.

FIRST, I HAVE DIRECTED A NUMBER OF ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE
MAJOR ECONOMIES IN THE OPERATION OF THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT.

OTHER ECONOMIES WHICH WOULD HAVE SAVED 16 BILLION DOLLARS
OVER FIVE YEARS REQUIRED AFFIRMATIVE LEGISLATIVE ACTION.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE CONGRESS HAS FAILED TO ACT ON THE
MAJORITY OF THESE MEASURES.

SECOND, CONGRESS HAS FAILED TO AUTHORIZE CERTAIN
PROGRAMS THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO OUR LONG-TERM DEFENSE POLICY.

THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE IN THE SHIPBUILDING AREA.

THIRD, CONGRESS HAS ADDED FUNDS FOR PROGRAMS

WHICH I DID NOT REQUEST IN FISCAL YEAR 1977 -- FUNDS

WHICH SHOULD BE USED INSTEAD FOR MORE IMPORTANT PROGRAMS

THE CONGRESS REJECTED.

THAT IS WHY ON AUGUST 23, I FOUND IT NECESSARY TO
RE-SUBMIT AUTHORIZATION REQUESTS TOTALLING 2.4 BILLION
DOLLARS TO COVER CRITICAL PROGRAMS WHICH WERE NOT APPROVED
BY THE CONGRESS. AT THAT TIME I ALSO ASKED FOR DELETION
OF PROGRAMS TOTALLING 584 MILLION DOLLARS IN THIS FISCAL
YEAR ~~AT ONE~~, SUGGESTING THAT THOSE FUNDS BE APPLIED AGAINST
THE PROGRAMS I REQUESTED.

I AM PLEASED THAT THE HOUSE AND SENATE CONFEREES ON THE
LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATION BILL HAVE AGREED TO SOME OF THE
STEPS I HAVE RECOMMENDED.

defense appropriation bill

THIS IS PROGRESS.

BUT THERE ARE STILL OTHER

MEASURES WHICH REQUIRE ACTION.

~~ONE OF THOSE WOULD PERMIT~~

~~THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO SAVE OVER ONE BILLION DOLLARS~~

~~A YEAR BY 1979.~~

~~IN ADDITION I BELIEVE~~ THE SHIPBUILDING PROGRAM

IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO OUR FUTURE ABILITY TO CONTROL

THE SEAS IN THE EVENT OF CONFLICT.

THE SEAPOWER SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HAS UNANIMOUSLY

APPROVED 1.1 BILLION DOLLARS TO BEGIN WORK ON THE ADDITIONAL

SHIPS NEEDED TO STRENGTHEN OUR NAVY.

I URGENTLY CALL ON THE CONGRESS TO APPROVE THIS PROGRAM

BEFORE THEY ADJOURN SO THAT WE CAN ASSURE OUR CONTINUED

NAVAL SUPERIORITY DURING THE NEXT TWO DECADES.

I ~~WANT TO~~ THANK IN PARTICULAR THOSE OF YOU HERE TODAY;

4 appreciate
I KNOW ⁿ THE EFFORTS YOU HAVE MADE WITH RESPECT TO OUR

NATIONAL SECURITY. I SHARE YOUR DEDICATION, AND VALUE

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR FREEDOM.

END OF TEXT

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...

SECRETARY RUMSFELD

DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE

MEMBERS OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

LEADERS OF OUR NATION'S MILITARY-ORIENTED AND VETERANS
ORGANIZATIONS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN