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MAY 14, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY  
(Louisville, Kentucky)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
UPON SIGNING  
S. 2115, RESERVE CALL-UP AUTHORITY

GALT HOUSE HOTEL

6:09 P.M. EDT

Congressman Carter, distinguished members of the military:

It is a great privilege to be in Louisville and to have the opportunity of signing this very important legislation.

In creating an all-volunteer military force, our country has strongly emphasized the very key role which our National Guard and Reserve forces play in our overall defense.

Existing law requires that a national emergency be declared prior to any involuntary immobilization of our Reserve forces. This means that these forces are not now available to augment our active forces in the very cases where their prompt availability might indeed prevent a situation from developing into a genuine emergency.

This bill provides the President of the United States with the authority to call to active duty not more than 50,000 members of the Selected Reserve to serve for a period not to exceed 90 days.

Under this legislation, we can more effectively utilize many key elements of our Reserve and National Guard forces. For example, over 60 percent of our tactical airlift and over 50 percent of our strategic airlift capability are made up of Reserve and National Guard personnel.

In signing this bill, I can assure the American people that its provisions will be invoked only when clearly warranted and at such times most judiciously.

I congratulate the Congress in enacting this legislation which was requested by me and the Department of Defense, and I am sure it will very strongly help and assist our overall efforts to be ready for any emergency and to preserve the peace.

END (AT 6:12 P.M. EDT)