

AUGUST 21, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary  
(Vail, Colorado)

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NOTICE TO THE PRESS

The President has signed H. R. 7896--Settlement of certain international claims. This bill amends present law to provide for settlement, under international agreements, of certain claims incident to the noncombat activities of the armed forces.

Under the NATO Status of Forces Agreement and similar bilateral agreements to which the United States is a party, each member nation has agreed to assume responsibility for paying compensation for non-combat damages done to third parties by other armed forces present in its territory as if caused by the host country's own armed forces. These agreements require that the host country investigate, settle, adjudicate and make final awards directly to claimants when the claim arises out of the act or omissions of members of a force or a civilian component of the guest country done in the performance of official duty and claims arising out of other acts, omissions, or occurrences for which such force or civilian component is "otherwise legally responsible" under local law. Typically, these agreements call for sharing such claims payments on a pro rata basis where the host country pays 75 percent and the guest country 25 percent.

H. R. 7896 will authorize the Secretary of Defense (and the Secretary of Transportation with respect to the Coast Guard) to pay the United States' pro rata share of the "otherwise legally responsible" type claims.

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