

Congressman Ron Paul U.S. House of Representatives May 9, 2002 Statement on the introduction of H. Res. 416, Expressing the Sense of the Congress regarding the International Criminal Court

We Want No Part of the ICC: Commending President Bush

Mr. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill Expressing the Sense of the Congress regarding the International Criminal Court.

On Monday, May 6, President George W. Bush directed his representative to inform United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan that the United States "does not intend to become a party to the treaty [the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)]." President Bush is to be highly commended for renouncing the U.S. signature on the ICC treaty, a bold first step toward protecting American servicemembers and citizens from the possibility of unwarranted and politically-motivated persecutions.

By taking this action, President Bush has put the international community on notice that the United States will defend its sovereignty and citizens from this global court. The Bush Administration correctly pointed out that the ICC has unchecked power that contradicts our Constitution and its system of checks and balances; that the Court is "open for exploitation and politically-motivated prosecutions;" and that "the ICC asserts jurisdiction over citizens of states that have not ratified the treaty" – which seriously threatens American sovereignty.

I applaud President Bush in making it perfectly clear that the United States wants no part of the ICC. He faced enormous pressure from the international community to do otherwise, yet he did the right thing.

But this is only a first step. As Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated this week, upon our renunciation of the ICC: "Unfortunately, the ICC will not respect the U.S. decision to stay out of the treaty. To the contrary, the ICC provisions claim the authority to detain and try American citizens-U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, as well as current and future officials-even though the United States has not given its consent to be bound by the treaty." Secretary

Rumsfeld added, "When the ICC treaty enters into force this summer, U.S. citizens will be exposed to the risk of prosecution by a court that is unaccountable to the American people, and that has no obligation to respect the Constitutional rights of our citizens."

Undersecretary of State Marc Grossman, explaining the president's decision to withdraw from the ICC, made the following critical point: "Notwithstanding our disagreements with the Rome Treaty, the United States respects the decision of those nations who have chosen to join the ICC; but they in turn must respect our decision *not* to join the ICC or place our citizens under the jurisdiction of the court." There is no indication that Undersecretary Grossman's message has been received.

Therefore, this legislation makes it clear that Congress should take all steps necessary to grant appropriate authority to the president to defend the American people – servicemember and citizen alike -- from the threat of arrest, prosecution and conviction by the International Criminal Court.

I am introducing this legislation to also to commend President Bush for his courageous move, to assure the president that this body supports his action to protect the Constitution and American sovereignty. We have all taken an oath to protect and defend the Constitution, and we should stand with the president.

I rise, finally, to encourage the president to remain steadfast in his intention of protecting American servicemembers and citizens from the unchecked power of the International Criminal Court. This is only the beginning, however, there is much more to be done.