

## **HELMS PRESS RELEASE ON CLINTON SIGNATURE**

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### **Helms on Clinton ICC Signature: "This Decision Will Not Stand"**

Washington, DC - Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms issued the following statement this evening:

"President Clinton's decision to sign the Rome treaty establishing an International Criminal Court in his final days in office is as outrageous as it is inexplicable.

"Two years ago, the President refused to sign the Rome Treaty, citing the threat the Court posed to American service members and officials. At the time, his chief negotiator Ambassador David Scheffer told Congress: 'The [Rome] treaty purports to establish an arrangement whereby United States armed forces operating overseas could conceivably be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court even if the United States has not agreed to be bound by the treaty. Not only is this contrary to the most fundamental principles of treaty law, it could inhibit the ability of the United States to use its military to meet alliance obligations and participate in multinational operations...'

"Nothing - I repeat, nothing - has changed since then to justify U.S. signature. To the contrary, for two years, the Administration has tried in vain to secure additional protections for American citizens, but was rebuffed at every turn by our so-called allies. The Court still claims today, as it did two years ago, the jurisdiction to indict, try and imprison American citizens, whether or not the U.S. agrees to be bound by the treaty. By signing, the President has effectively given his approval to this unprecedented assault on American sovereignty.

"Today's action is a blatant attempt by a lame-duck President to tie the hands of his successor. Well I have a message for the outgoing President: This decision will not stand.

I will make reversing this decision, and protecting America's fighting men and women from the jurisdiction of this international kangaroo court, one of my highest priorities in the new Congress.

"Earlier this year, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John Warner and I introduced the American Service Members' Protection Act, along with most of the Republican leadership and relevant committee chairmen in both houses of Congress. Our effort was publicly endorsed last month by a bipartisan group of former senior U.S. officials, including, among others, Bush Defense Secretary-designate Don Rumsfeld.

"Come January 20th, as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I will work with Senator Warner, Secretary Rumsfeld and others in the incoming Bush Administration to deal decisively with the threat posed by this court, and to ensure once and for all that no American is ever tried by this global star chamber."