

Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 6946 of October 24, 1996

The President

United Nations Day, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year we dedicate a day to celebrate the United Nations because it represents America's commitment to an institution dedicated to the promotion of peace and freedom.

The United Nations was born at the end of World War II, as the international community sent representatives to San Francisco to sign the official charter. The world's sovereign countries came in search of peace, freedom, tolerance, and cooperation after a period when many worried that the world had lost these ideals forever. These ideals became—and still remain—the bedrock principles of the United Nations Charter. And although the United Nations has not yet realized all its founders' aspirations, these ideals now touch more people in more nations than ever before.

International cooperation—as exemplified by the work of the United Nations—offers the opportunity for nations to work together in addressing worldwide problems like ethnic, tribal, or interreligious disputes; famine, drought, or epidemics; natural disasters, war, or refugee crises. On United Nations Day, we recognize this unique institution's role in helping individual nations come together as a community to make life better for all people.

To be sure, as we celebrate its 51st anniversary, the U.N.'s challenges are very different from those the world faced at the close of World War II. But the challenges are real and substantial. There are, for example, still too many places in the world where failed ideologies increase the suffering of people rather than making their lives easier; where human rights and human dignity are not officially recognized; where nuclear weapons remain a threat to the world's security; where honest and impartial observers are needed to ensure free democratic elections; and where international expertise is needed to replace ecological damage with sustainable development.

Americans are justifiably proud of the role our country played in creating the United Nations as part of a network of global institutions intended to reduce the chances of war and economic depression. We continue to recognize that, in a world of increasing interdependence, the United States' engagement and leadership in the United Nations is as important now as it has ever been. We will also persist in our efforts to achieve the reforms necessary to ensure that the organization is prepared to meet the demands of a new era and that we as a Nation honor our commitments to our fellow members.

On this special day, as we honor and celebrate the work of the United Nations, let us renew our commitment and determination to work with our fellow members to maintain international peace and security, to strive for a higher quality of life, and to champion human rights for all peoples.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 24, 1996, as United Nations Day. I encourage all Americans to acquaint themselves with the activities and accomplishments of the United Nations and to observe

this day with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities furthering the goal of international cooperation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

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