

Presidential Documents

Proclamation 6987 of April 11, 1997

Pan American Day and Pan American Week, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year, we pause to reflect on how the 34 free countries of the Western Hemisphere are inextricably linked to a shared vision through the common thread of democracy, free trade, and mutual respect. This vision can be achieved by continuing our efforts to create a hemispheric free trade area and by working together to uphold democracy, defend human rights, and defeat the scourge of narcotics trafficking.

The citizens of the Americas have made remarkable progress toward the advancement of democratic values and institutions, as well as the creation of integrated markets within which goods may be exchanged freely in a common market of ideas and innovation. Today, every country in our hemisphere—with one exception—has made the promise of democracy a reality. These countries have recognized that representative democracy is essential for guaranteeing the basic human rights of their citizens. Through common effort, we can make this gift of freedom a reality for all.

The United States applauds the people of Paraguay for their great accomplishment in resolving last year's constitutional crisis, and we welcome the central role of the Organization of American States in defending democracy in Paraguay. We commend the people and government of Guatemala for their success in forging a comprehensive peace accord, and we encourage the spirit of reconciliation that has firmly taken root throughout Central America. Americans continue to maintain a special consideration for the people of Haiti as they strive to consolidate their new democracy and set the stage for economic growth. Today, all of us must work together to encourage the one country—Cuba—that has not embraced our common purpose to join the community of democracies.

As the united standard bearers of democracy in the Western Hemisphere, we now approach a new century of unprecedented possibilities. Our vision is bold, and our expectations are high. Our cooperative spirit was nurtured through the Summit of the Americas, where we committed ourselves to free trade, representative democracy, relief from poverty, and respect for the environment. We are now collaborating closely with others in the hemisphere to prepare the agenda for the next Summit of the Americas, to be held in Santiago in March 1998. Never before has there been such a window of opportunity to promote a higher standard of living through improved access to quality education and adequate health care. Working together, we can prove that democracy provides the means for improving the daily lives of all the citizens of the Americas.

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 Monday, April 14, 1997, as Pan American Day and April 13 through April 19, 1997, as Pan American Week. I urge the Governors of the 50 States, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the officials of other areas under the flag of the United States of America to honor these observances with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

William Clinton

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