

Proclamation 7088—National Day of Prayer, 1998

April 29, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In every era of American history, devout men and women from every nation have come to our shores seeking the freedom to worship according to their own conscience. Recognizing the sacredness of this fundamental human right, our founders wisely guaranteed it in the First Amendment to the Constitution.

Prayer has always been an integral part of American life. In every city, town, and rural community across our country, people of every religious denomination gather to worship according to their faith. In churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques, Americans come together to pray. We pray for the health and happiness of loved ones; for inner peace and peace among nations; and for the wisdom and courage to face the challenges of the new millennium. And always we raise our voices and hearts in prayers of thanksgiving for the blessing of freedom.

Just as Americans rely on prayer for strength and renewal in private life, so do we turn to it at moments of great joy or crisis in our public life as a Nation. Meeting in Philadelphia to make the momentous decisions that would ultimately determine the nature and form of American Government, the Continental Congress began daily deliberations with a prayer for God's blessings and assistance. In his first inaugural address, President George Washington also prayed for guidance from the Almighty as he began the enormous task of leading a new, untried democracy.

In this century, with America in the throes of the Great Depression and a world teetering on the brink of war, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt concluded his first inaugural address with a fervent prayer: "In this dedication of a Nation we humbly ask the blessing of God. May He protect each and every one of us. May He guide me in the days to come." And today, as we look ahead to the promise of a new century, Americans

continue to draw strength from the bedrock of faith and religious freedom upon which our democracy rests.

The Congress, by Public Law 100-307, has called on our citizens to reaffirm the role of prayer in our society and to honor the religious diversity our freedom permits by recognizing annually a "National Day of Prayer."

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 7, 1998, as a National Day of Prayer. I encourage the citizens of this great Nation to pray, each in his or her own manner, seeking strength from God to face the problems of today, requesting guidance for the uncertainties of tomorrow, and giving thanks for the rich blessings that our country has enjoyed throughout our history.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 1, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 4.

Message to the Congress on the Chemical Weapons Convention

April 29, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997, I hereby certify in connection with Condition (7)(C)(i), Effectiveness of Australia Group, that:

Australia Group members continue to maintain an equally effective or more comprehensive control over the export of toxic chemicals and their precursors, dual-use processing equipment, human, animal and plant pathogens and toxins

with potential biological weapons application, and dual-use biological equipment, as that afforded by the Australia Group as of April 25, 1997; and

The Australia Group remains a viable mechanism for limiting the spread of chemical and biological weapons-related materials and technology, and the effectiveness of the Australia Group has not been undermined by changes in membership, lack of compliance with common export controls and nonproliferation measures, or the weakening of common controls and nonproliferation measures, in force as of April 25, 1997.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
April 29, 1998.

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 30.

The President's News Conference

April 30, 1998

The President. Good afternoon. Please sit down. Before I take your questions I'd like to make a few comments on a couple of matters that I believe are essential to the strength of America in the 21st century.

Five years ago we started a new economic course for a new economy, a combined strategy of fiscal discipline, expanded trade, increased investment in education, science, technology, and our people. Today we received more good news that that strategy is working. The latest economic report shows that in the first quarter of 1998, our economy grew at 4.2 percent. Wages are rising while inflation remains low. This expansion is not fueled by big Government deficits but by booming business investment.

In the first quarter, unemployment was the lowest in 28 years, inflation the lowest in 30 years, consumer confidence at its highest level in 30 years. For 5 years in a row now, our economy has been rated the most competitive in the world.

We are living in an American economic renaissance in which opportunity is abundant, communities are getting stronger, families are more secure and more prosperous.

But we cannot allow the hum of our growing prosperity to lull us into complacency.

As estimates of the possible budget surplus expand, so, too, the suggestions that we immediately commit to spending that surplus on tax cuts or new spending. But Americans have worked too hard for too long to put our economic house in order. So I will strongly resist the use of a single penny of the surplus until we have first saved Social Security for the new century.

Nor can we turn our backs on America's responsibility to lead in the world. We see that, by the way, in the commitment today of the Vice President and Mrs. Gore as they represent our Nation on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the birth of the State of Israel.

Today, the health of our economy is also deeply affected by what goes on in global affairs and by the health of the global economy. Therefore, I call on Congress to step up to its responsibility and renew our commitment to the International Monetary Fund and to pay our United Nations dues. I am confident we can do this in a bipartisan fashion.

The debate over NATO enlargement has been a model of bipartisan action. I want to thank Senators Lott and Daschle, Senators Helms and Biden for their leadership on this issue. I hope for a strongly positive vote in the Senate later today, because by admitting Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic we come even closer than ever to realizing a dream of a generation, a Europe that is united, democratic, and secure for the first time since the rise of nation-states on the European continent.

At the threshold of the 21st century we are on the rise at home and abroad. But we have to continue this progress. We have to continue to work if we want economic advances and strong national security. We have to continue to work if we hope to overcome our divisions at home and work together as one nation.

We can be everything that all of you want us to be and all Americans want us to be. But I want to emphasize, the fact that we are doing well today should not be a source of complacency. It should not be a pretext