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Proclamation 7182—National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, 1999

April 9, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

"We are honored to have had the opportunity to serve our country . . . ." With these simple words, Navy Commander Jeremiah Denton, released in 1973 from North Vietnam with his companions after the longest wartime captivity of any group of Americans in our history, summed up the courage, selflessness, and indomitable spirit of generations of American prisoners of war.

For more than two centuries, Americans have risked and lost their own freedom to defend democracy, preserve America's liberty and values, and protect our national interests around the world. In Andersonville or along the Yalu River, confined in Nazi stalags or enduring torture in the Hanoi Hilton, our prisoners of war have set an extraordinary example of valor, patriotism, and devotion to duty in the face of enormous hardship and adversity. The somber black and white POW/MIA flag serves as a reminder of their sacrifice and symbolizes our Nation's deep concern for and steadfast commitment to these brave Americans and their families.

But, however dark and trying the ordeal for our prisoners of war, their sacrifices did indeed serve a grand purpose. Inspired by their bravery in captivity, our Nation has been resolute in its defense of liberty. And, because of their sacrifice, the United States today is strong, free, and prosperous, looking forward to a future of limitless possibility.

Today we pay special tribute to our Nation's former prisoners of war and their families and express our heartfelt gratitude for their many sacrifices. They have embodied the ideals of a strong people and a free Nation. They have represented America at its best, and they have served a grateful Nation with honor, dignity, and distinction. As we honor them, let us also keep foremost in our thoughts and prayers Staff Sergeant Andrew Ramirez, Staff Sergeant Christopher Stone, and Specialist Steven Gonzalez of the United States Army as they endure unjust captivity in Yugoslavia and as we work for their safety and swift release.

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 April 9, 1999, as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I call upon all Americans to join me in remembering former American prisoners of war who suffered the hardships of enemy captivity. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:46 a.m., April 12, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 13.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on a Condition of the Convention on Nuclear Safety

April 9, 1999

Dear _____:

In accordance with Condition (1) of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, adopted by the United States Senate on March 25, 1999, I hereby certify that the United States Government will not engage in any multilateral activity in the field of international nuclear regulation or nuclear safety that unnecessarily duplicates a multilateral activity undertaken pursuant to the Convention.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations;