

Week Ending Friday, July 25, 2003

Statement on the Inauguration of the Transitional Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
July 18, 2003

I congratulate President Joseph Kabila and the Congolese people on the installation of the new transitional Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also extend congratulations to Vice Presidents Jean-Pierre Bemba, Abdoulaye Yerodia, Azarias Ruberwa, and Z'Ahidi Ngoma. The arrival of former rebel leaders in Kinshasa and their participation with former opposition parties in the new Government is a major achievement that sets the country on a course toward peace and democratic elections. I am confident that the Congolese people will be well served by the experience and vision these five leaders bring to these important posts.

The United States will work closely with President Kabila and the transitional Government to promote peace, prosperity, and democracy for all Congolese. I call upon neighboring countries to join us in supporting Congo's new Government during this crucial time.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7691—Captive Nations Week, 2003
July 18, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During Captive Nations Week, first declared in 1959 as a statement against the continuing Communist domination of Eastern Europe, America expresses its dedication to freedom and democracy. While many countries around the world uphold these prin-

ciples, millions of people still live under regimes that violate their citizens' rights daily. In countries such as Burma and Iran, citizens lack the right to choose their government, speak out against oppression, and practice their religion freely. The despot who rules Cuba imprisons political opponents and crushes peaceful opposition, while in North Korea hundreds of thousands languish in prison camps and citizens suffer from malnutrition as the regime pursues weapons of mass destruction. Violence, corruption, and mismanagement reign in Zimbabwe and an authoritarian government in Belarus smothers political dissent.

Yet the cause of freedom is advancing. With the demise of the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi people are no longer captives in their own country. Their freedom is evidence of the fall of one of the most oppressive dictators in history. Today, American and coalition forces are helping to restore civil order and provide critical humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people. Iraqis are now meeting openly and freely to discuss the future of their country. The United States vows to continue to work with those trying to bring about peaceful democratic change and greater respect for human rights.

The Congress, by Joint Resolution approved July 17, 1959, (73 Stat. 212), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week in July of each year as "Captive Nations Week."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim July 20 through July 26, 2003, as Captive Nations Week. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities and to reaffirm their commitment to all those seeking liberty, justice, and self-determination.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of July, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and