

a positive role, I'm grateful to have had the chance to do so.

President's Easter Plans

Q. Happy Easter. Are you going to Camp David?

The President. I am. We're going up probably in the early evening, and I hope all of you have a great holiday. Bless you.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. What are you going to do about the Middle East? [Laughter]

The President. Well, we got Bosnia and Haiti, and now, I hope, Ireland. And I'll just keep working on it. The Irish thing ought to give you hope for the Middle East because the lesson is: just don't ever stop. And in the end, if the will for peace is stronger than the impulse to avoid it and the impulse to avoid the tough decisions and the sacrifices that are made—that have to be made—then the will for peace can prevail. That's the lesson here.

So I would hope that those who care desperately about the Middle East and want the peace process there to prevail will take great heart here, because believe you me, I know a lot about this. There were a lot of tough decisions which had to be made, nobody could get everything they wanted, and risks had to be taken. And they were taken. And they now will be taken. And it seems to me that the friends of peace in the Middle East should take great heart from this, and perhaps we'll even find some examples that could be followed.

Thank you.

Reaction to Agreement

Q. Mrs. Clinton said that peace in Ireland is an article of faith. Is there going to be any kind of Clinton celebration here his evening?

The President. I'm celebrating right now, but we need to let the Irish people have their say. That's going to be in a few weeks.

Q. Going to let these guys go to sleep?

The President. Right now I want these guys to go to sleep. I hope nothing serious happens to our country in the next 8 hours, because I've got a bunch of pickle brains in the NSC. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Bertie Ahern and former Prime Minister John Bruton of Ireland; Prime Minister Tony Blair and former Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom; George J. Mitchell, Special Assistant to the President for Northern Ireland; and Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams.

Message on the 30th Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act

April 10, 1998

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating the 30th anniversary of the enactment of Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968—the Federal Fair Housing Act.

Within a week of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Congress passed and President Johnson signed into law this landmark legislation, which has helped countless Americans achieve the American Dream. The theme of this anniversary celebration, "Many Neighborhoods—One America," reflects the reality that people of diverse cultures and backgrounds can live together in harmony and reaffirm the American ideals of equality, opportunity, and freedom.

By limiting housing choice, discrimination reduces the quality of life for many Americans. During the past three decades, we have made great strides in opening housing markets. But housing discrimination, although less apparent than in years past, still exists, and the need to enforce fair housing laws vigorously remains as urgent today as ever.

My Administration is committed to building strong partnerships between the Department of Housing and Urban Development and local communities. I have proposed the largest single increase in HUD's civil rights enforcement programs in two decades. My proposal includes a significant increase in funding for HUD's Fair Housing Initiatives and Fair Housing Assistance Programs that, among other things, will combat racially motivated hate crimes related to housing. We are also seeking congressional approval to raise the Federal Housing Administration loan limit so that more Americans, including minorities and women, can become homeowners.

Working together, we can create a more just society that underscores our shared strengths instead of focusing on our differences. The Fair Housing Act continues to be an indispensable tool in these efforts, and as we celebrate its 30th anniversary, I call on all Americans to join me in making division and discrimination issues of the past, and to make America a stronger, better place to live for all of our people.

Best wishes for a memorable anniversary celebration.

Bill Clinton

Proclamation 7081—Pan American Day and Pan American Week, 1998

April 10, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Today, the nations of the Americas stand at the forefront of a promising new era of exciting growth and global cooperation. Americans north and south of the equator are communicating, interacting, and trading with one another more than ever before. All the nations in our hemisphere but one enjoy freely elected governments that promote human rights, free enterprise, and sustainable economic development through free trade. These vibrant democracies continue to seek opportunities to work together for the security, prosperity, and general welfare of all our citizens.

In keeping with this spirit of cooperation, the leaders of the 34 American democracies will meet in Santiago, Chile, on April 18 and 19 for the second Summit of the Americas. The United States hosted the first such summit in Miami in December 1994, and we look forward to strengthening our involvement in what is becoming a mature partnership that is fostering increased prosperity and security for our country. We hope to reach agreements in Santiago that will enhance hemispheric collaboration in more than 20 areas—including education, economic integration, democracy, justice, counternarcotics, security, poverty, and human rights.

This month also marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Organization of American States (OAS), a cornerstone of cooperation in our hemisphere. The most recent successes of the OAS include agreements against corruption and illegal firearms trafficking and ratification of the Washington Protocol, which provides for the suspension from the OAS of any country whose democracy has been overthrown by force. We applaud the crucial role the OAS plays in promoting and preserving democracy and human rights in the Americas. We look forward to its continued success in multilateral efforts to deepen the roots of democracy in this hemisphere and create new possibilities for progress in the next millennium.

The peoples of the Americas stand united in a commitment to democratic values and to increased regional cooperation and understanding. The partnership among our countries is laying the foundations for lasting freedom, prosperity, and peace in our hemisphere and bringing to reality our shared vision of a brighter future.

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 Tuesday, April 14, 1998, as Pan American Day and April 12 through April 18, 1998, 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 tenth 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., April 14, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 15.