

Proclamation 7577—Captive Nations Week, 2002

July 17, 2002

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

The United States is proud to stand on the side of brave people everywhere who seek the same freedoms upon which our Nation was founded. Each year, during Captive Nations Week, we reaffirm our determination to work for freedom around the globe. Created against the backdrop of the Cold War, the importance and power of Captive Nations Week continues to resonate in today's world.

In too many corners of the earth, freedom and independence are the victims of dictators driven by hatred, fear, designs of ethnic superiority, religious intolerance, and xenophobia. These despots deny their citizens the liberty and justice that is the birthright of all people. Some governments, such as those in North Korea, Iraq, and Iran, starve their people, take away their voices, traffic in terror, and threaten the world with weapons of mass destruction. In many other places, from Burma to Belarus, Cuba and Zimbabwe, people are denied the most basic rights to speak in freedom, and their daily lives are haunted by the fear of the secret police.

This week, America reaffirms our solidarity with and support for people living under conditions of servitude. They are the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. History teaches us that when people are given a choice between freedom and tyranny, freedom will win. Recently, the world saw this in Afghanistan, where people took to the streets to celebrate the fall of their Taliban oppressors. Those in other lands seeking to unshackle themselves from dictatorship will also have America's support.

Twenty years ago, President Ronald Reagan said before the British Parliament at Westminster that "our mission today (is) to preserve freedom as well as peace. It may not be easy to see; but I believe we live now at a turning point." These words were a prelude to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Today, as the events of September 11 made

clear, we are at another turning point, where the world faces the prospect of dictators supplying the world's most dangerous weapons to their terrorist allies. These terrorists aspire to impose their brutal will on freedom loving people everywhere.

One of our greatest strengths in this struggle against a world of fear, chaos, and captivity is our commitment to standing alongside people everywhere determined to build a world of freedom, dignity, and tolerance. This week America affirms its commitment to helping those in captive nations achieve democracy.

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, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim July 21 through 27, 2002, 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 devotion to the aspirations of all peoples for liberty, justice, and self-determination.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of July, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

George W. Bush

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on July 19.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring President Kwasniewski

July 17, 2002

Thank you all. Mr. President and Madam First Lady, it's a great privilege for Laura and I to host you here in the White House. Tonight's dinner is a small way of saying

dziękuję for the warm hospitality you showed us last year in Warsaw.

Today, Poland and the United States are meeting the challenges of our times, sustained by bonds of kinship, culture, and commerce that unite our peoples. Two centuries ago, Poles fought for America's independence. Before and since, thousands of American communities have been enriched by the energies of millions of Poles who came here to settle.

Mr. President, tomorrow we'll travel to Michigan to visit one of those communities. But pride requires me to point out that the oldest permanent Polish settlement in America can be found in my home State. In the fall of 1854, more than 100 Polish families traveled to the prairies of south Texas, seeking greater freedom and opportunity. They arrived at their destination on Christmas Eve, and they christened their new settlement Panna Maria, or Virgin Mary. The town is still there, a living symbol of our common ties.

Just as Poles keep contributing to America's vitality, Poland keeps contributing to the vitality of the entire world. Poland's opposition to Soviet tyranny inspired half a continent and helped bring down an evil empire. And the passion for human dignity and iron integrity of a Polish Pope has added to the momentum of freedom around the globe. Freedom did not have to be imported into Poland. It is found naturally in the rhythm of every Polish heart, a commitment of conscience and faith stronger than the brutality of conquerors or the official lies of oppressors.

In 1989, Poles on all sides of the ideological divide made an historic decision to build a society based on democracy and human rights and the rule of law. Two years later, more than 100 political parties participated in Poland's parliamentary elections, including one party called the Beer Lovers' Party. We're watching to see how much beer you drink tonight, Mr. President. *[Laughter]* All but a handful of these parties were committed to a Poland founded on freedom.

In the decades since, Poland has continued to be an example for other nations seeking to claim their democratic future. And Poland has found what America has found, that de-

mocracy and free markets are honorable and just and indispensable to national progress.

America and Poland are joined by a commitment to helping each other along freedom's road. Thomas Jefferson once wrote to Kosciuszko and praised him for being true to a single object, the freedom and happiness of man. Today, this single object defines Poland, itself, and it defines the partnership between Poland and America. Together, we can and we will complete the unification of Europe. We will reach out to Russia and Ukraine, and we will win the war against terror.

Poland and America share a vision that is stronger than intolerance and hatred and bigotry. It is a vision of a world that is free and just, a world that respects people's dignity and rewards their enterprise and creativity.

Mr. President, let us toast to friendship between our countries. Tonight the old Polish saying has new meaning in a new century: For your freedom and ours.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:37 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jolanta Kwasniewska, wife of President Kwasniewski. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Kwasniewski.

Remarks to the Polish American Community in Rochester, Michigan

July 18, 2002

The President. Thank you very much.

So I was telling the President of Poland, I said, "There's a lot of smart people in Washington, but not all the brains are in Washington. Why don't we get on the airplane and come out and see some other smart Americans?" It's an honor to be here. I want to thank you for coming. I appreciate the warm hospitality that you've shown me and my friend.

We had a heck of a dinner last night. It was a black-tie dinner, and I had the honor of sitting next to the First Lady of Poland. And it dawned on me after the dinner that he and I share a lot, starting with the fact that we both married really well. *[Laughter]* The First Lady of Poland sends her best, and