

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Protocol of Amendment to the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures

April 30, 2003

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith for Senate advice and consent to accession, the Protocol of Amendment to the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures done at Brussels on June 26, 1999. The Protocol amends the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures done at Kyoto on May 18, 1973, and replaces the Annexes to the 1973 Convention with a General Annex and 10 Specific Annexes (together, the “Amended Convention”). I am also transmitting, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State on the Amended Convention.

The Amended Convention seeks to meet the needs of international trade and customs services through the simplification and harmonization of customs procedures. It responds to modernization in business and administrative methods and techniques and to the growth of international trade, without compromising standards of customs control. Accession by the United States would further the U.S. interest in reducing non-tariff barriers to international trade.

By acceding to the Protocol, a state consents to be bound by the amended 1973 Convention and the new General Annex. At the same time, or anytime thereafter, Parties have the option of accepting any of the Specific Annexes (or Chapters thereof), and may at that time enter reservations with respect to any Recommended Practices contained in the Specific Annexes. In accordance with these terms, I propose that the United States accept seven of the Specific Annexes in their entirety and all the Chapters, but one of each of two other Specific Annexes (A–E, G, and H, as well as Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of F, and Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5 of J), and enter the reservations proposed by the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection as set forth in the enclosure to the report of the Department of State. The provisions for which res-

ervation is recommended conflict with current U.S. legislation or regulations. With these proposed reservations, no new implementing legislation is necessary in order to comply with the Amended Convention.

Accession to the Protocol by the United States would contribute to important U.S. interests. First, accession by the United States would benefit the United States and U.S. businesses by facilitating greater economic growth, increasing foreign investment, and stimulating U.S. exports through more predictable, standard, and harmonized customs procedures governing cross-border trade transactions. Setting forth standardized and simplified methods for conducting customs business is important for U.S. trade interests in light of the demands of increased trade flows, as is the use of modernized technology and techniques for customs facilitation. These achievements can best be pursued by the United States as a Party to the Amended Convention. Second, through early accession, the United States can continue to take a leadership role in the areas of customs and international trade facilitation as the U.S. accession would encourage other nations, particularly developing nations, to accede as well.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Protocol and give its advice and consent to accession.

George W. Bush

The White House,
April 30, 2003.

Proclamation 7668—Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, 2003

April 30, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America is strengthened by the rich cultural diversity of our people, and we are blessed to be a Nation that welcomes individuals of all races, religions, and cultural backgrounds. The values and traditions of the Asian/Pacific-American community—love of family, entrepreneurship, excellence in education, and community service—have

strengthened us as a Nation. During Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, we celebrate the contributions of these talented and hard-working citizens and recognize their rich legacy of ingenuity, perseverance, and achievement.

Many Asian/Pacific immigrants came to America to discover the promise of our Nation and to realize their dreams. Their contributions were critical in establishing a robust economy. Asian/Pacific Americans also worked tirelessly to build our national railroad infrastructure, paving the way for our western expansion and growth as a world leader. Generations of Asian/Pacific Americans have proudly served our Nation with honor and courage in wars and conflicts, including most recently in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Today, as in the past, their dedication and service to advancing peace in a troubled world upholds the values that make our country strong.

Asian/Pacific Americans are also helping to shape America's future. As entrepreneurs, artists, educators, public servants, scientists, and explorers, they challenge the minds of our next generation, expand commerce and innovation, probe the frontiers of space, and search for cures for the world's diseases. Our children are also inspired by the contributions and sacrifices of dedicated individuals such as inventor An Wang, experimental physicist Chien-Shiung Wu, *Challenger* astronaut Ellison Onizuka, *Columbia* astronaut Kalpana Chawla, and sculptor Isamu Noguchi.

Since the earliest days of America, people from all cultures have traveled to our Nation seeking the promise of freedom, opportunity, and justice. As an integral part of our society, Americans of Asian and Pacific heritage share in the pursuit of this American Dream. I join with all Americans in celebrating this rich and diverse culture, and I encourage every citizen to recognize the role of Asian/Pacific Americans in building and sustaining our Nation.

To honor the achievements of Asian/Pacific Americans, the Congress by Public Law 102-450 as amended, has designated the month of May each year as "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 2003 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. I call upon our citizens to learn more about the history of Asian/Pacific Americans and how they have contributed to the culture and heritage of our Nation.

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

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 2, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 1, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on May 5.

Proclamation 7669—Older Americans Month, 2003

April 30, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Advances in medicine, public health, science, and technology are keeping Americans healthier and adding years to our lives. As our population of senior citizens continues to grow, our Nation remains dedicated to fulfilling our promises to these valuable members of our society. This year's observance of Older Americans Month, "What We Do Makes A Difference," recognizes the important contributions of older Americans and the network of services that support them. Older Americans continue to work in a variety of jobs, from teachers, to engineers, to business owners and entrepreneurs, and in so doing bring invaluable experience and leadership skills. Additionally, their wisdom, strength, and compassion reflect the character of our great Nation. During this month, we honor our seniors and thank them for the lessons they teach us and the strong values they instill in families and communities throughout our country.