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35th Anniversary of NATO

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Thirty-five years ago, on April 4, 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington. Established in the dark aftermath of the most destructive war the world had ever seen, the NATO Alliance represents a living commitment of the nations of the West to the defense of democracy and individual liberty. By uniting Europe and North America in this way, it has deterred war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact for three and a half decades and made possible the longest period of peace and prosperity in modern history.

This success has not been won without effort. Throughout its history, the NATO Alliance has been challenged by the military power and political ambitions of the Soviet Union. Yet, in every decade, the nations of the Alliance have consistently pulled together to maintain peace through their collective strength and determination. On the basis of that strength and unity, the nations of the Alliance also have taken the initiative to seek a more constructive relationship with the Soviet Union.

Over the years, NATO has grown from its original twelve members to include Greece, Turkey, the Federal Republic of Germany, and, most recently, Spain. It has demonstrated a capacity to adapt to evolving political and security challenges and to meet the changing needs of its members. The Alliance's commitment to collective security has been sustained through full democratic respect for the sovereign independence of each member.

I am proud to rededicate the United States to the ideals and responsibilities of our Alliance. In May, the United States will host in Washington the spring meeting of NATO foreign ministers. This will be a special opportunity to celebrate the thirty-fifth anniversary of our common enterprise and to consider the future challenges facing the transatlantic partnership. I call upon the Congress and people of the United States to join me in expressing our support for a bond which has served us so well over the years and which will continue to be essential to our welfare in the future.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby direct the attention of the Nation to this thirty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, and I call upon the Governors of the States and upon the officers of local governments to facilitate the suitable observance of this notable event throughout this anniversary year with particular attention to April, the month which marks the historic signing ceremony, and May, the month which marks the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 6th day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

Ronald Reagan