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Bicentennial Year of the Birth of Simon Bolivar

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

July 24, 1983, marks the bicentennial of the birth of Simon Bolivar, the great Liberator who laid the foundation for the Inter-American System. The Government and people of the United States take pride in joining with the other countries of the Americas in celebrating this historic event. A great soldier and patriot, Simon Bolivar serves as an inspiration to all the peoples of the western hemisphere. Through turbulent and frustrating times, he had the vision to see that the unity of the Americas could be achieved.

Bolivar's military prowess made independence possible for Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Panama in a struggle similar to that which had brought the United States its liberty forty years earlier. Although shaken by personal tragedy and disappointed by two unsuccessful attempts to establish an independent republic in his homeland, Bolivar persevered. His burning desire for freedom could not be extinguished, and his subsequent brilliant military victories inspired an entire continent. Likewise, his vision of a united Americas continues to inspire new generations of citizens in every country of this hemisphere.

Bolivar's letter from Jamaica on September 6, 1815, poignantly expressed his dream of a union "with a single bond that unites its parts among themselves and to the whole." With this aim in mind, he convoked the Congress of Panama in 1826, which signalled a decisive step toward the system of cooperation we enjoy today. The Treaty drawn up by that Congress was ratified by only one country, but the idea of forming a coalition of American Republics took root, slowly developed, and finally evolved into a unique and beneficial system of international cooperation.

From the seeds planted by Simon Bolivar, the Organization of American States was born. Bolivar's ideals of Pan Americanism, based on independence, solidarity, sovereignty, as well as the right of all nations to live in peace, find clear expression in the Charter of the Organization of American States.

The debt owed by all Americans to Simon Bolivar is incalculable. Thus, it is fitting that we should pause and reflect upon his great achievements in this bicentennial year of his birth. On this occasion, we in the United States join with our hemispheric friends to remember the great hero whose ideals bind us closer together. Bolivar, more than any other figure in the history of the western hemisphere, understood that, while we are citizens of separate countries, we are members of one family in the new world—we are Americans.

The Congress of the United States, by Senate Concurrent Resolution 14, has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the period from July 24, 1983 through July 23, 1984, as the bicentennial year of the birth of Simon Bolivar.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the year beginning July 24, 1983 through July 23, 1984 as the Bicentennial Year of the Birth of Simon Bolivar, hero of the independence of the Americas.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 19th day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

Ronald Reagan