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Prayer for Peace Memorial Day, May 27, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Memorial Day is the one day we set aside each year for a special observance of the sacrifices Americans have made throughout our history for the ideals of peace, freedom, and justice for all. It is fitting upon this occasion that we look forward with hope to the future and also back with remembrance to the commitment and bravery of previous generations of Americans.

This year, we observe the fortieth anniversary of the end of the most destructive war the world has ever known—a war the United States did not want but nevertheless fought with total commitment to protect the most cherished human ideals. Throughout that war, and in our foreign relations afterward, we have sought to achieve true and lasting peace for all the people of the world.

Today, our desire for peace is equally great. In our observances this Memorial Day, we honor the brave Americans who paid the highest price for their commitment to the ideals of peace, freedom, and justice. Our debt to them can be paid only by our own recommitment to preserving those same ideals. But our recommitment cannot be for ourselves alone. It must also be for our children, and for the generations yet to come. Peace, freedom, and justice are not things that were won for us two hundred years ago or forty years ago; they must be won again and again by each successive generation.

And so today, let us pray for peace; and let us remember those who gave so much for peace that the ideals of the West may survive.

In recognition of those Americans to whom we pay tribute today, the Congress, by joint resolution of May 11, 1950 (64 Stat. 158), has requested the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe each Memorial Day as a day of prayer for permanent peace and designating a period on that day when the people of the United States might unite in prayer.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate Memorial Day, Monday, May 27, 1985, as a day of prayer for permanent peace, and I designate the hour beginning in each locality at 11 o'clock in the morning of that day as a time to unite in prayer. I urge the press, radio, television, and all other information media to cooperate in this observance.

I also request the Governors of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the appropriate officials of all local units of government, to direct that the flag be flown at half-staff during this Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States and in all areas under its jurisdiction and control, and I request the people of the United States to display the flag at half-staff from their homes for the customary forenoon period.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

Ronald Reagan