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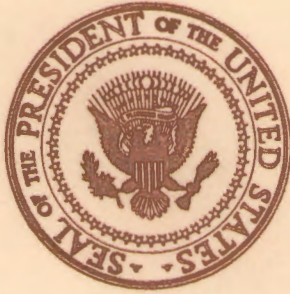
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Last Updated: 05/3/2023



Captive Nations Week, 1986

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America, built on a firm belief in the dignity and rights of all the members of the human race, continues to hold up that message to the world. Included in that message is unwavering opposition to all forms of oppression and despotism. Freedom is not divisible. To maintain it for ourselves, we must pursue it for others. As President Roosevelt declared in 1941, "we look forward to a world founded upon four essential freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world. The second is the freedom of every person to worship in his own way—everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want . . . everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear . . . anywhere in the world."

This vision of the future has been a beacon of hope and guidance both for those individuals who seek refuge here and for those nations whose aspirations for self-determination have been crushed by the Soviet empire. Deprived of basic human rights, their peoples are the victims of ruthless regimes run according to totalitarian ideologies. These are the nations held captive by forces hostile to freedom, independence, and national self-determination. These captive nations include those of Eastern Europe that have known foreign occupation and communist tyranny for decades; those struggling to throw off communist domination in Latin America; and the people of Afghanistan, Southeast Asia, and Africa struggling against foreign invasion, military occupation, and communist oppression.

Each year we renew our resolve to support the struggle for freedom throughout the world by observing Captive Nations Week. It is a week in which all Americans are asked to remember that the liberties and freedoms that they enjoy are denied to many peoples. With this observance, we hope to inspire those who struggle against military occupation, political oppression, communist expansion, and totalitarian brutality. We hope to inspire, but we also seek inspiration. Because the history of liberty is a history of resistance, we learn from those who live where the struggle is most urgent. Purified by resistance, they show us the path to a renewed commitment to preserve our own liberties and to give our support and encouragement to those who struggle for freedom.

To pursue that struggle, and to honor those who are with us in that battle, 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, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning July 20, 1986, as Captive Nations Week. I invite the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities to reaffirm their dedication to the international principles of justice, freedom, and national self-determination.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

Ronald Reagan