

Proclamation 6979 of March 25, 1997

Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 1997

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Today, the Greek people and the Hellenic Republic will celebrate the 176th anniversary of the beginning of their struggle for independence.

On this day, it is fitting that we reflect on the enormous contributions the Greek people have made to the modern world. The legacy of the ancient Greeks, in the fields of philosophy, literature, drama, sculpture, and architecture, continues to influence our beliefs, our values, and our concept of art. And, after more than 2,000 years, the ideology of Greece—as embodied in the concept of democracy—is still the ideal that guides us in charting our course for the future.

Greek ideology had a profound effect on our Founding Fathers, who molded the American form of government based upon the principles of Greek democracy. Thomas Jefferson studied the Greek classics in his youth and was inspired by their philosophy throughout his life, most dramatically when he crafted the Declaration of Independence. When formulating his vision for this country, Jefferson specifically referred to the integrated assertions, theories, and aims of the classic Greek world.

Our admiration for Greece continues into the modern day, and we salute its commitment to democracy, to peace, and to a united and stable Europe. We share a partnership with Greece in NATO, and our countries are linked forever by close family relationships between our peoples. Our Nation looks forward to working closely with Greece in the coming years as we examine ways to bring full peace, stability, and prosperity to all the nations of Europe and the world.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 25, 1997, as Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6980 of April 1, 1997**Cancer Control Month, 1997**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In observing Cancer Control Month, we reaffirm our national commitment to fighting this deadly disease. Since the signing of the National Cancer Act in 1971, we as a Nation have made significant strides in combating many forms of cancer. In November 1996, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) announced that the cancer death rate in the United States fell by nearly 3 percent between 1991 and 1995, the first sustained decline since national record-keeping began in the 1930s. The declines in lung, colorectal, and prostate cancer deaths in men, and breast and gynecologic cancer deaths in women, reflect the progress we have made in prevention, early detection, and treatment. However, we recognize how much work must still be done to control and eliminate this disease.

Perhaps one of the most promising achievements of cancer research this past year is in our increased understanding of cancer genetics. We have learned that cancer is a disease of altered genes and altered gene function. Researchers are making great progress in identifying genes whose dysfunction leads to cancer. Our research into the relationship between genetics and cancer also is helping us to better understand the basis for many other diseases and will strengthen our ability to intervene against them. If we are to continue this remarkable progress, we must keep scientific research as a fundamental priority.

Research has already taught us that smoking directly causes lung cancer and markedly increases a person's risk of developing cancers of the pancreas, esophagus, uterus, cervix, mouth, throat, and bladder. We know that many of the deaths from these cancers are preventable. Over the last several years, positive trends have emerged: Business, industry, and all levels of government have established smoke-free policies, and per-capita cigarette consumption has declined by 37 percent over the past two decades.

Reasons for deep concern remain, however. More than 3,000 teenagers become regular smokers each day in the United States. We must do all we can to help our children understand the consequences of smoking, and we must set a good example ourselves by not smoking. Last year, in an important step forward, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) proposed restrictions on the advertising, marketing, and sales of cigarettes to minors. In February of this year, I was proud to announce that the first part of those rules went into effect.

We are also learning more about the relationship between diet and cancer risk, and we are gaining insight into the role of dietary supplements in reducing certain types of cancer. We know that by improving our diet—reducing fat and increasing the amount of fiber—we reduce our risk of cancer. The NCI, in collaboration with the food industry, sponsors the national 5-A-Day Program, which encourages Americans to eat five servings of fruit and vegetables each day.

We are taking other important steps, as well. Federal agencies are working together to ensure that potentially active drugs move quickly from discov-