

us join hands to lighten our burdens and build bridges among people and communities so that we can be one America—a Nation of extraordinary possibility with opportunity, freedom, and respect for all.

**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 July 1996, as A National Month of Unity. I call upon religious leaders of all faiths to emphasize the need for healing and tolerance. I ask all Americans to join these efforts by working together to mend divisions and promote understanding; by reaching out to friends and neighbors of all races and faiths in a spirit of fellowship; and by seeking to strengthen, through words and actions, the ideals of equality and community cherished by generations of Americans. In this birth month of our Nation, let us set an example for the world we welcome to Atlanta for the Centennial Olympic Games by rededicating ourselves to America's fundamental truth: *E pluribus unum*—from many, one.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this first day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

**William J. Clinton**

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NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 2, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on July 5.

### **Remarks Announcing Emergency Action To Prevent Church Burnings July 2, 1996**

Good morning. I'd like to begin today by saluting the law enforcement officers who made the arrest in Arizona yesterday to avert a terrible terrorist attack. Their dedication and hard work over the last 6 months may have saved many lives, and they deserve our thanks.

I'd like to offer a special congratulations to the gentleman to my right, Ray Kelly, the Under Secretary of the Treasury for Enforcement, for his role in that endeavor.

Just as we acted to prevent a vicious crime from occurring there, today I'm announcing stepped up efforts to prevent the spread of violence against houses of worship. Again, I want to thank Mr. Kelly and Nancy Gist, the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, who is standing to my left, the representatives of the law enforcement organizations who are here and who have been supporting our efforts.

These attacks against African-American churches and other houses of worship are an affront to our most basic beliefs of religious liberty and racial tolerance. They pose a challenge to our entire Nation. I am gratified that law enforcement, government, business, and religious leaders are coming together to meet this challenge. Today, attorneys general from throughout our Nation are meeting at Howard University to discuss the problem.

I am also pleased that Congress acted quickly to pass legislation making it easier to prosecute and punish anyone who burns a house of worship, and I am eager to sign that legislation as soon as possible. I'm gratified by the outpouring of private support that will help to rebuild communities that are torn apart by these actions.

But we must do more to prevent these crimes. Last week, I asked Federal Emergency Management administrator James Lee Witt to take the lead in working with law enforcement to find ways to stop the burnings before they happen and to give our communities the tools they need to help in the prevention effort.

Today, I am taking emergency action to prevent church burnings by transferring \$6 million to communities in 12 targeted States. This emergency transfer would allow every county in the affected States to hire a new police officer for the summer to patrol the back roads, to visit the churches, to keep watch for signs of trouble.

These new officers, working with local police and community watch groups, can maintain a wall of protection to ward off people who would strike out in hate at a house of worship. Or communities can spend the

money for other purposes, installing floodlights, hiring private security guards, paying overtime for existing officers, whatever they believe will work best to forestall the fires.

I'm asking Congress to quickly approve the transfer through a special procedure that allows action without a time-consuming floor vote. We don't have any time to waste. With this step, the National Government will be helping local police not only to investigate arson and apprehend the guilty but to help to physically protect churches from harm in the first place.

If this emergency measure is not enough to beat back the church burnings, we will take further steps as needed. This is a struggle against racism and religious bigotry, and we will escalate that struggle as necessary with enough people power and willpower to make sure the struggle is won. This is a test not just for law enforcement but for all law-abiding Americans.

Earlier today, I signed a proclamation designating a national month of unity. During the month of July, I call on religious leaders of all faiths to speak from the pulpit and emphasize the need for healing. And I call on all citizens to join together, to reach out to one another, to strengthen the ideals that light our way and keep us strong.

On Thursday, we will celebrate America's Independence Day. This year, let us take this opportunity to rededicate ourselves once again to the proposition that all Americans are created equal and that every American should be able to worship in freedom and freedom from fear.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:39 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

### **Remarks to the Convention of the National Council of Senior Citizens in Chicago, Illinois**

*July 2, 1996*

**The President.** Thank you very much. Pretty rowdy group today. Thank you. I want to—what's the problem over here on the right? [Laughter] Steve said, you know, he said, "This room is 285 feet long. It's like a giant bowling alley." [Laughter] There's

kind of a wave that goes from right to left here.

Let me, first of all, thank Lois and Tom for their introductions. I want to thank your outgoing president, Gene Glover, for his years of outstanding service and wish your incoming president, Harry Gunther, well, and say that I hope this means that we have an even better chance of carrying Florida than we did before we started, Harry.

I thank all the distinguished labor leaders who are here, George Becker and Jay Mazur. And I see Doug Fraser there. You're looking great; I'm glad to see you, Doug. Thank you and God bless you, sir.

I want to say a special word of thanks to Steve Protulis. He has done a great job for you and a great job for me. Thank you, Steve. And I want to recognize one other person apart from the elected officials, and that is my great friend, Justin Dart, over there. Thank you for everything you have done, sir. I'm glad to see you.

When Tom was up there kind of being rough on the Congress I wanted to say, he didn't mean the Members of Congress who are here. [Laughter] He didn't mean Dick Durbin or Ed Pastor or Bobby Rush or Luis Gutierrez. We thank them for what they did in this Congress. They did a great job.

And, Mayor Daley, it's good to be in Chicago. And I'll be back before you know it. I thank you for having us all here.

I always love to come to Chicago, and I like to—we flew in a helicopter down to Meigs Field, and we got to fly over some of the suburbs—and I always reminisce when I do. But a lot of you know that Hillary was born in Chicago and grew up in Park Ridge. And I wish she were here today, but she is representing our country on a tour of nine Central and Eastern European nations. So I talked to her last night; she just finished a day in Romania. So I wish she were here, but she's over there talking about countries who love freedom. [Applause] Thank you.

I want to thank you for something else that I know you feel, and that is, it meant a lot to me when I took this recent trip to Europe to have the annual meeting of the seven largest industrial countries and then a meeting with those countries and Russia about political challenges facing the world to know that