

Proclamation 7244—United Nations Day, 1999

October 22, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As the 20th century draws to a close, Americans are taking time to reflect on the institutions that have shaped our past and that hold great hope for our future. One of the most important of these institutions is the United Nations. A dream of peace rising from the ashes of World War II, the U.N. has made great strides toward fulfilling the goals of its founders by saving lives, enhancing the security of law-abiding nations, and improving living conditions across the globe. This year, in marking the 54th anniversary of the founding of the U.N., we celebrate not only the organization's many accomplishments, but also its potential to bring the family of nations together to work toward a more peaceful, democratic, just, and prosperous world.

Since the U.N.'s founding more than half a century ago, humankind has learned a great deal—how to produce enough food for growing populations, how human activity affects the environment, how telecommunications can link the countries of the world into a single global community. But one of the most important lessons humanity has learned is one that Americans have always known: open societies are more just and open markets create more wealth.

Through the United Nations, America has access to a powerful forum where we can join with the other peoples of the world to raise awareness of these truths and to advance common interests and shared values. During the past decade, U.N. conferences have brought together nearly 50,000 people in Beijing to advance the rights and well-being of women; 47,000 in Rio de Janeiro to discuss ways to promote development while protecting the environment; and 30,000 people in Istanbul to seek solutions to urban problems.

In the last year alone, we have seen abundant evidence of the ways in which the United Nations benefits America and the

world. The United Nations is the primary multilateral forum to press for international human rights and lead governments to improve their relations with their neighbors and their own people. As we saw during the Kosovo conflict, and more recently with regard to East Timor, the perpetrators of ethnic cleansing and mass murder can find no refuge in the United Nations and no source of comfort in its charter. It is the institution the international community turns to in pursuit of solutions to armed conflict. It is the primary vehicle for broad international cooperation in addressing the needs of refugees and of the tens of millions of people around the world who remain mired in abject poverty. The United Nations and its affiliated agencies also provide a powerful voice for upholding and furthering the development of the rule of law and standards of international commerce—rules and standards that are crucial to global and economic stability and progress.

In acknowledging the far-reaching contributions of the United Nations to the international community, we must renew our commitment to work with our fellow U.N. members to advance international peace and prosperity and to champion human rights. In achieving these goals, the United Nations should make wise use of the international resources at its disposal; and the United States should meet its obligation to provide our share of these resources. By doing so, we can ensure that the United Nations will be an integral player in making the next millennium an era of unprecedented global peace, security, and prosperity.

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 October 24, 1999, as United Nations Day. I encourage all Americans to acquaint themselves with the activities and accomplishments of the United Nations and to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities furthering the goal of international cooperation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred

and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 28. This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 24.

Remarks on Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

October 25, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Callus, Ms. Kayden, for your remarkable statements. Thank you, Secretary Shalala, for your steadfast leadership on this issue. I would like to welcome a very large number of Members of the United States Congress who are here: Senator Baucus and Senator Wyden; Representatives Abercrombie, Brown, Waters, Obey, Vento, and Hoyer; and Congressman Berry. And I would like to acknowledge the important work of two that are not here, Representatives Waxman and Allen, who have been particularly interested in this issue.

Death of Senator John H. Chafee

Before I go into my remarks, I would like to make a statement about the passing last night of Senator John Chafee of Rhode Island. Rhode Island and America have lost a great leader and a fine human being who, in 23 years in the Senate and in his service as Secretary of the Navy, always put his concern for the American people above partisanship.

When you think of the term bipartisan, you immediately think of John Chafee. Known throughout his beloved Rhode Island simply as "the man you can trust," Senator Chafee was a consummate statesman and patriot. He served with valor in war and peace. I am particularly grateful for his commitment to health care, his concern for the environment, and his devotion to our children, especially his work for foster care and child care.

John Chafee proved that politics can be an honorable profession. For him, civility was not simply a matter of personal manners. He believed it was essential to the preservation of our democratic system and the progress of our Nation. He embodied the decent center which has carried America from triumph to triumph for over 200 years. How we will miss him.

Today our thoughts and prayers are with his wonderful wife, Ginny, their five children, and their twelve grandchildren. And again, I want to say a special personal word of appreciation on behalf of Hillary and myself for the many kindnesses John Chafee extended to us and the many opportunities we had to work together.

Prescription Drug Benefits

Now, last January, in the State of the Union Address, I was able to give the American people a great report on our economy and the improving condition of our society, which now has the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 30 years, and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years.

In the State of the Union Address, I said as we approached the new century, we could look back on 100 years of Americans meeting the great challenges of the century we're about to leave—the Depression, civil rights, two World Wars, the cold war. And now, because of the good fortune we presently enjoy, we have the opportunity and the obligations to meet the great challenges that we know lie before us in the 21st century: to build one America out of our amazing diversity; to make America debt-free for the first time since 1835; to use this moment of prosperity to bring genuine economic opportunity to the people and places that have been left behind; to deal with the challenge of global warming; to meet the new security challenges of the 21st century, including the challenges of high-tech terrorism and weapons of mass destruction; to give the largest and most diverse group of children in American history a world-class education; and to meet the challenge of the aging of America.