

Week Ending Friday, December 16, 2005

Proclamation 7968—Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week, 2005

December 9, 2005

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Americans believe that freedom is God's gift to every man and woman in the world. The Founders adopted our Constitution to secure the blessings of liberty for the people of the United States, and since 1789, generations of Americans have defended and advanced freedom in our Nation.

Throughout our history, the United States has also worked to extend the promise of liberty to other countries. We are continuing those efforts today. We are promoting democracies that respect freedom of speech, freedom of worship, and freedom of the press and that protect the rights of minorities and women. We are standing with dissidents and exiles against oppressive regimes and tyranny.

This year has seen great advances in the spread of democracy and human rights. In January, more than eight million Iraqi men and women braved threats of violence to vote for a provisional government. In October, Iraqis voted in even greater numbers to approve a draft constitution for their country, and on December 15, they will return to the polls to elect a Council of Representatives. Millions of Afghans voted in September in the first free legislative elections in Afghanistan in decades. Countries of the former Soviet bloc are emerging as thriving democracies. A free press is gaining ground in Kyrgyzstan, and civil institutions are being strengthened in Ukraine and Georgia. We have witnessed good progress this year, and America will continue this historic work to advance the cause of freedom.

We remain confident in this cause because we have seen the power of freedom to overcome the dark ideologies of tyranny and terror. Freedom enables men and women to live lives of dignity. And freedom gives the citizens of a nation confidence in a future of peace for their children and grandchildren. As we observe Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week, we renew our commitment to building a world where human rights are respected and protected by the rule of law and where all people can enjoy freedom and dignity.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, 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 December 10, 2005, as Human Rights Day; December 15, 2005, as Bill of Rights Day; and the week beginning December 10, 2005, as Human Rights Week. I call upon the people of the United States to mark these observances with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:18 a.m., December 12, 2005]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 13. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

December 10, 2005

Good morning. This week, Members of a House and Senate conference committee reached an agreement on reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act. Since its passage after the

attacks of September the 11th, 2001, the PATRIOT Act has proved essential to fighting the war on terror and preventing our enemies from striking America again.

This week's agreement would renew all 16 provisions of the PATRIOT Act that are scheduled to expire at the end of this month, and it would make 14 of these provisions permanent. It reauthorizes critical national security tools while bolstering the PATRIOT Act's significant protections of civil liberties. It also includes provisions to fight crime and terrorism at America's seaports and tougher criminal penalties and increased resources to combat the dangerous spread of methamphetamine abuse throughout our country.

I applaud the conference committee for its good work. Now Congress needs to finish the job. Both the Senate and the House need to hold a prompt vote and send me a bill renewing the PATRIOT Act so I can sign it into law.

Over the past 4 years, the PATRIOT Act has been a strong weapon for going after the terrorists. America's law enforcement and intelligence personnel have put the PATRIOT Act to wise and effective use while protecting our civil liberties. They have used the law to prosecute terrorist operatives and supporters or break up terror cells in New York, Oregon, Virginia, California, Texas, and Ohio. The PATRIOT Act has accomplished exactly what it was designed to do—it has protected American liberty and saved American lives.

By renewing the PATRIOT Act, we will ensure that our law enforcement and intelligence officers have the tools they need to protect our citizens. The PATRIOT Act tore down the legal and bureaucratic wall that kept law enforcement and intelligence authorities from sharing vital information about terrorist threats. Now law enforcement and intelligence officers are working together.

The PATRIOT Act also allowed Federal investigators to pursue terrorists with the same tools they already use against other criminals. For example, before the PATRIOT Act, it was easier to track the phone calls of a drug dealer than the phone calls of a terrorist. Before the PATRIOT Act, it was easier to get the credit card receipts of a tax cheat than those of an Al Qaida

bankroller. The PATRIOT Act ended these double standards. The theory is straightforward: If we have good tools to fight street crime and fraud, then law enforcement should have at least the same tools to fight terrorism.

The PATRIOT Act is helping America defeat our enemies while safeguarding civil liberties for all our people. The judicial branch has a strong oversight role in the application of the PATRIOT Act. Under the act, law enforcement officers need a Federal judge's permission to wiretap a foreign terrorist's phone or search his property. Congress also oversees our use of the PATRIOT Act. Attorney General Gonzales delivers regular reports on the PATRIOT Act to the House and the Senate.

The valuable protections of the PATRIOT Act will expire at the end of this month if Congress fails to act, but the terrorist threats will not expire on that schedule. In the war on terror, we cannot afford to be without this vital law for a single moment. So I urge Congress to approve the conference committee agreement promptly and reauthorize the PATRIOT Act.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:32 a.m. on December 9 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 9 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to the World Affairs Council and a Question-and-Answer Session in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

December 12, 2005

Thanks for the warm welcome. Thank you for the chance to come and speak to the Philadelphia World Affairs Council. This is an important organization that has, since 1949, has provided a forum for debate and discussion on important issues. I've come to discuss an issue that's really important, and that is victory in the war on terror.