

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 29, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
UPON SIGNING THE
FOURTH OF JULY PROCLAMATION

THE OVAL OFFICE

2:05 P.M. EDT

The Continental Congress, by resolution adopted July 2, 1776, declared that 13 American colonies were free and independent States. Two days later, on the 4th of July, the Congress adopted a Declaration of Independence, which proclaimed to the world the birth of the United States of America.

In the two centuries that have passed, we have matured as a Nation and as a people. We have gained the wisdom that age and experience brings, yet we have kept the strength and idealism of youth.

In this year of our Nation's Bicentennial, we entered our third century with the knowledge that we have achieved greatness as a Nation and have contributed to the good of all mankind. We face the future with renewed dedication to the principles embodied in our Declaration of Independence and with renewed gratitude that those who pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to preserve the individual liberty for all of us.

In the recognition of the 200th anniversary of the great historic events of 1776 and in keeping with the wishes of the Congress, I ask that all Americans join in an extended period of celebration, thanksgiving and prayer on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th days of July of our Bicentennial year so that the people of all faiths in their own way may give thanks for the protection of divine providence through the 200 years and pray for the future safety and happiness of our Nation.

To commemorate the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, the Congress declared that the anniversary should be observed by the ringing of bells throughout the United States. As President, I hereby proclaim that the 200th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence be observed by the simultaneous ringing of bells throughout the United States at the hour of 2:00 Eastern Daylight Time on the afternoon of the 4th of July for a period of two minutes, signifying our two centuries of independence.

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I call upon civic, religious and other community leaders to encourage public participation in this historic observance. I call upon all Americans, here as well as abroad, including all United (States) flag ships at sea, to join in this salute.

As the bells ring in our third century and as millions of free men and women pray, let every American resolve that this Nation, under God, will meet the future with the same courage, with the same dedication Americans showed the world two centuries ago.

In perpetuation of the joyous ringing of the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, let us again proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.

I will, therefore, sign at this time the official Proclamation.

END (AT 2:09 P.M. EDT)