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Dutch-American Friendship Day, 1982

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

April 19, 1982 marks the two hundredth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and the United States of America. This is the United States' longest unbroken, peaceful relationship with any foreign country.

From the very beginning, Americans and Dutch were drawn together by mutual ideals. The Pilgrims resided in the Netherlands for ten years before they set sail for the New World. During the Revolutionary War, the Dutch people demonstrated their widespread sympathy for the American struggle for freedom.

On the Dutch island of St. Eustatius in the Caribbean, the first foreign salute to the American flag took place on November 16, 1776; John Paul Jones was received as a hero in Amsterdam in 1779 when he landed with two captured British ships; and the Dutch Government entered into secret negotiations with the Continental Congress, starting in 1778, on the draft of a Treaty of Amity and Commerce.

But, most important, on April 19, 1782, John Adams was admitted by the States General of the Dutch Republic as Minister of the United States of America, thus obtaining the second diplomatic recognition of the United States as an independent nation. Adams also succeeded, on October 8, 1782, in signing the first Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the two countries. This recognition of the United States as an independent nation can be regarded as a key step in our country's efforts to take its rightful place in the world community of nations as a sovereign state.

During the dark days of World War II, America was able to return this early support for our nationhood. Thousands of our young men are buried on Dutch soil, having given their lives in the liberation of the Netherlands.

Today, the United States and the Netherlands share a joint commitment to our common security and the defense of freedom and our shared democratic values through our mutual membership in the North Atlantic Alliance. Our close economic ties reinforce our common philosophic and political goals, and the Netherlands is now the top foreign investor in the United States.

While the particular expression of our policies and actions has not always been identical, this recognition of common interests and shared ideals has been a hallmark of the continuously peaceful and productive relationship between the United States and the Netherlands for two hundred years.

In recognition of this long and fruitful relationship between our two countries and peoples, I do hereby designate April 19, 1982 as Dutch-American Friendship Day and call on all Americans to observe such day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 12th day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixth.

Ronald Reagan