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American Indian Day, 1983

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The story of the Indian in America is a record of endurance, of survival, of adaptation and creativity in the face of overwhelming obstacles. It is a record of enormous contributions to this country—to its art and culture, its strength and spirit, its sense of history, and its sense of purpose.

When European settlers began to develop colonies in North America, they entered into treaties with sovereign Indian nations. Our new Nation continued to enter into treaties with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis. Throughout our history, despite periods of conflict and shifting national policies in Indian affairs, the government-to-government relationship between the United States and Indian tribes has endured. The Constitution, treaties, laws, and court decisions have consistently recognized a unique political relationship between Indian tribes and the United States.

In 1970, President Nixon announced a national policy of self-determination for Indian tribes. At the heart of the new policy was a commitment by the Federal government to foster and encourage tribal self-government.

As set forth in the message on Indian policy of January 24, 1983, this Administration honors the commitment made in 1970 to strengthen tribal governments and lessen Federal control over tribal government affairs. To further the principle of self-government, we will encourage the political and economic development of the tribes by eliminating excessive Federal regulation and government intervention, which in the past have stifled local decision-making, thwarted Indian control of Indian resources, and promoted dependence rather than self-sufficiency.

In promoting effective self-government and a more favorable environment for the development of healthy reservation economies, we will take a flexible approach which recognizes the diversity among tribes and the right of each tribe to set its own priorities and goals. The tribes, not the Federal government, will chart the path of their own development. In support of this policy, the Federal government will faithfully fulfill its responsibility for the physical and financial resources it holds in trust for the tribes and their members.

In recognition of the unique status and contribution of the American Indian peoples to our Nation, the Congress of the United States, by House Joint Resolution 459 (P.L. 97-445), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating May 13, 1983 as "American Indian Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 13, 1983 as American Indian Day. I invite the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and deeds and to reaffirm their dedication to the ideals which our first Americans subscribe.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 14th day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventh.

Ronald Reagan