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**Presidential Documents**

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Title 3—

Proclamation 6873 of March 22, 1996

The President

Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

*A Proclamation*

While Hellenic literature, art, architecture, and philosophy have profoundly influenced western civilization for over 2,000 years, democracy remains the most precious gift to our world from the Greeks of ancient times. This manner of government, placing authority directly into the hands of the people, has long fulfilled the needs and aspirations of freedom-loving nations around the world. Our founders chose to adopt the democratic system when declaring America's liberty, just as the Greek Constitution enshrines democracy as the governing rule of the Hellenic Republic.

It is one of history's great ironies that Greece, the birthplace of democracy, was subject for centuries to foreign domination, culminating in almost four hundred years of political suppression by the Ottoman Empire. The Greeks' age-old love of liberty remained strong, however, and in 1821, Greece began its successful struggle for self-determination.

Today, as we commemorate the one hundred and seventy-fifth anniversary of Greek independence, the citizens of Greece and the United States remember that with democracy come great responsibilities—to seek peaceful solutions to civil differences, to foster freedom and human rights in all nations, and to ensure that our laws continue to build upon our strong democratic foundation.

Standing shoulder to shoulder, Americans and Greeks fought for these principles on the battlefields of World War II and through the dark days of the Cold War. Today, while we celebrate Greek independence, we also remember all those around the world who still endure oppression and are denied economic, social, or political freedom. In recent years we have seen many nations break the bonds of tyranny, and we must continue to support others who seek to embrace democracy's promise. In doing so, we look forward to a day when people everywhere enjoy the rights and liberties that Greeks and Americans are so proud to share.

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 March 25, 1996, as Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

