# P.S. to **the NEWS**

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## CAPTIVE NATIONS WEEK

Captive Nations Week is observed each year during the third week of July as a result of Public Law 86-90, passed in 1959 and signed by President Eisenhower. This law directs our President to proclaim Captive Nations Week "each year until such time as freedom and independence shall have been achieved for all the captive nations of the world."

The law lists by name 22 nations which had then been enslaved by Communist aggression, including Mainland China, Tibet, North Korea, North Vietnam, and 18 nations behind the Iron Curtain.

In the 19 years since the Captive Nations Resolution was passed by Congress, not a single captive nation has regained its freedom. Worse, many new nations have gone into Communist captivity, including Cuba, South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Angola ,/Mozambique. • Sout.h Y men and_'Ethiopia. are on the verge of going Communist.

The evolution in the wording of our annual Captive Nations Proclamations is a lesson in the development of U.S. foreign poHcy. As the number of captive nations increases, the rhetoric in the proclamations softens.

Eisenhower's July 21, 1959 proclamation called a spade a spade in these strong words: "Whereas many nations throughout the world have been made captive by the imperialistic and aggressive policies of Soviet Communism; whereas the peoples of the Soviet-dominated nations have been deprived of their national independence and their individual liberties; and **whereas** it is appropriate and proper to manifest to the peoples of the captive nations the support of the government and the people of the United States of America ..."

Succeeding Presidents progressively watered down the annual Captive Nations Proclamations. President Kennedy's three proclamations failed to list any captive nations or name the Soviet Union or Red Ch.ina as the captors.

On August 20, 1968, the Soviet·Union proclaimed to the world its policy toward

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the Captive Nations: The mighty military forces of the U.S.S.R. and its satellites will be used to crush any modicum of freedom and independence sought by any of the captive nations. That was the day when the Soviets launched their surprise invasion of Czechosl ovakio.. with 650,000 heavily armed troops.

Although the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia was denounced all over the world, the next Captive Nations Proclamation, issued by President Nixon in July 1969, showed no righteous indignation. It merely called on the American people "to sustain with understanding and sympathy the just aspirations of the peoples of a11 nations for independence and human freedom. "

After the Communists took over South Vietnam and Cambodia, the Captive Nations Proclamation became even softer and was shortened to 11 lines. The Nixon Proclam ation of July 1974 stated defensively: "We do not seek to impose our beliefs upon others, but we <lo not hide our sympathies toward the desires of those who, like us, cherish liberty and self-determination."

As the annual Presidential Captive Nations Proclamation became mushier, the White House began to release it on Saturdays, too late to make the Sunday news papers and so that it would be stale news by Monday. This also avoided coverage by the electronic media.

Last year President Carter issued the Captive Nations Proclamation only after ethnic groups began calling the Wh.ite House and demanding it. When the proclamation was finally issued, it was so vaguely worded that hardly anyone under age 35 would recognize the original intent of the 1959 law. The 1977 proclamation merely stated: "Our country was established on a profound belief in self-determination. Through out our history, we have sought to give meaning to this principle and to our belief in liberty and human rights. "

The recent Communist gains in Africa and the trials of the dissidents in the Soviet Union make the observance of Captive Nations Week even more timely than when it originated 1gyears ago. Prestdent Carter has a great opportunity to manifest his devotion to human ri h by issuing a strong Captive Nations Proclamation, with appropriate media coverage. Any bet he will do it?

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