

## 26 Statement About Proposed Establishment of an American Revolution Bicentennial Administration.

*February 1, 1973*

IT WAS exactly two centuries ago, in the year 1773, that the movement for American independence began its sharpest growth from a daring dream in the minds of a few patriots to an organized popular force capable of achieving the birth of a new nation. That was the year when a revolutionary network called the Committees of Correspondence spread rapidly from Massachusetts through most of Britain's American colonies. A year later those committees led to the convening of a Continental Congress; 2 years later Congress had an army in the field; 3 years later came the Declaration of Independence.

It seems especially fitting, therefore, that 1973 should be the year when the Congress and the President join in measures aimed at reinforcing the organizational effectiveness of our planning and preparations for the celebration of the Bicentennial of American independence, which is now just 3 years away.

To this end, I have directed that legislation be proposed today which would create a strong, new American Revolution Bicentennial Administration with a full-time Administrator, to continue and complete the preliminary Bicentennial work begun by the volunteer, part-time American Revolution Bicentennial Commission

during the past 7 years.

The Bicentennial Commission has made a commendable start on preparations for the observance of America's 200th birthday in 1976. Its dedicated and broadly representative members have rendered an important service to the Nation, with fine leadership from Chairman David Mahoney and Vice Chairman Hobart Lewis.

Now, however, upon the advice of Mr. Mahoney and Mr. Lewis and with the benefit of several evaluations from the legislative branch and professional consultants, I have concluded that a more streamlined, tightly organized, and action-oriented structure is needed to see us through the final stages of our Bicentennial preparations. The Bicentennial Administration whose creation we will propose would meet this need. It would be assisted by a 25-member Advisory Board, and would work closely with the Congress.

I believe that this action is essential to ensure that the American people are well prepared to mark in a meaningful fashion the completion of our first two centuries as a nation, and to begin our third century rededicated to the Spirit of '76. I urge the Congress and the people to give this proposal their fullest support.