

# 4th of July

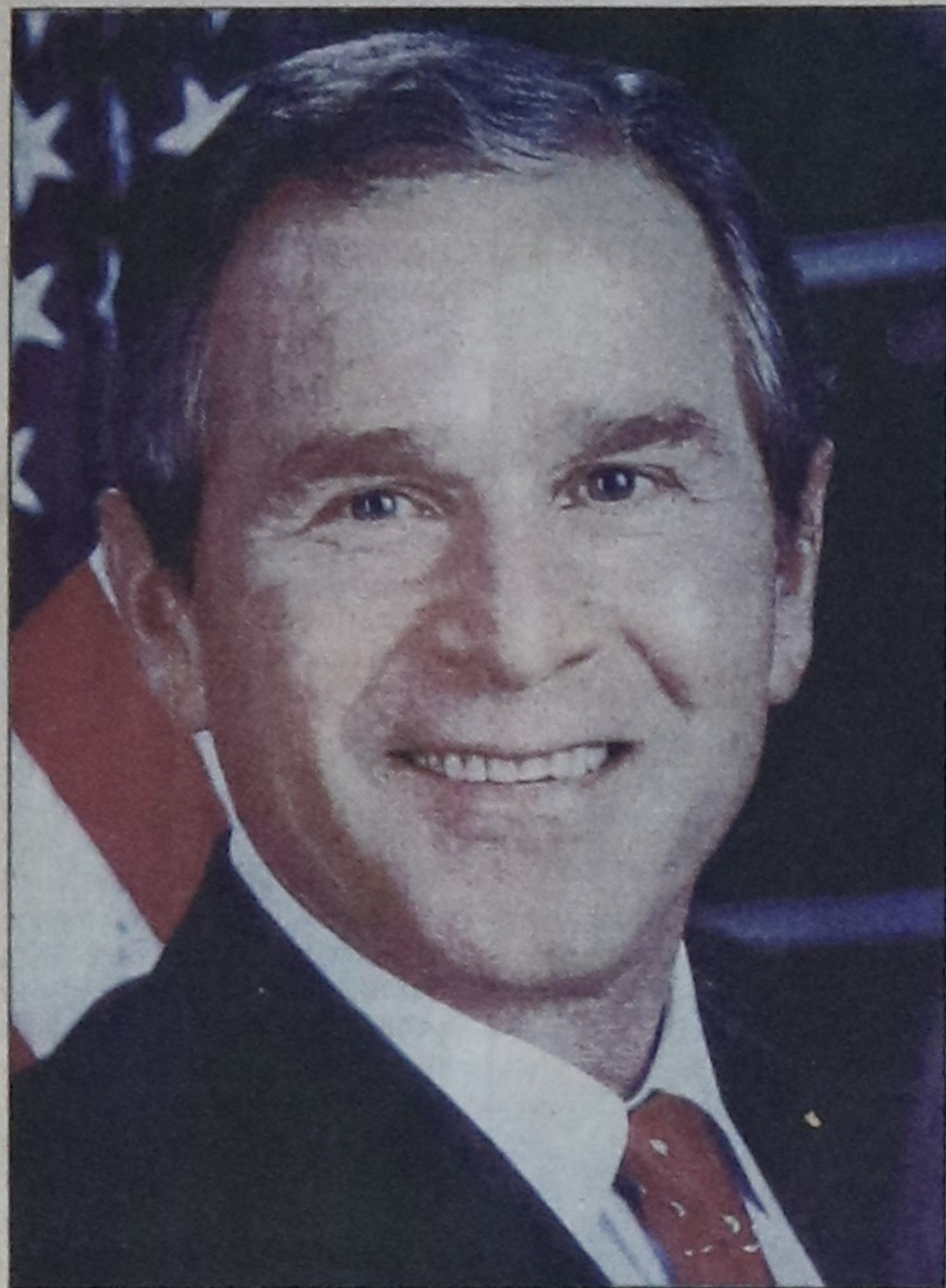
## 226TH

### INDEPENDENCE DAY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Daily Star

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

July 4, 2002



George W Bush, President of the United States

## Making sense of the Fourth of July

PAULINE MAIER

John Adams thought Americans would commemorate their Independence Day on the second of July. Future generations, he confidently predicted, would remember July 2, 1776, as "the most memorable Epoch, in the History of America" and celebrate it as their "Day of Deliverance by Solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forevermore."

His proposal, however odd it seems today, was perfectly reasonable when he made it in a letter to his wife, Abigail. On the previous day, July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress had finally resolved "That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." The thought that Americans might instead commemorate July 4, the day Congress adopted a "declaration on Independence" that he had helped prepare, did not apparently occur to Adams in 1776. The Declaration of Independence was one of those congressional statements that he later described as "dress and ornament rather than Body, Soul or Substance," a way of announcing to the world the fact of American independence, which was for Adams the thing worth celebrating.

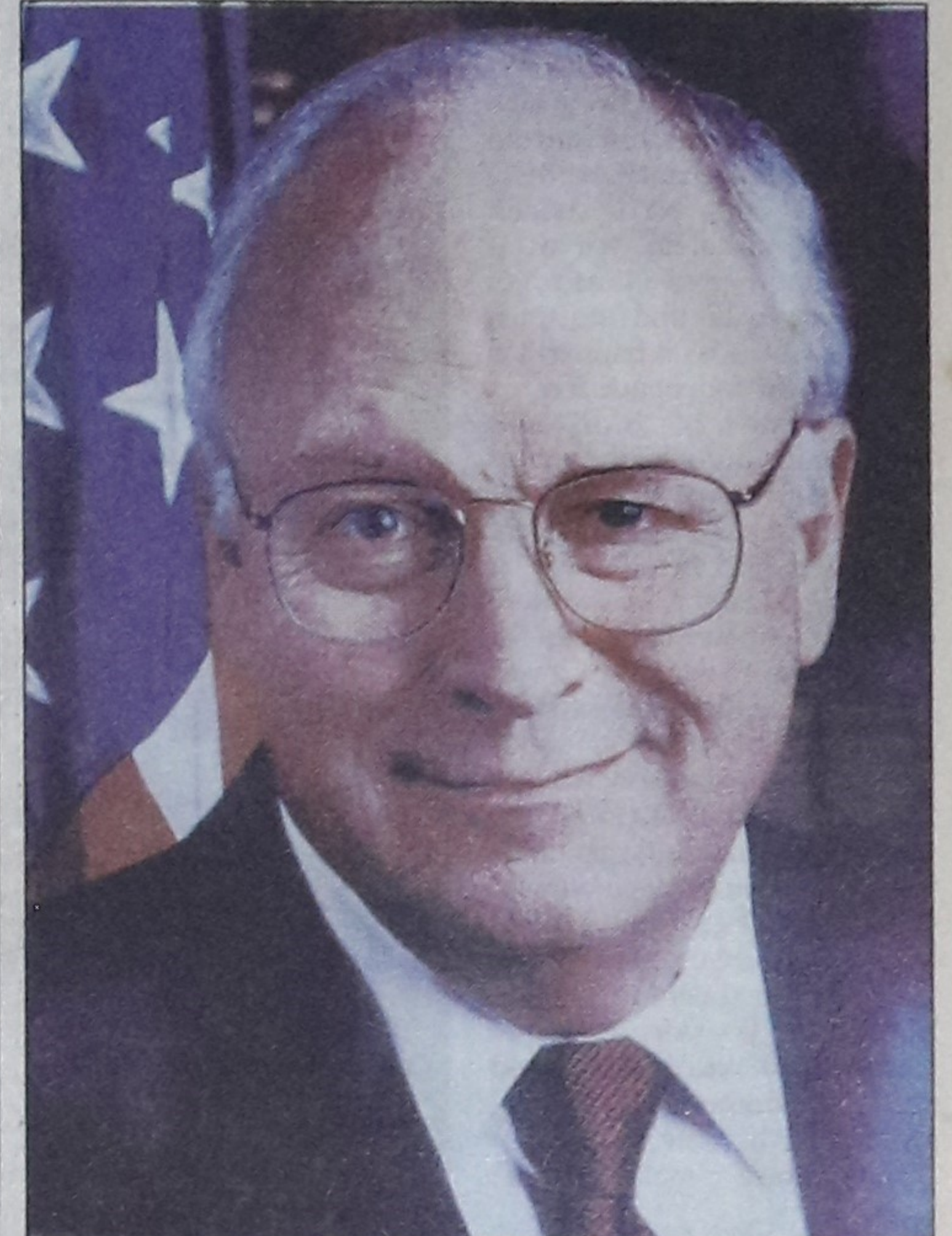
In fact, holding our great national festival on the Fourth makes no sense at all unless we are actually celebrating not just independence but the Declaration of Independence. And the declaration we celebrate, what Abraham Lincoln called "the charter of our liberties," is a document whose meaning and function today are different from what they were in 1776. In short, during the nineteenth century the Declaration of Independence became not just a way of announcing and justifying the end of Britain's power over the Thirteen colonies and the emergence of the United States as an

independent nation but a statement of principles to guide stable, established governments. Indeed, it came to usurp in fact if not in law a role that Americans normally delegated to bills of rights. How did that happen? And why?

According to notes kept by Thomas Jefferson, the Second Continental Congress did not discuss the resolution on independence when it was first proposed by Virginia's Richard Henry Lee, on Friday, June 7, 1776, because it was "obliged to attend at that time to some other business." However, on the eighth, Congress resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole and "passed that day and Monday the 10th in debating on the subject." By then all contenders admitted that it had become impossible for the colonies ever again to be united with Britain. The issue was one of timing.

John and Samuel Adams, along with others such as Virginia's George Wythe, wanted Congress to declare independence right away and start negotiating foreign alliances and forming a more lasting confederation (which Lee also proposed). Others, including Pennsylvania's James Wilson, Edward Rutledge of South Carolina, and Robert R. Livingston of New York, argued for delay. They noted that the delegates of several colonies, including Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and New York, had "not been 'Impoverished' by their home governments to vote for independence. If a vote was taken immediately, those delegates would have to 'retire' from Congress, and their states might secede from the union, which would seriously weaken the Americans' chance of realizing their independence. In the past, they said members of Congress had followed the 'wise and proper' policy of putting off major decisions 'till the voice of the people drove us into it,' since 'they were our power, and without them our declarations could not be carried into effect.' Moreover, opinion on independence in the critical middle colonies was 'fast ripening and in a short time,' they predicted, the people there would 'join in the general voice of America.'

Congress decided to give the laggard colonies time and so delayed its decision for three weeks. But it also appointed a Committee of Five to draft a declaration of independence so that such a document could be issued quickly once Lee's motion passed. The committee's members included Jefferson, Livingston, John Adams, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, and Pennsylvania's Benjamin Franklin. The drafting committee met, decided what the declaration should say and how it would be organized, then asked Jefferson to prepare a draft.



Richard B Cheney, Vice President of the United States

Meanwhile, Adams -- who did more to win Congress's consent to independence than any other delegate -- worked feverishly to bring popular pressure on the governments of recalcitrant colonies so they would change the instructions issued to their congressional

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#### MESSAGE



Today, July 4, 2002, marks the 226th anniversary of the

signing of the Declaration of Independence, a document that proclaimed a state of independence that had to be earned through prolonged struggle and loss of life. On July 4th, 1776, our founding fathers ratified the Declaration of Independence and proclaimed to a skeptical world the birth of a new nation. This nation was and is dedicated to the belief that all men and women are created equal, and that we are all endowed with certain inalienable rights, including

the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. As Americans celebrate our national day all over the world, this is an occasion to reflect on the values and principles that a freedom-loving nation is keen to share with people throughout the world. Throughout our history Americans have grappled with the challenge presented by a need to live up to the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence. We have come to recognize

that while our goals of equality and justice for all may elude us at times, they must always be pursued.

Today, we are honored to stand with Bangladesh not only as trading partners and allies, but also as friends and fellow democracies. Relations today between the United States and Bangladesh are strong and show every prospect of growing stronger. Over the past year the United States and Bangladesh have worked together on peace-keeping and humanitarian missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan, and just two weeks ago US and Bangladesh military forces joined together to build five new houses for the needy in Jessore.

Bangladesh and the United States are also committed to another vitally important goal, that of ridding the world of the scourge of terrorism. The tragic events of September 11 have reminded us that peace and freedom are rarely achieved without a struggle, and that defending the democracy we all treasure requires unflinching commitment and dedication. Bangladeshis too were among the victims of the September 11 tragedy and we mourn their loss as we do our own. The United States is proud to consider Bangladesh an ally in the worldwide fight against terror.

Both the United States and Bangladesh share a deep commitment to democracy, and there is every reason to believe that the relationship of friendship and cooperation between our two countries will continue to broaden and deepen. This friendship and a shared commitment to freedom and democracy are among the blessings that Americans have to celebrate as we mark the 226th year of our independence this July 4.

MaryAnn Peters  
Ambassador of the United States of America to Bangladesh.

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**4 July 2002**

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