

Message on the Observance of Id al-Fitr February 7, 1997

On behalf of all Americans, I want to extend greetings to all Muslims in the United States and around the world as you celebrate Id al-Fitr.

This celebration, which marks the end of a month of fasting and sacrifice, is an occasion for rejoicing. It is an opportunity for Muslims to gather in joy, as well as in remembrance of those less fortunate.

It is also an opportunity for all of us to rededicate ourselves, not only to achieving spiritual growth, but also to the cause of peace

between all peoples of the earth. It is our common challenge and our shared responsibility to create a better world for ourselves and our children.

To all who practice the faith of Islam, in the United States and abroad, Hillary and I extend our very best wishes. May peace be with you and your families, and may God grant you health and prosperity now and in the year ahead.

BILL CLINTON

The President's Radio Address February 8, 1997

The President. Good morning. This morning the Vice President and I are going to talk about the progress we've made to bring 21st century technology to our students and our schools.

In my State of the Union Address Tuesday night, I issued a call to action to all Americans to prepare our people for the 21st century. The very heart of this mission and my number one priority these next 4 years is to give our children the best education in the world.

Education is about opportunity, about giving our children the tools to make the most of their God-given potential. This is a goal every American must share for every other American. That's why I'm calling for a new, nonpartisan commitment to education. During the cold war, America had a bipartisan commitment to foreign policy and politics stopped at the water's edge. Today, education is a critical national security issue for our future, and our politics must stop at the schoolhouse door.

My plan calls for world-class standards for students, teachers, and schools. It calls for expanding Head Start, rebuilding crumbling schools, opening the doors of college wider than ever before, and ensuring that workers can learn and earn for a lifetime.

To give our children the best education, we must help them to harness the powerful forces of technology. That's why we've challenged

America to connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000. For the first time in history, children in the most isolated rural towns, the most comfortable suburbs, and the poorest inner-city schools will have the same access to the same universe of knowledge.

We've come a long way toward meeting that goal, and we owe much of that progress to the leadership of the Vice President who will now say a few words about our efforts.

[At this point, the Vice President made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you, Mr. Vice President. We are making a lot of progress. Today we're issuing a report prepared by Secretary Riley and the Department of Education that shows that 65 percent of our schools are now connected to the Internet, almost double the number of schools connected in 1994. But it's not enough to connect every school; we must connect every classroom and every library as well. Since 1994, we have more than quadrupled the number of classrooms with a direct link to the Internet, but the vast majority still do not have access. That's why we're now launching an aggressive, three-part plan to finish the job.

First, my balanced budget plan makes an unprecedented commitment to education technology, doubling the technology literacy initiative the Vice President just mentioned and providing a total of \$500 million for computers, teacher training, and educational software for our schools.

Second, we're working to ensure that every school and library can afford the Internet. Under the Telecommunications Act, the Federal Communications Commission is now developing a plan to give schools and libraries access to the Internet at a dramatically discounted rate. Fees for most schools will be cut in half. Fees for our poorest schools will be almost free. I urge the FCC to act quickly. And I call upon the telecommunications industry to support this effort.

Third, this April 19th, parents, teachers, business people, and volunteers from all walks of life will answer our call and hold NetDays in

all 50 States, connecting tens of thousands of schools, classrooms, and libraries to the Internet.

By doubling our investment in education technology, by dramatically lowering the Internet rates for schools and libraries by mobilizing Americans all across the country to help wire our schools, we will meet our goal of connecting every classroom and library to the information superhighway by the year 2000. That's how we must prepare our children for the 21st century, with the full promise of the information age at their fingertips. And it's an important way to give our children the world's best education and the chance to make the most of their own lives.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:38 p.m. on February 7 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 8.

Remarks to the Maryland General Assembly in Annapolis, Maryland February 10, 1997

Thank you all for that wonderful reception. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for what you said. Thank you, Senator Miller, for that 10-year walk down memory lane. *[Laughter]* It is true that when I met his mother I fell in love with her, even before I found out she had 10 kids. *[Laughter]* It's not often you meet a person who can elect you if her family votes for you. *[Laughter]*

Thank you, Governor Glendening, for your leadership here on so many issues. Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Attorney General Curran, Treasurer Dixon, my old friend Comptroller Louie Goldstein. I was in the first grade when he became comptroller. *[Laughter]* The walking argument against term limits, you know. It's amazing. *[Laughter]*

I'd like to thank so many Members of your very distinguished congressional delegation for joining me today: Senator Sarbanes and Senator Mikulski; Representative Wayne Gilchrest, your Congressman; Representative Connie Morella; Representative Ben Cardin; Representative Al Wynn; and Representative Elijah Cummings.

Now, I know that Ben was formerly the speaker here and that Al and Elijah and Connie and Senator Sarbanes were all members of this body. It kind of makes you wonder how Senator Mikulski and Congressman Gilchrest got elected to Congress. *[Laughter]* It's obviously a good training program here. *[Laughter]*

I'd like to thank the president of the Maryland State Board of Education, Christopher Cross, for being here. When he worked for President Bush, he and I stayed up all night one night writing the national education goals, which began the process which bring us to this point today. Thank you, sir, for being here. And I'd like to thank your State superintendent of education, Nancy Grasmick, for being here.

Then there are two people who are not here, who are here with us in spirit, and I would like to ask that we all remember them today, our good friend Congressman Steny Hoyer and his late wife, Judy, who was one of the finest educators this State ever had. And I know we miss them today. Steny and his family are in