

for health and happiness and prosperity in the year to come.

*Eid Mubarak.* God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the mosque at the Islamic Center of Wash-

ington, DC. In his remarks, he referred to Abdullah Khouj, director of the center. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Message on the Observance of Eid al-Fitr, 2002 *December 5, 2002*

I send greetings to Muslims in the United States and around the world as you celebrate Eid al-Fitr, the Festival of Breaking the Fast.

At the end of Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting, worship, and reflection, Eid celebrates the renewal of faith, hope, and compassion. During this time of great rejoicing, Muslims give thanks for the blessings they have been granted, and demonstrate their commitment to the Qur'an's teachings by helping those in need. These acts of kindness and generosity strengthen communities worldwide, and as we observe this holiday season, I encourage Americans of all faiths to join in building a culture of service that demonstrates the true character of our Nation.

America treasures the relationship we have with our many Muslim friends, and we respect the vibrant faith of Islam which inspires countless individuals to lead lives of honesty, integrity, and morality. This year, may Eid also be a time in which we recognize the values of progress, pluralism, and acceptance that bind us together as a Nation and a global community. By working together to advance mutual understanding, we point the way to a brighter future for all.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a joyous Eid, and for health, happiness, and prosperity in the coming year.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

## Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree *December 5, 2002*

Thank you very much. With the lighting of the National Christmas Tree, we observe one of the great traditions of our Nation's Capital. And throughout the Christmas season, we recall that God's love is found in humble places, and God's peace is offered to all of us. Laura and I are pleased to be with you at this Christmas Pageant of Peace, and we thank you all for coming as well.

I want to thank Barbara for hosting this event. I want to thank all the entertainers

for making the night such a special evening. Thank you all for coming. I want to thank Peter and the board of directors and the production team for organizing this fine event. I appreciate Santa coming. *[Laughter]* Looks like he needs a belt for Christmas. *[Laughter]* Finally, I want to thank all the good people of the National Park Service. The National Christmas Tree is a living tree, and the Park Service looks after it every single day of the year.