

Message on the Observance of Eid al-Fitr *October 1, 2007*

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

The great faith of Islam has enhanced our society and brought comfort and strength to generations in America and around the world. The three day festival of Eid al-Fitr marks the end of the month-long fast of Ramadan and is a time to look forward with a spirit of renewal and hope, and celebrate the rich Islamic tradition of charity and giving. During this holiday, Muslims gather with family and friends to share in traditional food, thank God for His blessings, and reach out to the less fortunate.

Our Nation is proud to be a land of many beliefs, and our society is enriched by our Muslim citizens. On the first day of Shawwal, the tenth month of the Islamic calendar, may people of all faiths reflect on the values we hold in common, including love of family, the importance of community, and gratitude to God.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a joyful celebration. Eid Mubarak.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 11. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks Following a Meeting on the National Economy *October 11, 2007*

I just had a meeting with members of my economic team, and I thank you all for coming. I particularly want to thank Director of the OMB Jim Nussle for his briefing on the newest numbers regarding our deficit.

You know, last February, it was projected that our deficit would be \$244 billion, and today the Director informed us that the deficit—actual deficit is \$163 billion. In other words, as a result of the hard work of the American people, this economy is growing; the growing economy has yielded more tax revenues than anticipated. And because of fiscal restraint, those tax revenues went to reduce our deficit.

The deficit today is at 1.2 percent of GDP, which is lower than the average of the last 40 years. In other words, we have told the American people that by keeping taxes low, we can grow the economy, and

by working with Congress to set priorities, we can be fiscally responsible and we can head toward balance. And that's exactly where we're headed.

Now the fundamental question is whether the United States Congress will work constructively with the administration to keep taxes low and to keep spending sound. I look forward to working with members of both parties to continue keeping this—keeping our fiscal house in order, to continue to head for a balanced budget. But it's going to require the Congress to show fiscal restraint, fiscal discipline. One of the reasons why the Constitution wisely gave the President the veto is to help them exercise fiscal discipline and fiscal constraint.

It's very important for Congress to also understand that they should not be trying to take money out of the pockets of the small-business owners and working people.

One of the reasons why this economy is robust is because taxes are low. And in order to keep making sure that this economy grows, we've got to keep them low. After all, people are working here in America. We've had 49 consecutive months of uninterrupted job growth, which is a record. And we intend to keep breaking

that record by good fiscal policy here in Washington, DC.

I want to thank you all for your briefing. Thanks for coming by.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:04 p.m. in Room 3015 of the New Executive Office Building.

Remarks in Miami, Florida October 12, 2007

The President. Thank you all. Thank you. Thank you for the warm welcome. It's great to be in Miami. I've been looking for my little brother. [*Laughter*] He must have finally found work. I thank—[*laughter*]. Just kidding, Jeb.

I thank the Center for Hemispheric Policy and the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce for sponsoring this event. And I appreciate you all coming. I appreciate the support that you give for enterprise here in south Florida.

I know you know that—as business leaders and foreign policy thinkers, that one of the pivotal issues facing our country is expanding trade and investment. And that's what I want to talk to you about today. And it's a timely message because Congress has some important decisions coming up. I've made up my mind about the importance of trade and investment, and now Congress is going to have to make up its mind about trade and investment, especially when it comes to free trade agreements with Peru, Panama, and Colombia.

These agreements will level the playing fields for businesses, workers, and farmers here in the United States. These agreements will help our friends in neighborhoods, and help them lift them out of poverty. These agreements will counter the false populism promoted by some nations in the hemisphere. These agreements will strengthen the forces of freedom and de-

mocracy throughout the Americas. I urge the congressional leaders to pass these three Latin American agreements as soon as possible.

And I appreciate you giving me a chance to come here and explain why they're important.

I want to thank my friend Senator Mel Martinez for introducing me. I appreciate his willingness to serve in the United States Senate. I know this is a nonpartisan meeting, but let me just tell you, he's doing a fine job.

I want to thank three members from the congressional delegation who are here, the Diaz-Balart boys—Lincoln and Mario—as well as Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. I'm honored you all are here. Thanks for coming.

I appreciate so very much Manny Diaz for joining us today. Mr. Mayor, I'm honored you are here. I thank you for your time. I want to thank the other State—[*applause*—thank the State and local officials who have joined us. I really appreciate former Secretary Donna Shalala, who happens to be the president of the University of Miami, for sponsoring this event. I thank Hank Klein, the chairman of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, as well for hosting this. And I thank my friend Chuck Cobb, who's the chairman of the Florida Free Trade Area of the Americas, Inc., which is a group of citizens concerned about free trade.