

Aug. 13 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2010

our two nations, I have directed my administration to continue to work closely with the Government of Pakistan and provide assistance in their response to this crisis. We have rushed financial assistance, life-saving and life-sustaining relief supplies, helicopters, rescue boats, and disaster management experts to assist the Pakistani authorities. The people of

America stand with the people of Pakistan through this difficult time and will continue to urge the international community to increase their support and assistance. We will remain committed to helping Pakistan and will work side by side with you and the international community toward a recovery that brings back the dynamic vitality of your nation.

Statement on South Korea's Independence Day

August 13, 2010

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate the Republic of Korea and all those of Korean descent in the United States and around the world on the celebration of their independence day on August 15. In the 62 years since the founding of the Republic of Korea, our two nations have enjoyed a strong and enduring alliance. We are bound by a common belief in the values of democracy and freedom. Sixty years ago, Communist armies came across the 38th parallel and threatened the very survival of the

Republic of Korea. Our alliance was as necessary then as it is now. As I said during my visit to Seoul last fall, our commitment to the security and defense of the Republic of Korea will never waver. Here in the United States, Korean Americans have contributed greatly to our Nation in all facets of life, from business and science to sports, the arts, and public service. I send my best wishes on this year's Korean independence day.

Remarks at the Iftar Dinner

August 13, 2010

Good evening, everybody. Welcome. Please, have a seat. Well, welcome to the White House. To you, to Muslim Americans across our country, and to more than 1 billion Muslims around the world, I extend my best wishes on this holy month. *Ramadan Kareem*.

I want to welcome members of the diplomatic corps, members of my administration, and Members of Congress, including Rush Holt, John Conyers, and Andre Carson, who is one of the two Muslim American Members of Congress, along with Keith Ellison. So welcome, all of you.

Here at the White House, we have a tradition of hosting iftars that goes back several years, just as we host Christmas parties and Seders and Diwali celebrations. And these events celebrate the role of faith in the lives of the American people. They remind us of the basic truth that we are all children of God and we all draw

strength and a sense of purpose from our beliefs.

Now, these events are also an affirmation of who we are as Americans. Our Founders understood that the best way to honor the place of faith in the lives of our people was to protect their freedom to practice religion. In the Virginia Act of Establishing Religious Freedom, Thomas Jefferson wrote that "all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion." The First Amendment of our Constitution established the freedom of religion as the law of the land, and that right has been upheld ever since.

Indeed, over the course of our history, religion has flourished within our borders precisely because Americans have had the right to worship as they choose, including the right to believe in no religion at all. And it is a testament to the wisdom of our Founders that America remains deeply religious, a nation where the abili-