

take for granted. And given the enormous challenges they face, the Afghan people will need the partnership of the world, led by the United States, for many years to come. But with our support, Afghanistan is a better place than it once was. Millions of Afghan children—boys and girls—are in school. Dramatic improvements in public health have saved the lives of mothers and children. Afghans have cast their ballots in democratic elections and seen the first democratic transfer of power in their country's history. The current National Unity Government continues to pursue reforms—including record revenues last year—to strengthen their country and, over time, help decrease the need for international support.

That Government is a strong partner with us in combating terrorism. That's the progress we've helped make possible. That's the progress that our troops have helped make possible,

and our diplomats and our development personnel. That's the progress we can help sustain, in partnership with the Afghan people and our coalition partners. And so I firmly believe the decision I'm announcing today is the right thing to do: for Afghanistan, for the United States, and for the world.

May God bless our troops and all who serve to protect us. May God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:27 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. John W. Nicholson, Jr., USA, commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan; and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Statement on the Observance of Eid al-Fitr

July 6, 2016

Upon the arrival of a new crescent Moon, Michelle and I send our warmest greetings to all those celebrating Eid al-Fitr in the United States and around the globe. For Muslim Americans, Eid is an opportunity to reflect on the 30 days spent fasting and to recommit to values of gratitude, compassion, and generosity. In neighborhoods and homes across the world, this special occasion begins in the early hours of the day when families dress in their finest attire in preparation for prayers and festivities. Homes are decorated with ornaments and lanterns. Gifts are wrapped and envelopes of money are prepared for kids. Above all, Eid is a time to gather and celebrate with loved ones.

Muslim Americans are as diverse as our Nation itself: Black, White, Latino, Asian, and Arab. Eid celebrations around the country remind us of our proud history as a nation built by people of all backgrounds, our history of religious freedom and civil liberties, and our history of innovation and strength. These legacies would not be possible without the contribu-

tions of Muslim Americans that make our country even stronger.

This past month, our country and the world endured challenges and senseless violence that broke our hearts and tried our souls. Our prayers are with the hundreds of innocent lives—many of them Muslim—taken during the month of Ramadan in places like Orlando, Istanbul, Dhaka, Baghdad, and Medina.

Here at home, we've also seen a rise in attacks against Muslim Americans. No one should ever feel afraid or unsafe in their place of worship. Many Americans have shared in the experience of Ramadan by volunteering in community service efforts to assist those in need and even fasting a few days with their fellow Muslim American coworkers. In the face of hate, it's our American values and strength that bring us together to stand in solidarity and protect one another, thereby, making our Nation stronger and safer.

Muslim Americans have been part of our American family since its founding. This Eid, we recommit to protecting Muslim Americans against bigotry and xenophobia, while

celebrating the contributions of Muslim Americans around the country, including one of our finest, the People's Champion, Muhammad Ali, to whom we bade farewell this Ramadan. Later this month, Michelle and I

will host an Eid celebration at the White House, and we look forward to welcoming Americans from around the country to celebrate the holiday. From our family to yours, *Eid Mubarak*.

Statement on Congressional Passage of the Global Food Security Act of 2016 *July 6, 2016*

Seven years ago, just a few months into my Presidency, I came together with counterparts from some of the world's most powerful nations and committed to improving the lives of rural poor people around the globe through investments in more productive agriculture and better nutrition. Today I'm proud to see that Congress has passed S. 1252, the Global Food Security Act of 2016, an overwhelmingly bipartisan piece of legislation that will put Feed the Future, our global hunger and food security initiative, into law.

I want to thank the co-sponsors of the legislation, Senators Isakson and Casey and Representatives Smith and McCollum, for their steadfast commitment to strengthening global food security, and also recognize the leaders of the Foreign Affairs and Agriculture Commit-

tees for their extraordinary leadership to ensure that these efforts are enduring.

This game-changing development initiative—the first of my administration—has helped increase economic growth and stem the tide of global hunger, poverty, and malnutrition over the span of just a few years. While we've already accomplished so much through this collaborative global partnership, I know that with the continued effort and support that this legislation provides, we can achieve what was just a few years ago the unimaginable: We can end global poverty and hunger within our lifetimes.

NOTE: The statement referred to Rep. Christopher H. Smith.

Remarks on the Deaths of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile From Warsaw, Poland *July 8, 2016*

Good evening, everybody.

I know we've been on a long flight, but given the extraordinary interest in the shootings that took place in Louisiana and Minnesota, I thought it would be important for me to address all of you directly. And I want to begin by expressing my condolences for the families of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile.

As I said in the statement that I posted on Facebook, we have seen tragedies like this too many times. The Justice Department, I know, has opened a civil rights investigation in Baton Rouge. The Governor of Minnesota, I understand, is calling for an investigation there as well. As is my practice, given my institutional role, I can't comment on the specific facts of

these cases, and I have full confidence in the Justice Department's ability to conduct a thorough and fair inquiry.

But what I can say is that all of us as Americans should be troubled by these shootings, because these are not isolated incidents. They're symptomatic of a broader set of racial disparities that exist in our criminal justice system. And I just want to give people a few statistics to try to put in context why emotions are so raw around these issues.

According to various studies—not just one, but a wide range of studies that have been carried out over a number of years—African Americans are 30-percent more likely than Whites to be pulled over. After being pulled