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Address on the Observance of Id al-Fítr

January 19, 1999

On behalf of Muslim Americans and, indeed, all Americans, I would like to send my best wishes to the Islamic world as the holy month of Ramadan draws to a close, and you celebrate the festival of Id al-Fítr. The month of fasting you have completed demands sacrifice and discipline. But it delivers a profound reward, the chance to teach people of every faith what is precious about Islam: its charity, its generosity, its essential humanity. All people in the world are moved by the observance of Ramadan, by the devotion and dignity that makes Islam one of the world's great religions.

I fervently hope that the new Moon will stand for a rising tide of peace on Earth, in the Middle East, Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, Africa, every place where devoted people aspire and deserve to lead lives of fulfillment and self-respect. I especially hope we will see the lives of the Iraqi people improve. They have suffered for too long from oppression and war.

One of the central challenges of our time is to build greater understanding among people who practice different forms of worship. As the leader of a nation of many, many faiths, I pledge that we will do all we can to strengthen relations with the Islamic community around the world in the year ahead. In the United States, we deeply respect the Muslim Americans who observe Ramadan. And we look forward to working with Muslims everywhere, everywhere in the world, to build a world where faith and friendship can truly flourish.

As-salaamu alaykum.

NOTE: The address was videotaped at approximately 5:10 p.m. in Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building on January 12 for later broadcast on the U.S. Information Agency Worldnet, and it was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 19.

Message on the Observance of Id al-Fítr

January 19, 1999

Warm greetings to Muslims across America and around the world as you mark the end of the holy month of Ramadan and celebrate the festival of Id al-Fitr.

The month of fasting that you have just completed demands discipline and a spirit of sacrifice. But it also delivers a profound reward: the opportunity to show people of every faith what is precious about Islam—its charity, its generosity, and its essential humanity. All people in the world are moved by your observance of Ramadan and by the devotion and dignity that make Islam one of the world's great religions.

As you welcome the appearance of the new moon and the close of Ramadan, Hillary joins me in extending best wishes for a memorable celebration and for peace, health, and prosperity in the year to come.

Bill Clinton

Statement on the Proposed "Affordable Child Care for Early Success and Security Act"

January 19, 1999

Tonight, in my State of the Union Address, I will outline my agenda to help parents struggling to meet their responsibilities at work and at home. This agenda includes an ambitious initiative to make child care safer, better, and more affordable for America's working families. Today Senator Christopher J. Dodd (D–CT) and many of his Democratic colleagues in the Senate have taken an important step toward reaching that goal by introducing the ''Affordable Child Care for Early Success and Security Act'' (A.C.C.E.S.S.).

This proposal, like mine, significantly increases child care subsidies for poor children, provides greater tax relief to help low- and middle-income families pay for child care and to support parents who chose to stay at home to care for their young children. This