

Jan. 10 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

its precepts, and its inclusive humanity. [Applause] Thank you.

The Koran also teaches, in addition to the fact that we should do unto others as we wish to have done to us and reject for others what we would reject for ourselves, that we should also make a commitment to live in peace. There is a new Moon that has risen at the end of Ramadan and a new millennium marked in many nations. And again, I say to you as we leave, in addition to your prayers and work for peace and understanding and reconciliation within the United States, I ask especially for your prayers for the current mission of peace in the Middle East.

We are on a track in which the Israelis, the Syrians, I hope soon the Lebanese, and already the Palestinians have committed themselves to work through these very difficult, longstanding issues over the course of the next 2 months—the longstanding commitment between the Palestinians and the Israelis to resolve their busi-

ness by next month. So this will be a time of great tension, where all people will have to search for wisdom and understanding, where there will be great reluctance to open the closed fist and walk out into a new era.

And I think that the prayers of Muslims, Jews, Christians, and people of good will all over the world will be needed for us to get through these next several weeks. But for you, I hope it is an immense source of pride that you live in a country that is trying to make peace in the land where your faith was born.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Naimah Saleem, who introduced the President; Yahya Hendi, chaplain, Georgetown University; and Capt. Rasheed Abdul-Muhammad, chaplain, USA.

Remarks on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China and an Exchange With Reporters

January 10, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. This year we face major challenges and opportunities in our relationship with China, in foreign and security policy, economic policy and trade. All those issues come together in one opportunity for the American people: what we stand to gain when China enters the World Trade Organization.

But to lock in our benefits, we first must grant China permanent normal trade relations status. To get this done, I am directing John Podesta, my Chief of Staff, my international economic Cabinet members, my Policy Council coordinators to launch an all-out effort. Each member of this team has a distinctive role to play. I'm asking them to do everything they can to accomplish the task.

To ensure that we have as strong and responsive an effort as possible in both parties in Congress, I'm asking Secretary of Commerce Bill Daley and my Deputy Chief of Staff, Steve Ricchetti, to lead our congressional effort.

This agreement is a good deal for America. Our products will gain better access to China's

market in every sector from agriculture to telecommunications to automobiles. But China gains no new market access to the United States, nothing beyond what it already has. In fact, we'll gain tough new safeguards against surges of imports and maintain the strongest possible rules against dumping products that have hurt Americans in the past. China's tariffs on United States goods, on the other hand, will fall by half or more over the next 5 years. And by joining the WTO, China agrees to play by the same trade rules that we do.

We continue to have serious disagreements with China on human rights, on proliferation and other issues. We'll continue to press our views and protect our interests. This deal will not change China or our relationship with China overnight, but it is clearly a step in the right direction, and it is clearly in the short- and long-term best economic interests of the American working people.

It encourages China also to take further steps in the direction of both economic reform and