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PRESS RELEASE

EID-UL AZHA MESSAGE

CDA A.I. GEETA PASI

DHAKA, DECEMBER 19 -- At this very special time of year, it is my pleasure to send greetings to those in Bangladesh preparing to celebrate Eid-ul Azha. During this season, we are reminded of the fundamental tenets of Islam, notably obedience, sacrifice and charity towards those less fortunate. It is a time of great joy and celebration as families and friends gather to exchange greetings and share special foods. I look forward to celebrating with you.

Eid-ul Azha takes on a special significance this year for those struggling to rebuild their lives in the wake of Cyclone Sidr's devastation. I have been heartened by the outpouring of assistance that is now reaching the victims of the cyclone. Your government and fellow citizens have shown great resilience and kindness in their emergency relief efforts.

I know that this assistance to those in need comes at great sacrifice, and is motivated by religious obligation as well as the fraternal bonds that unite the people of this great nation.

I am proud of the significant United States Government assistance and development program. These include disaster mitigation procedures before the cyclone hit and emergency relief to affected areas immediately thereafter. It will continue with recovery and reconstruction programs. I am also heartened by the outpouring of support from the American people through non-governmental organizations. As you may have heard me say before, the United States was here before the cyclone and we will be here well into the future to help our friends in Bangladesh recover from this tragedy.

Islam, like other world religions, celebrates peace, tolerance, and giving. Bangladesh has shown the enduring strength of these values, even as others in the world preach intolerance and destruction.

I would like to wish each of you Eid Mubarak and to offer best wishes for a brighter future for all Bangladeshis.

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GR/ 2007

Note: A Bangla translation of this message is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)