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NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY  
CENTRAL SECURITY SERVICE  
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755-6000

FOIA Case: 78425A  
4 April 2016

JOHN GREENEWALD  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Greenewald:

This responds to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request of 1 July 2014, which was received by this office on 2 July 2014, for “a copy of all documents, electronic or otherwise, that pertain to orders to NSA personnel and contractors, about how they are expected to observe Ramadan and how they are supposed to act in other countries during this time.” As previously provided, your request has been assigned Case Number 78425. For purposes of this request and based on the information you provided in your letter, you are considered an “all other” requester. As such, you are allowed 2 hours of search and the duplication of 100 pages at no cost. There are no assessable fees for this request.

Your request has been processed under the FOIA. A thorough search of our files located one document considered semi-responsive, which is enclosed. Certain information, however, has been deleted from the enclosure.

This Agency is authorized by statute to protect certain information concerning its activities, as well as the names of its employees. Such information is exempt from disclosure pursuant to the third exemption of the FOIA, which provides for the withholding of information specifically protected from disclosure by statute. The specific statute applicable in this case is Section 6, Public Law 86-36 (50 U.S. Code 3605). We have determined that such information exists in this record, and we have excised it accordingly.

Since these deletions may be construed as a partial denial of your request, you are hereby advised of this Agency’s appeal procedures; you may appeal this decision. If you decide to appeal, you should do so in the manner outlined below.

- The appeal must be in writing and addressed to:

NSA/CSS FOIA/PA Appeal Authority (DJ4)  
National Security Agency  
9800 Savage Road STE 6248  
Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-6248

- It must be postmarked no later than 60 calendar days of the date of this letter.
- Please include the case number provided above.
- Please describe with sufficient detail why you believe this denial was unwarranted.
- NSA will endeavor to respond within 20 working days of receiving your appeal, absent any unusual circumstances.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of John R. Chapman in black ink.

JOHN R. CHAPMAN  
Chief, FOIA/PA Office  
NSA Initial Denial Authority

Encl:  
a/s

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ENTERPRISE**

(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

**(U) Reflecting on Ramadan**

FROM: [REDACTED]

Run Date(s): 06/19/2015



(U) Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic year-- the month in which the Quran, Islam's holy book, was revealed by God. This year Ramadan kicked off on Thursday, June 18.

(U) During this time, Muslim people around the world fast from sunrise to sunset for the entire month. This requires that they abstain from drinking, eating and intimacy during those hours each day. Since fasting is one of the five Pillars of Islam, Muslims around the world take the month of Ramadan very seriously.

For Muslims, fasting is the required way of worshiping prescribed in the Quran. (U) Before we take a more detailed look at how Ramadan is observed, let's first take note of some of the ways that Ramadan will manifest itself here at NSA.

(U) To start, throughout the month of Ramadan, please be mindful that the person working right next to you could be observing Ramadan. As an Equal Opportunity Employer, NSA/CSS has a significant number of Muslim employees. Managers might also observe employees taking a few minutes to offer Afternoon Prayer. The standard greeting for Ramadan is "Ramadan Kareem" or "Ramadan Mubarak."

(U//~~FOUO~~) For Muslim employees, there are certain accommodations that are provided by the Agency throughout the year. There are three accommodations that we want to highlight in this article:

- First, there is Religious Observance Compensatory Time. With supervisor approval, employees can take up to 40 hours of comp time; details can be found under PMM 363.
- Second, there are two meditation rooms [REDACTED] that can be used to offer prayers or to meditate at any time.
- Last but not least, the Agency also accommodates Friday Prayer onsite, starting at [REDACTED] in the [REDACTED] Room. To be added to the Friday Prayer alias, please contact [REDACTED]

(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

(U) Because they will be fasting from both food and beverages during daylight hours, most Muslims will be thirsty, hungry, and sleep-deprived at some point during this strenuous month. As a result, managers may see some behavioral changes and an increase in time-off requests throughout this timeframe. The majority of Muslims will ask for time off during the last 10 days of Ramadan and the first 3 days of the following month (the Eid al-Fitr celebration). While everyone working at NSA is professional and adheres to high standards, if a Muslim employee seems to have a little less patience or endurance during the month of Ramadan, this may be a temporary effect of the daily fasting.

(U) Everyone knows it is summer, which means that most offices will be planning their annual picnic/moral e-building activity (MBA) during this time. To be inclusive and to ensure maximum employee participation-- since most Muslims will be fasting during this month-- please refrain from planning these types of MBA events during Ramadan.

**(U) How Is Ramadan Observed?**

**Approved for Release by NSA on 04-04-2016, FOIA Case # 78425**

**DOCID: 4289777**

Islamic calendar consists of 12 months based on a lunar cycle; each month lasts either 29 or 30 days. Typically, the dates move back 10 days per Gregorian calendar year. Once Ramadan is underway, Muslims in the Washington D.C. area will wake up for Sehur (the morning meal prior to the fast) around 3:45 AM. Fasting starts after the Fajr Prayer (Morning Prayer), which is around 4:15 AM. Because of the longer days at this time of year, fasting ends around 8:30 PM (depending on one's location and the time of sunset), which amounts to 16 hours of fasting. Around 8:30 PM, as Maghrib Adhan (the call for prayer at sunset) starts, people will break their fast with water and food, such as dates (this is called iftar).

(U) After breaking the fast, everyone breaks to offer the Maghrib Prayer. Next, most families then prepare for a larger dinner. During the month of Ramadan most people also offer Tarawih (Quran recitation), which starts after Isha Prayer (Night Prayer). In the Washington D.C. area this will be around 10:00 PM. The objective of Tarawih is to finish recitation of the entire Holy Quran within the 30 days of Ramadan. Usually Tarawih prayer lasts for 2 hours. Therefore, Muslims in the D.C. area will return from Tarawih at around midnight, and then start everything over again at 4:00 AM the next morning.

(U) Besides the schedule above, Muslims around the world also hold special observances the last ten days of Ramadan. They offer extra prayers that can last the whole night. It is believed that the Quran was revealed on one of the odd-numbered nights of the last ten days of Ramadan. Laylat-al-Qadr (Night of Power), the 27th night of Ramadan, is the night most widely observed by Muslims around the world. The end of Ramadan is marked by the celebration of Eid al-Fitr starting on 1st Shawwal (10th month); as noted, the celebration lasts for 3 days.

(U) Note that Ramadan can be observed a bit differently depending on which Muslim sect one belongs to.

(U/~~FOUO~~) The Islamic Cultural Employee Resource Group ("**go IC-ERG**") and the Religious Affairs Office ("**go RAO**") are available to answer any additional questions. Please also use the resources on the IC-ERG and RAO websites, which provide valuable information about the Islamic culture and religion.

**Information Owner** DN Strategic Comms, DN, 963-5901, (email)

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