



WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

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Warm greetings to those gathered in Sarajevo this evening to celebrate the extraordinary life and legacy of President Alija Izetbegović.

When I met President Izetbegović during the darkest days of the Bosnian War, I was struck by his calm resolve and his conviction that people of different faiths could once again live together in peace. I deeply admired his intellect, composure, and moral conviction, and will always be grateful for his courageous leadership during that time. I am proud that the United States could stand with him, and with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to help end the war and support the peace that followed.

During the Dayton peace negotiations, I saw a leader who bore the grief of his people with grace. He never confused peace with surrender, nor justice with revenge. In the years that followed, as Bosnia rebuilt, President Izetbegović remained steadfast in his belief that reconciliation was the only true victory.

On what would have been his 100th birthday, the best way to honor President Izetbegović's legacy is to follow the example he set by choosing cooperation over conflict.

Best wishes for a meaningful, memorable commemoration.

*Bill Clinton*