

Federal assistance is necessary, and FEMA is directed to provide such assistance.

Individual assistance can include temporary housing, grants, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover

from the effects of the disaster. Public assistance is available to eligible local governments on a cost-sharing basis for the repair or replacement of public facilities damaged by the flooding.

Additional areas may be designated at a later date, if requested and warranted.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel

March 15, 1993

Middle East Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, what do you think are the chances of resuming the Middle East peace talks if deportees are not returned immediately?

The President. I think the Secretary of State's done a commendable job on his trip, and he's worked with the Prime Minister on that issue. And I think we've got a good chance to resume the talks. I certainly hope we will.

Q. Do you think all the parties will come back?

The President. I certainly hope so.

Q. Sir, as you prepare for the first peace talks under your guidance, what do you think the prospects are for a lasting peace in the Middle East?

The President. I think there are a lot of reasons to be hopeful. Obviously, there's difficulty, and there are those who would prefer that it not be done, but I think we have a real shot.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

Q. Mr. President, do you think the United States could be helpful in bringing peace between Israel and Syria? Are you optimistic that peace between these two countries can come during this year?

The President. Well, I hope that the peace process will resume shortly. And I'm hopeful that it can produce a good result. I think there's a chance.

Q. What is your reaction to terrorist action in Israel today and the day before? If you've heard about it, what do you think about it?

The President. Yes, I've heard about it, and I'm disturbed about it. I hope it won't deter any of the parties involved from seeking a genuine long-term peace. But the larger security interests of all the nations involved still argue for trying to have a good-faith effort at the peace process.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:35 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel

March 15, 1993

The President. Good afternoon. It's a great pleasure for me to welcome Prime Minister Rabin back to Washington. Since we first met here last August, much has changed. But one thing I can say definitely will never change is the unique bond that unites the United States and Israel. It is a bond that goes back to the founding of the state of Israel and beyond, based on shared values and shared ideals.

Israel's democracy is the bedrock on which our relationship stands. It's a shining example for people around the world who are on the frontline of the struggle for democracy in their own lands. Our relationship is also based on our common interest in a more stable and peaceful Middle East, a Middle East that will