

Remarks on the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles September 13, 1993

Thank you very much. I never thought I would enter what may well be the first meeting of its kind in the history of our country—[*ap-
plause*]*—*that I would enter this meeting hearing our erudite Vice President quote Lao Tse. But today, I think we could solve all our problems with China, too, and everything else. All things are possible today.

I do want to acknowledge the presence, also, of a person here who has done a lot of wonderful work on this and the other foreign policy efforts we've made since I've been President, my National Security Adviser, Tony Lake.

I want to thank all of you for the work that so many of you have done, many of you for years and years and years, to help make this day come. I know well that there were a lot of people—I couldn't help when I was looking out at that crowd today, I thought there were so many people I wish I had the luxury of just standing up and mentioning, because I knew of the things which have been done to help this day come to pass. And I thank you all.

I know that most of what needs to be said specifically has already been said, so let me just say this: I am convinced that the United States must assume a very heavy role of responsibility to make this work, to implement this agreement, and that means I must ask you for two or three things, specifically. First of all, this is a difficult time for our country and with our own borders, and a lot of our own people are very insecure in a profoundly different way than the insecurities about which we just talked today.

We simply cannot afford to sort of fold up our tent and draw inward. We can't afford to do it in matters of trade, we can't afford to do it in matters of foreign policy, and we certainly can't afford to do it when we have been given a millennial opportunity and responsibility in the Middle East. And so I ask you, together and individually, to do what you can to help influence the Members of Congress whom you know, without regard to their party, to recommit themselves to the engagement and leadership of the United States in the Middle East.

I have been profoundly impressed by the broad, and deep bipartisan support in the Con-

gress for this agreement. But everyone must understand that this agreement now has to be implemented. A lot of the complicated details are left. And frankly, even beyond the financial issues, the United States is perhaps in the best position of any country just to help with the mechanics of the election, with the mechanics of the law enforcement issue, with a whole series of complex, factual issues, which have to be worked through. And if we are leading, then we can send American who are Jewish or Arab to go there to work with this process. So the beginning is a sense that there is still the work to be done and a commitment to do it in the Congress.

Secondly, there is an enormous amount of work that can be done by private citizens. Many of you have been doing that and giving of your time and money for a very long time. Now, you'll be given the chance to do it in a different context, and I hope we will explore ways that this group can stay together, work together, and define common projects, because I think that that will help to shape the attitudes of the people who live in the region, what we do here as Americans together in specific terms as private citizens as well as through Government channels.

And finally, let me say that if there's one lesson I learned in my own life in politics here in America and one that I relearn every time I leave the White House and go out and talk to ordinary citizens in this very difficult time, it is that no public enterprise can flourish unless there is trust and security. Indeed, one of the reasons that I think the Vice President's work on the National Performance Review is so important—if I might just veer off and then come back to this subject—is that because our Government for so long has had not only a budget deficit and an investment deficit but a general performance deficit, there is this huge trust deficit in America, which makes it difficult for us to do what we ought to do. And when millions and millions of our people are profoundly insecure, it is even more difficult for them to restore their trust.

If that is true in America, how much more difficult must it be in the Middle East when

the very issues of survival have been confronting people for a very long time now? On the other hand, unless the political leadership which made this agreement winds up stronger for doing it, we won't be able to succeed and move on to the next steps and ultimately conclude this whole process in a way that will really get the job done.

And so the last thing I want to ask you to do is, again, individually and collectively, to make as many personal contacts as you can with people in the region to tell them you support this, the United States is going to stand for peace and security and progress, and they should give their trust to this process. It is clear to me now that the major threat to our success going forward is not necessarily all those who wish to wreck the peace by continuing the killing of innocent noncombatants but the thin veneer of hope which might be pierced before it gets too deep and strong to be broken.

So we, you and I, we have a big responsibility to strengthen the support for the people who did this among their constituents, not to interfere in the internal affairs of Israel or the PLO but simply to make it clear that we are going to be there and that we believe in it, and that we believe it will enhance security and make

trust more possible and make all the parties ultimately over the long run more reliable. I think this is a very big deal. Any many of you in some ways are in a unique position to manifest your belief in that.

So those are the things we must do. We have to have the support in the United States for our Government to take the lead in implementing the agreement. We have to have you and people like you, more of you, willing to undertake projects individually, as groups, and perhaps jointly as citizens, private citizens, that will reinforce what has been done. And we must begin immediately to make it absolutely clear that we support this decision and the people who made it for making it and that we will have more security for doing it.

If we can do those three things, then we can honor what happened here today, and we can validate the feelings we all had. And instead of just being a magic moment in history, it will truly be a turning point. That's what I think it is.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:24 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building.

Remarks at a Dinner Honoring Former Presidents *September 13, 1993*

Ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention please. The microphone's not on, so I'll just speak.

First, let me welcome you all to the White House and thank you all for being part of a great and promising day for the United States and for the Middle East and for the entire world.

I am so pleased that we could end this magnificent day with a gathering of many of the great American leaders who made this day possible. I want to salute all my predecessors who are here: President Ford, President Carter, President Bush, and especially acknowledge the contributions of President Carter at Camp David and President Bush in starting the peace talks in Madrid, President Ford for his wise leadership during a pivotal time in the history of the

Middle East. I want to thank the Secretaries of State who worked tirelessly over many years for peace in the Middle East: Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, Cyrus Vance, James Baker, Larry Eagleburger, and of course, my own Secretary and good friend, Warren Christopher. I thank the Congress for the essential role that it plays in providing the guidance, the resources, and the bipartisan support. The Speaker is here and our majority leader, Dick Gephardt, the Senate and House whips, Senators Ford and Simpson, Congressmen Bonior and Gingrich. And I want to thank all the rest of you who are here who have made a contribution to the remarkable events that are unfolding today.

In this room we represent both political parties and, I think it's fair to say, a fairly wide array of views about public events. But we do