

pared to what happens if you do, the problems that people associate with the agreement will seem to be associated with the status quo more than with the agreement. And that's what I believe. So we're going to talk about that, and we're just going to keep working on it, to see if we can pass it.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, how did you manage to convince Crown Prince Hassan and Foreign Minister Peres to come over to the White House this afternoon and have this open meeting? There have been secret meetings before, but this is the first time they've met at that kind of an open level. How important is it?

The President. I think it's quite important, because I think it's important that their people

see them working together. As you know, I had hoped we would see some more states, Arab states, willing to lift the embargo. And right now, we're not making a lot of progress on that, but I think we will. I think this is an important next step. We just have to get these folks comfortable dealing with each other and being seen dealing with each other among their own people. That was the donors conference that we're having in Washington today. I think it will give a real boost to the peace process.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:08 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. During the exchange, the President referred to Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of Israel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on the Middle East Peace Process

October 1, 1993

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I have a brief statement and then I want to give the Crown Prince and the Foreign Minister an opportunity to make a few remarks.

I have just had the privilege of hosting what to date has been an unprecedented meeting in the Oval Office between His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of Israel. This meeting is another important step on the road toward a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

With me in the Oval Office were Shimon Peres, a principal architect of the pathbreaking Israel-PLO agreement, and Crown Prince Hassan, a leader who has literally devoted his life to the promotion of peace and a better future for his entire region. I am grateful to both of them for accepting my invitation to further the cause of peace.

On September 13th we bore witness to an event that should serve as a turning point in the history of the Middle East. Then I spoke of my commitment to help build a new future for the Middle East and all its people. Today we have taken two additional steps to turn that hope into reality.

This morning at the State Department, in an extraordinary demonstration of international support for peace, 43 nations from every region of the world helped to usher in this new era by providing their political and financial backing to those who would make peace in the Middle East. They pledged more than \$600 million in immediate needs of the Palestinians and over \$2 billion over the next 5 years to help establish Palestinian self-government.

And now this meeting has just taken place in the Oval Office, coming as it does some 2 weeks after Jordan and Israel signed their agreement on a common agenda to guide their negotiations. This symbolizes a new relationship between Jordan and Israel, marked by dialog and acceptance rather than confrontation and rejection.

The special relationship between the United States and Israel is central to the pursuit of peace, and I want to emphasize the great importance the United States attaches to Jordan's critical role in achieving lasting peace in the region.

In our meeting, both the Crown Prince and the Foreign Minister spoke of their hopes for the future of peace and prosperity for Israelis, Palestinians, Syrians, Lebanese, and Jordanians

all alike, indeed, for the entire region. To help to work toward this goal they discussed ways to give more energy and force to their bilateral negotiations to resolve all outstanding issues.

They also agreed today that Israel and Jordan should establish a joint economic committee, much like the one agreed to in the Israel-PLO agreement of 2½ weeks ago. And we all agreed that Israel, Jordan, and the United States should establish a working group to be convened by the United States with two representatives from each country so that Israel and Jordan can agree, together with this Nation acting as facilitator, on the next steps in economic development in their two nations. They share so much in common, as they both pointed out. Now they want a common economic agenda.

They also agreed to work through this working group on common steps to reduce the certification in the area. We want to reduce the problems of the environment and especially the problems the desert presents as a part of the long-term economic growth of the Middle East, and especially of Israel and Jordan.

And finally, they both agreed that we should all get to work as soon as possible. That's the kind of action and the kind of attitude that I hope we can keep alive, coming as it does on the heels of so many other encouraging signs in the Middle East.

Finally, let me say that they spoke of their common commitment to work in close coordination with the Palestinians as this peace process goes forward. In this way, we can all act as partners with the Palestinians and work toward our common goals.

Let me say personally that I enjoyed this meeting very much. I applaud the Crown Prince. I applaud the Foreign Minister for coming here, for being a part of it. We believe that together we can work toward a peace that benefits everyone. And we believe there are things we can be doing now to benefit the countries and the peoples economically in ways that strengthen their inner sense of security and commitment to this remarkable process.

I'd like now to offer the microphone first to the Crown Prince and then to the Foreign Minister.

[At this point, Prince Hassan of Jordan and Foreign Minister Peres of Israel made brief statements.]

The President. Let me say first of all, to reiterate one of the things that the Crown Prince

has said, this working group that we have agreed to set up will clearly operate within the framework and the context of the peace process and not independent of it but will focus on the economic and the environmental issues I have mentioned.

Second, I appreciate what the Foreign Minister said about the Secretary of State. In the privacy of our meeting, he said that today's speech by the Secretary of State was outrageous because it was the most expensive in memory. He raised more than a million dollars for every minute he talked today, which I appreciated.

And finally, let me say, this is somewhat to my chagrin, but one of the many matters that the Crown Prince and the Foreign Minister agreed on in the meeting is that they would not take any questions today, but I could. So here I am.

Q. Mr. President, what about the Arab boycott? Can you tell us your feelings about whether the continued Arab boycott is an obstacle to the kind of economic cooperation that you gentlemen are trying to forge here today?

The President. Well, I think, first of all, they have agreed to find common economic objectives which they can pursue and seek investment for from all around the world, and they've asked us to help them do that. And so we intend to. Obviously, the region can grow more rapidly when all its partners can trade with one another and invest in one another.

I think the statement, though, of the countries in continuing their position was not altogether discouraging. Obviously, as you know, the United States wanted the boycott lifted now, but basically they were saying we have to finish the peace process. Well, we all agree with that. Israel agrees with that. No one disputes that. And so I don't want us to be deterred.

This is a really historic day. We have this meeting and the agreement coming out of it. We have the remarkable donors conference today and the results coming out of this. We are moving this process very quickly, and I am confident that in the course of time we'll get the boycott lifted.

Q. Mr. President, now that you've brought Israel and the PLO together here on the White House lawn, and Israel and Jordan today, what are the prospects of bringing Israel and Syria together here at the White House?

The President. I thought you were going to

ask me if I could get both parties together in the Congress on a health care plan.

Well, I'm hopeful. We have to take these things as we can, but I'm quite hopeful. I will say again, I am committed to finishing the peace process. I have told President Asad that. I have made it clear to Prime Minister Hariri, and we met at the United Nations and discussed Lebanon. Nothing that Prime Minister Rabin or Foreign Minister Peres has said to me leads me to believe that they have a different position.

But I will say again, the most important thing we can do at each step along the way is to build the support among the ordinary people of Israel, among the Palestinians, among the Jordanians for the agreements that have been made, for the processes that are underway, so that people all over the Middle East have a greater sense of confidence and security about what has been agreed to and what is being done. The Crown Prince made a very important point that I think needs to be reiterated.

We are trying to make our statements brief and our actions and commitments long. And that is what we have to do. And so, I understand that this whole thing has to be finished. But to finish it, to get to the end, we have to absorb the full implications of the enormity of the things which have been done and implement them in a way that keeps the support for the process going. And I am committed to finishing it with all parties, more so than when we began.

Q. Mr. President, how much of the money that was given today at the donors conference will or should go to Jordan? Or will all of this go exclusively to the Palestinians? And if so, what will Israel and Jordan be cooperating about?

The President. Well, what we are going to do, this committee is going to come up with a whole different economic agenda for Israel and for Jordan and for how to deal with the

overlapping Palestinian issues. And there are some overlapping ones which might lead to some different decisions down the road about what we do with commitments that have already been made. But I think that we need a whole different economic agenda there.

I think, as you know, I'm extraordinarily excited about this group of American Jewish and Arab American business people we got together who want to see an enormous private sector commitment in the Middle East. They are particularly interested in what can be agreed upon between Israel and Jordan and whether they could play a role in that. So I wouldn't rule out anything.

But the purpose of the donors conference today was to give life and meaning and reality to the agreement we saw between Israel and the PLO. There will have to be other investments, other commitments that will help to deal with the problems of Jordan, including the enormous problem Jordan has of accumulated debt. There needs to be some debt relief for Jordan, and the United States will support that. And there are a whole lot of other things that we need to be doing on that.

Yes?

Q. Do you think that this is leading to a confederation between Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinians? Is this the beginning? Is this the basis to something like that?

The President. That's a question that I haven't answered and shouldn't answer. Anything regarding the political organization of the Middle East, that's a decision that will have to be made by the parties themselves. The United States will support the process and will support the decision of the people there.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:29 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Strengthening America's Shipyards

October 1, 1993

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the requirements of section 1031 of the National Defense Authorization

Act for Fiscal Year 1993 (Public Law 102-484), I transmit herewith a report entitled "Strengthening America's Shipyards: A Plan for Compet-