

with the Republicans. I see all this stuff about their difficulties, but I don't buy that. I think that they've got some of the same problems our folks do.

I think it's clear to everybody now—let me say this again, if there were a secret ballot, this would pass by 50 votes or more. And I think everyone knows that. So now it's a question of getting the people who are in there harder for NAFTA and who know it's good for American jobs and who know it's an important part of our foreign policy for the future, that it will develop America by reaching out to the world, that it will lead to a trade pact with all of Latin America, that it will help us with the Pacific and Europe. It's a matter of sort of bringing that conviction to the fore.

And I will say again, I think that from the point of view of the Congress, the number one virtue of the debate between the Vice President and Mr. Perot is that Al Gore showed that if

you are on the right side of an issue and if you believe it, you can convince your constituents that you're right and that it's in their interest. And so I'm still very upbeat about this. But I think there will be clouds around this issue right to the last.

Q. Well, just in a ballpark idea, I mean, is it fair to say less than 20 votes away or—

*The President.* It's fair to say that I've got a list that makes me think we can do what we always thought we'd have to do. In fast track, I think the Democrats only had—when they voted for the fast track negotiations here, I think they only had 95 votes. But I've always thought we could do our part and we could get 218 votes on Wednesday, and I still believe we're going to.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:19 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

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

November 12, 1993

### *Middle East Peace Process*

Q. Mr. President, are you considering a stop in the Middle East during your Europe trip in January to help the momentum of the Middle East peace process?

*The President.* The Prime Minister and I are going to talk about what we can do to keep this going, but that's not one of the things that's been raised so far by anyone.

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

Q. President Clinton, is King Hussein strong enough to make peace with Israel before President Asad?

*The President.* I think he's in a good position to proceed now. And of course, we all have come out for a process that will lead to comprehensive peace in the Middle East. But I think King Hussein obviously wants peace, and

the recent elections must surely encourage him. I think the people of Jordan want peace.

Q. Do you think there's a chance to reach any progress with the Syrians?

*The President.* I hope so. We're going to discuss that today and a number of other issues. Over the long run, I think we'll have to make progress with everyone.

### *PLO Terrorism*

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, what's your comment on the involvement of PLO people in the kidnapping and killing of an Israeli?

*Prime Minister Rabin.* We consider it as a great and dangerous violation of the commitment of the PLO. In the letter that was signed by the Chairman of the PLO to me, he committed himself to renounce and reject terrorism. Keeping commitments is the basis for the advancement towards peace. We'll keep our commitments; we demand them to keep their commitments and to come up openly in renouncing

and taking the disciplined measures to which he is committed, as it is written in the letter that he signed and sent to me.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:41 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

## The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel *November 12, 1993*

*The President.* Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It's a great pleasure for me once again to have the opportunity to host my friend Prime Minister Rabin. I first welcomed him to the White House last March. At that time, he stated with great conviction that he felt the time had come to make peace and that he was ready to make the necessary steps and to take the necessary risks for peace. I told him that if that were to be the case, it was the job of the United States to minimize those risks. We both committed to make 1993 a year of breakthrough for peace in the Middle East.

On September 13, that commitment was transformed into history through the simple handshake on the South Lawn of the White House. Israel's historic effort with the Palestinians was due, in large measure, to the courageous statesmanship of Prime Minister Rabin.

Shortly thereafter, the United States convened a donors' conference to help provide the funds necessary to speed and facilitate the reconciliation. Yet there is still much work to be done to turn the promise of September 13th into a comprehensive and lasting peace. The Prime Minister and I have agreed it must be a peace that secures Israel's existence and one that endures for generations. We agreed on the need for prompt and effective implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli accord. We must not allow the opponents of that agreement to derail the new progress that this year has brought. And leaders who seek peace must speak out in a loud and clear voice against those who would destroy those aspirations for peace.

The Prime Minister and I discussed the next step toward our common objectives. We agreed that peace between Israel and Syria is essential to achieving that objective of comprehensive peace. I told the Prime Minister that I have been delighted by the progress Israel has made

with Jordan following the historic meeting between Crown Prince Hassan and Foreign Minister Peres, which I hosted a few weeks ago. We discussed how the United States and Israel, working together, can achieve a peace agreement with Jordan and Israel in the near future. Morocco, Tunisia, Indonesia, and other Arab and Muslim states have also taken encouraging steps to respond to Israel's peace commitments.

I told the Prime Minister that I believe even more needs to be done to reinforce the progress already made by the PLO and Jordan. In particular, I think the time has come to end the Arab boycott of Israel, a relic of past animosity that simply has no place in the architecture of peaceful relations we are all working to build in the Middle East.

During our talks we discussed what the United States can do to enhance Israel's security as it comes to grips with the very real risks it is taking to achieve this peace.

I reaffirmed my commitment to work with the Congress, to maintain our present levels of assistance, and to consult with Congress to consider how we can use loan guarantees and other forms of assistance to Israel to help Israel defray the cost of peace.

We also discussed ways the United States can help Israel defend itself from its adversaries and long-term threats to its security. And I renewed America's unshakable pledge to maintain and enhance Israel's qualitative security edge.

Mr. Prime Minister, as you go home, I hope you will tell your people that as they turn their energies and talents to the hard and daring work of building that comprehensive peace, the American people will stand by them.

*Prime Minister Rabin.* Mr. President, the Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, ladies and gentlemen. A few weeks ago we took part in the historical moment of signing