

And we intend to do that, and that's what we're going to discuss here.

*Abu Abbas*

Q. Mr. President, 99 Senators asked for you to—and for Chairman Arafat to authorize the extradition of Abu Abbas, the mastermind of the *Achille Lauro* hijacking. Will you ask the Justice Department to issue an extradition request?

And Chairman Arafat, would you honor such a request if it came from the United States?

*Chairman Arafat.* We should not forget that Abu Abbas came and attended the PNC and voted to change the Covenant of the PLO and to support the peace process.

*Middle East Peace Process*

Q. Mr. Arafat, Mr. Peres said this week that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel forever, and Mr. Savir said the right to return is not going to be given to the Palestinians. What are you going to talk about in the final talks of negotiations, only the settlement?

*Chairman Arafat.* No, according to what has been agreed upon and what had been signed in Washington and in Cairo and in Washington, that this has to be discussed with other matters—Jerusalem—settlements, borders, and relation with neighbors.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:03 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. During the exchange, reporters referred to President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria and Uri Savir, Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

## Remarks Honoring the United States Olympic Committee's Champions in Life

*May 1, 1996*

Thank you very much. Let me say that whoever organized this program so that I could follow Buddy Lee—[*laughter*—]—should take up another line of work. [*Laughter*] Wasn't he wonderful? Let's give him another hand. [*Applause*]

And thank you, Bonnie Blair, for your story and your example. Thank you, Ralph Neal, for letting us come here to Eastern. I thank the Senior High School Band, and I thank the wonderful Eastern High School Choir that sings for us every Christmas, I'm told. I thank the students from Elliot and Payne and the Head Start kids who are here; thank you. I want to thank Al Oerter and the representatives of the U.S. Olympic Committee and all the Champions in Life who are here.

I am so honored to be here with you today. And I hope that all of you have enjoyed this just as much as I have and has gotten just as much as I have out of it.

You know, I'm very proud that the United States is going to be hosting the Olympics again and that this is the 100th anniversary of the modern games. I'm proud that there will be people from 197 different nations coming here. And when I see these folks behind me, the

Olympians and the Paralympians, I know that they will see America at its best.

They'll see our diversity and our unity. They'll see that we have differences that don't divide us. They'll see that we understand individual excellence and teamwork. They'll see, as Buddy Lee said, that no champion wins alone, not in athletics and not in life. There's always a parent who cares or a teacher who listens or a coach who believes or a friend who encourages or a church and community that supports.

And behind them, there must be an America—an America where every child, without regard to race or gender or however they start out in life, has a chance to make the most of his or her own life through a decent education and safe streets and a clean environment and a brighter future.

We know that it takes extraordinary individual effort to achieve. The Vice President talked about Jeff Blatnick's heroism in the face of his cancer. We know that there are incredible stories of heroism here on this stage and throughout the Olympic teams: people like Deanna Sodoma, a cyclist until she was paralyzed, and now she will race in a wheelchair in the

Paralympics, still an Olympic champion; people like Bill Demby, who lost both his legs serving our country in Vietnam, and is now a member of our Paralympics volleyball team.

All these athletes, each in their own way, and in some special way the members of the Paralympics team, remind us that we all have a lot of important muscles in our body, but the most important muscle we ever use on the field of competition as well as in life is the heart. Having heart means doing the very best we can with our God-given capacity, whatever that is, just like Bonnie Blair said.

If you young people have heart, you will remember the pledge that Buddy Lee got you to make: You'll stay in school; you'll stay drug-free; you'll stay away from gangs and violence; and you'll get into developing your minds and your bodies. If you have heart, you know you can be a better student, a better athlete, a better musician, and you can be a good son or daughter, a good brother or sister, a good friend. If you have heart, you know that you have to respect yourself and others, and you have to show the responsibility that every human being can that makes you a champion.

A lot of heart has gone into putting the Olympics together. In the final weeks, it's all coming together. There are a lot of people being recognized in the Olympics for what they do every day, not as athletic champions but because they are champion human beings.

Today, this day, in Boulder City, Nevada, a woman named Irene Wisner is carrying the Olympic torch on its way to Opening Day in Atlanta, July 19th. Most of you have probably never heard of Irene Wisner. She won't be in the Olympics; she is 74 years old. The children in Washington, DC, don't know her, but there are 100 children who know her very well because they were abused children, abandoned children and no one would take care of them, but this one 74-year-old woman took 100 of these children into her love and life to give them a better chance. And for that service, she was one of many Americans selected to carry the Olympic torch.

There are people like that all around. Just this morning before I came out here, I was with one of your fellow students in Washington, Alicia Brown, a young woman who made a television spot with me about violence because she had lost friends of hers, and she was speaking out not only personally but to all the people

of this country against violence against our young people. I thank her for that, and I hope all of you will do that in your individual lives.

I hope you young people will watch this torch as it travels through 42 States and 15,000 miles. It will follow the work of countless volunteers who are trying to make this country better. They've cleaned roads, painted houses, even shuttled neighbors to places where they can see the torch passed. I want you all to cheer on our torchbearers and follow their example by holding high the torch of good citizenship in your own lives.

And that's what I want to say, finally, about these Champions of Life behind me. Yes, they all have succeeded in athletics. Yes, many of them have succeeded against extraordinary odds, and every one of them has achieved something extraordinary against the odds. But what they are doing now is in some ways more important because they are trying to set an example for the next generation of champions. We should be grateful to them. And I'd like to ask you to recognize all of them with a warm round of applause. [Applause]

The America these champions represent is a place where individual dreams must be realized through our common efforts, a place where all Americans who are willing to work hard can succeed, a place where we have different points of view and different heritages, but a place where, like the champions here today, we come together as a team, wearing the colors of liberty and freedom, respecting our honest differences and working together to help each of us clear life's highest hurdles together. One America, good for all, where we all work for the common good—this is the America we want the world to see in Atlanta, and this is the America that we want you young people to grow up in.

Good luck. God bless you, and God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. in the stadium at Eastern High School. In his remarks, he referred to Buddy Lee, U.S. Olympic Greco-Roman wrestling team member; Olympic Gold Medalists Bonnie Blair, Al Oerter, and Jeff Blatnick; and Ralph Neal, principal, Eastern High School.