

combat narcotics trafficking and the threat of maritime terrorism.

The 1993 amendments increase the size of the IMO governing Council from 32 to 40 members. The United States has always been a member of the IMO governing Council. Increasing the Council from 32 to 40 Member States will ensure a more adequate representation of the interests of the more than 150 Member States in vital IMO maritime safety and environment protection efforts worldwide.

The 1991 amendments institutionalize the Facilitation Committee as one of the IMO's main committees. The 1993 amendments increase the size of the Council from 32 to 40 members,

thereby affording a broader representation of the increased membership in the IMO's continuing administrative body.

Support for these amendments will contribute to the demonstrated interest of the United States in facilitating cooperation among maritime nations. To that end, I urge that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to these amendments and give its advice and consent to their acceptance.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 1, 1996.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery

October 1, 1996

To the Congress of the United States:

I hereby submit the Second Report to the Congress on the Operation of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act. This report is prepared pursuant to the requirements of section 214 of the Caribbean Basin Economic Re-

covery Expansion Act of 1990 (19 U.S.C. 2702(f)).

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 1, 1996.

Statement on Signing the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act

October 1, 1996

Today, I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 2428, a bill that will facilitate the donation of food and grocery products to needy individuals. The bill, known as the "Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act," exempts those who recover or donate apparently fit food and groceries from criminal or civil liability arising from those activities.

Through food recovery and donation, Americans can share with the hungry a portion of our country's immense food resources that would otherwise be wasted. The Department of Agriculture has supported the recovery and donation of packaged food for years. Moreover, during this Administration, the Department has undertaken a national initiative to help Ameri-

cans "rescue" food of a highly perishable, but nutritious nature. Most of this food is prepared in restaurants, hotels, cafeterias, and other institutional settings and would otherwise have been thrown away. Through this important effort, thousands of hungry people have been fed at no cost to the Federal taxpayer.

In working with various private sector donors and food banks, however, it has come to light that liability concerns are often an impediment to food recovery and donation efforts. Although many States have enacted their own "Good Samaritan" laws to support food recovery and donation efforts, many businesses have advised that these varying State statutes hinder food donations.

This legislation will end the confusion regarding liability for food recovery and donation operations through uniform definitions in one national law. This will encourage the charitable and well-intentioned donation of food to the needy, while preserving governmental authority to protect health and food safety. For these reasons, I am pleased to sign this bill into law.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

October 1, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 2428, approved October 1, was assigned Public Law No. 104-210. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 2.

The President's News Conference With Middle Eastern Leaders *October 2, 1996*

The President. Good afternoon. Please be seated. The four of us have agreed that I will speak about our 2 days of meetings and then do my best to faithfully answer questions that you have about it. And of course, the other three leaders will have a chance to be heard after the press conference.

I'd like to begin by thanking King Hussein, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and Chairman Arafat for coming here to Washington at this critical and very difficult moment for the Middle East peace process. Their journey reflects a true commitment to peace and an understanding that there is no alternative to the path of peace their people have traveled so far along in the last few years.

I invited them here with three urgent goals in mind: first, to seek to curb the terrible violence and death that we saw last week; second, to get the Israelis and Palestinians talking again at the highest levels; and third, to help both parties return to the hard work of building peace through negotiations. Today I can report progress on these goals.

First, the Israelis and Palestinians clearly are talking again at the highest levels. I believe the calm, constructive, face-to-face meetings Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat have had here will help to build trust between them and promote progress on the issues that still divide them. The Prime Minister and the Chairman agree that they are partners in peace, understand that it is vital to take into account each other's needs and concerns, and realize the importance of removing the frictions between them.

Second, the Prime Minister and Chairman Arafat have recommitted themselves to a non-violent future, to renouncing violence in the resolution of their disputes.

Third, they are ready to renew and intensify negotiations on implementing the Interim Agreement, with Hebron as the first priority. They are committed to engaging immediately in talks and to achieving tangible progress quickly. To assist them in this effort I am sending Dennis Ross, our Special Middle East Coordinator, to the region now. The very first meeting will take place on Sunday morning at Erez. They want to resolve the problem of Israeli redeployment from Hebron, and they want to achieve this as soon as possible. I might point out that these talks will be occurring continuously, and these will be the first continuous peace talks that have been held since the Prime Minister assumed office with the Palestinians.

Finally, the leaders also understand the need to make arrangements between their security forces so that cooperation is more reliable and the situation on the ground is stabilized. They are prepared to do what is needed to achieve that as well.

All of us should put the meetings we have had over the last 2 days into the proper perspective. The peace process did not start today, and it will not be finished tomorrow. For 3 years now the Israelis and the Palestinians have been moving forward along the path to a lasting peace. Every step is hard. It requires both sides to make difficult decisions and to keep their eyes fixed on the prize of lasting peace. But the progress they have made has proved to the world that progress is possible and peace is pos-