

Mar. 12 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997

their friends were not influenced by public service announcements. Mr. Jennings then invited the President to speak for the remaining 2 minutes of the program.]

The President. Well, I'm going to give you back the 2 minutes. I'm going to give you 2 minutes to tell me anything specific you think I could do to help more kids stay off drugs.

Mr. Jennings. Okay. You're going to have to make it very quick.

The President. Very quick, though. Real quick. One line, everybody.

Participant. What you need to do is make more mentorship programs, more after-school programs where kids could keep themselves busy right after school.

Participant. There should be more treatment centers and more education.

Participant. People who are in jail should have more learning while they're in jail and not just getting out and learning more while they're in the system.

Participant. You should have more police officers out on the street, make sure nobody is selling drugs.

Participant. I think you need more of a first-hand look from people who have experience with this problem to—that's it.

Participant. I think you should cut back on the cartooning commercials and make there be

more live-action commercials that get to the point about drugs.

The President. Give evidence.

Participant. More education programs for kids and younger kids about the harmful effects.

Participant. Well, I think that the cartoons they really don't believe because it's just—if they do it then they think it's cool anyway.

Participant. I also think that you should open up more after-school programs where kids have sports to do after school, keep them active.

Participant. I think the parents need to get really, really involved with their kids, no matter how many times their kids try to make them stay away from them.

Mr. Jennings. Boy, don't you wish you could get such fast, cogent advice from your Cabinet members? *[Laughter]*

The President. It's great, and I think—first of all, I agree with the after-school arguments, the mentoring arguments, the treatment, all the things you have said. But I think it's a good thing that we ended with Ally, because we know that children that have parents who work with them and deal with this issue are much less likely to be in trouble.

NOTE: The townhall meeting began at 11:06 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Federico Peña as Secretary of Energy March 12, 1997

I want to applaud the Senate today for its strong vote of support for Federico Peña to serve as our Nation's new Energy Secretary. As Transportation Secretary, Federico Peña built consensus among communities, business, and Government and streamlined operations to reap benefits for all taxpayers.

With this record, I am confident that Secretary Peña has the skill, experience, and dedication to lead the Energy Department to meet its central challenges—to broaden America's energy resources, to promote a safer, more secure world, and to help to create a brighter economic future for all Americans.

Remarks on the Attack on Israeli Schoolchildren and an Exchange With Reporters

March 13, 1997

The President. Today along the normally peaceful border between Israel and Jordan, we have seen an inexcusable and tragic act of violence against schoolchildren. I condemn this act in the strongest possible terms. I offer to Prime Minister Netanyahu, the Israeli people, and the families and friends of the innocent children who died or were wounded my profound condolences and those of the American people.

As I travel to North Carolina today to speak to people about our own schoolchildren, the senseless denial of a future for these young Israeli children will bear heavily on my mind. There is no justification or excuse for these acts. Now the leaders in the region must work hard to calm the situation, to do everything in their power to create an atmosphere in which violence is rejected rather than embraced.

I call on the leaders and the people of the region to reject violence, to redouble their efforts toward peace and reconciliation. I was encouraged by the statement which King Hussein issued not long ago—just a few moments ago—and I am very hopeful that the leaders and the people will respond in an appropriate manner.

Thank you.

Jerusalem Settlements

Q. Mr. President, do you believe the Israelis have to halt the settlements in East Jerusalem at this point? Do you think that might help calm the situation there?

The President. Let me first say that there is no evidence at this moment that this terrible incident is related to the tensions in the area

over the issues. For all we know, this may have been just a deranged person. And I think it is important, given King Hussein and Jordan's long record of reaching for peace and reconciliation, that no one jump to any undue conclusions.

We don't have the facts. None of us have any facts other than we know this incident occurred. But we have no reason to believe that this was politically motivated by any larger group or anything. We just don't know that.

But you know what I believe. I believe that this is a time when we need to be building confidence and working together and there needs to be a certain mutuality of action in the Middle East to get this peace process well underway. That is what I had hoped would happen after the Hebron agreement, and that is still what I believe has to happen if we're going to succeed.

So we'll be talking to all the parties, and I'm in more or less constant contact with them. And we'll continue to be hopeful. But for right now, I think we need to give the people of Israel the time to absorb this terrible shock.

Thank you.

Q. Have you had a chance to talk to King Hussein?

The President. No.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:36 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for Raleigh, NC. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel and King Hussein I of Jordan.

Remarks to a Joint Session of the North Carolina State Legislature in Raleigh

March 13, 1997

Thank you very much. Lieutenant Governor Wicker, Speaker Brubaker, Senator Basnight, the other State elected officials who are here, my good friend Governor Hunt, Mayor Fetzer.

I'd like to thank those who came down here with me today. I brought some of the Members of your congressional delegation home. They don't need to hear this speech, they've heard