

Statement on the Death of Dawn Steel *December 22, 1997*

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Dawn Steel. She was a pioneer in the film industry, blazing a trail for a new generation of young women, and setting a standard of

achievement for all. Our lives have been enriched by her talent, and she will be missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with her husband, her daughter, and with all her family.

Remarks at a Hanukkah Celebration and an Exchange With Reporters *December 23, 1997*

The President. Hello, everybody. Before we light the menorah, I'd like to make a brief statement. First of all, I'd like to welcome the Jewish Primary Day School students here and their principal, Susan Koss. I'd like to thank Mayrim Baram, who is not here, who lives in Israel, who did this magnificent, magnificent menorah for us. It's very, very beautiful. Dr. Amatzia Baram, his son, and Mrs. Baram are in the audience today, and through them, I'd like to thank his father for this really beautiful menorah. I will treasure it always. And it's been up in the White House during the holiday season, so many people have come in here and have seen it.

This evening I join the rest of the country in wishing you a happy Hanukkah. Tonight Jews across America and the world are celebrating the victory of the Maccabees over their oppressors and the Miracle of Lights that marked their triumph. This joyous holiday also reminds us of our precious right to religious freedom, a right we all hold dear as Americans, a right that is the very first one written into our Bill of Rights. Like the Maccabees, we must vigilantly oppose religious prejudice whenever we find it.

I know that your teachers and rabbis have instilled in you the values of compassion, justice, and tolerance. And if you have courage to follow those values, you can be the Maccabees of our time.

This year we will also celebrate the 50th anniversary of the creation of the modern State of Israel, the land where the miracle of Hanukkah occurred such a long time ago. But our prayers to God this holiday will be for peace in the land of Israel, for the tranquility of its people,

for a bright and hopeful future for all the children of the Middle East, children that are very much like you.

Now as Danny Lew lights the menorah, I wish you all once again a very happy Hanukkah. Danny.

[*At this point, Danny Lew lit the menorah.*]

Health Care Task Force Civil Case

Q. Mr. President, can we—if we have time for just one question. A Federal judge the other day had some very tough words for Ira Magaziner. But so far there's been no public comment from the White House. It seems like if that accusation was unfair, Mr. Magaziner is entitled to a public defense. And if it was fair, the public is entitled to an explanation of why somebody on the White House staff might mislead a judge.

The President. First of all, it's a fair question, but because of what we've been doing the last few days and because of what we've been—the holiday season, I honestly haven't read the judge's opinion, nor have I asked anyone on the staff for a response to it. So I'd like to ask you to just give me a pass until tomorrow or so. I'll be happy to answer it, but I don't want to give you the wrong answer.

I was a little skeptical when I read the news story, because I believe I know what the facts were, so I was quite skeptical when I read the news story. But I think it's a very fair question; we should answer the question. I just don't think I'm prepared to do it now. And I'll be ready tomorrow. I'll ask someone, and you can ask me tomorrow.