

May 18 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

*Jordan-U.S. Relations/Middle East Peace Process*

Q. Your Majesty, what do you hope your talks with the President will result in? And do you think the climate in Israel now is more conducive to making progress in the peace process?

King Abdullah. Well, I think we have many issues to discuss with the President, and one of the main things is to thank the overwhelming support that the President has shown Jordan over the many years, but especially with the passing away of His Majesty. And again, the President went out of his way, and the American administration and Government, to support us through this very difficult time.

Vis-a-vis, obviously, the elections in Israel were very, very optimistic. I just had the opportunity to speak to Prime Minister-elect Barak and wish him well. And we had the opportunity of seeing him in Jordan only several days ago, and we see eye-to-eye on many issues, and we're very optimistic of taking the peace process forward.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:57 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak of Israel; and Gen. Wesley K. Clark, USA, Supreme Allied Commander Europe. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Statement on Withdrawal of the Nomination of J. Brian Atwood To Be Ambassador to Brazil

May 18, 1999

Today Brian Atwood asked me to withdraw his nomination to be the United States Ambassador to Brazil. I have accepted his request with reluctance and regret.

Few people in public life have better combined the qualities of professional competence and moral purpose. Brian Atwood has served with distinction as Administrator of the Agency for International Development, making it more effective while tenaciously defending its mission and its independence. He has helped put the fight against poverty, civil strife, and disease in the developing world at the heart of our foreign policy, where it belongs, and where I am confident it will stay. When I asked him last month to lead America's effort to bring aid to the refu-

gees escaping Kosovo, I knew we would be getting the very best. That is what America gets every time Brian Atwood goes to work.

In his statement today, he said that Washington owes us nothing but the "opportunity to serve." I believe we owe Brian Atwood something more: our gratitude for continually making a difference in the lives of millions of people around the world.

I thank him for his many contributions and for his willingness to stay on as our AID Administrator, where he is doing an outstanding job as our Kosovo humanitarian coordinator. And I am confident he will have many opportunities to serve our Nation again.

## Statement on Senate Action on Legislation To Require Child Safety Locks for Guns

May 18, 1999

I want to commend the Senate for reversing its position of last year and voting overwhelmingly today to require that child safety locks be provided with every gun sold. This was a courageous, commonsense vote that will help

prevent tragic shootings and gun-related accidents in the future.

I also want to thank Speaker Hastert for agreeing that we should close the gun show

loophole and raise the age of handgun ownership from 18 to 21. The Senate should likewise put progress over politics and give its strong backing to these reasonable measures to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals.

I urge Senator Lott to let the Senate keep working on the juvenile crime bill and give every Senator the chance to vote on these common-sense provisions.

## Statement on the Sierra Leone Cease-Fire Agreement May 18, 1999

I welcome the signing of a cease-fire agreement today in Lome, Togo, by President Kabbah of Sierra Leone and the leader of the Revolutionary United Front rebels, Foday Sankoh. I want to express my appreciation to my Special Envoy for the Promotion of Democracy in Africa, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Economic Community of West African States, and to the U.N. for helping to bring about this agreement which marks an important first step towards peace.

The conflict in Sierra Leone has killed tens of thousands of people—6,000 in the first month of this year alone. Half a million men, women, and children have become refugees, and one-

fifth of Sierra Leone's population has been uprooted.

With the continued commitment and engagement of both parties, the cease-fire and the confidence-building measures outlined in the agreement today can pave the way for the negotiation of a durable peace agreement. I welcome the agreement as a step toward providing for guaranteed safe and unhindered access by humanitarian agencies to all people in need, and hope that the world might soon witness an end to the needless suffering of Sierra Leone's people.

I urge all parties to implement the agreement in good faith.

## Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Burma May 18, 1999

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the emergency declared with respect to Burma is to continue in effect beyond May 20, 1999.

As long as the Government of Burma continues its policies of committing large-scale re-

pression of the democratic opposition in Burma, this situation continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force these emergency authorities beyond May 20, 1999.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
May 18, 1999.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.