

But of all the people I have known in public life, in way over 25 years of working steadily at it now, nobody has the combination of intelligence, experience, heart, grit, and pure devotion to the public interest that my wife does. You could do a good thing for New York by helping her.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. at Mulrooney's Pub. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts John (Duke) Kinney and Terence McAuliffe. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Middle East Peace Process *September 3, 1999*

I am extremely pleased that the leaders of Israel and the PLO have reached an agreement that will allow them to resume implementation of the Wye River accords and restart permanent status talks on an accelerated basis. I congratulate the two leaders for their vision in seizing this opportunity. It shows that when both sides are willing to work together, their fundamental requirements can be met, confidence can be built, and the process can move forward.

I thank the Egyptian Government, especially my good friend President Hosni Mubarak, for

helping to facilitate the agreement. I am grateful to Secretary of State Albright and her team. Their personal involvement made the difference in helping the two sides to bridge remaining gaps and reach consensus.

This truly is a new beginning. A lasting, just, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is now a step closer. The Israelis and Palestinians are doing their part to bring it about. We must do ours. Today I call on the Congress to fund fully the commitments we made when the Wye accords were first signed.

Message on the Observance of Labor Day, 1999 *September 3, 1999*

Warm greetings to all Americans across our country as we celebrate Labor Day.

For more than a century, we have set aside this day to honor our nation's working men and women whose energy, talent, creativity, and determination have built the foundations of freedom and prosperity that generations of Americans have enjoyed. Through the decades, America's workers have built a strong economy and strived to bring justice and dignity to the workplace.

Today all Americans owe a debt of gratitude to our nation's labor force. Since 1992, we have experienced the longest peacetime economic expansion in American history, with nearly 20 million new jobs, wages rising at twice the rate of inflation, the highest percentage of home ownership, the shortest welfare rolls, and the lowest peacetime unemployment rate since 1957. We have fully restored fiscal soundness

to the federal budget, with a budget surplus of at least \$99 billion—the largest dollar surplus in American history.

With America's robust economy, we have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to address the needs of our nation's working families. We must take advantage of this unique moment in time to reform Social Security and Medicare to preserve them for our children. We must ensure that these programs are there for our children in the 21st century just as they were there for our parents and grandparents in the 20th century. And we must raise the minimum wage to make certain that our workers are able to earn a decent income.

As we observe this last Labor Day of the 20th century, let us rededicate ourselves to this important effort. On behalf of a grateful nation,