

the post-cold-war world, whether it's in expanding NATO or fighting against ethnic cleansing in the Balkans or working to deal with the challenges of terrorism in the 21st century. So I think it will be seen as a time of transformation, of hope, of genuine opportunity, and genuine community in America.

So I'm very grateful for the chance I've had to serve. And I'm very grateful for the results that the approach that Al From and I have been working on for 15 years now has had in the lives of the American people. I think it's, by and large, a tribute to the public and the citizens of this country. But for whatever role I've been able to play, I am profoundly grateful. And I believe that the legacy will be transformation, movement, the restoration of prosperity and hope.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. Let me say, first of all, I want to thank you, Al, again for giving us all this opportunity and for always being a visionary and thinking about the future. I want to thank the other elected officials who have shared this press conference with me tonight, and commend you and those like you who have taken our New Democratic ideas and actually used them to change the lives of our people for the better.

And finally, let me say to all the people who have been a part of this, I'm not running for anything anymore. I'm doing this because I believe in the enterprise of Government and in the work and impact of citizenship. And if we can use technology to chip away at cynicism and increase participation and give—empower citizens to feel that they're holding their elected officials accountable and they're helping them to do their jobs, that will be a very great thing, indeed.

So I would urge you to keep the E-mails coming into the White House, keep the E-mails coming into the DLC. If you have questions that weren't answered or ideas you want to share, keep pouring them in there.

But let me tell you something. There's a reason this country's been around here for more than 200 years, and there's a reason we're enjoying this enormous level of economic prosperity with our social conditions improving and our leadership in the world unquestioned. America is a great country founded on a great set of ideas, capable of permanent renewal. And the technology of the moment has made it more exciting than ever before. But it still requires, more than anything else, even more than good leaders, good citizens.

Those of you who have been part of this tonight have been good citizens. I thank you, and I want to urge you on because our country's best days lie ahead in the new century.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:14 p.m. in the Marvin Center Auditorium at George Washington University. In his remarks, he referred to John A. Koskinen, Chairman, President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and Democratic Presidential candidate former Senator Bill Bradley. The discussion, which was sponsored by the Democratic Leadership Council, included the following participants: Marc Andreessen, founder, Netscape; Gov. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire; Mayor Donald T. Cunningham, Jr., of Bethlehem, PA; Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of Maryland; and Wisconsin State Assemblyman Antonio Riley, chairman, Democratic Leadership Council State Legislative Advisory Board. On-line participants used first names only.

Statement on Signing Legislation To Locate and Secure the Return of Zachary Baumel and Israeli Soldiers Missing in Action

November 8, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1175, "An Act to locate and secure the return of Zachary Baumel, a United States citizen, and other Israeli soldiers missing in action." I deeply sympathize with the families of the missing soldiers

and have made the resolution of these cases a priority throughout my Administration. The United States remains determined to pursue every concrete lead to ascertain their fate. We will continue to consult closely with the families

and the Government of Israel in our long effort to resolve this important issue. We will also continue to raise this issue with other governments in our search for answers.

I believe that two sections of the bill must be carefully construed to avoid constitutional and practical problems. Specifically, section 2(a) of the bill states that “the Secretary of State shall continue to raise the matter of Zachary Baumel, Yehuda Katz, and Zvi Feldman on an urgent basis with appropriate government officials” of certain foreign governments. To the extent that this provision can be read to direct the Secretary of State to take certain positions in communications with foreign governments, it interferes with my sole constitutional authority over the conduct of diplomatic negotiations. Therefore, this provision will be treated as precatory.

In addition, section 3 of the bill would require the Secretary of State to report to the Congress on efforts taken with regard to section 2(a) and additional information obtained about the individuals named in section 2(a). I sign this bill

with the understanding that this section does not detract from my constitutional authority to withhold information relating to diplomatic communications or other national security information.

Section 3(b) of the bill would require the Secretary of State to report to the Congress not later than 15 days after receiving “any additional credible information” relating to the missing servicemen. Because there could well be a delay between the receipt of information and the determination that such information is “credible”, I regard the 15-day period as commencing upon that determination.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 8, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1175, approved November 8, was assigned Public Law No. 106–89. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 9.

Remarks on Budget Negotiations and an Exchange With Reporters November 9, 1999

The President. Good morning. We’re about to begin a Cabinet meeting that will be a briefing on the current state of the budget negotiations. As I think all of you know, our budget negotiators have been meeting with congressional leaders almost around the clock in an effort to complete our work and produce a budget that reflects the values of our people, lives within our means, and looks to the future.

We are seeing encouraging signs of real progress in our efforts to put 50,000 community police officers on our streets and keep the crime rate coming down, in our new markets initiative that seeks to bring investment to areas of our country that have not participated fully in our prosperity, in our efforts to preserve and protect our environment. We are even seeing the first signs of agreement.

But there’s still a lot of work to be done, a number of critical priorities yet to be resolved. Most important is the commitment to a quality education and our agreement to hire 100,000

new highly qualified teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. We will keep working with Congress to keep the promise that both of us made to the people of America last year.

The Senate’s voting on a minimum wage bill today. I urge them to pass a bill that helps more Americans into the circle of opportunity and to do it in a way that does not give unfair and excessive tax breaks to special interests. Congress also needs to pass a strong hate crimes bill to protect more of our citizens from violence and bigotry.

And I am hopeful that we can resolve these issues and the other remaining issues, especially the one involving United Nations dues, so that we can complete our work. It’s still possible that we can complete our work in the next few days and get out of here. And we’re working hard; Mr. Lew’s working hard particularly, and Mr. Podesta and Mr. Ricchetti and others, and I thank them for their efforts. And I’m going to give the Cabinet an update.