

*July 19 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999*

and down until she collapsed from sheer exhaustion. The perfectly timed leap Briana Scurry made to the left to block China's third penalty kick.

I might say, I saw the last three games, and I concluded that if I had to do it all over again, I'd like to be a goalie. [Laughter] No pressure. [Laughter]

And of course, Brandi Chastain's perfect shot right into the top right corner of the goal to win the World Cup.

The day after the game, a lot of us who aren't so young anymore were trying to search the whole cluttered attic of our memories to try to think if there was ever a time when there had been a more exciting climax to an athletic event that meant as much to so many. I'm not sure that in my lifetime there has been. It's no wonder that so many young girls like Stefaney Howell here are following the lead of our World Cup champions.

Over a half million girls and young women have begun playing soccer in the 8 years since America won the World Cup in 1991. Thanks to these women, America's passion for women's soccer and women's sports in general is growing, and we owe them a lot for that.

I also can't help mentioning briefly, again, the role that Title IX has played in all this, and for all of you who have supported it, I thank you very much. I can say this: For the Clintons and the Gores, the proud parents of daughters, it is always a wonderful thing to see women finding new ways of expressing their God-given talents and abilities. Because what we want for our children is what I think all Americans want for all of our children, whether they're girls or boys, which is a chance to find their way and to follow their dreams.

These women have sent a signal, loud and clear, to millions and millions and millions of girls that they can follow their dreams. And I thank them for that.

Now, you will be happy to know I have exercised some leadership today. It's over 90 degrees out here, and I cut my speech in half. [Laughter] Who's next? Are you next? I don't know who's next—I think Hillary is next, the First Lady.

*[At this point, the First Lady, DC SCORES youth soccer program participant Stefaney Howell, Tipper Gore, Vice President Al Gore, and team cocaptain Julie Foudy made brief remarks. Team cocaptain Carla Overbeck then presented several gifts to the Clintons and Gores.]*

*The President.* You have all been very patient in this warm, hot sun. I want to, again, say thank you all for coming. Thank you for supporting America's soccer team. I want to thank the women on the team. I would be remiss if I did not say, also, how profoundly impressed I was at the quality of their opposition.

You know, when we had the last NCAA men's basketball championship, and UConn beat Duke, the Duke coach said something I think every coach would like to say. He said, "We did not lose this game; we were defeated." The German team, the Chinese team, the Brazilian team, they can honestly say that, too. And this is something happening all over the world, for which I am very grateful. And again, I am very grateful that our women are leading the way.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Marla Messing, president and chief executive officer, 1999 Women's World Cup Organizing Committee; and Duke University men's basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski. The President also referred to Title IX, Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Public Law 92-318).

## The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

*July 19, 1999*

*President Clinton.* Good afternoon. Please be seated. Prime Minister Barak and I have had

a very good series of meetings over the past few days. Of course, we have focused primarily

on the Middle East peace process. We strongly agree that a negotiated peace is the best way to make Israel more secure, the best path to lasting stability and prosperity for all the peoples of the Middle East.

The Prime Minister is determined to accelerate that process, to reach with Chairman Arafat a permanent status agreement between Israel and the Palestinian people, and to achieve a broader regional peace that includes Syria and Lebanon. As he has said, the objective now is to put the peace process back on all its tracks.

But we should have no illusions. The way ahead will be difficult. There are hard decisions to be made. Knowing his long record of accomplishment, both as soldier and civilian, and having spent a good deal of time with him these past few days, I believe the Prime Minister is ready to move forward decisively. And America is clearly ready to help in any way we can. As Israel takes calculated risks for peace, we will continue to support Israel's defense.

Today we have agreed to strengthen our security assistance to Israel so Israel can best meet the threats to its citizens, including terrorism and the growing threat of long-range missiles and weapons of mass destruction. We've also agreed to establish a high-level joint planning group to consult on security issues and to report back regularly to the Prime Minister and to me personally.

I intend to work closely with our Congress for expedited approval of a package that includes not only aid to Israel but also assistance to the Palestinian people and Jordan in the context of implementing the Wye River agreement. Making Israel stronger and making Palestinians and Jordanians more secure and more prosperous: all these are crucial to building a just and lasting peace in the region.

Finally, I want to announce that America and Israel will be taking our partnership to new heights, literally. As part of an effort to enhance our scientific cooperation, we will create a working group between NASA and the Israel Space Agency to advance scientific research, educational activities, and the peaceful uses of space. And an Israeli astronaut and a payload of Israeli instruments will fly on a space shuttle mission next year.

All these efforts will strengthen the bonds between our two democracies. They will help us to build a better future together. I am proud

that Prime Minister Barak is my partner in this work. I look forward to seeing him again soon.

Mr. Prime Minister, the floor is yours.

*Prime Minister Barak.* Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen. President Clinton and I have just concluded the last in our series of meetings. Those meetings were held in an atmosphere of deep friendship and understanding that characterizes the bilateral relationship between Israel and the United States.

Our policy is based on the following: We are committed to the renewal of the peace process. It is our intention to move the process forward simultaneously on all tracks—bilateral, the Palestinian, the Syrians, and the Lebanese, as well as the multilateral. We will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to reinvigorate the process, which must be based upon direct talks between the parties themselves and conducted in an atmosphere of mutual trust.

Any unilateral steps, acts or threats of terrorism, violence, or other forms of aggression have no place in a process of peace. The peace we seek to establish is only the one that will enhance the security of Israel. Only a strong and secure Israel is capable of making the difficult choices that the process requires.

I will not shy away from those difficult choices, but I have responsibility to the people of Israel to do all that I possibly can to minimize the risks and dangers involved. From here, I call upon our Arab partners and their leaders to embark with us together on this historic journey, which requires tough choices from all parties.

Mr. President, Israel and America share a unique friendship and a very special partnership. Our relationship is built upon common values, shared interests, and a mutual vision as to the future of the region. A strong Israeli-American relationship must be the cornerstone on which to build a peaceful Middle East. Mr. President, the road ahead may be long and arduous, but together with our peace partners, we can and will make it happen.

We know, Mr. President, that in the pursuit of this sacred mission, a mission of peace, we can count on your wisdom, experience, good advice, and continued support all along the road.

For Nava and for myself, thank you again for your warm hospitality accorded us throughout our visit and for your consistent friendship and support.

Thank you.

*President Clinton.* Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

*Middle East Peace Process*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, the Prime Minister has committed himself to implementing the West Bank pull-back agreed upon at Wye River. You just talked about accelerating the peace process. Realistically speaking, looking ahead, how long before the final status talks get underway on the tough issues like Jerusalem, the Palestinian hopes for a homeland, refugees? And what specific steps can the United States do to facilitate this process? Maybe if each of you could address those.

*President Clinton.* Well, first of all, the United States will continue to do what it has done all along. I believe that we should be prepared to support a final status agreement in the way we have supported all these other agreements, going all the way back to Camp David and through those that have been reached during my tenure. We should support the security of Israel, the stability of the region, the economic development of the region. And we should help to work out any of the particular problems as they arise.

In terms of the timing, I don't think it's for the United States to set the timetables here. I think we should just be supportive of moving ahead as vigorously as possible. But it's not our role—and shouldn't be—to impose an outside timetable on the process.

*Prime Minister Barak.* We are committed to agreements signed by Israeli governments. We are committed to Wye. We will implement it. We are committed to the permanent status negotiations, and we intend to go forward and do it.

We have to consider, together with Chairman Arafat, the way to combine the Wye agreement implementation with the pushing forward of the permanent status negotiations and implementation. And we will do exactly that in the coming months.

I would suggest a kind of framework of about 15 months, within which we will know whether we have a breakthrough and are really going to put an end to the conflict, or alternatively—I hope this will not be the case—we are stuck once again. I use the kind of framework of 15 months to signal to all publics and ask the players that we are not talking about a miraculous solution, magic solution, that will drop upon us

from heaven in 3 weeks, and we do not intend to drag our foot for another 3 years.

*President Clinton.* Want to take a question from an Israeli journalist?

*Prime Minister Barak.* Please.

*President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria*

Q. Mr. President, do you intend to have talks or to meet with President Asad at the present time and maybe shoot for a summit meeting here with President Asad?

And, Prime Minister Barak, another question also on Damascus. Today terrorist organizations there were urged to leave the country by the Syrian Government. Is there any proof of this news that you heard, and if it's true, do you see any significance?

*President Clinton.* Well, let me answer the first question. I have had regular contact, as you know, and a lot of contact with President Asad over the last 6½ years. He knows very well that I am committed to the peace process between Israel and Syria, and that I believe that he has a golden opportunity now to resume that process and that I hope he will do so. And I intend to reaffirm that in the appropriate way at the conclusion of our meeting.

We, too, would like more normal relations with Syria, and we would like Syria to be reconciled to all its neighbors in the region. And I think anything that Syria does to disassociate itself from terrorists is a positive step in the right direction.

Yes, ma'am. Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], you're next; I'll take you next.

*Future Israeli Security*

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, a question to you. As Israel moves now to resume peace talks with its Arab adversaries, what and who do you regard as the real existential threats to Israel in the coming century? Do you look more toward Iran and Iraq? Do you have different views on these issues than your predecessor? Thank you.

*Prime Minister Barak.* Unlike this part of the world, our neighbor—unlike North America—Western Europe is a very tough neighborhood, you know, kind of merciless environment, no second opportunity for those who cannot defend themselves. And many threats might loom over the horizon without very long early warning. We, of course, see the risk. This is one of the reasons

why I'm so determined to do whatever we can to achieve peace.

I spent all my life in uniform fighting for the security of our country, and we know from our experience that by strengthening Israel and going toward peace, we will reduce this kind of threat. There are a lot of conventional armed forces around us. If you combine them together it's more weapon systems in the Middle East than in NATO. And of course, the prospect of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technology to places like Iran or Iraq create a major threat to the stability of the whole Middle East, to the free flow of oil from this region that helps to sustain the economies of both Europe and Japan, and, of course, to Israel. And we are watching very carefully these kinds of threats.

We do not aspire to eliminate any future risk from the globe by making peace with our neighbors, but we're clearly determined to make our future and the future of our neighbors better by reaching a full agreement about peace with all our neighbors around.

*Q. Iraq and Iran, sir?*

*Prime Minister Barak.* Iran and Iraq is a sources of potential threat to the stability of the Middle East and to Israel if they reach missile technology, nuclear weapons, and, by this, the combination to really launch them.

#### *Middle East Peace Process*

*Q.* President Clinton, you have met with Prime Minister Barak for many hours, and we all know that you have concluded some sort of a program to advance the peace process. Can you please tell us some of these details that you can tell us? What is expected in the coming days or weeks, and when is the talks between Syria and Israel are going to be resumed? Is there any date?

And a question to Prime Minister Barak, what is your reaction to the meeting of Abd al-Halim Khaddam in Damascus with a few Palestinian organizations that are imposing the Oslo—the peace process? Do you think that it's a significant step for peace?

*President Clinton.* First of all, we have issued a very detailed joint statement. I don't know if you have it yet or not.

*Q.* I've read it, but it doesn't say specifically what are the coming moves.

*President Clinton.* That's right; that's on purpose. [Laughter] So you know, sometimes in

this process, the less you say, the better. Let me say that you know that Prime Minister Barak has talked to Chairman Arafat, and they intend to talk again. And I have said that I will make it known to President Asad what I consider to be the very satisfactory results of this meeting and that this is an important time to restart the peace process. I think to go beyond that right now would be an error on my part, not because I don't intend to push ahead in every way I can, but I just think it would be a mistake.

*Prime Minister Barak.* I can just add to this that I'm fully confident that when we will have something to tell, we will be interviewed by you, and we'll tell you, and the public will know. There will be no secrets when something really happens in the open.

On the other part of your question, I did not get a real report about this meeting, but if there was such a meeting and the Syrians really asked the terror organizations to reduce their level of activity, if that is true, it is, of course, good news for all of us.

*President Clinton.* Helen.

#### *Israeli-Palestinian Relations*

*Q.* Mr. Prime Minister, there's an expression—

*Prime Minister Barak.* I awaited you. [Laughter]

*Q.* —that if you walk in someone's moccasins, then you'll know how they really feel. If you were walking in a Palestinian's shoes, how would you feel about occupation, annexation, incarceration for months, for years without a charge, without a trial?

*Prime Minister Barak.* I was elected Prime Minister of the State of Israel. I'm fully focused on the security and future of the Israelis. I am aware that the same way that a person cannot choose his parents, a nation cannot choose its neighbors. They are there, the Palestinians; we respect them. We want to build a peace with them that will put an end to the conflict with all the sufferings that happen on both sides of this conflict. We are determined to do it. I believe that focusing on how to solve the problems of the future is a more, may I say, productive way to consume our time than dealing with analyzing past events or their interpretation.

*Q.* Well, they aren't past. They're very current.

*Prime Minister Barak.* We are working on bringing a peace that will create a different environment in the Middle East, and I am fully focused on this future, rather than on analysis of the past.

*President Clinton.* Do you want to take another question?

*Prime Minister Barak.* Please.

#### *U.S. Role in Middle East Peace Process*

*Q.* How do you reconcile between the Prime Minister's expectation to get your support to the further negotiations with the Palestinians, the potential difficulties that Israel will face, with your role as an honest broker?

*President Clinton.* Why are they inconsistent? I'm not sure I understand the question.

*Q.* It's a cultural gap.

*Q.* No, it's not cultural gap.

*President Clinton.* No, no, explain the question. I'm sorry; I don't mean to be dense, but I don't understand the question.

*Q.* We understand that the Prime Minister strove to get your understanding to Israel's point of view with regard to the negotiations that he will have with the Palestinians.

*President Clinton.* Yes, that's correct.

*Q.* On the other hand, America is going to play the role of an honest broker between Israel and the Palestinians. So probably there is a kind of conflict between these two roles.

*President Clinton.* Oh, I see what you mean. Actually, in this case, I disagree with that for the following reason. The Prime Minister has made it clear—this goes a little bit to the question Helen asked in a general way—the Prime Minister has made it clear that however he proceeds into the future in negotiating with the Palestinians that it must all be done by agreement, including the ideas of synchronizing Wye and going to the final status talks. I'm convinced that at the end of the road, anything they could both agree to would be in both their interests.

And I must say, I think—some of you may think this is naive, especially as long as I've been doing this—but I honestly believe that the most important element for success for an Israeli Prime Minister in negotiating an agreement with the Palestinians is being able to set aside the accumulated burdens of the past to at least see them with respect and understand how they perceive the legitimacy of their aspirations. And I have seen that with this Prime

Minister. And I think when you do that, then there will be a way to work this out.

I think that in a peculiar way, the United States can only be of value to the Palestinians because we are so close to Israel. Otherwise, of what value are we to them? And because we are, if we believe they have a good point that I privately and personally communicate to the Prime Minister or his designated representatives, it should carry more weight because they know how close we are.

So I don't see the two things as in conflict. I think that, in the end, they both have to believe they have won or there will be no agreement. If either side believes that it has lost, why should they agree?

#### *Convicted Spy Jonathan Pollard*

*Q.* Mr. President, did the subject of Jonathan Pollard and his possible release come up in any form during your discussions? It's now 8 months since White House Counsel Chuck Ruff requested the major U.S. Governmental agencies to offer their opinions on this. Did any of those agencies recommend or indicate that they would recommend his release?

And, Mr. Prime Minister, did President Clinton give you any reason to expect that Pollard's release may be a possibility?

*Prime Minister Barak.* Maybe I'll answer first, and it will make it more—smoother in a way. I clearly want to see Jonathan Pollard released, but I am of the position that any public discussion of this issue doesn't push forward the purpose of having him released. For many reasons, this is a subject that should be dealt with not in public, but at most, between the leaders of the two nations.

*President Clinton.* One more over here, and then we'll take—Sam [Sam Donaldson, ABC News], you want a question?

#### *First Lady's Position on Middle East Process*

*Q.* Sir, I'd like to take another crack at a question you've been asked before. You've said that when Mrs. Clinton expresses her opinions publicly she's just doing something in public which you've done in private before—that is, have disagreements. That's the American way. But when she talks about an opinion in which she takes the Israeli position on Jerusalem, doesn't this make it more difficult for you to be that honest broker that one of your colleagues talked about, sir?

*President Clinton.* No, no. For one thing—let me say, that issue is not one that—that's not the public-private distinction. The Government of the United States, the executive branch, the President, is a sponsor of the peace process and a facilitator of it. In that context, those of us with positions of official responsibility who are all the time asking Israel and the Palestinians, we're all the time asking both sides not to do anything which prejudices final status issues—I have taken the position that my government should not prejudice final status issues.

There are many American citizens who consider, for example, Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel; Israel considers Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel. You heard the Prime Minister say that he hoped that when we had all this worked out, everybody's Embassy would be there.

The genius, I thought, of the legislation which was passed by the Congress and sponsored I think primarily by Senator Moynihan was that it permitted each individual Member of Congress and, therefore, imposed on everybody who might want to be in Congress, the responsibility of expressing their opinion on it, while allowing the United States to continue to be an honest broker through the waiver authority so we don't have to prejudice the final status issue.

The status of Jerusalem is, under the Oslo accords, something that the parties themselves have to work out at the end. So that's my position. I don't think there is any inconsistency there at all. I think that anybody who is ever going to consider being a candidate for Congress in any place in this country, or the Senate, where people care about this, might be asked about it. But we have a framework in our law, which I think is quite good, where people can express their opinion about it, vote for a law, support the law, but the President, whoever the President is, is permitted to honor the obligation of the United States not to prejudice the final status issue.

*Q.* But sir, the thrust—

*Prime Minister Barak.* —of Israeli TV—

*Q.* Sir, may I just follow up?

*Prime Minister Barak.* Please, let the young lady—beauty before age. [Laughter] I'm not quarreling with your wisdom, but look, a young Israeli. [Laughter]

#### *Palestinian State*

*Q.* To both of you, Prime Minister Barak was mentioning that 15-month framework for the negotiation; do you see, Mr. President, and you, Prime Minister Barak, a Palestinian state at the end of this period of time?

*Prime Minister Barak.* I think it's too early to think of the results of the negotiations about permanent status that were hardly begun. And I don't think that you should interpret this 15-month framework as a kind of a deadline where everything should be either fully concluded and implemented, or the whole thing is blown up, blown apart. I don't think that is the case.

We have this framework in order that different players on different tracks with only partially transparent membranes between them could make up their judgment about what should be concluded in their own track, vis-a-vis Israel, while taking into account the fact that the others are continuing.

So without providing them with a certain timeframe they might be lost or suspicions would be heightened, which as you know, happens very often in the Middle East. So in order to produce a certain kind of common basis, common framework, and common understanding about how we intend to move, we shaped this timeframe. It could not be interpreted as more than this.

*Q.* What about the possibility of a Palestinian state?

*Prime Minister Barak.* Oh, this was the question, I thought—[laughter]. It's part of the permanent status negotiations, and I'm confident that the nature of the Palestinian entity will emerge quite naturally out of these permanent status negotiations. We are concentrating on solving at the same time all the problems that are on the table—the refugees, the border, the future of settlements, the problem of Jerusalem. And I don't think it's a very easy task to solve part of the problem without solving, at the same time, the other parts.

*President Clinton.* Joe says we were about to draw this to a close. But if you want to chew on me, I'll be back Wednesday; we're going to have a press conference. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Oh, wait, wait, I'll answer the Coast Guard question. Go ahead. This is important—further—what's going on for America today, so I'll answer this. Go ahead.

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*John F. Kennedy, Jr.*

Q. Mr. President, I'm told that you were briefed earlier today by the U.S. Coast Guard about their search for the wreckage of the Kennedy plane. Can you tell us what the results of that are to date? And also, sir, since the search became a—quote, unquote—“recovery operation” last night, have you had a chance to speak with any members of the Kennedy family, and if so, can you relate some or all of those conversations?

*President Clinton.* Well, let me say, first of all, I did speak with Admiral Larrabee this morning, and again I want to say I think the Coast Guard, the National Transportation Safety Board, the FAA, all the State and local entities who have worked for them have done quite a fine job here; and I'm grateful to them.

He was actually, Admiral Larrabee, somewhat optimistic that they would eventually be successful in this area they have identified, in finding further—at least further parts of the plane. And I believe it's appropriate that this search continue. So I think they've done a good job.

I have had, over the last 3 days, several conversations with Senator Kennedy, and I have talked with Caroline, and I have—but I think it would not be appropriate for me to talk about the merits of it.

Let me say that John Kennedy and his sister and later his wife, were uncommonly kind to my daughter and to my wife, and this has been

a very difficult thing for us, personally, as well as because of my position. They are very strong people, and I think they are carrying on as well as any human beings could. But they need the support and prayers of our country.

Thank you.

*Prime Minister Barak.* Allow me please to add to it—to extend on behalf of myself and the Israeli people our prayers and thoughts to the Kennedy family that faced so many tragedies and now is facing another one, a tragedy that I believe touched hearts of billions all around the world.

Thank you.

*President Clinton.* Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 178th news conference began at 4 p.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, the President referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; First Coast Guard District Commander Rear Adm. Richard M. Larrabee, USCG, who headed the search and recovery efforts off the coast of Martha's Vineyard, MA, to locate the missing aircraft that carried John F. Kennedy, Jr., his wife, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, and her sister Lauren Bessette. The President also referred to Mr. Kennedy's sister, Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg. Prime Minister Barak referred to his wife, Nava; and Vice President Abd al-Halim Khaddam of Syria.

## Joint Statement by the President and Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

*July 19, 1999*

During several days of close consultations, the President and the Prime Minister conducted a comprehensive review of the U.S.-Israel bilateral relations, the peace process, Israeli as well as regional security, economic and scientific development and cooperation. These fruitful discussions have produced important agreements and understandings in all of these areas.

Prime Minister Barak expressed his deep appreciation of President Clinton's special efforts to enhance the U.S.-Israeli relationship and advance the cause of peace in the Middle East.

President Clinton and Prime Minister Barak have reached a broad new understanding that

significantly enhances the already unique bilateral relations between the United States and Israel, and raises their friendship and cooperation to an even higher level of strategic partnership. This new partnership is designed to underpin their joint effort to put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict and achieve a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

The President and the Prime Minister have agreed on the need to assign a top priority to the pursuit of peace in the Middle East. They have also reached a meeting of minds on the desirability of making an intensive effort to move ahead simultaneously on all tracks of the