

I care about—many of which I was talking about here today—in a way that is respectful of the fact that the country has a new President, and the people need to bond with the new President, and the new President needs to establish his relationships and role in the world.

But I think I can find a way to do that. So I'll be around. But I also have to support a Senator, and I'm going to do my best to do that, as well.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in the Ballroom at the Empire Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Hamdillah H.A. Wahab, chairman, APEC-CEO Summit 2000; Prince Abdul Qawi of Brunei; U.S. Ambassador to Brunei Sylvia Stanfield; Sy Sternberg, Paul Y. Song, and Ernest S. Micek, U.S. members, APEC Business Advisory Council; President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Vladimir Putin of Russia in Bandar Seri Begawan *November 15, 2000*

2000 Presidential Election

Q. President Clinton, any comment on the U.S. election?

President Clinton. Yes, let him talk about it. [Laughter]

President Putin. We're interested, but with respect to the feelings of the American people, are waiting for the outcomes.

Russia-U.S. Relations

[At this point, a question was asked in Russian, and a translation was not provided.]

President Putin. President Clinton, during the term of his Presidency, has caused a breakthrough in the U.S.-Russian relations. And we expect this torch to be given to whoever will be the successor.

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, how are you going to explain what's going on back home to Mr. Putin and other foreign leaders?

President Clinton. Well, I think it's pretty clear that no one knows yet who won the election. There are recounts in progress, and there will be a full accounting according to an accepted legal process in America. We have plenty of time. There's nothing to worry about.

I think other leaders should have the same reaction the American people have about it. I think they are pretty relaxed about it now. They're going to let the process play out. Both sides are certainly very well represented, and they'll argue their points, and we'll see how it works.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:10 p.m. at the Assara Guest House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on Ratification of the Convention To Combat Desertification *November 15, 2000*

On November 13 I signed the instrument of ratification for the Convention To Combat Desertification. Degradation of dry lands affects hundreds of millions of people around the world, especially in Africa. The Convention will

help countries marshal the resources needed to mitigate the effects of desertification. It will enhance the effectiveness of foreign assistance and promote a strong role for nongovernmental organizations. Finally, it properly places affected

local communities at the heart of international efforts to meet this critical challenge. I look forward to working with our partners in Africa

and around the world to implement this innovative international agreement. I commend the Senate for its approval of this important treaty.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea in Bandar Seri Begawan November 15, 2000

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Have any of the leaders asked you about the election results, sir?

President Clinton. Just briefly.

Q. Did they accept your explanation of what's going on?

President Clinton. No, they were just interested in it. I told them it would all be worked out. The process was underway.

Possible Visit to North Korea

Q. Mr. President, what exactly are you waiting for from the North Koreans, in terms of commitments on their missile program? What do you need to hear from them?

President Clinton. Well, we're working on a number of issues, of which the missile program is one. We're obviously trying to make as much progress as we can, and I'll make an appropriate decision about the trip sometime in the not too distant future.

Q. Sir, do you think it would be helpful to bring the South Koreans' President with you if you make a trip?

President Clinton. Well, I don't—he just went, and he deserves a lot of credit for doing it. I was actually quite thrilled, as I've told him several times, that the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to him for a lifetime of devotion to peace and human rights, and especially for the breakthrough he's achieved here.

So I think he's put this whole business on a different footing. Secretary Albright, as you know, had a very good trip to North Korea. So I think we're going to work together. We've always worked in partnership with South Korea, and we will continue to do so.

NOTE: The exchange began at 6:42 p.m. at the Istana Edinburgh Guest House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Interview With Terence Hunt and Walter M. Mears of the Associated Press November 14, 2000

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Why don't we start with the election? Do you think either Vice President Gore or Governor Bush is going to be able to govern effectively in a situation as divided and increasingly embittered as it is now?

The President. I think it's too soon to draw that conclusion. I think the American people are pretty good about uniting around a President, particularly if the President gets a certain grace period. And I don't think that the circumstances are as rife, or ripe, for discord as

they were in '93, where Newt Gingrich was in control and—the Republican apparatus in the Congress—and had a certain theory about what he was trying to do. I think now the country may be quite sobered by this, and the Congress may be somewhat sobered by it. You might well find that there is a real willingness to work together.

The fact that the American people were closely divided on the candidates for President, and would have been closely divided even if Ralph Nader weren't in here, the Vice President would