

## Statement Announcing the Chief of Staff of the Post-Presidency Transition Office

*January 19, 2001*

I am pleased to announce that Karen Tramontano will be serving as my Chief of Staff in my Post-Presidency Transition Office. Following that, Karen will direct my staff, work with me to develop a foundation, and manage my other public service activities. She will also serve an integral role in the development of my Presidential Library.

Karen Tramontano has spent the past two decades bringing more opportunity to working Americans. From her work at the Service Employees International Union to her days on the U.S. Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, Karen brought issues such as minimum wage, health and child care, and workers' and civil rights to the political forefront. She contin-

ued that effort at the White House, first as Counsel to my then Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles and then as Counselor to my Chief of Staff John Podesta. In that capacity, she also worked tirelessly on the census, global trade, and issues important to the Washington, DC, community. I know that in this new role she will continue to fight for these and other important causes.

Time and again, Karen has demonstrated keen insight and shrewd political judgment. Her energy is infectious, her skill and leadership unparalleled. I know she will bring that same level of commitment and enthusiasm to her work with me in the years ahead. I am grateful that she has agreed to take on one more assignment.

## Open Letter to the People of Israel

*January 19, 2001*

*Open Letter to the People of Israel:*

On Saturday, January 20th, at the stroke of noon, I will step down as President of the United States. This will bring to a close eight eventful years during which I have dealt with problems large and small, domestic and foreign, full of pain and full of joy. Of all, none has meant more to me than the future of your region and of your country.

You live in a dangerous world, and every day brings reminders of that reality. I have expanded our special strategic relationship and helped protect and enhance your security. As part of that continuing effort, I am recommending that when our most advanced fighter aircraft, the F-22, becomes available for sale, Israel, if it so chooses, will be among the first, if not the first, foreign customer. And we have just concluded a memorandum of understanding regarding bilateral security assistance to give practical expression to our long-term commitment to modernize the IDF.

I also have done my best to pursue the path of peace, for I am convinced there is no better route to securing Israel's existence. For eight

years, from Yitzhak Rabin to Ehud Barak, I have worked with your leaders as they took calculated risks for peace. We have journeyed together through times of great triumph—like that unforgettable handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat on the White House lawn—and times of dark tragedy—like the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the untimely death of King Hussein, and today's violence. Together, we experienced moments of doubt, as terror and violence stalked us every step of the way. But we also achieved historic successes—agreements with the Palestinians in which both sides took steps toward mutual recognition, a peace treaty with Jordan, and, last summer, your withdrawal from Lebanon in fulfillment of United Nations Security Council 425.

I know that the violence of the past three months has brought you great pain, that it has shattered your confidence in the peace process and raised questions about whether you and the Palestinians ever could coexist peacefully side-by-side. But do not draw the wrong lessons from this tragic chapter. The violence does not demonstrate that the quest for peace has gone too