

Week Ending Friday, November 25, 1994

**Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and an Exchange With Reporters**

*November 21, 1994*

***Bosnia***

**The President.** I would like to make a brief comment and then give the Prime Minister a chance to make a comment.

First of all, with regard to the NATO attack this morning on the airfield, it was a strong and entirely appropriate response. That airfield had been used to conduct air attacks against the Bihac region, and it was the right thing to do. The situation in Bihac remains quite serious. We'll just have to see how it next develops. But I strongly support the NATO action today.

***Middle East Peace Process***

With regard to the meeting that we have just had, let me say that it was, as always, a good meeting. We remain committed to achieving a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. I have reaffirmed my support for the current aid level to Israel as well as for certain security assistance, including the Arrow missile program in the years ahead, so that we can continue to support the security conditions that, in my judgment, are the precondition for Israel being able to make a just peace with all her neighbors in the Middle East.

Mr. Prime Minister, would you like to—

**Prime Minister Rabin.** In the last 2 years, the Middle East has seen dramatic change in the interrelationships between the Arab countries and the Arab peoples and Israel. As you remember, in September '93, here on the lawns of the White House, we signed the Declaration of Principle between us and the PLO representing the Palestinians. We started to tackle the longest and the most complicated conflict in all the conflicts of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Since then, we have im-

plemented the first phase. There are problems, but we are continuing this, the process of reconciliation and solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

President Clinton visited the area when we signed the peace treaty with Jordan, the second peace treaty ever to be signed between Israel and an Arab country and the first one after the convening of the Madrid peace conference.

We are committed to continue the negotiating with the Palestinians, with Syria, and Lebanon, with the purpose to achieve comprehensive peace. I'm sure that without the United States involvement, support, under the leadership of President Clinton to Secretary Christopher, it would be much more difficult, if at all, to achieve this progress in the peace process that we all witnessed and so many people did not believe that it would be possible to be done.

Therefore, in our discussions, the President said what has been agreed, and we'll continue to adhere to our responsibility to achieve comprehensive peace. There will be obstacles; there will be difficulties. But I believe, with the support, involvement of the United States, we will achieve comprehensive peace.

**Q.** Do you have any possibility of Syria in '95, of a peace agreement, Mr. Prime Minister?

**Prime Minister Rabin.** In accordance to the Bible, all the prophets came from the Middle East. I would not advise anyone to become a prophet what will happen in the Middle East today. We will try our best.

***Senator Jesse Helms***

**Q.** Mr. President, do you think that Jesse Helms owes you an apology?

**The President.** Tomorrow I'm going to have a more extensive opportunity to meet with the press; I'll be glad to answer all those questions. I'd rather just answer questions today on these two matters we've discussed.

**Bosnia**

**Q.** —is NATO on crisis? Are the European allies and the Americans pulling in opposite directions? Do you intend to assert your leadership to try to get the allies to be more in accord with the American policy on using NATO force? Despite today's attack, Europeans have refused to enforce exclusion zones.

**The President.** Well, let me say that you know what our position has been all along, and I think today's action is a good step in the right direction. We are moving forward. I will have a chance to meet with many of our allies in Budapest in the next few days, and we'll continue to work on it. But this was a step in the right direction.

**Senator Jesse Helms**

**Q.** Are you talking to Helms about the Israeli aid and Arab aid, and are you talking also about NATO?

**The President.** We're having extensive consultations and will continue to with the congressional leadership. But as I said, I'd rather talk about these matters today, and I'll answer some other questions tomorrow.

**Q.** Mr. President, on these matters—  
**Q.** Senator Helms' office says—

**Middle East Peace Process**

**Q.** —to the Middle East leaders like the Prime Minister when the incoming head of the Foreign Relations Committee calls this process a fraud?

**The President.** I don't think—well, the Prime Minister has already said the process is not a fraud; it's been quite successful. It's been the most successful process since Israel became a nation. And we'll just keep working at it to try to make it work better.

**Q.** Can you clarify your position on the constitutional amendment—

**Q.** Senator Helms also opposes troops on the Golan Heights—

**The President.** I think it's—on the Golan issue, let me say, generally, we shouldn't get in the way of the parties making peace themselves. And I don't think I should say or do anything on that that would undermine the possibility of the parties reaching a peace. I think that ought to be the position that all Americans take. Now, the Prime Minister

can comment on this better than I, but you know there have been American troops in the Sinai for quite a long time without incident. And I don't think any American would begrudge the investment we've made in the historic peace that grew out of Camp David.

**Prime Minister Rabin.** Do you know that there are today a thousand Americans, about a thousand Americans, that served for 15½ years in the Sinai as part of the multinational force in which there are participation of military civilians from Austria, New Zealand, Colombia, Canada, and this force is in existence since we signed the peace treaty with Egypt, on the demand of Israel?

All of the Americans there, as the others—and there is one fighting infantry battalion, American uniformed soldiers, in the Sinai. Their role is not to defend Israel. Their role is to monitor the military annex of the peace treaty, the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. And it serves effectively. No American was hurt there by any terror activities, because it is an area controlled by the Egyptian armed forces. We work in cooperation. We have all the machinery of cooperation.

No doubt, on the Golan Heights, for 19 years, we had no one act of terror toward the lines between Syria and Israel. The Golan Heights today is the safest from terror because the Syrians keep their commitment under the disengagement agreement of 1974.

**Q.** Mr. President, the Prime Minister is describing a monitoring force. Is that how you anticipate Americans being used, as monitors, or is it—which is something entirely different?

**The President.** First of all, there has been no discussion—he described to you what came out of Camp David. There has been no discussion among the parties of a role for American forces yet. That would—let's let the people who have to make this agreement make it. And then, if we're asked by the parties themselves to become involved at some point in the future, I will come to the American people, I will come to the Congress, and I will make the case at that time based on an agreement that they would reach. There has been no agreement of any kind about this. We're jumping the gun here on this part of it.

**Senator Jesse Helms**

**Q.** Are you going to see Helms yourself, Mr. Prime Minister? Are you going to see Mr. Helms, Senator Helms?

**The Prime Minister.** He's not in town.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

**Aid to Israel**

**Q.** Mr. President, with a new Republican Congress, what will happen to the foreign aid and to the American troops in the Golan Heights?

**The President.** Well, first of all, with regard to the foreign aid, I have just pledged to the Prime Minister that I will support next year continuing the aid to Israel at its present level, in addition to some new security initiatives with regard to the Arrow missiles, supercomputers, and a couple of other things. So we are going to have a very robust security relationship with Israel, and I believe the aid levels will be maintained. We have enjoyed in this country, historically, a bipartisan level of support for Israel.

Now, with regard to the Golan, I can only tell you that we in the United States must await an agreement of peace between Israel and Syria. If a peace agreement is reached regarding the Golan in which we were asked to participate, obviously that is something that I would consider.

We have been in the Sinai, as a result of the agreement between Egypt and Israel, for quite a long time now without incident. I am very proud of the role the United States has been asked to play there as a monitor, not as a defender of Israel's security but as a monitor. But that has not been discussed now; we are a good ways from that. And that is something for Israel and for Syria to resolve between themselves before the United States can be involved in that.

**Aid to Palestinians**

**Q.** Mr. President, can you shape foreign policy with Jesse Helms in Congress, and can you speed up foreign aid to Arafat, who seems to be on the brink of civil war?

**The President.** I do think we should speed it up. There will be a meeting next week, a donors' meeting in Brussels, and we're going to try to move about \$125 million

out in a hurry. I do believe that the donors must work to get the assistance out quickly to enable the people in the areas to receive and to feel some benefits of the peace. I think that's critically important.

**Middle East Peace Process**

**Q.** Mr. President, do you see any chance of resuming the talks here in Washington between Israel and Syria in full scale of delegations and military—

**The President.** I have no comment about that except to tell you that we will continue to do everything we can to reach a peace agreement and to facilitate the peace between the parties.

**Q.** Mr. President, in view of the Republican victory in the election to the Congress, do you intend to change the foreign policy of the United States vis-a-vis the Middle East, or do you feel that this policy enjoys a bipartisan support in the American Congress or in the American public?

**The President.** No, I have no intention of changing it; it's working. My policy in the Middle East is to support the peace process, to support a comprehensive peace, to stand behind Israel in its security, to increase the feeling that peace is possible, and then to make the benefits of peace apparent to all the parties who sign on to it. So that policy has worked very well for 2 years, and I intend to continue it.

**Q.** Mr. President, what do you think of what happened in the Gaza Strip in the last few days?

**The President.** Well, I think we have to work hard to stand up against terror and to try to bring the benefits of peace to the people who support the peace. And that is a difficult situation; we know that it is. But our policy will remain clear and steadfast there. We'll continue to support the peace process.

**Q.** Don't you think that the way that President Asad treated you, it was an insult from your point of view?

**The President.** I wouldn't characterize it in that way. I would say that if you look at the way my press conference and my comments about terrorism were played in the Syrian media, I don't think you can say it in that way. I do think that we have to keep working to build more trust and confidence

between the two countries. And I have urged President Asad to do that, to do whatever can be done to reach out to the people as well as to the Government of Israel to make it clear that Syria does genuinely wish a peace.

I am convinced that the President of Syria wants to make peace with Israel, but I think that my opinion is not nearly as important as not only the opinion of the leaders of Israel but the people of Israel. Israel is a very great democracy, and the people need to feel in their bones that peace and security are both possible. And I am going to keep working to that end.

**Q.** Mr. President, yesterday the Palestinian Minister said that unless sponsors speeded up aid to the territories very soon it might be too late. Do you share that bleak assessment, and what role do you think the violence in Gaza—I'm sorry—what do you think the connection was between the violence in Gaza and the fact that the economic situation is hurting?

**The President.** I don't think you can draw a direct connection, but I do believe that when you bring peace to a place, you need to work hard to make sure that the benefits of peace become apparent to people who are the targets of the enemies of peace. And the poor in Gaza are clearly the targets of the enemies of peace. So we have to work harder and more aggressively, all of us who support the peace process, to try to make the benefits more apparent.

We all knew that this would be difficult. The Prime Minister knew it would be difficult. There had never been, in effect, a national Palestinian Government there, if you will. There are difficulties. But I think the responsibility is on all of us who wish to see benefits of peace to keep pushing it. That's what the donors conference is about. And I think there is a sense of urgency among those who understand that the money, the investment need to go out.

#### **Discussions With Prime Minister Rabin**

**Q.** Mr. Prime Minister, what did you achieve in your meeting today with President Clinton?

**Prime Minister Rabin.** I'll say a few words in English, and with your permission, President, I will pass to Hebrew.

First, I thanked the President for his involvement in sending the Secretary of State to the region, because in the last 2 years, we have achieved, to my humble opinion, dramatic changes in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

We started to tackle the longest, the most complicated complex of conflict, the Israeli-Palestinians. I knew that there would be ups and downs, there would be enemies of the achievement of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem. But I believe that regardless to what happened in Gaza, we are on the right track.

We signed the peace treaty with Jordan, the country that has got the longest border with Israel, and it goes mostly the implementation of the peace treaty. We are still in process, not easy ones, with negotiations with Syria and Lebanon. This all happened in the last less than 2 years.

I told the President that I, the Government of Israel, the people of Israel, thank him for his guidance, for his involvement, for his readiness, as he once wrote to me, and has kept his commitment that when Israel takes risks for peace, the United States would try its best to minimize these risks.

And the support that we got from the President, from the administration, the Secretary of State, and what you were told by the President that for the next fiscal year the President will keep the same level of assistance to Israel, will recommend to the Congress to keep the same level, with the additions that the President mentioned, all this means backing Israel in its effort and assisting wherever it is needed, wherever it is possible by the United States to advance towards comprehensive peace. There are problems, but I'm proud of what has been achieved towards peace in the last 2 years.

And now I shall be brief, with your permission.

[At this point, Prime Minister Rabin spoke in Hebrew, and a translation was not provided.]

#### **Islamic Extremists**

**Q.** Mr. President, one more question. The Prime Minister mentioned the danger of the

Islamic extremists. Do you intend, as the President of the most powerful country, to build a coalition against the Islamic extremists and the danger?

**The President.** First, let me say that I agree that it's a danger, and we are monitoring it very closely. We keep up with it, and we're going to do whatever is appropriate.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:38 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A reporter referred to Palestinian spokesman Nabil Shaath. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Message on the Observance of Hanukkah, 1994**

*November 21, 1994*

Warm greetings to all who are celebrating Hanukkah.

Arriving this year in advance of winter, the Festival of Lights casts a warm glow that can see us through the cold months ahead. Hanukkah fills our hearts with the story of a people's deep and enduring faith. Families around the world tell of a faith that guided the Maccabees to victory and that preserved a day's worth of oil for eight days. By the rich light of the menorah, people everywhere celebrate a faith that has sustained the Jewish people for millennia.

Today, this same powerful belief that light may prevail over darkness continues to illuminate a path toward a brighter future. We have seen Israel join hands with its old adversaries, brought together by the desire to give all children a world finally free from violence. The partnerships taking root in the Middle East have not come easily, and the challenges that remain are great. This year, let the menorah lights shine as a harbinger of a day filled with light—light of a land graced with prosperity, of nations blessed by peace. Let us look forward to a time when the whole world is united in believing that tomorrow can be better if we have the faith to make it so.

Hillary and I extend best wishes to all for a joyous Hanukkah and a wonderful holiday season.

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 21.

### **Remarks Welcoming President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine**

*November 22, 1994*

Mr. President, Mrs. Kuchma, members of the Ukrainian delegation, representatives of the Ukrainian-American community, distinguished guests: It is indeed an honor to welcome to Washington the leader of one of the world's youngest democracies and oldest nations. To have you here with us today, Mr. President, is to be reminded that we live in an era of wonders, a time when people's long-denied hope or having age-old dreams fulfilled, a time when the unstoppable power of men and women who wish to be free has been demonstrated anew.

The rebirth of Ukraine as an independent state after centuries of rule by others is one of the most inspiring developments of our time. For ages Ukraine was divided by competing empires, then subjugated to Tsars and commissars.

Despite efforts to create an independent Ukraine, dictators, terrible famines, and relentless oppression all combined to deny our people the right to shape their fate. Despite these ordeals, the Ukrainian people have endured, preserving hope and their identity and contributing greatly to the glories of European civilization. Now, finally, Ukraine has reclaimed its independence and its place as a pivotal state in the new Europe.

We congratulate you, Mr. President, and all Ukrainians on your remarkable achievements in the almost 3 years since regaining your freedom. You held a historic referendum and began the hard work of reform and building democratic institutions. Above all, Ukrainians are weathering the immense difficulties of political and economic transition. In the face of continuous hardship, you have shown patience, bravery, and the ability to overcome all obstacles, an ability your young athletes like Oksana Baul showed so spectacularly in the Olympic competition.

We honor you, Mr. President, in our Nation's Capital as the man who is leading a Ukrainian renaissance. Your boldness in the face of daunting problems reminds us of one