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But I believe there is a distinction, and I think there is a very powerful argument for doing no harm. Why make things worse? Why backslide?

President's Meeting With King Hussein

Q. How was your meeting with King Hussein? What was his response to your ideas on ways of reviving the Middle East peace process? And having met with him, are you in a position to now give us more detail on what those ideas are?

The President. The meeting was good. He responded well to the things that I suggested; I responded well to the things that he suggested. And no, I'm not in a position to be more specific, because—let me just say—all of you know this—this is a very difficult time in this process. We have got to reestablish the sense of—on the part of the Israelis that the Palestinian Authority has committed to security. We have to reestablish on the part of the Palestinians that the Israelis are committed to continuing to build confidence by doing concrete things as contemplated by the Oslo agreement.

This is not an easy time. The more I say about it specifically, the more difficult it will be for me to succeed over the long run. I can tell you this: The United States is prepared to take significant efforts—I am prepared personally to do anything I can to get this process back on track and to move it forward. But I think the less I say about it, the more likely I am to have some success in doing that, particularly in the next 2 to 3 weeks when we have got to try to keep the lid on things over there.

As you know, we had some other incidents this morning. We've just got to work at it. It is not going to be easy, but I am encouraged by what I would have to call creative thinking on the part of all the parties involved, and I would include the Israelis and the Palestinians in that right now.

Visit by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu

Q. [*Inaudible*]—Netanyahu when he is here this weekend?

The President. Yes, he—I understand he's coming, and I certainly hope to see him. I expect to see him. If he is able to keep his travel plans and come on over for the AIPAC meeting, then I will certainly clear some time to see him. I think it's important for us to talk, and I'm glad he's coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:24 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Letter to the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission on the Advertising of Distilled Liquor

April 1, 1997

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I write to ask your assistance in addressing a new and emerging challenge to parents struggling to raise safe, healthy children: the decision by manufacturers of hard liquor to advertise on television.

For half a century, these companies voluntarily refrained from such advertising. They understood that advertising over the uniquely powerful and pervasive medium of broadcasting could reach children inappropriately, encouraging them to drink before it is even legal for them to do so. Until now, these companies have shown appropriate restraint. For as long as there has been television, they have known that a voluntary ban was right and they lived by it.

Now, some companies have broken ranks and started placing hard liquor ads on TV. I was greatly disappointed by their decision. I have previously expressed my dismay at this action and called on the industry to urge all its members to return to their long-standing policy and stand by the ban. I am gratified to learn that, according to one survey, the vast majority of television stations are declining to air these advertisements. I applaud that stand.

I firmly believe that we have a national obligation to act strongly to protect our children from threats to their health and safety. That's why I have fought so strongly to impose appropriate regulations on the sale and distribution of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco and tobacco advertising that appeals to adolescents, to ensure that our schools and children are safe and drug-free, and to combat gangs and violence afflicting our youth.

I applaud your public remarks calling on the industry and broadcasters to reactivate

the voluntary ban. I also commend your comments that the Federal Communications Commission has an obligation to consider any and all actions that would protect the public interest in the use of the public airwaves.

I urge the Commission to take all appropriate actions to explore what effects might ensue in light of the decision by manufacturers of hard liquor to abandon their longstanding voluntary ban on television advertising, specifically the impact on underage drinking.

We have made tremendous progress in recent years reducing the incidence of deaths due to drunk driving among our youth. We have taken important steps including the increase in the 1980s in the drinking age to 21 and the passage of zero tolerance legislation for underage drinking and driving. But there is more to be done. Too many of our young people are dying in car crashes, and too many young people are starting to drink at an early age, leading to alcohol and other substance abuse problems.

I would appreciate your help and the help of the Commission in exploring the possible actions you could take to support our parents and children in response to the manufacturers' decision to break with the long and honorable tradition of not advertising on the broadcast medium.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This letter was sent to Reed E. Hundt, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks on April Fool's Day and an Exchange With Reporters

April 1, 1997

The President. I came here today because I thought I should personally deliver some disturbing news. Mike McCurry has just made a fool of himself by taking an unfortunate fall on dimly lit steps here at the White House.

We believe he may have torn a tendon in his upper right thigh, which could get him a 6-inch incision above the place where he's torn it, but we won't know for sure until he's been thoroughly examined. And so until we can bring him back to full health, Kris Engskov is going to do the daily briefing today. [*Laughter*] And he will be my Press Secretary during Mike's absence, and he has some truly disturbing things to comment on. And frankly, I do not have the courage to stand here and listen to what he's about to tell you. But I am responsible for all of it. [*Laughter*]

Q. Will his accent get in the way of his job?

The President. I thought we should have a Press Secretary that did not have an accent for the first time in 4 years. [*Laughter*]

Q. Is there a danger of Mr. McCurry getting his old job back?

The President. I think McCurry's job is in real danger now. [*Laughter*]

Q. Will he be taking narcotics, pain— [*laughter*]——

The President. Yes. And under the 25th amendment he has already signed his authority over to Kris Engskov. [*Laughter*]

Q. How come the pool wasn't notified earlier about this accident?

The President. It's because we're pretty sneaky around here. [*Laughter*]

Q. Was he using alcohol before he fell? [*Laughter*]

The President. And beer and wine. [*Laughter*] But only after he watched 4 hours of advertisements on television. He was shaking beyond all belief.

Q. What about controlling legal authority here?

The President. Well, Kris Engskov is, I'm reliably informed, still underage. [*Laughter*]

I first met this man when he was 3 years old, in his grandfather's store. And he still looks like he's 3 years old to me. [*Laughter*]

Q. Sometimes acts like it.

The President. That's right. Which makes him a perfect choice for the Presidential Press Secretary. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Engskov, this is your big chance. Don't blow it. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Press Assistant Kris Engskov.