issues that were set up at Wye not being dealt with in the security committee, not being dealt with in the informal channel on prisoners, not being dealt with in some other way.

And so what I would say, as I think you will get a report before the end of the day here that these folks have gotten together, the reports have been made, and I think a determination will be made that a number of the requirements of the Wye agreement have been met so that we can go forward. But this is a complicated matter, obviously, and I hope we can stay as close to the schedule as possible.

Prime Minister Netanyahu's Preconditions

Q. He set preconditions for going in. His latest one was unilateral declarations of statehood. He said that yesterday. Before that, it was the covenant. You got the covenant taken care of. What I am trying to determine is whether his preconditions have been swept away.

The President. Well, the meeting we did yesterday was part of the Wye agreement. The other question is one that I think both sides should observe, which is, it is okay to advocate how you want this to come out. That's okay. Neither side should try to stop the other from saying what their vision of the future is. That would be a terrible mistake. But it is not okay to imply that we're not going to resolve all the matters that were listed in the Oslo agreement for negotiations by negotiations. That is what we've got to do, and that's where I think the line ought to be drawn and the balance ought to be struck. If we stick with that, you know, we'll have fits and starts; it will be hard parts, but we'll get through this. We'll get through this just fine, and it will come out where it ought to.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. in the Matak Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr.

December 15, 1998

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Judge A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. Throughout his life as a scholar, lawyer, and judge, Leon Higginbotham was one of our Nation's most passionate and steadfast advocates for civil rights.

When Leon Higginbotham was named to the Federal bench at the age of 36 by President Kennedy, he was the youngest Federal judge to be appointed in three decades. He served with distinction and eventually became judge of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. He also found the time to write and speak with idealism and rigor on the great dilemmas of race and justice. And because of this remarkable service and his indelible spirit, I had the honor in 1995 to award Judge Higginbotham the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor given to citizens in the United States.

His retirement was spent remarkably—helping to draft the Constitution for a democratic South Africa and teaching a fresh generation of students at Harvard. Judge Higginbotham's life, as much as his scholarship, set an example of commitment, enlargement, and service to young minds at home and abroad.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, and their four children.

Address to the Nation Announcing Military Strikes on Iraq

December 16, 1998

Good evening. Earlier today I ordered America's Armed Forces to strike military and security targets in Iraq. They are joined by British forces. Their mission is to attack Iraq's nuclear, chemical, and biological programs and its military capacity to threaten its neighbors. Their purpose is to protect the national interest of the United States and, indeed, the interest of people throughout the Middle East and around the world. Saddam Hussein must not be allowed to threaten his