

Statement on the Death of Morris K. Udall

December 13, 1998

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Representative Morris Udall. Mo Udall was a leader whose uncommon wisdom, wit, and dedication won the love of his colleagues and the respect of all Americans. It was my pleasure to award him the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award a President can bestow.

Mo Udall represented the people of Arizona for more than three decades and guided the Nation forward on issues ranging from the reform of our election laws to improving the Postal Service. As a Presidential candidate and a leader of our party, his was an articulate voice

reminding us of what our Nation can achieve when we leave no one behind. Above all, he was a devoted steward of the land that God gave us and was responsible for the preservation of some of our most important wilderness areas. It is fitting that the easternmost point of the United States, in the Virgin Islands, and the westernmost point, in Guam, are both named "Udall Point." The Sun will never set on the legacy of Mo Udall.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Norma, their six children and many grandchildren, and the people of Arizona.

Remarks to the People of Israel in Jerusalem

December 13, 1998

Thank you very much. Let me begin by thanking the Prime Minister for his leadership for peace and his leadership of Israel; Mrs. Netanyahu, members of the Israeli Government; to the distinguished American delegation here. I want to say a special word of appreciation to the young man who spoke first, Ben Mayost. Didn't he do a good job? [*Applause*]

This is my third trip to Jerusalem as President, my third time in this magnificent hall, and the young woman who was with me here last time on the stage, Liad Modrik, is also here. Thank you; I'm really glad to see you. I'd like to also thank this magnificent choir, the Ankor Choir. Didn't they do a good job? They left, but they were great. I understand we have students here from Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Beer Sheva, Akko, and other cities; welcome to you all.

We come here today to speak about the future of Israel and the Middle East—your future. Six weeks ago Prime Minister Netanyahu came to the United States to seek a new understanding with the Palestinian Authority on the best way to achieve peace with security. Today I come to Israel to fulfill a pledge I made to the Prime Minister and to Chairman Arafat at Wye River, to speak to Israelis and Palestinians about the benefits of peace, and to reaffirm

America's determination to stand with you as you take risks for peace.

The United States will always stand with Israel, always remember that only a strong Israel can make peace. That is why we were, after all, your partners in security before we were partners for peace. Our commitment to your security is ironclad. It will not ever change.

The United States stood with Israel at the birth of your nation, at your darkest hour in 1973, through the long battle against terror, against Saddam Hussein's Scuds in 1991. And today, American marines and Patriot missiles are here in Israel exercising with the IDF. We have also stood with you as you reached out to your neighbors, always recognizing that only Israelis can make final decisions about your own future.

And as the Prime Minister said in his remarks about education for peace, we agree that peace must begin with a genuine transformation in attitudes. Despite all the difficulties, I believe that transformation has begun. Palestinians are recognizing that rejection of Israel will not bring them freedom, just as Israelis recognize that control over Palestinians will not bring you security.

As a result, in just the last few years you have achieved peace with Jordan, and the Arab world has accepted the idea of peace with Israel.

The boycotts of the past are giving way to a future in which goods move across frontiers while soldiers are able to stay at home. The pursuit of peace has withstood the gravest doubts. It has survived terrorist bombs and assassins' bullets.

Just a short while ago this afternoon, Hillary and I visited the gravesite of Prime Minister Rabin with Mrs. Rabin, her daughter and granddaughter. He was killed by one who hoped to kill the peace he worked so hard to advance. But the Wye memorandum is proof that peace is still alive, and it will live as long as the parties believe in it and work for it.

Of course, there have been setbacks, more misunderstandings, more disagreements, more provocations, more acts of violence. You feel Palestinians should prove in word and deed that their intentions have actually changed, as you redeploy from land on which tears and blood have been shed, and you are right to feel that.

Palestinians feel you should acknowledge they too have suffered and they, too, have legitimate expectations that should be met and, like Israel, internal political pressures that must be overcome. And they are right, too.

Because of all that has happened and the mountain of memories that has not yet been washed away, the road ahead will be hard. Already, every step forward has been tempered with pain. Each time the forces of reconciliation on each side have reached out, the forces of destruction have lashed out. The leaders at Wye knew that. The people of Israel know that.

Israel is full of good people today who do not hate but who have experienced too much sorrow and too much loss to embrace with joy each new agreement the peace process brings. As always, we must approach the task ahead without illusions but not without hope, for hope is not an illusion.

Every advance in human history, every victory for the human spirit, every victory in your own individual lives begins with hope, the capacity to imagine a better future and the conviction that it can be achieved. The people of Israel, after all, have beaten the most impossible odds, overcome the most terrible evils on the way to the Promised Land. The idea of the Promised Land kept hope alive. In the remaining work to be done, the idea of peace and security in the Promised Land must keep hope alive.

For all you young people today, under all the complexities and frustrations of this moment,

there lies a simple question: What is your vision for your future? There can be only two ways to answer that question. You could say that the only possible future for Israel is one of permanent siege, in which the ramparts hold and people stay alive, but the nation remains preoccupied with its very survival, subject to gnawing anxiety, limited in future achievement by the absence of real partnerships with your neighbors.

Perhaps you can live with that kind of future, but you should not accept it unless you are willing to say—and I will try to say properly—*ein breira*, there is no alternative. But if you are not willing to say that, not willing to give up on hope with no real gain in security, you must say, *yesh, breira*, there is an alternative.

If you are to build a future together, hard realities cannot be ignored. Reconciliation after all this trouble is not natural. The differences among you are not trivial. There is a history of heartbreak and loss. But the violent past and the difficult present do not have to be repeated forever.

In the historical relationship between Israelis and Palestinians, one thing and only one thing is predestined: You are bound to be neighbors. The question is not whether you will live side by side, but how you will live side by side.

Will both sides recognize there can be no security for either until both have security, that there will be no peace for either until both have peace? Will both sides seize this opportunity to build a future in which preoccupation with security, struggle, and survival can finally give way to a common commitment to keep all our young minds strong and unleash all your human potential?

Surely, the answer must be, yes. Israelis and Palestinians can reach that conclusion sooner, reducing the pain and violence they endure, or they can wait until later—more and more victims suffer more loss—and ultimately, the conclusion must be the same.

Your leaders came to an agreement at Wye because a majority of people on both sides have already said, "Now is the time to change."

I want to talk just a little bit about this agreement at Wye. It does not, by itself, resolve the fundamental problems that divide Israelis and Palestinians. It is a means to an end, not the end itself. But it does restore life to a process that was stalled for 18 months, and it will bring benefits that meet the requirements of both

sides if both sides meet their obligations. Wye is an opportunity for both that must not be lost. Let me try to explain why.

Prime Minister Netanyahu went to Wye, rightly determined to ensure that the security of Israeli citizens is protected as the peace process moves forward. He fought hard, not to kill the peace but to make it real for all those Israelis who only want to live normal lives in their own country. And he succeeded in obtaining a set of systematic Palestinian security commitments and a structure for carrying them out.

The Palestinian Authority agreed to a comprehensive and continuous battle against terror. It pledged to combat terrorist organizations, to crack down on unlicensed weapons, to take action against incitement to terror. U.S.-Palestinian committees will be set up to review specific actions the Palestinians are taking in each of these areas and to recommend further steps. We also will submit to our Congress a \$1.2 billion package to help Israel meet its future security needs, including those growing out of the redeployments agreed to at Wye.

The agreement can benefit Israel in another way. It offers the prospect of continuing a process that is changing how most Palestinians define their interests and their relationship with you. More and more, Palestinians have begun to see that they have done more to realize their aspirations in 5 years of making peace than in 45 years of making war. They are beginning to see that Israel's mortal enemies are, in fact, their enemies, too, and that is in their interests to help to defeat the forces of terror.

This transformation, however, is clearly unfinished. It will not happen overnight. There will be bumps in the road, and there have been some already. The Palestinian leaders must work harder to keep the agreement and avoid the impression that unilateral actions can replace agreed-upon negotiations. But it is vital that you, too, recognize the validity of this agreement and work to sustain it and all other aspects of the peace process.

Tomorrow I go to Gaza to address the members of the Palestinian National Council and other Palestinian organizations. I will witness the reaffirmation of their commitment to forswear, fully, finally, and forever, all the provisions in their Charter that called for the destruction of Israel.

I will also make it clear that with rights come responsibilities, reminding people there that vio-

lence never was and never can be a legitimate tool, that it would be wrong and utterly self-defeating to resume a struggle that has taken Palestinians from one tragedy to another. I will ask the Palestinian leaders to join me in reaffirming what the vast majority of Muslims the world over believe, that tolerance is an article of faith and terrorism a travesty of faith. And I will emphasize that this conviction should echo from every Palestinian schoolhouse and mosque and television tower.

I will point out, of course, all the ways in which this Wye agreement benefits Palestinians: It provides for the transfer of more territory, the redeployment of more Israeli troops, safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank, the opening of the airport in Gaza, other initiatives to lift their economic condition, and new commitments of international assistance to improve the lives of the Palestinian people.

In doing these things, this agreement benefits Israelis as well, for it is in Israel's interest to give the Palestinian economy space to breathe and the Palestinian people a chance to defeat the hopelessness that extremists exploit to unleash their terror. And it is surely in Israel's interest to deal with Palestinians in a way that permits them to feel a sense of dignity instead of despair.

The peace process will succeed if it comes with a recognition that the fulfillment of one side's aspirations must come with—not at the expense of—the fulfillment of the other side's dreams. It will succeed when we understand that it is not just about mutual obligations but mutual interest, mutual recognition, mutual respect; when all agree there is no sense in a tug-of-war over common ground.

It will succeed when we all recognize, as Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat did at Wye, that ultimately this can and must be a partnership between Israelis and Palestinians. It will succeed if both sides continue the work that Wye makes possible, if they face the hard decisions ahead so that the future continues to be shaped at the negotiating table, rather than by unilateral acts or declarations.

We cannot, of course, expect everyone to see that. There are still people in this region, indeed in every region, who believe that their unique cultures can thrive only behind walls that keep out those who are different, even if the price is mutual mistrust and hatred. There are some who still talk openly about the "threat" of peace

because peacemaking requires making contact with the other side, recognizing the legitimacy of different faiths and different points of view, and openness to a world of competing ideas and values.

But I don't think that's the majority view in the Middle East any longer. What once was a conflict among mainstreams is evolving into a mainstream seeking peace. We must not let the conflict invade the mainstream of Israel or of the Palestinians or of any other group in this region again.

I believe you can not only imagine, you young people, but actually shape the kind of partnership that will give you the future you want. I think you can do it while protecting Israel's fundamental interests. To anyone who thinks that is impossible, I would ask you this: How many people thought Israel was possible when your grandparents were just people searching for a land? Who would have imagined the marvel Israel has become?

For decades, you lived in a neighborhood which rejected you. Yet, you not only survived and thrived but held fast to the traditions of tolerance and openness upon which this nation was founded. You were forced to become warriors, yet you never lost the thirst to make peace. You turned weakness into strength, and along the way, you built a partnership with the United States that is enduring and unassailable.

Now Israel enters its second half-century. You have nourished an ancient culture. You have built from the desert a modern nation. You stand on the edge of a new century prepared to make the very most of it. You have given your children a chance to grow up and learn who they are, not just from stories of wandering and martyrdom but from the happy memories of people living good lives in a natural way. You have proven again and again that you are powerful enough to defeat those who would destroy you, but strong and wise enough to make peace with those who are ready to accept you. You have given us every reason to believe that you can build a future on hope that is different from the past.

This morning the Prime Minister and Mrs. Netanyahu and Hillary and I had breakfast together, and he said something to me I'd like to repeat to you to make this point to all of you young people. He said: You know, there

are three great ancient civilizations in the world—the Chinese civilization, the Indian civilization, and the Jewish civilization—all going back 4,000 years or more. The Chinese are 1.2 billion people; the Indians are nearly a billion people. To be sure, they have suffered invasion, loss in war; in the Indian case, colonization. But they have always had their land, and they have grown.

There are 12 million Jews in the world, driven from their homeland, subject to Holocaust, subject to centuries of prejudice. And yet, here you are. Here you are. If you can do this after 4,000 years, you can make this peace. Believe me, you can do this.

Years ago, before the foundation of Israel, Golda Meir said of her people, and I quote, "We only want that which is given naturally to all people of the world, to be masters of our own fate, only our fate, not the destiny of others; to live as a right and not on sufferance; to have the chance to bring the surviving Jewish children, of whom not so many are left in the world now, to this country, so that they may grow up like our youngsters who were born here, free of fear, with heads high."

This hope that all of us can live a life of dignity when respecting the dignity of others is part of the heritage of values Israel shares with the United States. On this, the first day of Hanukkah, may this hope be the candle that lights Israel's path into the new century, into a century of peace and security, with America always at your side.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:38 p.m. in the Ussishkin Hall at the Jerusalem Convention Center. In this remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel and his wife, Sarah; Ben Mayost, chair, National Student Council; Liad Modrik, student council representative during the President's March 1996 visit to Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Leah Rabin, widow of assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, her daughter, Dalia Rabin Filosof, and her granddaughter, Noa Ben Artzi.