

July 25 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

a lot of ideas floated around. None of it amounted to large numbers of people. But they were potentially significant in terms of the psychology of the situation. But there was no decision made about that.

On the money, basically, you know, I think that the United States should be prepared to make a significant contribution to resolving the refugee problem. You've got refugees that have to be resettled. You've got some compensation which has to be given. And there are lots of issues in that refugee pot that cost money. And then there's the whole question of working out the economic future of the Palestinians, and the whole question of working out what the security relationships will be and the security needs will be for Israel and in this new partnership that they will have—the Palestinians. How is that going to work, and what should we do?

I also, when I went to the G-8, I gave a briefing to the G-8, and I asked the people who were there to help pay, too. I said, you know, this is going to have to be a worldwide

financial responsibility, but because of the United States' historic involvement, which goes back many decades in the Middle East—we were the first country under President Truman to recognize Israel; we've had Republicans and Democrats alike up to their ears in the Middle East peace process for a long time—and because we have such a lot of strategic interest over there, if there could be an agreement, I think we ought to lead the way in financial contributions, but the others who are able to do so should play their part, as well.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:07 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House upon returning from Camp David, MD. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; National Security Adviser Samuel R. (Sandy) Berger; and Ambassador Dennis B. Ross, Special Middle East Coordinator.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Community Economic Renewal Legislation

July 25, 2000

I commend the House of Representatives for passing today the bipartisan new markets, empowerment zone, and community renewal legislation. At a time of unprecedented prosperity, too many Americans in our cities and rural areas still do not have access to investment capital and economic opportunity. This legislation will

spur more private sector investment in these new markets so that all Americans can fully participate in our thriving economy. I look forward to working with Members of both parties in the House and the Senate this year to enact this historic and innovative legislation.

Statement on Signing the Valles Caldera Preservation Act

July 25, 2000

I am very pleased today to sign bipartisan legislation authorizing protection of New Mexico's Baca Ranch as the new Valles Caldera National Preserve.

From time to time, we are presented with an opportunity to save a truly magnificent piece of America's rich natural endowment. Today we seize one such opportunity. At the heart of the

scenic Jemez Mountains west of Santa Fe, the Baca Ranch contains the remarkable Valles Caldera—the collapsed crater of an ancient volcano—and sustains one of our Nation's largest wild elk herds. Thanks to the careful stewardship of the Dunigan family, this extraordinary landscape appears today much as it did when the first settlers arrived. And thanks to the