

But I'm glad that the President has said what he has said, and I think the Congress and the American people need to know that the Bosnian government would look to the United States to be a part of any attempt to guarantee the peace.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:25 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Senate Action on the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993

September 8, 1993

I want to thank and congratulate Members of the United States Senate today for passing a landmark piece of legislation, the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993.

Many times I have talked about how national service will bring together Americans from a wide variety of backgrounds, expand their educational opportunity, and empower a new generation to take on our Nation's most pressing domestic needs. Thousands will spend a year or two serving their country and their communities, working as teachers, as health care workers, or on environmental projects, while helping to pay for school.

In the best sense of reinventing Government, the new Corporation for National and Community Service will emphasize decentralization in favor of empowering local initiatives that devise local solutions to local problems. It will be bold and it will be entrepreneurial in its quest for excellent programs and quality participants. Its business plan will be an unwavering mandate to get things done in our communities and our country.

Today's Senate action is yet another opportunity for change for the American people. National service will be the American way to change America.

Statement by the Press Secretary on Democracy in South Africa

September 8, 1993

The President welcomes the historic decision in South Africa to establish a transitional executive council in anticipation of South Africa's first democratic election next April. He commends all those who achieved this important step along the road to a peaceful transition to democracy in South Africa and looks forward to the ratification of the agreement by South Africa's Parliament next week.

In separate phone calls this afternoon to State President F.W. de Klerk and African National Congress President Nelson Mandela, President Clinton congratulated the two leaders on the historic breakthrough and said, "The historic agreement on the transitional executive council paves the way for the transition to a multiracial, democratic South Africa. The United States will remain a partner in the process of building democracy and promoting economic development in South Africa." President Clinton indicated that the United States looks forward to announcing a number of new initiatives to support the smooth transition to democracy.

Nomination for Four Ambassadors

September 8, 1993

The President announced his intention today to nominate Alan John Blinken to be Ambassador to Belgium, Swanee Hunt to be Ambassador to the Republic of Austria, and William Lacy Swing to be Ambassador to the Republic of Haiti. In addition, the President announced that he has nominated Richard Wallace Teare to be Ambassador to the Republic of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

"These four individuals have all exhibited the level of accomplishment and excellence that Secretary Christopher and I have pledged that our Ambassadors would have," said the President. "I am very proud of these choices."

NOTE: Biographies of the nominees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Remarks on Israeli-Palestinian Agreement and Exchange With Reporters in Cleveland, Ohio
September 9, 1993

The President. I just got off the telephone with Prime Minister Rabin. I called him to congratulate him on the agreement that he has reached today.

When we first met, he told me that he was prepared to take risks for peace, and I told him that it was the responsibility of the United States to do everything we could to minimize those risks. And I reaffirmed that today. They have reached a general agreement, but the process of implementing it will be quite complicated. And we expect to be closely involved in the process all along the way. I am extremely happy that it has finally happened. I am very, very hopeful for the future. And this is a very brave and courageous thing that has been done.

Q. Will there be a signing ceremony Monday—

Q. Will the U.S.—with the PLO as part of this deal, Mr. President?

The President. Well, let me answer you in this way. Later today we will see what the statements of the parties are and then I will have another formal statement later in the day. If the PLO statement today meets the criteria we have repeatedly set down, renouncing terrorism, acknowledging Israel's right to exist, those things, then we will resume our dialog with them and then we'll go forward from there. And we'll have an announcement probably today, perhaps tomorrow, about what happens next with regard to this agreement.

Q. Will that constitute formal recognition of the PLO?

The President. I don't want to say any more today. Let's wait until their statement comes out. For the moment, for the next few hours let's savor the fact that they have made this agreement. As Prime Minister Rabin said, it's the first time in 100 years that the Israelis and the Palestinians have agreed on something fundamental and important.

Q. Why do you think the time was right now for such an agreement, sir?

The President. I think that there are many reasons. I think, frankly, the major leaders in Middle East, beginning with Prime Minister Rabin and Mr. Arafat, were at a point in their lives, their careers, their experiences, where for all kinds of reasons they thought the time had come. And I also want to compliment Foreign Minister Peres; I think he deserves a lot of credit.

I think the circumstances were propitious. I think most people thought they had exhausted their reasonable alternatives, and they didn't want to go on in this manner anymore. And I hope we can keep this process going.

But I want to remind you that there are a lot of things that still have to be done to make this really happen, and the United States is committed to doing our share.

Q. Was the U.S. cut out of this deal, Mr. President?

The President. No. You know the facts, but let me briefly reiterate them. We sponsored, along with the Russians, the resumption of the talks. We put on the table a set of basic principles. About 70 percent of them were in the ultimate agreement that came out of the secret channel in Oslo. Our job was to keep these talks going in Washington, and the Secretary of State did a masterful job on two different occasions, once with the deportations and once with the conflict in the Bekaa Valley, when they were in danger of being derailed. And he worked hard. He went to the Middle East. We've worked hard to do that.

We were made aware in the most general terms of what was happening in Norway, but we didn't know a lot of the details, nor should we have known. I think this matter was so volatile and so difficult that it may be that the only way the final agreements could have been reached on the principles was in a secret and totally unknown channel. I think it gave both sides the freedom to reach out to one another.

So I think we did everything we could have, and a lot of our work is still to be done now that the agreement has been made and