

Statement on Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Roger C. Altman

July 25, 1994

Secretary Bentsen and I believe that Roger Altman has been an excellent Deputy Treasury Secretary and we want him to continue in that capacity.

The President's News Conference With King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Rabin of Israel

July 26, 1994

The President. Good afternoon. I am happy to once again welcome King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin.

In the last 2 days, history has been made in Washington, and a brighter future has been built, a future that offers more peace and security, not only for the people of Israel and Jordan but also for the people of the United States. With great courage and foresight, the King and the Prime Minister have united in their conviction that it is time to end more than four decades of bloodshed and loss. They have demonstrated that contact can overcome conflict, that direct talks can produce peace. They have declared an end to the state of war between their two countries and have determined to secure a lasting peace. They have personally committed to making sure that a treaty is concluded as rapidly as possible.

When we met yesterday, the King, the Prime Minister, and I agreed to designate representatives to ensure that the provisions of the Washington Declaration are implemented quickly.

In the week of extraordinary set of events, this morning we witnessed another one, as the King and the Prime Minister appeared jointly before Congress. Their eloquent remarks articulated a common vision of cooperation that will yield specific and concrete benefits for all peoples on both sides of the Jordan River. The outpouring of support by Members of Congress for these two heroes of peace, I believe, clearly reflect the feelings of all the American people.

As I've made clear since my first meetings with the King and the Prime Minister, Amer-

ica will stand by those who take risks for peace. We will support leaders whose boldness and wisdom are creating a new Middle East. Today I have reaffirmed to Prime Minister Rabin that as Israel moves forward in the peace process the constant responsibility of the United States will be to help ensure its security. I have also reaffirmed to King Hussein my determination to assist Jordan in dealing with its burden of debt and its defense requirements. I am working with Congress to achieve rapid action on both these matters. The United States is committed to a comprehensive peace in the Middle East and an end to hostility between Israel and all her Arab neighbors.

I spoke yesterday with President Asad of Syria and reaffirmed my personal dedication to achieving a comprehensive peace. Secretary Christopher has devoted a great deal of time and effort to the negotiations with Syria, and I have asked him to return to the region soon to continue that work.

In these 2 days we have taken great strides on the road to peace. But even as these two leaders have come together, the enemies of peace have not been silent. In recent days terrorists have struck in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and in London. We will not, we must not, allow them to disrupt this peace process.

This week's events here in Washington and the bravery of King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin prove that a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is within reach. Inspired by the extraordinary events of the last 2 days, now we go forward with a new sense of determination and a new sense of confidence to take the next steps in the days and weeks ahead.

As I turn over the microphone, if I might, to the King and to the Prime Minister, let me say at the end of the statements we will take press questions in alternating order from the American, the Jordanian, and the Israeli press.

King Hussein. Mr. President, Prime Minister Rabin, ladies and gentlemen: These have been unique days in our lives, yesterday and today. They have witnessed dreams, hopes, and prayers realized in terms of an end to the state of war between Jordan and Israel, more important, in terms of our determination to move ahead in executing our du-

ties towards our people, towards our peoples in the entire region in the present and in the future that they live secure in peace with the ability to come together, for the opportunity to give their talents a chance, to make a difference, to create at the breaking dawn of peace in the region what is worthy of them.

I would like, Mr. President, to thank you very, very much indeed, sir, for your personal support, continued interest. We are proud to have you as our partner. We are proud and happy that these meetings between myself and Prime Minister Rabin have taken place here in Washington. We are overwhelmed by all the warmth and support that we have seen during these last 2 days. We recall and appreciate the efforts of the Secretary of State, the efforts of so many friends here that enabled us to get this far.

I hope, together, we will build from now on and we will continue and we will succeed in giving all our peoples the chance to live under conditions that have been denied us, certainly as far as I'm concerned throughout my life. And I am proud to say that the overwhelming majority of Jordanians rejoice with me, as I am sure is the case in Israel and here in the United States.

Thank you very, very much.

Prime Minister Rabin. Mr. President, Your Majesty King Hussein, ladies and gentlemen: I believe that the last 2 days represent a landmark in the positive developments towards peace in the Middle East. I believe to understand the meaning of what has been done by Jordan and Israel, with the assistance, support of the United States, has to be looked at in proportion to what are the trends today in the Middle East. We see two conflicting trends in the Middle East: one, the rise for extreme, radical Islamic terrorist movements within the Palestinian side, within the Lebanese side, in other Arab countries, derived from a certain source that each purpose is undermining any possibility to achieve peace. I believe that we see their fingers in the international terror acts that have taken place not so far ago in Thailand, in Buenos Aires, in London, in addition to what goes on from Lebanon and in the territories by the extreme radical Islamic terrorist groups. It's an all-out war waged by these

elements against the possibility of the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict in all its parts.

I believe that they have got infrastructure of terror all over the world. We saw it lately in Argentina. I don't want to talk about what's going on here, in Europe, in the Far East, in addition to the Middle East.

And therefore, what we have done in the last 2 days is a major step of brave people on both sides to come up and to say, we are making an important, important phase towards peace, because the Washington Declaration is, first and foremost, end of a state of belligerency or as the King declared, end of state of war. Believe me, today in the Middle East, to reach commitment by the countries of the region for nonbelligerency, no violence, no terror, can be the greatest contribution to peace in the region, and not only in the region.

Between Jordan and Israel we have reached the end of the state of belligerency. But there is a need beyond the end of war, threats of war, violence, and terror, to build a structure of peace, the relations of peace. We lay the foundations to this world, to this work, to this place. The test will be to what extent we will succeed to build this structure of peace, to reach the kind of relations between Jordan and Israel that the man in the street in Amman and in Tel Aviv will call it a peace.

Therefore, hard work is before us. We are committed, I believe, on both sides to do what is needed in addition to the elimination of war to build the relations of peace. We need your assistance, Mr. President in doing so.

The first responsibility lies with the parties, with Jordan and Israel. But without—*[inaudible]*—the United States, the leader of peace in the region, hopefully other countries, the European Union, assisting those who take risks, calculated risks for peace, we will not achieve it in the way and the pace which it is needed.

We open a new chapter. We created a new landmark. But the road is still, hopefully not too long, but still work has to be done. We will do it. We need participation of those who preach peace to translate their words to realities, to practical support of those who take the risk for peace.

Thank you very much.

Lebanon

Q. I'd like to direct my question to Prime Minister Rabin. Mr. Prime Minister, when do you expect to pull your occupation troops out of southern Lebanon?

Prime Minister Rabin. As you know, there were 3 years of war in Lebanon which the purpose then declared by the Government of Israel was to eliminate Lebanon as a basis for terrorism. In '85 the government—then the Prime Minister was Shimon Peres, and I was the Minister of Defense; it was a national unity government—we decided to pull out. But in the absence of central government in Lebanon, in the absence of military and security forces that can take control of each sovereign soil, and with the continuation of at least Syrian division on the Lebanese soil and from the area that the Syrian army is deployed, Hezbollah takes action against us. There are still members of the revolutionary guards of Iran there.

We have made it clear, and I repeat it, in the context of a peace treaty with Lebanese Government that will be in full control of its own sovereign soil, Israel will agree to peace treaty. We don't seek one square inch of Lebanese territory. The border there is defined. There is an international border, and we will respect it. We are not seeking one cubic meter of their water. All that we want, peace treaty and their capability to maintain control of their own land. I believe they are capable if somebody from the outside will not interfere and will prevent it.

Nuclear Weapons

Q. Mr. Rabin, I'd like to ask you a question. We've seen the historic handshake and the Washington Declaration. But there is topic that was rarely discussed, and that is, now that Israel is moving very quickly on the Palestinian and Jordanian front, and hopefully will have—with the advent of peace in the Middle East, with other Arab countries, what does Israel intend to do with its huge arsenal of nuclear weapons?

Prime Minister Rabin. Well, as you know, Israel is not a nuclear country in terms of weapons, and therefore, your question is not relevant. We are committed to the

United States for many years not to be the first to introduce nuclear weapons in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. But at the same time, we cannot be blind to efforts that are made in certain Muslim and Arab countries in this direction. Therefore, I can sum it up. We'll keep our commitment not to be the first to introduce, but we still look ahead to the dangers that others will do it, and we have to be prepared for it.

Syria

Q. Mr. President, I would like to ask you when do you hope to see the President of Syria, President Asad, standing next to you like his Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin of Israel? And what are you prepared to do in order to achieve it?

The President. Let me say, as you know, I have already met with President Asad once for an extended period of time in Geneva. We have talked many times on the phone, and the Secretary of State has been to Syria on several occasions, and we are working hard there. But in the end, the lesson of the successes which have been enjoyed over the past year is that the best thing the United States can do is to help to create the conditions within which the parties themselves feel secure in making peace.

This is an agreement made by Israel and Jordan. In September we had an agreement freely made by Israel and the PLO. What remains is for sovereign states with great interests and long histories to reach an accord. My job will be to create the conditions insofar as I am humanly capable for such a peace to be made, but the decisions will have to be made by them. And the successes of the last year on that fundamental understanding.

Andrea [Andrea Mitchell, NBC News].

Terrorism

Q. Mr. President, it is widely believed that Hezbollah was responsible for some of the recent bombings in Buenos Aires and Panama, if not also in London. Did you discuss that with President Asad? Do you believe that more pressure should be brought against Iran by Germany, France, other of our allies who have had very friendly relations with Iran? Do you believe that Hezbollah could operate as it has in Damascus and southern

Lebanon without the complicity of President Asad?

I'd also like to ask Your Majesty if you could comment on that, and also the Prime Minister, on Hezbollah as well.

The President. Well, let me say first of all, I condemn—the United States condemns the terrorist attacks in Buenos Aires and in London. They are, in all probability, of too recent vintage for anyone to be absolutely certain what the source of them is, but I think it is reasonable to assume that terrorists who wish to be the enemies of peace are behind it.

I did discuss the terrorism issue with President Asad in Geneva. I have continued to press with our friends and neighbors, our allies, the importance of standing up against nations which support terrorism. Trying to stem the expansion of terrorism is a major objective of the United States. And I think that there is a good chance that this agreement between Jordan and Israel, juxtaposed against the horrible events in Buenos Aires and the attempt at a horrible result in London, may stiffen the resolve of other countries around the world to help us to move against this.

And I think we must all try to do more. I am committed to do more. I think everyone in the United States would want us to do more against terrorism. And we're going to have to have some more help from our allies. We cannot allow the enemies of peace to prevail.

Q. May we have comments——

The President. Sure.

Q. Can you comment on that also?

King Hussein. I believe, Mr. President, that the enemies of peace is the right description, the enemies of life, the enemies of human relations between human beings, the enemies of hope, the enemies of security, the enemies of what should be normal between people. We have always stood against terror and terrorism, and we have paid a heavy price.

I condemn these recent deaths. And in fact, just a while ago we were discussing amongst ourselves, myself and some of my colleagues, the need for us to increase our vigil in the time ahead because more may come.

However, I believe that this is a challenge we face, to speak for what we believe in, to speak for the overwhelming majority of people. We are Muslims in Jordan and Christians. We live as members of one family. Nothing irritates me more or is more painful to me than to witness and see acts and attitudes attributed to Islam that have nothing to do with Islam, my faith and my religion. But I believe this is extremism as we know it in our world, people with blinders, with no vision.

I believe that what we have achieved here in Washington and our commitment to make a difference, to continue in dealing with every aspect of the building of the house of peace in our region in terms of negotiations to come, work to be done, and to have all this culminate in a peace treaty between us, hopefully in the context of a comprehensive peace, is our best answer to those who try to continuously destroy it everywhere in our region.

Prime Minister Rabin. The Hezbollah is very active daily, equipped with modern weapons, Russian-made, Soviet-made anti-tank—[inaudible]—mortars, antitank weapons, artillery. To the best of our knowledge, it comes from Iran via Syria—might be lately in reduced number. Their forces are deployed. One of the bases that we attacked was in area in the Bacca in which the Syrian army is deployed.

If you ask me who is the boss of Hezbollah, I would say, Iran. If you ask me, Syria can put limitations on its activities, my answer will be yes. If you ask me for proof of that, in July, in response to prolonged—[inaudible]—by Hezbollah, we went and used fire-power in southern Lebanon. And we worked out certain understanding through the good offices of the United States, in which the Secretary of State was involved.

The talks were, to the best of my knowledge, with the Syrians. If the Syrians could reach understanding, limit part of the activity of Hezbollah, it means that they have got at least preventing capability vis-a-vis Hezbollah. If you ask me, do they want to use it, my answer: in a very limited way.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Your Majesty, do you believe that it is time to convene the Arab family of nations in order to support these agreements which were signed between Jordan and Israel, and between the Palestinians and Israel, and make ways in order to clear the political environment, which is very poisoned in the Arab world, and prepare and begin for the reconciliation process between the family of the Arab world?

King Hussein. I believe this is inevitable. And at the same time I know that you know that we have been trying to get that for a long period of time. It will happen I hope and before too long.

Q. Your Majesty, what does it take when more is still needed to be done for your grandson and my son, who have met before but abroad, to meet respectively in Amman and Tel Aviv? And also, since we are on a live broadcast to Israel, would you care to carry a message directly to the Israeli people?

King Hussein. I hope to share with the people of Israel the hopes that the people of Jordan share with me that we are on the verge of the breaking of a new dawn for all our peoples for a secure, safe future, for a future of peace, cooperation, for human relations to develop and grow between us. And I hope that the answer will come as a result of our joint efforts, which I hope, following this meeting, we will be able to shepherd, both the Prime Minister and myself, in terms of the tasks ahead of negotiating on all aspects of the problems that we still have to resolve, in other words, using his words, the building blocks of peace that will culminate in a peace treaty hopefully before long.

I hope it won't be long before what you suggest will happen, sir.

Russia and Estonia

The President. Let me say one other thing before we leave. I think that King Hussein and the Prime Minister have put peace in the air all over the world.

A few hours ago, I received a message from President Yeltsin saying, first of all, how pleased he was about what had happened here between Jordan and Israel and, sec-

only, that he had reached agreement with President Meri of Estonia to withdraw all Russian troops from Estonia by August 31st.

As you know, this has been one of the principal objectives of American policy, so that now, for the first time since the end of World War II, on the last day of August there will be no more Russian troops in Germany or anywhere in Eastern Europe. And I think maybe the vibrations of peace that the King and the Prime Minister have sent out—who knows what may be announced tomorrow.

Thank you very much, and good day.

NOTE: The President's 67th news conference began at 4:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this news conference.

Remarks at a Reception Honoring King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Rabin of Israel

July 26, 1994

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. Thank you for your kind remarks. Thank you for being a remarkable host tonight for this fitting capstone of the last 2 days. And thank you for your tireless efforts toward this remarkable achievement. The world is in your debt as well, sir, and we're grateful to you.

What a 2 days this has been. It's been so elevating and so exhilarating, I hesitate to diminish it in any way with a little humor. But when we were being called in and we realized, the three of us, that once more we were going to be asked to say something, I said, "Isn't it wonderful we're going to give another speech." [Laughter] His Majesty rolled his eyes—[laughter]—and the Prime Minister said, "You go in and tell everybody we're very grateful to them, we've had a wonderful time, and we're going to eat and drink some more." [Laughter]

I think America will long remember the remarkable signing ceremony yesterday and the gripping appearance of King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin before the joint session of Congress today. They were truly magnificent. They remind us by the events here in the last 2 days and by the lives that they