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Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With King Hussein of Jordan Aboard Air Force One

March 12, 1996

President's Health

Q. How's your cold?

The President. It's okay. Like I said, Hillary had a cough and then Chelsea was sick and I sort of got it. It'll be gone in a day or two. It's just a head cold, it's not any big deal—just from the neck up.

Q. Does it bother your ears?

The President. No.

Air Force One

Q. You know—[*inaudible*]—is a certified pilot of this aircraft.

The President. Right. Well, he was up there on take off. I don't know if he lifted us off or not.

King Hussein. I watched and was very impressed by the wonderful, professional team up there.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. What are you guys going to talk about?

The President. A lot of—[*inaudible*].

Q. Any surprises coming out of this summit, Mr. President? What do you expect?

The President. I don't know. I think a very strong statement will come out of it and that we may have some pretty good ideas come out of it for what we can all do together. I hope so. But I thank His Majesty for standing up for the right thing in the Middle East and helping to get so many other countries involved in this. He's got quite a remarkable array of people actually coming together on short notice.

Q. What would make the meeting a success?

The President. Well, I think a strong united stand for keeping the peace process going and standing against the terror as a precondition of that, because unless people are secure they can't go forward. I think that's the most important thing. And then, obviously, we want to come out with some more concrete steps. We've taken some already; we intend to take some more.

Q. Anything on Iran?

The President. Well, wait a minute, we've got to have the meeting. We haven't had the meeting yet.

Q. What about Syria? What about the lack of Syrians present?

The President. Well, I wish they were there—the Syrians—I wish they were there. But I believe that in terms of continuing the peace process and keeping commitments, that President Asad will do that. And that's very important, very important.

I hope you all get some sleep.

Q. You, too.

The President. It's 10 minutes after 10 Egyptian time—[*laughter*]—so watch a movie and go to bed. It's real important. You're going to have a hard day tomorrow.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10 p.m. In his remarks, the President referred to President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at the Opening of the Summit of the Peacemakers in Sharm al-Sheikh, Egypt

March 13, 1996

Thank you very much, President Mubarak. Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, heads of state, heads of government, Foreign Ministers, and Mr. Secretary-General.

I'd like to begin by thanking President Mubarak for his extraordinary efforts in the last few days to convene this meeting, to host us here, and to make us feel welcome. I thank President Yeltsin, my distinguished cosponsor of the peace process, and all the rest of you who have come so far on such short notice to this very important meeting.

From all around the world we have come to the Sinai to deliver one simple, unified message: Peace will prevail. This summit is unprecedented in the history of the Middle East. It would have been inconceivable just a few short years ago. It stands as proof and promise that this region has changed for good. Leaders from Israel and the Arab world, from Europe, from Asia, from North America, 29 of us, shoulder-to-shoulder, joined in support of peace. We have gathered before to celebrate new milestones in our journey; today we join in common defense