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the Treasury (particularly in the Office of Foreign Assets Control, the Office of the General Counsel, and the U.S. Customs Service), the Department of Justice, and the Department of State.

6. Executive Order No. 12978 provides this Administration with a new tool for combating the actions of significant foreign narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia, and the unparalleled violence, corruption, and harm that they cause in the United States and abroad. The Order is designed to deny these traffickers the benefit of any assets subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and to prevent United States persons from engaging in any commercial dealings with them, their front companies, and their agents. Executive Order No. 12978 demonstrates the U.S. commitment to end the scourge that such traffickers have wrought upon society in the United States and beyond.

The magnitude and the dimension of the problem in Colombia—perhaps the most pivotal country of all in terms of the world's cocaine trade—is extremely grave. I shall continue to exercise the powers at my disposal to apply economic sanctions against significant foreign narcotics traffickers and their violent and corrupting activities as long as these measures are appropriate, and will continue to report periodically to the Congress on significant developments pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1703(c).

William J. Clinton

The White House,
April 23, 1996.

Remarks Prior to Discussions with President Ilyas Harawi of Lebanon and an Exchange With Reporters

April 24, 1996

Lebanon

President Clinton. Let me begin by saying I'm very pleased to have the President of Lebanon here today to discuss what we can do to bring about an end to the present violence and to establish conditions so that it will not occur. I believe all Americans are profoundly concerned and regret the loss of innocent civilian life. And we support whatever can be done to end the violence as quickly as possible. And that's what Secretary Christopher is working on in the Middle East today.

Q. Mr. President, there's a perception among some that the United States is more interested in the reelection of Shimon Peres than the bloodshed in Lebanon. If that's not true, why is the United States so cool to the French peace initiative in Lebanon?

President Clinton. Well, those two things have nothing to do with one another. What the United States is trying to do is to maintain a coherent capacity to talk to both sides so that we can move quickly as we did in 1993 when we were able to move alone to reestablish circumstances that obtained until, frankly, right after Sharm al-Sheikh when the violence started again when the agreement of 1993 was broken. And that's what we're trying to do. And we don't object to anybody trying to help achieve that.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Do you think that Syria's President Asad snubbed Secretary Christopher yesterday by not meeting with him?

President Clinton. I really don't know. I haven't talked to him. I'm not sure that's accurate. But the main thing is they're going to meet; we're going to talk; we're going to keep working. And I think we'll eventually get this worked out. But sooner is better than later. It should have been done yesterday.

Lebanon

Q. Mr. President, there is also the perception that you condemn violence against Israelis more than you do the Lebanese in the south, and you have not condemned the occupation of southern Lebanon for so long. I mean, you wouldn't tolerate one inch of our territory being occupied.

President Clinton. The United States supports the United Nations resolution on this. We don't believe there should be any foreign troops in Lebanon. I'd like to see Lebanon completely sovereign and free and independent. And if Lebanon were completely sovereign, free, and independent, none of this would have happened.

The Lebanese people have been subjected to all kinds of problems because of—frankly, because of the influence of outside forces in the country. But our position has been consistent that we think the only way to reestablish Lebanese sovereignty is to have a comprehensive resolution of the problems in the region. And no one has worked harder for that, including for the sovereignty of Lebanon, than the United States.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, how close are we to a cease-fire?

President Clinton. Well, I hope we're quite close. I have some, you know—I've gotten some encouraging news, but I can't announce one. And I've learned the hard way to understate rather than overstate where we are.

But I think every thinking, feeling person knows that this has gone on way too long. And it needs to stop.

Lebanon

Q. There were some Arab-Americans here yesterday who asked for emergency U.S. aid to Lebanon. Are you prepared to respond positively to that?

President Clinton. We are going to provide some emergency aid, and I'll have a chance to talk to the President about that as we have our meeting.

Q. Could we ask the Lebanese President a question? Mr. President, is there anything the Lebanese Government can do to stop the Hezbollah from launching Katyushas on northern Israel?

President Harawi. I wish that the Lebanese Army and security forces were present in this section of the country. Then I could answer your question much more clearly. But we don't have authority over this part of our country occupied by the Israelis.

1996 Election

Q. Is that a sign that you'll be spending more time on the campaign now?

President Clinton. [*Inaudible*]—at this time——

Q. That's all it means?

President Clinton. That's what it means.

Budget Negotiations

Q. Are you looking forward to seeing Senator Dole here at the White House today?

President Clinton. I expect to. I was pleased by what he said yesterday. Let me say again, we know we're going to sign the anti-terrorism bill today. We have proved that we can do some things. The Senate passed the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill 100 to nothing yesterday. So we have a big consensus now that we ought to go ahead and balance the budget. And the recent revision by the Congressional Budget Office makes us even closer together. So I was pleased to see Senator Dole's response to what I said yesterday, and I intend to call him today.

Q. [*Inaudible*]——

President Clinton. I'm going to call him today. We'll see. I'm going to call him.

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.*]

Lebanon

Q. Mr. President, do you have any message to the Lebanese people who are living now in difficulties?

President Clinton. Yes. First of all, the United States is deeply concerned and very regretful of the loss of life and the dislocation of innocent civilians who have been caught up in this conflict. We are doing everything we can to bring an end to the fighting and to get a set of understandings which will prevent it from recurring. We had such an understanding in 1993, and it held for more than 2 years. We would like to see a new agreement in place, and we know there must be an end to the fighting.

Now secondly, I want to have a chance to discuss with the President what we might be able to do in the short run in the way of humanitarian assistance to the people who have been displaced, and we'll be discussing that.

And finally, let me just say, over the long run, what our goal is is to see a Lebanon with strong sovereignty, with the sovereignty of the country protected. And so then I hope we can achieve it. I think we can only achieve it if we can resolve the larger problems in the Middle East. We have seen too many times that until there is an ultimate peace

settlement, Lebanon, unfortunately, is going to continue to be victimized.

Q. When do you think we're going to achieve a full, fair peace to the Lebanese people and the Lebanese territory, especially now that you're meeting with President Harawi?

President Clinton. Well, as you know, I've been working hard for it for 3 years now. And I hope and believe that if we can reestablish a cease-fire and the conditions under which violence will not recur, then we can get back to the peace process. The issues are fairly clear, and the timing is largely in the hands of the parties. But the United States is working hard. And I can't set a timetable on it, but it could be done before too long if we can reestablish the peace. But first of all, we have to stop the killing.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, on what basis do you ask for a cease-fire?

President Clinton. We ask for a cease-fire, first of all, on strictly humanitarian terms—that the people who are being hurt by this, starting when the shelling started 6 weeks ago, are innocent civilians on both sides of the border and that all these people who are being dislocated, the people who have died, they're not a part of the larger fight that's going on here.

We, first of all, want to reestablish peace. Secondly, we want to do what we can to help Lebanon deal with the problems of the refugees. The third thing we want is an arrangement so that the violence doesn't recur. And then—then—we want to go back to the peace process.

We do support U.N. Resolution 425. We do support the sovereignty of Lebanon. We don't think there should be any foreign troops in Lebanon. But history has shown us, from our point of view, at least, that the only way to achieve that is to get a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. And I have worked very hard for that. I have tried to be an honest arbiter, if you will, of the positions of both sides. I have done everything I could to that end, and we are still working. And we will continue to work for that.

Q. Mr. President, the view in Lebanon and in the Arab world is that your administration was very slow in intervening to stop the carnage last week, that the United States had not even sent condolences to the victims, to the families of the victims, until it was too late. What is your view of this?

President Clinton. Well, all I can tell you is, the moment I heard about the fighting, I instructed the Secretary of State to immediately try to achieve an end to it and to protect the lives of the people involved—the minute I heard about it.

We were—as you know, our whole foreign policy team was in the Far East. And I instructed the Secretary of State to leave our mission—we were going to Russia for the nuclear summit—and fly directly to the Middle East to try to reestablish a cease-fire and stop the killing. And as soon as I had an opportunity to publicly comment on it, I expressed my profound condolences to the people who were killed—the minute, the first opportunity I had to say something about it.

I am sorry that the people feel that way, but the important thing is to stop others from being killed and help people put their lives back together and restore some sense of normalcy and peace. And that's what I'm trying to do.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the Service Employees International Union Convention

April 24, 1996

Thank you for that wonderful welcome, and thank you, Dick, for that fine introduction. I really enjoyed working with you, and I want to congratulate you on the many years of service you have given to your great union. I look forward to working with your new president, Andy Stern. I know he has also made a tremendous contribution as your organizing director, and I wish him every success.

I want to also acknowledge your secretary-treasurer, Betty Bednarczyk, and my wonderful Secretary of Labor Bob Reich. I know that you enjoyed his speech, and I thank him for his work on your behalf.