

ture of its time, continues to express America's profound commitment to human dignity.

We celebrate the Constitution as a model for other nations around the world, as the purest expression of American law, and as the ultimate authority for our statutes, judicial decisions, and Executive actions. But its power also depends on an informed, involved citizenry. Each of us must take personal responsibility for our actions and respect the rights of others. In homes, schools, neighborhoods, and businesses we must honor the rule of law and cherish the promise of equality and opportunity for all people. Every American must work to see that our Nation's legal system remains a model for the rest of the world and that future generations will continue to share its blessings.

On this day and throughout the year, let us consider the written instruments that have so profoundly shaped our experience and pay tribute to all those who enforce and maintain our legal and judicial systems—including police officers, community policing volunteers, lawyers, and members of our independent judiciary. Their efforts help to ensure that Americans will always enjoy individual liberties and a just society.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, in accordance with Public Law 87-20 of April 7, 1961, do hereby proclaim May 1, 1996, as Law Day, U.S.A. I urge all Americans to recognize the rule of law as the basis for freedom in our democratic society and to learn more about the United States Constitution. I call upon members of the legal profession, civic associations, educators, librarians, public officials, and the media to promote the observance of this day with appropriate programs and activities. I also call upon public officials to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings throughout the day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 2.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and an Exchange With Reporters

May 1, 1996

Middle East Peace Process

The President. First, let me say I am very pleased to have Chairman Arafat in the Oval Office today. We need to take this opportunity to take stock about where we are with our common efforts in the Middle East. I had a good visit with Prime Minister Peres yesterday, and I look forward to this one.

I do want to make two specific points before we begin. First of all, I want to applaud the action that Chairman Arafat has taken in keeping the commitment he made at the Sharm al-Sheikh meeting to revise the Palestinian Covenant. I think that was applauded by all Americans.

And secondly, we now have to work hard on where we go from here. I want to talk to him about what we can do to improve the welfare of the Palestinian people and what we can do to continue to work together to improve security for all the people in the region. And I'm looking forward to that conversation.

Palestinian State

Q. Mr. President, do you endorse a Palestinian State as we did so avidly the creation of the State of Israel?

The President. I endorse the continuation of the talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis to resolve that problem.

Q. Well, how does the U.S. feel?

The President. We are going to do everything we have done—we can do, just as we have since I took office, not to get in the way of these parties making a permanent peace that suits them. That's what we want to do.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Chairman Arafat, can we ask you how you view the state of Israel-Palestinian rela-

tions in the aftermath of the Israeli military campaign in southern Lebanon?

Chairman Arafat. First of all, I have to thank His Excellency for giving me this opportunity. It is a great privilege from His Excellency. And no doubt, it is a very important opportunity to speak about how to push forward to strengthen more and more the peace process which we cannot forget His Excellency was from the beginning, which started here under his provision.

Q. How are relations now with Israel in the aftermath of that military action in southern Lebanon?

Chairman Arafat. What is important is that the efforts to stop all the military activities has succeeded, and the two sides have retained back to the agreement of 1993, which is very important, and this is also because of His Excellency's efforts and Mr. Christopher's shuttling visits.

Q. Could President Asad learn anything from your example, sir?

Chairman Arafat. I am sure that President Asad will follow up in his Syrian track the same line so that we can achieve a comprehensive, lasting peaceful solution in the whole area.

The President. Thank you.

Gas Tax

Q. Are you going for a gas tax repeal?

The Vice President. That's a good place to leave it, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International]. [Laughter]

Q. But what is the answer?

The Vice President. Thank you.

Q. You've got a new press secretary here. [Laughter]

The President. He's always been better at it. [Laughter]

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

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, when will—

Q. —Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital?

The President. Let me begin by making a statement if I might. I am delighted to have this opportunity to meet with Chairman Arafat. When we met at Sharm al-Sheikh he said that there would be a revision in the

Palestinian Covenant by the 1st of May. Under difficult circumstances, he kept that commitment. And now it's time for us to discuss the continuation of the peace process, what we can do to help improve the welfare of the Palestinian people, which I know is uppermost on his mind, and we are very concerned about that, and what we can do together to improve the security for all the people in the region. So we're going to discuss all these issues.

Q. Mr. President, when will we see that Israeli negotiations are going to continue to complete the circle of peace that you are talking about?

The President. I believe that they will continue shortly, and we're going to discuss that.

And as to your question, ma'am, my position from the day I got here is still the same position. I believe that those matters are going to have to be worked out by the parties in the region. I do not believe the United States can serve any useful purpose by getting in the middle of decisions which have to be resolved by the parties themselves.

Our purpose is to try to speed the peace process along and to help those like Chairman Arafat who take risks for peace. When people take risks for peace, we want to minimize those risks, and we want to do what we can to help improve life for ordinary people in the region. And we intend to do that, and that's what we're going to discuss here.

Abu Abbas

Q. Mr. President, 99 Senators asked for you to, and for Chairman Arafat, to authorize the extradition of Abu Abbas, the mastermind of the *Achille Lauro* hijacking. Will you ask the Justice Department to issue an extradition request?

And Chairman Arafat, would you honor such a request if it came from the United States?

Chairman Arafat. We should not forget that Abu Abbas came and attended the PNC and voted to change the Covenant of the PLO and to support the peace process.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. Arafat, Mr. Peres said this week that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel forever,

and Mr. Savir said the right to return is not going to be given to the Palestinians. What are you going to talk about in the final talks of negotiations, only the settlement?

Chairman Arafat. No, according to what has been agreed upon and what had been signed in Washington and in Cairo and in Washington, that this has to be discussed with other matters—Jerusalem—settlements, borders, and relation with neighbors.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:03 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Hafiz al-Asad is President of Syria; and Uri Savir is the Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

Remarks Honoring the United States Olympic Committee's Champions in Life

May 1, 1996

Thank you very much. Let me say that whoever organized this program so that I could follow Buddy Lee—[laughter]—should take up another line of work. [Laughter] Wasn't he wonderful? Let's give him another hand. [Applause]

And thank you, Bonnie Blair, for your story and your example. Thank you, Ralph Neal, for letting us come here to Eastern. I thank the Senior High School Band, and I thank the wonderful Eastern High School Choir that sings for us every Christmas I'm told. I thank the students from Elliot and Payne and the Head Start kids who are here. Thank you. I want to thank Al Oerter and the representatives of the U.S. Olympic Committee, and all the Champions in Life who are here.

I am so honored to be here with you today. And I hope that all of you have enjoyed this just as much as I have and has gotten just as much as I have out of it.

You know, I'm very proud that the United States is going to be hosting the Olympics again and that this is the 100th anniversary of the modern games. I'm proud that there will be people from 197 different nations coming here. And when I see these folks behind me, the Olympians and the Paralympians, I know that they will see America at its best.

They'll see our diversity and our unity. They'll see that we have differences that

don't divide us. They'll see that we understand individual excellence and teamwork. They'll see, as Buddy Lee said, that no champion wins alone, not in athletics and not in life. There's always a parent who cares or a teacher who listens or a coach who believes or a friend who encourages or a church and community that supports.

And behind them, there must be an America—an America where every child, without regard to race or gender or however they start out in life, has a chance to make the most of his or her own life through a decent education and safe streets and a clean environment and a brighter future.

We know that it takes extraordinary individual effort to achieve. The Vice President talked about Jeff Blatnick's heroism in the face of his cancer. We know that there are incredible stories of heroism here on this stage and throughout the Olympic teams: people like Deanna Sodoma, a cyclist until she was paralyzed, and now she will race in a wheelchair in the Paralympics, still an Olympic champion; people like Bill Demby, who lost both his legs serving our country in Vietnam, and is now a member of our Paralympics volleyball team.

All these athletes, each in their own way, and in some special way the members of the Paralympics team, remind us that we all have a lot of important muscles in our body, but the most important muscle we ever use on the field of competition as well as in life is the heart. Having heart means doing the very best we can with our God-given capacity, whatever that is, just like Bonnie Blair said.

If you young people have heart, you will remember the pledge that Buddy Lee got you to make: You'll stay in school; you'll stay drugfree; you'll stay away from gangs and violence; and you'll get into developing your minds and your bodies. If you have heart, you know you can be a better student, a better athlete, a better musician, and you can be a good son or daughter, a good brother or sister, a good friend. If you have heart, you know that you have to respect yourself and others, and you have to show the responsibility that every human being can that makes you a champion.

A lot of heart has gone into putting the Olympics together. In the final weeks, it's all