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GPO

The MIF will experience an increase in workload as a result of the Government of Iraq's acceptance of U.N. Security Council Resolution 986. We have revised our Notice to Mariners, which governs the maritime regime in the Gulf, to require prior notification and strict observance of maritime trade with the Mina al Bakr oil terminal. Our policy remains firm: sanctions enforcement measures continue to send a clear message to commercial shippers, and most importantly to the Government of Iraq, that there will be no action to completely lift or modify sanctions until Iraq has established its peaceful intentions by complying with all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions. The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), established pursuant to Security Council Resolution 687, continues to resolve claims against Iraq arising from Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait. Currently, the UNCC has issued over 850,000 awards worth more than $3.3 billion. The UNCC has been able to authorize only limited payments for fixed awards for serious personal injury or death, as Iraq is not in compliance with all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions, and U.N. sanctions remain in force. However, under U.N. Security Council Resolution 986, if Iraq sells the full amount of oil initially authorized, $600 million in revenue will go to the Compensation Fund, based on the requirement that 30 percent of oil sales proceeds be transferred into the Fund. Because the UNCC has issued over $3.3 billion in awards, funds generated by this sale of oil will be sufficient to pay only a portion of the claims issued to date.

To conclude, Iraq remains a serious threat to regional peace and stability. I remain determined to see Iraq comply fully with all of its obligations under U.N. Security Council resolutions. My Administration will continue to oppose any further relaxation of sanctions until Iraq demonstrates its peaceful intentions through such compliance.

I appreciate the support of the Congress for our efforts and shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 9.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel

July 9, 1996

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, do you think it's a good idea for Prime Minister Netanyahu to sit down with Yasser Arafat personally and try to work out the problems between the Israelis and the Palestinians?

President Clinton. Well, I think it's a good idea for him to sit down with me. And we're looking forward to it. We'll be able to—we'll answer your questions later. I think we should wait until after we have a chance to visit to answer questions.

Terrorist Attack in Saudi Arabia

Q. Has there been any progress in determining who was responsible for the terrorist action in Saudi Arabia?

President Clinton. Well, I got an update yesterday. I think the investigation is progressing. I don't know how to—I don't want to answer your question specifically. I feel confident that the investigation is being handled in the proper way and it is progressing.

Q. If it is state-sponsored, though, is there going to be U.S. retaliation if you can conclude that a state was responsible for this action?

President Clinton. Let me—let's do the investigation first.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, are you bringing the President information about Palestinian violations of the accord, sir?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. First of all, I'm bringing with me to the President a lot of goodwill from the people of Israel to the people of the United States, and from the leadership of Israel to the leadership of the United States. I'm sure we'll have a productive discussion, and I'm sure you'll bear with us until we do.

Terrorist Attack in Saudi Arabia

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, do you think there are any Syrian links to the bombing in Saudi Arabia?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Well, I thought that the President's suggestion of first investigating and then declaring may be not that frequent among political leaders, but I think it's wise. It's a wise suggestion in which I'll follow.

Q. Do you have any evidence of Syrian involvement? Do you?

President Clinton. Thank you. We'll answer more later. Thank you.

Secretary of Defense William Perry

Q. Mr. President, Secretary Perry seems to be getting a pretty tough grilling right now up on the Hill. Do you still have confidence in Secretary Perry?

President Clinton. Oh, absolutely. He's been a very good Defense Secretary. This is a tough issue. That's why I appointed General Downing to look at it all, to get the facts and to evaluate the security situation there and elsewhere where our people might be at risk. And we will do a good job of that. But I think the American people recognize that, on balance, our military people have done a good job and that he's been quite a good and effective Defense Secretary. I have full confidence in him. And I believe that every fairminded person, when they look at his record, will feel the same way.

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

Prime Minister's Visit

President Clinton. Let's get everyone in first.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. This is the most genteel press of all, the Israeli press. They're all pussycats here.

President Clinton. Let me, first of all, say I'm delighted to have the Prime Minister here. I've looked forward to having a chance to have this conversation. He and his family arrived late last night, and I'm glad to see him looking so bright-eyed this morning. And I think that I should defer answering any substantive questions until we have a chance to visit. When we have a chance to visit, we're going to make ourselves available to you, and I'll answer whatever substantive questions you have then.

Q. Mr. President, will you promise the Prime Minister that in the second Clinton administration the Embassy will move to West Jerusalem as the law of the land says?

President Clinton. I'll promise the Prime Minister to answer questions after we have a chance to visit.

Q. Mr. President, are you going to change your policy towards Syria?

President Clinton. I'll talk about all this after we have a chance to visit. I want to visit with the Prime Minister first.

Q. Mr. President, are you expecting to get any specific answers from the Prime Minister regarding Hebron, as an example?

President Clinton. I expect we'll have a good conversation.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—the chemistry between you two is important to you, Mr. President?

President Clinton. I have always thought it was pretty good. I read the Prime Minister's—one of his books a long time before I even ran for President before, and I've always been very interested and admiring of his understanding of the problem of terrorism, which I think he explained to the world in advance of many other people focusing on it. And I just read his most recent book. And we've always had a cordial relationship. So I'm looking forward to renewing it and working with him.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:10 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Gen. Wayne A. Downing, USA (Ret.), Director, Downing Assessment Task Force. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Netanyahu

July 9, 1996

President Clinton. Good afternoon. Please be seated. I'm very glad to welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu to the White House. This is his first visit since taking office, and it gave me an opportunity to congratulate him on his victory in the election in May.