

been, if you will, wasted or broken, and we'll be able to go forward.

Is that right?

Director James Lee Witt. Absolutely.

Q. Sir, do you see the—to the Republicans—[inaudible]—

The President. No, I think Americans, without regard to party, believe in aggressive disaster relief. I would hope they do. We've been through a 500-year flood in the Middle West, the big flooding in the Pacific Northwest, the earthquake, and all the terrible other problems that we had in California, the fires and the floodings. So just about every region of America has been touched in the last 4 years by some form of disaster or another, and I think we all understand our shared responsibilities there.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:39 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

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

September 9, 1996

The President. Is everybody in? Let me just say very briefly, it's a pleasure to welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu back to the White House; Mr. Gold; our new Ambassador from Israel, welcome, sir. I'm especially glad to have this chance to visit with him so soon after his historic meeting with Mr. Arafat, and I'm looking forward to getting a briefing on that and discussing the issues that are still outstanding.

All of you know the United States is still committed to peace and security, and I think we're making some progress in that direction. And I'm going to do whatever I can to advance it.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, when do you think you'll pull your occupation troops out of the Golan Heights and Lebanon?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Well, you didn't waste any time. [Laughter] First of all, let me say that I'm delighted to be here with

President Clinton and Vice President Gore and Secretary Christopher.

We've renewed our commitment to achieving peace with the Palestinians and with the Syrians. I think that we've been greatly assisted by President Clinton and his staff in resuming the negotiations with the Palestinians. It's not an easy road ahead, but it's one we're committed to, and we'll pursue it. And I went over the notes of the conversation that I had with President Clinton a few months ago here, and we've pretty much done what we set out to do, again, with the support—I think the very important support of the United States.

I hope to have the same kind of support as we seek to resume the peace talks with the Syrians. And in fact, we're enjoying American assistance, and so far we're awaiting the Syrian response.

Q. Where do both of you see the process going with, first, with the Palestinians, and with the Syrians?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Mr. President.

The President. Well, that's what we're going to talk about.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:50 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dore Gold, Policy Adviser to the Prime Minister; Israeli Ambassador to the United States Eliahu Ben-Elissar; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister John Bruton of Ireland and an Exchange With Reporters

September 9, 1996

The President. I'm delighted to have the *Taoiseach* here today and a good day: The talks began again today. Senator Mitchell is over in Belfast, and I just want to talk to him about where we go from here.

Also, I want to note that Ireland is assuming the Presidency of the European Union, and we have a lot of common interests there, a lot of things we have to work on together, including our common interest in the world-