

we fought for 100,000 police on the street. And the leaders of the other party said that it would have no effect on the crime rate, that nothing good would happen, that we would never see these police on the street, that no guns would be kept out of the hands of criminals because criminals didn't buy guns in gun stores anyway. I heard all that. And one of the reasons that our friends in the other party are in the majority today in the House is that they beat somewhere between 12 and 15 of our House Members, the NRA did, in 1994, scaring the living day-lights out of rural people, saying we were going to take their guns away.

Well, 6 years later, we've got the lowest crime rate in 25 years; we finished putting 100,000 police out there—under budget and ahead of schedule; 400,000 gun sales have been canceled to criminals, felons, fugitives, and stalkers. And this is a safer, better, stronger country. We were right about that. And it's an important issue going forward—just like the management of the economy is.

I'll give you just two other examples—I could give you 10—where we had different ideas. We believed we could grow the economy and not just maintain but improve the environment. And a lot of people don't believe that to this day. But compared to 6 years ago, the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the drinking water is safer; the food supply is purer. We have immunized 90 percent of our kids against serious childhood diseases for the first time in the history of the country and set aside more land in perpetuity than any administration, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt.

And the economy is stronger. We did not hurt the economy; we helped the American economy by doing what was right by the environment. And we had to fight the other party to do that. There was an honest disagreement. That is relevant for us going forward.

In the area of education, we fought for tax cuts that would, in effect, open the doors of college of all Americans—\$1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college, other tax credits for other years. We fought for better student loans and more work-study positions. We fought to hook up all the classrooms in this country to the Internet.

And now we're fighting to have a national ratification of what you're doing here in Chicago, with no social promotion but not blaming the children for the failures of the system, and instead giving them all access to summer school and after-school programs. I want to this year say we are only going to give Federal aid to education, to States and districts that end social promotion but don't dub the children failures, and give them the after-school or summer school programs and the support they need to succeed.

I'll just give you one last idea. We had an idea that we could best solve our social problems in this country, generally, not by asking the Government to do it and not by leaving the Government out of it, but by forming new partnerships with the private sector and with individual citizens. So we started AmeriCorps, the national service program. We said, we'll give young people some money to go to college if they'll give a year or 2 of the lives to serving in their communities.

I believe the young people, the so-called "Generation X-ers," were not selfish people, as they were caricatured. I thought they were passionately committed to the future of this country. And in 4½ years, we have had 100,000-plus volunteers for AmeriCorps—it took the Peace Corps 20 years to get that many. And the man who started it, Eli Segal, is here with us tonight, and I thank him for that.

Then I gave Eli another job. I said, "We're going to reform welfare, and we're going to say if you're able-bodied, you've got to go to work; but we don't want to hurt children." So we're going to say, "If you go to work, we will give you child care; we will give you medical care; we will give your kids nutrition; but you've got to go to work." And then I realized that not all these people would be able to go to work, because they had no real experience. No one had ever said, "Here's how you interview for a job; here's how you show up; here's how you relate to people at work." We had some serious problems there.

So I asked Eli if he would help me go out and challenge the business community of this country to actually take personal responsibility for hiring people off welfare. We started with five companies. Then we had

100. Then we had 1,000. In 3 years, he has gone from 5 companies to 12,000 businesses, hiring half a million people off welfare. And here's a little shameless plug. We're coming to celebrate this in Chicago on August 3d, and we need more help.

So what's the point of all this? The point of all this is, this country is doing well, but we all know there are still challenges out there. It seems to me that the Democratic Party is entitled to the benefit of the doubt of the American people. When we go to them in the Congress races, when we go to them in the Presidential race, we need to make it clear that there is a connection between the values and the ideas and the actions we have taken and the consequences we see in every community in this country.

And that is why we need your contributions and why we need your voice. This is not an accident. We cannot see this coming election as just sort of a—independent of the reality of the last 6 years. But our party also has a solemn responsibility between now and then in Washington to keep trying to get things done for the American people. We shouldn't be caught playing politics, waiting for the next election. Our belief is that we get paid by the American people every week, not just in the seasons where there is no politics—every week. They pay us to show up and produce.

That's why you heard me say yesterday we've got the new surplus, all right, here's my plan for Medicare: We'll make it stable until 2027; we'll provide preventive services for free—screenings for everything from osteoporosis to cancer screenings and all kinds of other preventive services; we will employ modern means of competition, but we will have adequate funding to keep the quality up; and we will provide a prescription drug benefit for the first time in history to our seniors. I think that's a big idea.

I also think that it is a big idea to take this surplus and say to our friends in the Republican Party, "Can you have a tax cut? Of course you can. But first things first. First, let's save Medicare and save Social Security and pay the debt of the country off by 2015 so that our children and our children's children will have a stronger economy and a stronger society. Then there will be money

left over; we can argue about what to do with it, and you'll have some that you can give in a tax cut. But let us save Social Security and Medicare and deal with the baby boom generation and pay the debt of the country off."

Now, these are ideas. These things have consequences. So when people ask you, "Why did you come tonight?" I hope you say, "Well, you know, Chicago took Bill Clinton to raise a long time ago." Or, "He made a pretty good talk." I hope you say that. But I hope you'll be able to tell people, "Look, I am a Democrat for the 21st century. Here are my ideas. Here is why I write checks to do this. This is what I believe in. And, oh, by the way, it works. It makes a difference. My children will have a better future."

And I could go through issue after issue after issue. But if you just look at—you just look at the issue of Social Security, Medicare, and paying off the debt. Why should a liberal Democrat be for putting America out of debt? Here's why: Because we live in a global economy; and if we have no public debt, then the Government will not be competing not only with you, but with every poor, blue-collar worker of all races in this country, for money, for a home mortgage, for a car payment, for a credit card payment, for a college loan, for a business loan.

And if we don't have any public debt, interest rates will be lower in America, which means there will be more investment, more jobs, higher wages, and less debt for ordinary people. It means, furthermore, that the next time we have a global financial crisis, like we had in Asia 2 years ago, the United States will be less vulnerable, and our friends in the developing countries will be able to get more money at a lower cost because we won't be taking any away from them. And that's good, because as they get richer, they can buy more of our stuff. So I'm making a good Republican argument for my position here.

This is a big deal. You need to go tell—this is a huge idea. Do you know when the last time the country was out of debt? 1835. [Laughter] This is a big idea. And we can do it in a way that saves Social Security and Medicare. But liberals, as well as conservatives, should be for it, for the reasons I said—big idea—matters. It matters.

It matters whether we close this gun show loophole. The same crowd that said nobody, no crooks, bought guns at gun stores—and now they know they were wrong, because we've got 400,000 sales were canceled in 5 years—now they say that we shouldn't do background checks where they admit the crooks do buy their guns—not just gun shows, but also urban flea markets. And we're for it, and the leaders of the other party are against it. This is an important issue; this is a big idea.

Kids' lives are at stake—not just in scenes of carnage, like what happened at Littleton, but every day of the world, 13 kids die from gun violence—nameless, faceless kids you don't know because they die one and two at a time. A lot of them are poor kids in inner cities, that don't have any votes, any influence, nobody to speak up for them if we don't do it.

It matters. This is a big idea. This is not some trivial thing, that, oh, these parties are having a little dispute. This matters. And I believe we're right. And I think all the evidence is that they're wrong. And I could go through the environment and health care and the Patients' Bill of Rights and every other issue, and make the same case.

You go home tonight, and you just think about the three things I talked about. Think about the economy; think about Social Security and Medicare; think about education policy, what I said—what a difference it's made to Chicago, that you've finally got your schools getting juiced up again because somebody believes that all kids can learn, and somebody believes that kids should be held to high standards, and there are consequences, and you don't just get patted on the back whether you know what you're supposed to know or not—but we don't point the finger at kids and call them a failure when the system is failing them.

You just think about this stuff. It matters what you do in life. Politics is no different than your family life, no different than your business life, no different than your school life. This matters. And on the great ideas of the age, we have been right in preparing America for the 21st century. It's not Bill

Clinton being President. It is, we have a party that is best for all the American people, that has become a party of permanent change, of restless, constructive, positive change.

And this is a better country because of that, because people like you are thinking about tomorrow. You know, nearly everybody here would be better off—in the next 6 months, in the next year and a half—going to a Republican fundraiser. I mean, they'll give you a bigger tax cut than we will. *[Laughter]* They will. You'd be better off in the next year and a half going to a Republican fundraiser. It wouldn't be—the house wouldn't be as interesting as this. *[Laughter]*

You know, the people that were good enough to serve us dinner tonight, they're the ones that we're going to help immediately. We're trying to make sure their parents can afford to have prescription drugs so they don't have to bankrupt their kids and their ability to raise their grandkids. We think we ought to raise the minimum wage. We think their kids ought to be able to go to college.

But most of you who paid to get here tonight would be better off in the short run if you were over with the Republicans. But you aren't because you know that in the long run—and in the not-so-very-long run—people who think about what's best for all Americans, and how we reach across the lines that divide us, and how we think about our children's future—that is what is best for us.

If I told you—suppose you'd all been here with Lew and Susan, back in 1991, and I'd said, "Now here, folks, I want you to vote for me for President." Just keep in mind, 1991—we're in this big old creaking recession, and everybody is feeling bad, and there's about to be a riot out in Los Angeles in a few months. And I said, "Now, I want you to vote for me, and in 7 years you'll have nearly 19 million jobs and the longest peacetime expansion in history and a \$100 billion surplus and trillions expected in the surplus over the next 15 years. And we'll be able to solve the problems the baby boomers present to Social Security and Medicare. And along

the way, we'll have a 25-year-low in crime, and we'll cut the welfare rolls in half. And we will be a leading force for peace from Bosnia to Kosovo to the Middle East to Northern Ireland. And we will have extra money to make sure we're working hard to be prepared for the security problems of the future. But we will double our investment in education, clean up the environment, and we'll be moving this country forward."

If I'd told you all that, you'd have said, "There's another lying politician if I ever heard one." [*Laughter*] Wouldn't you? You would have said, "That kid needs to go home to Arkansas. He's, you know, he's not living in the real world." We did better than I thought we could. Why? Because we didn't do it alone. All we did was to unleash the incredible potential of the American people, and give everybody a chance.

So I say to you, I thank you for being here. I thank you for what you've done for me, for Hillary, for Al and Tipper. I thank you for what you will do. But don't kid yourself; part of the reason that we've done as well as we have is that people like you with good values and good common sense, with an ability to see the future, had the right ideas. And you hired us, and we turned them into action. And when you go home tonight and you go about your business tomorrow, and people ask you why you came and why you're a Democrat, you tell them, "Because we've got good ideas, and they've changed America for the better, and here's what we want to do tomorrow and next year and in the new century."

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:07 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee (DNC); former DNC chair David Wilhelm and his wife, Deegee; dinner hosts Lewis and Susan Manilow; Lou Weisbach, chief executive officer, HA-LO Industries, Inc.; Fred Eychaner, president, Newsweb Corp.; former Senator Carol Moseley-Braun; John Schmidt, former U.S. Associate Attorney General; Neil Hartigan, former State attorney general; and attorney William S. Singer, member, Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the U.S.

## **Memorandum on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe**

*June 30, 1999*

Presidential Determination No. 99-31

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Eligibility of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to be Furnished Defense Articles and Services Under the Foreign Assistance Act and the Arms Export Control Act

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 503(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, section 3(a)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, and section 422 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 (as implemented by Executive Order 13029 of December 3, 1996), I hereby find that the furnishing of defense articles and services to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe will strengthen the security of the United States and promote world peace.

You are authorized and directed to report this finding to the Congress and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 1.

## **The President's News Conference With President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt**

*July 1, 1999*

**President Clinton.** Good afternoon. I'm delighted to welcome President Mubarak back to the White House. He is our longtime partner in building a safer and more peaceful world.

Once again, we now have a real chance to move the peace process forward in the Middle East. Egypt has been central to that process and to all the progress which has been made since the Camp David accords over 20 years ago. Egypt will continue to play a leading role to address the important tasks ahead, building on Oslo, Wye River implementation, reaching a permanent status

agreement between Palestinians and Israelis, widening the circle of peace to include agreements with Syria and Lebanon, revitalizing talks between Israel and the Arab world on a host of other important issues from the environment to water resources to refugees to economic development. There are, to be sure, major challenges ahead, but the will of the people for peace is strong.

President Mubarak and I also discussed our common determination to fight terrorism in all its forms.

With regard to the peace process, let me just say one other thing. The best way for the Israelis to have lasting security is a negotiated peace based on mutual respect. That is also the best way for Palestinians to shape their own future on their own land. A negotiated peace is the best way for all the people of the region to realize their aspirations.

Let me just say also that over the last two decades, under President Mubarak's leadership, Egypt has done much to fulfill the aspirations of its people. Economic growth has been strong and sustained; inflation has been held in check; the GDP per person has increased by a factor of five. Egypt is building a modern infrastructure in roads, powerplants, communication systems. Civil society has grown, with work ahead to strengthen it, so that all Egyptians participate in building a better future.

Among the reasons for all this progress, two stand out—both advanced by President Mubarak's wise leadership. First, Israel's—excuse me—Egypt's deepening peace with Israel; that has freed resources and energies of the people. A broader regional peace will be good for prosperity, for progress, and for freedom.

Second, Egypt's economic reform, with expansion of the private sector and free markets. The work of President Mubarak and Vice President Gore on our U.S.-Egypt partnership for growth and development, which they will advance later today, has been crucial. The President is committed to continuing the reforms, and America will continue to help.

Today we discussed a number of other issues. I'd like to mention just one, Kosovo. I am profoundly grateful to Egypt for supporting the stand taken by NATO. Already, more than half the refugees have returned to Kosovo. There is still much work to do, and I thank Egypt for its commitment to provide Egyptian police officers for the civilian police implementation force there.

But we have made a powerful statement together. The future belongs to those who reconcile human differences, not those who exploit them. The future belongs to those who respect human rights, not those who destroy people because of their religion, their race, or their ethnic background.

I hope we can carry some of the momentum from what we have achieved in Kosovo to the Middle East, as we seek there to promote tolerance and a durable peace. As we do, the leadership of President Mubarak, as always, will be critical.

Mr. President, welcome. The floor is yours.

**President Mubarak.** Thank you. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I was very pleased to see my friend President Clinton and exchange views with him on matters of common concern. As usual, our talks this morning reflected the similarity and the convergence of our views. We value our solid friendship with this great Nation and consider it one of the pillars of our policy.

For decades, we have been working together in order to bring about peace and reconciliation in the Middle East. President Clinton has been playing an active and very effective role. Under his leadership, the American contribution to the cause of peace has reached a new high. His continued involvement is appreciated by those of us who are committed to peace in the region.

In the months ahead, we'll be looking forward to reviving the peace process, which has been stalled for sometime. Unfortunately, valuable time has been wasted. Today, there's an opportunity which should not be missed. We shall work closely with the U.S. and coordinate our joint efforts in order to have the parties break the stalemate and restore movement towards peace.

Recent events indicate that most of the region's inhabitants are yearning for peace. We shall be working with President Assad, Prime Minister Barak, and Chairman Arafat, respectively, with a view to creating the necessary atmosphere for resuming the peace process without delay. I'll be meeting with each of them in the near future for this purpose.

Agreements which have been signed on the Palestinian track must be implemented fully and in good faith. Provocative actions, especially settlement activities, should be stopped altogether. This will pave the way for starting final status negotiations. In parallel, negotiations should be resumed on the Syrian track. There are signs that the ground is favorable for that. It would be a mistake to assume that movement should be confined to one track at a time. Progress on each track facilitates movement on the other. The goal is to achieve just, comprehensive, and stable peace in the whole area.

In that context, we were alarmed by the recent Israeli bombing of civilian targets in Lebanon. Such actions only poison the atmosphere in the region. They create an erosion of the people's confidence in the process at the time when we are working hard to encourage the parties to take confidence-building measures. We call upon Israel to apply maximum self-restraint in the crucial months ahead.

As tangible progress is achieved towards peace, we can work for enhancing cooperation and interaction in the region. Egypt was a country that initiated the peace process, and we remain most willing and determined to do all we can to help bridge the gaps and restore confidence between the parties.

We also discussed some other regional and international problems, notably African issues, as well as matters related to cooperation between countries of north and south.

I commended President Clinton on the success of the American role in bringing about peace and security in Kosovo. We hope that the events that took place in that part of the world will convince all those concerned of the necessity to abide by the rule of law and respect the human rights of all peoples. We are aware of the fact that much has to be done to help the refugees and to prevent any recurrence of ethnic, religious,

or cultural violent conflicts. On our part, we will contribute to international forces as being assigned the task of maintaining security and order in Kosovo.

As we are about to enter a new era, with the dawning of the new millennium, we must spare no effort in our quest for peace and security. For all nations, global problems that threaten the future of mankind ought to be addressed with vigor and determination. In all these endeavors, we shall cooperate with our partners and friends, among whom the U.S. figures very prominently.

Our bilateral cooperation is expanding every year, and it will continue to grow. This is a goal both of us are committed to. The Clinton administration has done much in this respect, and the President's personal involvement in this process was and continues to be most appreciated by the Egyptian people.

Before I conclude, I would like to send a message of friendship and affection to all Americans. Thank you very much.

**President Clinton.** Thank you, Mr. President. Now, as is our practice, we will alternate between American and Egyptian journalists.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], you go first.

**Q.** I'd like to ask both Presidents questions. President Clinton, do you have any new ideas for breaking the stalemate in the Middle East? And with the advent of our own Independence Day, when do you think Lebanon will be free and independent and rid of a longtime occupation?

President Mubarak, do you think the new Israeli Government will make a gesture toward halting the settlements?

**President Clinton.** Well, let me answer the questions you asked me first. I do think that the time is right, but I think that before I advance publicly any ideas, I should have a chance to meet with the Prime Minister-elect, Mr. Barak, when he—according to the reports in the press this morning, he has constituted a government on quite a broad base. We should give him more freedom of movement to move aggressively ahead.

Our role, traditionally, has been to try to create the conditions and provide the support necessary for the parties to make peace, and I expect that he will have ideas of his own

about that. And so I think that the appropriate thing for me at the moment is to look forward to our meeting, which I hope will occur in the near future, and then after that, after I talk with him, to make whatever statements are called for at that time.

On the question of Lebanon, I think our position on that has always been clear. We believe that a comprehensive peace in the Middle East should include not only an agreement with the Palestinians and an agreement with the Syrians but also an agreement which includes Lebanon and promotes its independence and integrity.

**President Mubarak.** The question about the settlements you mean? I think the time now is—at least, to improve the atmosphere in the area, to stop building the settlements now until the negotiations start. Then the Palestinians and the Israelis could sit and find out what could be done. This is, I mean, a step for improving the atmosphere between the two groups.

**President Clinton.** Would you like to call on one of your journalists?

**President Mubarak.** Yes.

**Q.** Thank you. The question is for President Clinton. I would like to follow up on Helen's question on the settlements. President Clinton, in 1991, when you first were running for the Presidency, you made a pledge never to criticize Israel publicly. However, your administration expressed its dissatisfaction with Israel's settlements activities by describing them as an obstacle to peace.

However, 23 new settlements have been built since the signing of the Wye River accord. Would you be willing, your administration, would be willing to tell Israel to stop building the settlements, the new Israeli government, to stop building the settlements and undo the wrong that has been done? Thank you.

**President Clinton.** Well, I think our position on the settlements has been clear. We don't believe that unilateral actions by any parties, including other interested parties like the United States, which compromise the capacity of the parties to the Oslo accord to reach agreement on final status issues, should be taken. And that includes provocative set-

tlement actions. We have made that clear and unambiguous.

But I do not believe—the Israeli people just had a huge election, a big election, and they voted in very large percentages in ways that almost every commentator has concluded sent the signal that they were ready to pursue the peace process to its conclusion. They now have a Prime Minister-elect who has just completed his government. He is coming to see me in the next few days. I think the less I say until I see him, and until we see if we can embrace a common posture toward making a peace, the better. But my views on the settlement question are well-known and have not changed.

Yes, Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

### **2000 Election and Campaign Finance Reform**

**Q.** Mr. President, Governor Bush has raised a record breaking \$36 million, more than ten times his closest rival for the Republican nomination. Do you think he's wrapped up the nomination, or is wrapping it up? And if he decides not to accept Federal campaign money and the spending limits that go with it, as appears increasingly likely, do you think that would be a blow to campaign finance reform?

**President Clinton.** Well, first of all, I don't want to get into being a political handicapper, so I can't say—how do I know what the Republicans are going to do in their nominating process? I don't have a clue.

But I would make two observations. First of all, the leadership of the Republican Party, in general, are unanimously hostile to campaign finance reform. They don't believe in it. And so, if he did that, he would have that in common with the other leaders, who won't permit us to bring the McCain-Feingold bill to a vote, or to try to pursue what I believe are needed changes in the campaign finance laws. So that is one thing—that's just where they are, and they're very forthright about it. And the American people are going to have to make up their minds whether this is an important issue to them or not.

But I would make one point, generally. I think the most valuable commodity in an election in a democracy, in which you will

cover the candidates extensively—even more valuable than money—is ideas. And I think the most important thing, therefore, that I have seen in this election so far is that Vice President Gore is, nearly as I can determine, the only candidate of either party who has yet actually told the American people what he would do if he got elected.

And I think that if you look at the 1998 elections, for example, it's a good example that in a democracy which has a vigorous media publicizing what people are doing and saying, money may be important, but ideas are even more important.

### **World Summit on Terrorism/Middle East Peace Process**

**Q.** My first question is for President Mubarak. You've been suggesting for some time the preparation of a world summit on terrorism. Did you discuss your ideas on this issue with President Clinton? And, Mr. President, do you have a specific plan for dealing with this international threat?

And for you, President Clinton, to carry on with the peace process, how do you plan to work really on the peace process as you approach the next, best and maybe the happiest, 18 months in the Clinton administration? [*Laughter*]

**President Clinton.** Well, being at peace would be a good start. [*Laughter*]

**President Mubarak.** I've already discussed this issue about international terrorism with the President, as well as I have discussed it with other heads of states, but mainly here with President Clinton I did this issue. I'm saying that in the coming century the most dangerous element is not the war program of this or that; it's terrorism spreading all over the world.

Sometimes when the terrorism starts, when I start speaking about terrorism sometime, I was told, "Oh, because of some kind of incident, you're speaking about terrorism." Now terrorism is spreading everywhere in the world. It's a very dangerous phenomenon. And a summit, and if it's well prepared before it—I think the whole world will suffer from terrorism. War is much more easier than terrorism. Terrorism, you never know when the attack is going to take place. But war is planned, and you know its limits.

That's why I discussed with the President, and I hope we could reach a summit, and before the summit there should be very thought-out preparation with a technical group to see what kind of agreement could be reached in the whole world under the U.N.

**President Clinton.** We discussed this issue quite extensively. And this has been a subject of great concern to me. It's one thing we've shared over the last 6 years. A few years ago, I gave a speech at the United Nations, at the opening session, about terrorism and asked that we focus on it.

We have asked the Congress to provide substantial resources to look into what else we can do to fight terrorism, to deal with the threats of biological and chemical weapons and the prospect that they might get into the hands of terrorists. We have to consider the prospect in the future that, as the President said, the most serious security threats to nations will not be from other nations but from terrorist groups that cross national borders, and that may well form, presently, unprecedented allegiances with other illegal groups, organized crime groups, drug traffickers, weapons profiteers.

And so I think that all the nations of the world that are interested in stability and peace for their people are going to have to have a much higher level of cooperation on these issues. So I'm for doing anything that can be done to increase that.

Now, you asked me about the Middle East peace process. Let me just say again, our role has never been to dictate to either party the terms of the peace. Even though we have many Arab-Americans and many Jewish Americans in this country, we do not live in the Middle East. The people of the Middle East live there, and they have to work out the terms of their own reconciliation.

What we have always tried to do is to keep the parties working together and then to do whatever was necessary to provide the support that the friends of peace need, and if the process seemed in danger of failing, as it did before the Wye River 9½ days and sleepless nights, to do what could be done to keep it alive. But I think that the people of Israel have sent us a loud message that

they want the process to be kept alive and they want it to be seen through.

So we're in a period of transition now. Let's let the Prime Minister, the new Prime Minister-elect, get his government in place, take office, come to see me, talk to President Mubarak, and talk to all the other parties and see where we go from there. But those of us who are friends of the peace process in the Middle East should focus on successful resolution of it. And sometimes, the less we say in public, the more likely we are to have a positive impact on the outcome of the negotiations.

**Q.** On Northern Ireland—

**President Clinton.** Larry [Larry McQuillan, Reuters]? Yes, I'll take an Irish question. Go ahead.

***President's Relationship With the Vice President/Medicare***

**Q.** President Clinton, as you're aware, there have been reports of tension between you and Vice President Gore. And I wondered if you could comment on your relationship. And are you resigned, as the campaign goes on, that, inevitably, you're going to be at odds on certain issues and disagree with the Vice President, and for that matter, assuming your wife decides to run for the Senate, perhaps on Medicare and New York issues?

**President Clinton.** Well, that's substantive question—I'll be glad to answer that if you want. But let me say, I have been, frankly, bewildered by those reports. Only one person ever asked me about it directly, one of your number, and that was Wolf Blitzer, in an interview I did before I left my European trip at the G-8. And I gave him a very good answer, which was that I thought that the Vice President had done a good job in his announcement; I thought the most important thing he had done is—I'll say again—is to tell the American people what he would do if he got the job and to pose the choice that I think is before them which is do you want to go beyond—build on and go beyond the successful direction of the last 6½ years, or would you like to turn around and go back and take a different course.

And so I think he's doing fine. I honestly do not know what the source of the stories

are, but they are not in my heart or my mind. I want him to get out there, and if he disagrees with the decision that I make as President during the next year and a half, then, of course, he will have to say so. And I will take no offense at that. And if my wife decides to run for Senator from New York, then some of the disagreements that we've had in the past over decisions I've made as President she may be constrained to state publicly because they will be relevant to the future. And that's the way a democracy works.

You know, members of a political party, whether Democrats or Republicans, belong to the political party because they share a general set of values and a general approach, and because they agree on almost all things, not because they agree on all things. It would be a dreary world, indeed, if we all agreed on everything. And I didn't ask Al Gore to become Vice President so that he would agree with me about everything. Nobody with a fine mind and a lot of experience and looking at the world we live in would agree with anyone else with the same qualities on every issue. It just wouldn't happen.

Now, on the merits—let me say on this Medicare issue—there have been many people—not just in New York with the teaching hospitals, but there are rural hospitals; there are home therapy providers; there are others—who have felt that the budget savings, the cuts in the '97 Balanced Budget Act, were too severe and made it difficult for them to maintain quality of care. One such group are the teaching hospitals. There are a lot of them in New York who take care of a lot of poor people, but there are a lot of them in Massachusetts, a lot of them in California, and there is at least one in every State in the country.

When we put out our Medicare plan, we, therefore, did not continue all of the cost savings in the '97 Balanced Budget Act beyond the period when they run out. We actually left some of them off to try to alleviate that pressure. The second thing we did was to create a fund, a quality fund, of about \$7.5 billion, which the Congress can use to debate and allocate to alleviate present problems.

So I would encourage the Senators from New York, or anyone else who's concerned about this, to bring those concerns, bring the

facts to the table, get it out in the open, then embrace the idea of Medicare reform, pass that fund, and then allocate it as it should be allocated. Because I do think that's a legitimate issue.

### ***Iraq/Kosovo/Middle East Peace Process***

**Q.** For President Mubarak. Have you discussed the issue of Iraq, and how close or distant American and Egyptian positions are? For President Clinton, Mr. President, I'd like to congratulate you on your success and resolve on Kosovo. And from your statement, you referred as one of the criteria for success, the return of refugees. Will you work—the return of refugees, Kosovars, to their homes—will you use the same criteria in the Middle East, that the Palestinian refugees and displaced will come back to their homes? Thank you.

**President Clinton.** That's really good. [Laughter] That's really good. [Laughter]

**President Mubarak.** Well——

**President Clinton.** You called on him. [Laughter]

**President Mubarak.** I didn't know what was the question. [Laughter]

Really, for the first part of the question, about Iraq, really, our position didn't change at all. We are looking forward, how to help the people of Iraq under any circumstances. I have discussed this with the President, and I think that the resolution in the U.N., and I think maybe some improvement in it in the near future, may lead to helping the people of Iraq for medicine, food, and other things. And I hope that something can conclude in that direction—discussed this with the President.

**President Clinton.** Let me say, our position on Iraq is that we favor the proposal before the United Nations advanced by the British and the Dutch. It would provide for more money to Iraq to help the people there, with their human needs. But it would maintain a vigorous arms control regime, because we do not believe that Saddam Hussein should be permitted to develop again weapons of mass destruction.

And I would remind everyone that he has actually used weapons of mass destruction. He has used chemical weapons on the Ira-

nians. He has used them on his own people, on the Kurds that live in Iraq.

So I think that we have a balanced position. But I have never wanted the Iraqi people to suffer because of their leader. And I think we supported a relaxation of the way the funds flow there so that more can go to benefit the people. But I do not believe we should give up on an attempt—an insistence, indeed, that the United Nations, in return for this, maintain an arms control regime.

Now, on the refugee question, let me say one brief question about Kosovo because I do appreciate the interest in Kosovo in Egypt and in other countries of the region. About half the refugees have gone home. They're dying to go home. And one of the reasons that NATO was determined to act is, we knew if we acted quickly enough that the refugees could go home and most of them would wish to go home.

Even in Bosnia, where the war went on from—the conflict, from 1991 until 1995, there were many people who had established other lives in other places and did not want to go home. There are still a lot of refugees who have not gone home in Bosnia.

So I'm delighted that the Kosovars are pouring in. The truth is that we've actually tried to slow it down a little bit because we're worried about the landmines and other explosives which might be there, and we want it to be safe for them and because we're trying to get organized to help everybody rebuild their homes and the basic infrastructure of life so that once they do go home they can actually live and do well.

Now, that brings you back to the refugee question you asked in the Middle East. I think that the important thing is, if we have the right kind of a peace agreement—that's why I say—no one can accuse me of dodging Middle East questions. I've been up to my ears and eyeballs in this peace process since the day I took office. But if you just look at it as a practical matter, the agreement that is made in the end, whether refugees go home depends in part on how long they've been away and whether they wish to go home. It will also depend on what the nature of the settlement is, how much land will the Palestinians have, where will it be, how does it correspond to where people lived before.

And I would like it if the Palestinian people felt free and more free to live wherever they like, wherever they want to live. I would also like it very much if we could help those countries which have borne a heavy burden, particularly Jordan, where a majority of the population is now Palestinian, to build a better life for the people who are there, because they have a lot of very serious economic challenges. They have a fine new King who is an able person, and we're trying to help and we want others to help. But I think it will depend upon the refugees themselves, and it will depend upon the shape of the final agreement.

Ask the Irish question if you want.

#### **Northern Ireland Peace Process**

**Q.** Thank you, sir. Several questions on Northern Ireland. What is the latest—[laughter]—sorry.

**The President.** They're learning from you now. [Laughter]

**Q.** What is the latest update you can give us about your activities? Do you plan to make an emergency trip over there? Do you blame either side for the impasse, and what constructive suggestions can you convey to us at this juncture?

**President Clinton.** Well, I have been—for the last couple of days, particularly, we've been in virtually constant contact with the parties there. And I spent a lot of time on it yesterday and late, late last night, and this morning early. They are in negotiations as we speak. The mood seems to be reasonably positive, and they are exploring some new ideas. I offered my suggestions for a possible resolution of the sticking points, with the benefit of all the folks on our national security team who have been working on that.

And I'll say this, it is a very difficult problem for the parties, but it will be very hard for the world to understand if this breaks off, since everyone has agreed to the fundamental elements of the Good Friday agreement. Both sides agree that they have to comply with every bit of it. There was an election where the Irish people voted for it. Then there was an election where the Irish people voted for leaders under it.

So if you have a situation where you've had two elections ratifying a peace agree-

ment and you have all the leaders saying that we all have to comply with every element of it and it falls apart over sequencing, I think that it would be—to call it a tragedy would be a gross understatement. But it is a very difficult thing—it would take 30 minutes to go through the whole litany of why. But they are working now. They are exploring some new ideas, and they do seem determined to work it through to a positive conclusion.

Would you like to take one more?

#### **Middle East Peace Process/Iraq**

**Q.** Thank you. President Clinton, you talked about the 9½ days at the Wye Plantation. We know you tried; God knows you tried, but you failed, sir. [Laughter] What makes you think that—

**President Clinton.** I got an agreement. It wasn't my job to implement it. It has not been fully implemented. The agreement, itself, was a success.

**Q.** That's correct, sir, but your officials—[laughter]—

**President Clinton.** That's all right. They tell me I've failed every day. It's quite all right. [Laughter] You just save them the trouble today. Go ahead.

**Q.** Your officials used to speak about CBM, confidence-building measures. The Palestinians did their part, even Netanyahu thanked Arafat at one stage. But let's say you failed in convincing the Israelis to reciprocate and do the same. What makes you feel that this time around you would be more successful, sir?

My question to President Mubarak: Sir, how does Egypt view any external interference in Iraqi internal affairs from whatever source it comes? Thank you.

**President Mubarak.** I've failed also this time. [Laughter]

**President Clinton.** Yes, they zinged you this time.

Let me say, I think, with regard to Wye, obviously, I think its conditions should be honored, because it's like any agreement between two parties—unless both parties agree that the agreement should be modified, then it should be honored.

I believe that historians, when they look back on this period, will conclude that the principal difficulty that Mr. Netanyahu had