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Party, a decision based on our shared commitment to a vigorous, innovative agenda for America's future.

Our party is inclusive and committed to a new direction for the 21st century. Today we are fighting for the Patients' Bill of Rights, for using the surplus first to save Social Security and Medicare and provide seniors access to prescription drugs, for paying off our national debt and investing more in quality education for all our children, and for a responsible middle class tax cut. Michael Forbes has embraced these ideas. The Congressional Republicans have rejected them. We welcome him to the Democratic Party and to the fight for America's future.

Michael Forbes has changed parties because he believes it is best for his constituents, for the people of New York, and for our country. He is joining a party that welcomes independent thinking and the courage to change. I know he made a hard choice, but it is the right choice for his constituents, for his own children, and for our Nation.

Remarks on Returning From Camp David, Maryland

July 18, 1999

Disappearance of John F. Kennedy, Jr., Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, and Lauren Bessette

As the search continues, I want to express our family's support, and offer our prayers and those of all Americans for John Kennedy, Jr.; his wife, Carolyn; her sister Lauren; and to their fine families.

I also want to thank the Coast Guard and all those who have worked so hard in this endeavor.

For more than 40 years now, the Kennedy family has inspired Americans to public service, strengthened our faith in the future, and moved our Nation forward. Through it all they have suffered much, and given more.

In recent years, in particular, John Kennedy, Jr., and Carolyn have captured our imagination and won our affection. I will always be grateful for their kindnesses to Hillary and Chelsea and me.

At this difficult moment, we hope the families of these three fine young people will feel the strength of God, the love of their friends, and the prayers of their fellow citizens.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:13 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the search and rescue efforts off the coast of Martha's Vineyard, MA, to locate the aircraft that carried Mr. Kennedy, his wife, and her sister, who were reported missing on July 17.

Statement on Crime Rate Statistics

July 18, 1999

Today's Justice Department statistics confirm that our strategy of more police on the street and fewer guns in the hands of criminals is working. Violent crime has now dropped by 27 percent since 1993, and overall crime has fallen to an unprecedented low. We should stick to this commonsense strategy.

Unfortunately, some in Congress are willing to play politics with our public safety and threaten all of our progress. They want to shut down our successful community policing efforts and riddle our gun laws with dangerous new loopholes. To keep driving down the crime rates, Congress should support more police on the street and fewer guns, not more guns on the street and fewer police.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 16 but was embargoed for release until 4:30 p.m., July 18.

Remarks at a Dinner for Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

July 18, 1999

I want to, first of all, welcome you all and thank you for braving the rather lengthy receiving line. Prime Minister Barak has asked me to announce that you can relax, because our speeches will only be half as long as the receiving line. [*Laughter*]

It's a great pleasure and an honor for Hillary and I to welcome the Baraks to the White House. This is a good day. This is a good day for affirming the eternal friendship between Israel and the United States. It is

also a hard day for those of us who are Americans, and we offer our prayers for John Kennedy, Carolyn Bessette, and Lauren Bessette and for their families. We are reminded again that life and its possibilities are fleeting, that we mortals are obliged to be humble and grateful for every day, and to make the most of every day, and that the obligation we bear for the search for peace in the Middle East should be assumed with that clear knowledge.

Mr. Prime Minister, 12 days ago you spoke to the Knesset, announcing your new government. Now, I read your speech with great interest, particularly your vow that you will, quote, ''not sleep a wink'' until peace is achieved. Shortly after you gave that speech you came here; we went to Camp David; you kept me up until 1:45 in the morning. [*Laughter*] This is a man who keeps his commitments. [*Laughter*]

In that speech, you proclaimed that this moment is, quote, ''a landmark and a turning point, a time of reconciliation, a time of unity, a time of peace.'' Many years of hard work have brought this day closer—some of it done on this very ground. Here Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat, with President Carter's assistance, made peace. Here Prime Minister Rabin, Chairman Arafat, and King Hussein committed to peace. Here last year, Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat agreed to build on that commitment.

Now the challenge is to make the promise of those days a reality every day from now on, to implement the Wye accords, to reach a permanent status agreement between Israel and the Palestinian people, to build a comprehensive peace for the region, including Syria and Lebanon. Mr. Prime Minister, you have made it very clear that Israel will keep its commitments. I want to make it equally clear that America will do its part. And that should include the approval by our Congress of the commitments we made at Wye to help the parties promote the peace process.

Mr. Prime Minister, I know you are more than ready for the challenge ahead. Americans know you as a great war hero. They may not know you as a classical pianist, a systems analyst, a tinkerer who can take apart and repair any clock, and, I am told, pick any lock. [*Laughter*] I don't know what you're thinking about for a career change, but—[*laughter*].

They may not know about your parents' path to Israel, how your father saw his parents killed by Cossacks in Lithuania, while you mother's parents perished in the Holocaust. The qualities you have and the experiences you have known have shaped a leader of extraordinary breadth and depth. A leader who is a decorated warrior but, who, like another decorated warrior, Yitzhak Rabin, has the courage to make peace, the humanity to treat old adversaries with dignity and fairness, the wisdom to know that the land which brought forth the world's great religions, who share a belief in one loving creator, God, that cares for us all, surely that region can be a land of milk and honey for all who call it home.

President Theodore Roosevelt, also a warrior turned peacemaker, said when he received the Nobel Peace Prize, ''Words count only when they give expression to deeds.'' Much of the hard work of turning words to deeds remains to be done. I am grateful that the people of Israel have called upon you for your greatest command—to bring to life the cherished dream of shalom, salaam, peace.

Please join me in a toast to Prime Minister Barak, to Nava, to all of the friends of peace here, especially to you, Leah Rabin, and to the people of Israel.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 p.m. in the South Lawn Pavilion at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Barak's wife, Nava; and Leah Rabin, widow of slain Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Barak.

Memorandum on Delegation of Authority

July 16, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Delegation of Authority Under Section 1304(b)(2) of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999

By the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3 of the United States Code, I hereby delegate to the Secretary of Defense the authority vested in me under section 1304(b)(2) of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105–261). The authority delegated by this memorandum may be redelegated not lower than the Under Secretary level.

Any reference in this memorandum to the provision of any Act shall be deemed to include references to any hereafter-enacted provision of law that is the same or substantially the same as such provision. You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 19.

Remarks Honoring the 1999 Women's World Cup Champion United States Soccer Team

July 19, 1999

The President. Good morning. Please be seated. Hillary and Al and Tipper and I are delighted to welcome all of you here, the members of the team, the Members of Congress, who are here. We want to welcome Marla Messing, the president of the Women's World Cup; Donna de Varona, the chairman of the Women's World Cup Organizing Committee. Thank you and—yes, give them a hand. [*Applause*] And we want to welcome this remarkable team. They are all here, but two, today; that's an amazing turnout. Give them a hand. [*Applause*]

We all know this is both a moment of celebration and a moment of sadness for the United States, and our thoughts and prayers are with the families of John Kennedy and Carolyn and Lauren Bessette. It is at times like this that we really stop to recognize that, as big and diverse as our country is, we can come together as a national family. We can come together in sorrow or in joy if it reflects the values that we honor most.

This is one of those moments. The Women's World Cup champions, here at the White House, brought America to its feet, had us screaming our lungs out with pride and joy. They also didn't spare us the suspense. [*Laughter*] But their triumph has surely become America's triumph. We are all proud them, and we are thrilled to have them here at the White House today.

As someone who got to watch the game at the Rose Bowl, who sat so far on the edge of my seat I actually almost fell out of the skybox, I can't help recalling just a few moments of that game. Kristine Lilly heading away what would have been a game-winning goal for the other side, in overtime. She's not here, but I have to mention Michelle Akers charging up and down until she collapsed from shear exhaustion. The perfectly timed leap Briana Scurry made to the left to block China's third penalty kick.

I might say, I saw the last three games, and I concluded that if I had to do it all over again, I'd like to be a goalie. [*Laughter*] No pressure. [*Laughter*]

And of course, Brandi Chastain's perfect shot right into the top right corner of the goal to win the World Cup.

The day after the game, a lot of us who aren't so young anymore were trying to search the whole cluttered attic of our memories to try to think if there was ever a time when there had been a more exciting climax to an athletic event that meant as much to so many. I'm not sure that in my lifetime there has been. It's no wonder that so many young girls like Stefaney Howell here are following the lead of our World Cup champions.

Over a half million girls and young women have begun playing soccer in the 8 years since America won the World Cup in 1991. Thanks to these women, America's passion for women's soccer and women's sports in

general is growing, and we owe them a lot for that.

I also can't help mentioning briefly, again, the role that Title IX has played in all this, and for all of you who have supported it, I thank you very much. I can say this: For the Clintons and the Gores, the proud parents of daughters, it is always a wonderful thing to see women finding new ways of expressing their God-given talents and abilities. Because what we want for our children is what I think all Americans want for all of our children, whether they're girls or boys, which is a chance to find their way and to follow their dreams.

These women have sent a signal, loud and clear, to millions and millions and millions of girls that they can follow their dreams. And I thank them for that.

Now, you will be happy to know I have exercised some leadership today—it's over 90 degrees out here, and I cut my speech in half. [*Laughter*] Who's next? Are you next? I don't know who's next—I think Hillary is next, the First Lady.

[*At this point, the First Lady, DC SCORES youth soccer program participant Stefaney Howell, Tipper Gore, Vice President Al Gore, and team co-captain Julie Foudy made brief remarks. Team co-captain Carla Overbeck then presented several gifts to the Clintons and Gores.*]

The President. You have all been very patient in this warm, hot sun. I want to, again, say thank you all for coming. Thank you for supporting America's soccer team. I want to thank the women on the team. I would be remiss if I did not say, also, how profoundly impressed I was at the quality of their opposition.

You know, when we had the last NCAA men's basketball championship, and UConn beat Duke, the Duke coach said something I think every coach would like to say. He said, "We did not lose this game; we were defeated." The German team, the Chinese team, the Brazilian team—they can honestly say that, too. And this is something happening all over the world, for which I am very grateful. And again, I am very grateful that our women are leading the way.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Marla Messing, president and chief executive officer, 1999 Women's World Cup Organizing Committee; and Duke University men's basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski. The President also referred to Title IX—Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, part of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Public Law 92–318).

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

July 19, 1999

President Clinton. Good afternoon. Please be seated. Prime Minister Barak and I have had a very good series of meetings over the past few days. Of course, we have focused primarily on the Middle East peace process. We strongly agree that a negotiated peace is the best way to make Israel more secure, the best path to lasting stability and prosperity for all the peoples of the Middle East.

The Prime Minister is determined to accelerate that process, to reach with Chairman Arafat a permanent status agreement between Israel and the Palestinian people, and to achieve a broader regional peace that includes Syria and Lebanon. As he has said, the objective now is to put the peace process back on all its tracks.

But we should have no illusions. The way ahead will be difficult. There are hard decisions to be made. Knowing his long record of accomplishment, both as soldier and civilian, and having spent a good deal of time with him these past few days, I believe the Prime Minister is ready to move forward decisively. And America is clearly ready to help in any way we can. As Israel takes calculated risks for peace, we will continue to support Israel's defense.

Today we have agreed to strengthen our security assistance to Israel so Israel can best meet the threats to its citizens, including terrorism and the growing threat of long-range missiles and weapons of mass destruction. We've also agreed to establish a high-level joint planning group to consult on security issues and to report back regularly to the Prime Minister and to me personally.

I intend to work closely with our Congress for expedited approval of a package that includes not only aid to Israel but also assistance to the Palestinian people and Jordan in the context of implementing the Wye River agreement. Making Israel stronger and making Palestinians and Jordanians more secure and more prosperous—all these are crucial to building a just and lasting peace in the region.

Finally, I want to announce that America and Israel will be taking our partnership to new heights, literally. As part of an effort to enhance our scientific cooperation, we will create a working group between NASA and the Israel Space Agency to advance scientific research, educational activities, and the peaceful uses of space. And an Israeli astronaut and a payload of Israeli instruments will fly on a space shuttle mission next year.

All these efforts will strengthen the bonds between our two democracies. They will help us to build a better future together. I am proud that Prime Minister Barak is my partner in this work. I look forward to seeing him again soon.

Mr. Prime Minister, the floor is yours.

Prime Minister Barak. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen. President Clinton and I have just concluded the last in our series of meetings. Those meetings were held in an atmosphere of deep friendship and understanding that characterizes the bilateral relationship between Israel and the United States.

Our policy is based on the following: We are committed to the renewal of the peace process. It is our intention to move the process forward simultaneously on all tracks—bilateral, the Palestinian, the Syrians, and the Lebanese, as well as the multilateral. We will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to reinvigorate the process, which must be based upon direct talks between the parties themselves and conducted in an atmosphere of mutual trust.

Any unilateral steps, acts or threats of terrorism, violence, or other forms of aggression have no place in a process of peace. The peace we seek to establish is only the one that will enhance the security of Israel. Only a strong and secure Israel is capable of making the difficult choices that the process requires.

I will not shy away from those difficult choices, but I have responsibility to the people of Israel to do all that I possibly can to minimize the risks and dangers involved. From here, I call upon our Arab partners and their leaders to embark with us together on this historic journey, which requires tough choices from all parties.

Mr. President, Israel and America share a unique friendship and a very special partnership. Our relationship is built upon common values, shared interests, and a mutual vision as to the future of the region. A strong Israeli-American relationship must be the cornerstone on which to build a peaceful Middle East. Mr. President, the road ahead may be long and arduous, but together with our peace partners, we can and will make it happen.

We know, Mr. President, that in the pursuit of this sacred mission, a mission of peace, we can count on your wisdom, experience, good advice, and continued support all along the road.

For Nava and for myself, thank you again for your warm hospitality accorded us throughout our visit and for your consistent friendship and support.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, the Prime Minister has committed himself to implementing the West Bank pullback agreed upon at Wye River. You just talked about accelerating the peace process. Realistically speaking, looking ahead, how long before the final status talks get underway on the tough issues like Jerusalem, the Palestinian hopes for a homeland, refugees? And what specific steps can the United States do to facilitate this process? Maybe if each of you could address those.

President Clinton. Well, first of all, the United States will continue to do what it has done all along. I believe that we should be prepared to support a final status agreement in the way we have supported all these other agreements, going all the way back to Camp

David and through those that have been reached during my tenure. We should support the security of Israel, the stability of the region, the economic development of the region. And we should help to work out any of the particular problems as they arise.

In terms of the timing, I don't think it's for the United States to set the timetables here. I think we should just be supportive of moving ahead as vigorously as possible. But it's not our role—and shouldn't be—to impose an outside timetable on the process.

Prime Minister Barak. We are committed to agreements signed by Israeli governments. We are committed to Wye. We will implement it. We are committed to the permanent status negotiations, and we intend to go forward and do it.

We have to consider, together with Chairman Arafat, the way to combine the Wye agreement implementation with the pushing forward of the permanent status negotiations and implementation. And we will do exactly that in the coming months.

I would suggest a kind of framework of about 15 months, within which we will know whether we have a breakthrough and are really going to put an end to the conflict, or alternatively—I hope this will not be the case—we are stuck once again. I use the kind of framework of 15 months to signal to all publics and ask the players that we are not talking about a miraculous solution, magic solution, that will drop upon us from heaven in 3 weeks, and we do not intend to drag our foot for another 3 years.

President Clinton. Want to take a question from an Israeli journalist?

Prime Minister Barak. Please.

President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria

Q. Mr. President, do you intend to have talks or to meet with President Asad at the present time and maybe shoot for a summit meeting here with President Asad?

And, Prime Minister Barak, another question also on Damascus. Today terrorist organizations there were urged to leave the country by the Syrian Government. Is there any proof of this news that you heard, and if it's true, do you see any significance?

President Clinton. Well, let me answer the first question. I have had regular contact, as you know, and a lot of contact with President Asad over the last 6½ years. He knows very well that I am committed to the peace process between Israel and Syria, and that I believe that he has a golden opportunity now to resume that process and that I hope he will do so. And I intend to reaffirm that in the appropriate way at the conclusion of our meeting.

We, too, would like more normal relations with Syria, and we would like Syria to be reconciled to all its neighbors in the region. And I think anything that Syria does to disassociate itself from terrorists is a positive step in the right direction.

Yes, ma'am. Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], you're next; I'll take you next.

Future Israeli Security

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, a question to you. As Israel moves now to resume peace talks with its Arab adversaries, what and who do you regard as the real existential threats to Israel in the coming century? Do you look more toward Iran and Iraq? Do you have different views on these issues than your predecessor? Thank you.

Prime Minister Barak. Unlike this part of the world, our neighbor—unlike North America—Western Europe is a very tough neighborhood, you know, kind of merciless environment, no second opportunity for those who cannot defend themselves. And many threats might loom over the horizon without very long early warning. We, of course, see the risk. This is one of the reasons why I'm so determined to do whatever we can to achieve peace.

I spent all my life in uniform fighting for the security of our country, and we know from our experience that by strengthening Israel and going toward peace, we will reduce this kind of threat. There are a lot of conventional armed forces around us. If you combine them together it's more weapon systems in the Middle East than in NATO. And of course, the prospect of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technology to places like Iran or Iraq create a major threat to the stability of the whole Middle East, to the free flow of oil from this region that helps to sustain the economies

of both Europe and Japan, and, of course, to Israel. And we are watching very carefully these kinds of threats.

We do not aspire to eliminate any future risk from the globe by making peace with our neighbors, but we're clearly determined to make our future and the future of our neighbors better by reaching a full agreement about peace with all our neighbors around.

Q. Iraq and Iran, sir?

Prime Minister Barak. Iran and Iraq is a sources of potential threat to the stability of the Middle East and to Israel if they reach missile technology, nuclear weapons, and, by this, the combination to really launch them.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. President Clinton, you have met with Prime Minister Barak for many hours, and we all know that you have concluded some sort of a program to advance the peace process. Can you please tell us some of these details that you can tell us? What is expected in the coming days or weeks and when is the talks between Syria and Israel are going to be resumed? Is there any date?

And a question to Prime Minister Barak, what is your reaction to the meeting of Abd al-Halim Khaddam in Damascus with a few Palestinian organizations that are imposing the Olso—the peace process? Do you think that it's a significant step for peace.

President Clinton. First of all, we have issued a very detailed joint statement. I don't know if you have it yet or not.

Q. I've read it, but it doesn't say specifically what are the coming moves.

President Clinton. That's right; that's on purpose. [*Laughter*] So you know—sometimes in this process, the less you say, the better. Let me say that you know that Prime Minister Barak has talked to Chairman Arafat, and they intend to talk again. And I have said that I will make it known to President Asad what I consider to be the very satisfactory results of this meeting and that this is an important time to restart the peace process. I think to go beyond that right now would be an error on my part. Not because I don't intend to push ahead in every way I can, but I just think it would be a mistake.

Prime Minister Barak. I can just add to this that I'm fully confident that when we will have something to tell, we will be interviewed by you, and we'll tell you, and the public will know. There will be no secrets when something really happens in the open.

On the other part of your question, I did not get a real report about this meeting, but if there was such a meeting and the Syrians really asked the terror organizations to reduce their level of activity, if that is true, it is, of course, good news for all of us.

President Clinton. Helen.

Israeli-Palestinian Relations

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, there's an expression——

Prime Minister Barak. I awaited you. [*Laughter*]

Q. ——that if you walk in someone's moccasins, then you'll know how they really feel. If you were walking in a Palestinian's shoes, how would you feel about occupation, annexation, incarceration for months, for years without a charge, without a trial?

Prime Minister Barak. I was elected Prime Minister of the State of Israel. I'm fully focused on the security and future of the Israelis. I am aware that, the same way that a person cannot choose his parents, a nation cannot choose its neighbors. They are there, the Palestinians; we respect them. We want to build a peace with them that will put an end to the conflict with all the sufferings that happen on both sides of this conflict. We are determined to do it. I believe that focusing on how to solve the problems of the future is a more, may I say, productive way to consume our time than dealing with analyzing past events or their interpretation.

Q. Well, they aren't past. They're very current.

Prime Minister Barak. We are working on bringing a peace that will create a different environment in the Middle East, and I am fully focused on this future, rather than on analysis of the past.

President Clinton. Do you want to take another question?

Prime Minister Barak. Please.