

United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., November 3, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 1, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on November 4.

Exchange With Reporters on Arrival in Oslo, Norway

November 1, 1999

Middle East Peace Process

Q. What is your hope for the peace process?

The President. Well, first of all, I would like to thank the Prime Minister, the Government, and the people of Norway for hosting this meeting. I think it's coming at a good time. I believe that Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat want to continue the peace process. And we are now to the point where the really difficult decisions lie ahead. So coming back to Oslo, where the Oslo accords were born, coming here to honor the memory of Yitzhak Rabin, who gave his life for this peace process, it's a good thing to do.

And so we're hopeful that we'll make some progress. And we'll see, and probably the less we say about it in public, the more likely we are to get something done. But I'm hopeful. And I'm honored to be here in Norway. This is my first trip, as President, to Norway. I haven't been here in 30 years—30 years ago next month was my first trip to Norway.

President's First Visit to Norway

Q. Do you remember it well?

The President. Very well, yes. It was wonderful.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 7 a.m. at Oslo International Airport. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik of Norway; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik of Norway and an Exchange With Reporters in Oslo

November 1, 1999

Prime Minister Bondevik. Mr. President, dear journalists, it's a very special occasion for us in Norway. This is the very first visit from a sitting President of the United States to our country. So we are so glad to receive President Clinton here.

We have had fruitful discussions, where we could continue our talks from the White House in Washington, only 2 weeks ago. And of course, we have discussed the Middle East peace process. We think that the ceremonial commemoration tomorrow for the late Prime Minister Rabin and the talks in that framework can stimulate the peace process. And we are both committed to assist the two parties. The main responsibility for a final solution is, of course, upon the two parties.

Norway and the U.S. will seek ways to expand our common efforts in a number of areas for security, development, and for well-being. The President and I have today agreed on an initiative to follow up the Reykjavik Conference on Women and Democracy, where the First Lady, Hillary Clinton, participated. We are also agreed on a joint initiative on funding for support of disabled victims of the war in Sierra Leone.

Mr. President, I believe that you want to say a few words before we answer one or two questions. Mr. President.

President Clinton. Thank you. First, Prime Minister, let me say I am delighted to be here, honored by your invitation to come a few weeks ago, and then by the King's invitation to come to Norway. As you perhaps know, I traveled here alone as a young man some 30 years ago—it was actually 30 years ago this December—and I fell in love with this country. I'd long wanted to come back. I was amazed to discover that I am the first sitting President ever to visit Norway. I can't imagine what the others were thinking about—[laughter]—but I am delighted to be here.