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lives and their children's lives. That's what I want to ask you more. You've given her a great gift. Now help her use it for the purpose it was intended.

Last Wednesday, when Hillary was sworn into the Senate, I believe that Chelsea and I were the two happiest people on the planet: Chelsea, because she loves her mother and she's proud of her; me, for the same reasons, but also because when I met Hillary nearly 30 years ago now—2 more months, 30 years ago—I thought that she had more capacity and more heart for public service than anybody I had ever met. And I worried when we started our lives together that somehow I would limit her service.

Your giving her this chance, in my mind, has reaffirmed the wisdom she made in moving to be with me so long ago and all the many roles she's played in giving to others and never asking for anything for herself until she made this race. And I can tell you this, you will not be disappointed, because I was right about her 30 years ago.

Thank you. God bless you.

Now, Mr. Vice President, please reenact the ceremony.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:50 p.m. at Madison Square Garden. In his remarks, he referred to soprano Jessye Norman; author Toni Morrison; musician Billy Joel; and Judith Hope, chair, New York State Democratic Party; Garrison Keillor, host of "Prairie Home Companion"; and Senator Schumer's wife, Iris Weinshall. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Senator Hillary Clinton and Vice President Al Gore.

Remarks at an Israel Policy Forum Dinner in New York City

January 7, 2001

Thank you very much. Thank you. I want to thank all of you for making me feel so welcome tonight and also for making Hillary and Chelsea feel welcome. I thank Michael Sonnenfeldt, who, like me, is going out after 8 years—[*laughter*]—and will doubtless find some other useful activity. But he has done a superb job, and I'm very grateful to him.

I thank my friend Jack Bendheim for his many kindnesses to me and to Hillary. Yesterday he had a birthday, and now, like me, he's 54. Unlike me, he has enough children to be elected President of the United States. [*Laughter*] And he's had a wonderful family and a wonderful life, and I'm delighted that he's so active in the Israel Policy Forum. I'd like to thank Judith Stern Peck for making me feel so welcome and for her leadership.

I thank Lesley Stahl. It's good to see you, and thank you for your kind remarks. I thank the many Members of Congress who are here and also the members of my Middle East peace team. Secretary Albright and Sandy Berger and others have been introduced, but Secretary Dan Glickman is here, and Kerry Kennedy Cuomo is here, and I thank them for being here.

I want to thank the New York officials who are here—Carl McCall, Mark Green, and any others who may be in the crowd—for your many kindnesses to me over the last 8 years. New York has been great to me and Al Gore and even greater to my wife on election day, so I thank you for that.

We just reenacted her swearing-in at Madison Square Garden. And I was reminded of one of the many advantages of living in New York: Jessye Norman sang; Toni Morrison read; and Billy Joel sang. Meanwhile, at least at half time, the Giants were ahead. [*Laughter*] And so I said, I felt sort of like Garrison Keillor did about Lake Wobegon. I was glad to be in New York where all the writers, artists, and sports teams were above average—[*laughter*]—and all the votes were always counted. [*Laughter*]

Let me also say a word of warm welcome and profound respect to the Speaker of the Knesset, Speaker Burg, for his wonderful and kind comments to me, and to Cabinet Secretary Herzog, for his message from the Government of Israel. I want to say a little more about that in a moment.

I want to congratulate Dwayne Andreas, my good friend—I wish he were here tonight—and thank him for his many kindnesses to me. Congratulations, Louis Perlmutter; Susan Stern, who has been such a great friend to Hillary, and you gave a good talk tonight. I think you've got a real future in this business. And your mother sat by me, and she gave you a good grade, too. [*Laughter*]

And Alan Solomont, who has done as much for me as, I suppose, any American, and he and Susan and their children have been great friends, and I thank you for what you've done, sir. I thank all of you.

I'd also like to say how much I appreciated and was moved by the words of Prime Minister Barak. He was dealt the hard hand by history. And he came to office with absolute conviction that in the end, Israel could not be secure unless a just and lasting peace could be reached with its neighbors, beginning with the Palestinians; that if that turned out not to be possible, then the next best thing was to be as strong as possible and as effective in the use of that strength. But his knowledge of war has fed a passion for peace. And his understanding of the changing technology of war has made him more passionate, not because he thinks the existence of Israel is less secure—if anything, it's more secure—but because the sophisticated weapons available to terrorists today mean even though they still lose, they can exact a higher price along the way.

I've been in enough political fights in my life to know that sometimes you just have to do the right thing, and it may work out, and it may not. Most people thought I had lost my mind when we passed the economic plan to get rid of the deficit in 1993. And no one in the other party voted for it, and they just talked about how it would bring the world to an end and America's economy would be a disaster. I think the only Republican who thought it would work was Alan Greenspan. [*Laughter*] He was relieved of the burden of having to say anything about it.

But no dilemma I have ever faced approximates in difficulty or comes close to the choice that Prime Minister Barak had to make when he took office. He realized that he couldn't know for sure what the final intentions of the Palestinian leadership were without testing them. He further realized that even if the intentions were there, there was a lot of competition among the Palestinians and from outside forces, from people who are enemies of peace because they don't give a rip how the ordinary Palestinians have to live and they're pursuing a whole different agenda.

He knew nine things could go wrong and only one thing could go right. But he promised himself that he would have to try. And as long as he knew Israel in the end could defend itself and maintain its security, he would keep taking risks. And that's what he's done, down to these days. There may be those who disagree with him, but he has demonstrated as much bravery in the office of Prime Minister as he ever did on the field of battle, and no one should ever question that.

Now, I imagine this has been a tough time for those of you who have been supporting the IPF out of conviction for a long time. All the dreams we had in '93 that were revived when we had the peace with Jordan, revived again when we had the Wye River accords—that was, I think, the most interesting peace talk I was ever involved in. My strategy was the same used to break prisoners of war: I just didn't let anybody sleep for 9 days, and finally, out of exhaustion, we made a deal—just so people could go home and go to bed. [*Laughter*] I've been looking for an opportunity to employ it again, ever since.

There have been a lot of positive things, and I think it's worth remembering that there have been positive developments along the way. But this is heartbreaking, what we've been through these last few months, for all of you who have believed for 8 years in the Oslo process, all of you whose hearts soared on September 13, 1993,* when Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin signed that agreement.

For over 3 months, we have lived through a tragic cycle of violence that has cost hundreds of lives. It has shattered the confidence in the peace process. It has raised questions in some people's minds about whether Palestinians and Israelis could ever really live and work together, support each other's peace and prosperity and security. It's been a heartbreaking time for me, too. But we have done our best to work with the parties to restore calm, to end the bloodshed, and to get back to working on an agreement to address the underlying causes that continuously erupt in conflicts.

Whatever happens in the next 2 weeks I've got to serve, I think it's appropriate for me

* White House correction.

tonight, before a group of Americans and friends from the Middle East who believe profoundly in the peace process and have put their time and heart and money where their words are, to reflect on the lessons I believe we've all learned over the last 8 years and how we can achieve the long sought peace.

From my first day as President, we have worked to advance interests in the Middle East that are long standing and historically bipartisan. I was glad to hear of Senator Hagel's recitation of President-elect Bush's commitment to peace in the Middle East. Those historic commitments include an ironclad commitment to Israel's security and a just, comprehensive, and lasting agreement between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Along the way, since '93, through the positive agreements that have been reached between those two sides, through the peace between Israel and Jordan, through last summer's withdrawal from Lebanon in which Israel fulfilled its part of implementing U.N. Security Counsel Resolution 425—along this way we have learned some important lessons, not only because of the benchmarks of progress, because of the occasional eruption of terrorism, bombing, death, and then these months of conflict.

I think these lessons have to guide any effort, now or in the future, to reach a comprehensive peace. Here's what I think they are. Most of you probably believed in them, up to the last 3 months. I still do.

First, the Arab-Israeli conflict is not just a morality play between good and evil; it is a conflict with a complex history, whose resolution requires balancing the needs of both sides, including respect for their national identities and religious beliefs.

Second, there is no place for violence and no military solution to this conflict. The only path to a just and durable resolution is through negotiation.

Third, there will be no lasting peace or regional stability without a strong and secure Israel, secure enough to make peace, strong enough to deter the adversaries which will still be there, even if a peace is made in complete good faith. And clearly that is why the United States must maintain its commitment to preserving Israel's qualitative edge in military superiority.

Fourth, talks must be accompanied by acts—acts which show trust and partnership. For good will at the negotiating table cannot survive forever ill intent on the ground. And it is important that each side understands how the other reads actions. For example, on the one hand, the tolerance of violence and incitement of hatred in classrooms and the media in the Palestinian communities, or on the other hand, humiliating treatment on the streets or at checkpoints by Israelis, are real obstacles to even getting people to talk about building a genuine peace.

Fifth, in the resolution of remaining differences, whether they come today or after several years of heartbreak and bloodshed, the fundamental, painful, but necessary choices will almost certainly remain the same whenever the decision is made. The parties will face the same history, the same geography, the same neighbors, the same passions, the same hatreds. This is not a problem time will take care of.

And I would just like to go off the script here, because a lot of you have more personal contacts than I do with people that will be dealing with this for a long time to come, whatever happens in the next 2 weeks.

Among the really profound and difficult problems of the world that I have dealt with, I find that they tend to fall into two categories. And if I could use sort of a medical analogy, some are like old wounds with scabs on them, and some are like abscessed teeth.

What do I mean by that? Old wounds with scabs eventually will heal if you just leave them alone. And if you fool with them too much, you might open the scab and make them worse. Abscessed teeth, however, will only get worse if you leave them alone, and if you wait and wait and wait, they'll just infect the whole rest of your mouth.

Northern Ireland, I believe, is becoming more like the scab. There are very difficult things. If you followed my trip over there, you know I was trying to help them resolve some of their outstanding problems, and we didn't get it all done. But what I really wanted to do was to remind people of the benefits of peace and to keep everybody in a good frame of mind and going on so that all the politicians know that if they really let the

wheel run off over there, the people will throw them out on their ears.

Now, why is that? Because the Irish Republic is now the fastest growing economy in Europe, and Northern Ireland is the fastest growing economy within the United Kingdom. So the people are benefiting from peace, and they can live with the fact that they can't quite figure out what to do about the police force and the reconciliation of the various interests and passions of the Protestants and Catholics, and the other three or four things, because the underlying reality has changed their lives. So even though I wish I could solve it all, eventually it will heal, if it just keeps going in the same direction.

The Middle East is not like that. Why? Because there are all these independent actors—that is, independent of the Palestinian Authority and not under the direct control of any international legal body—who don't want this peace to work. So that even if we can get an agreement and the Palestinian Authority works as hard as they can and the Israelis work as hard as they can, we're all going to have to pitch in, send in an international force like we did in the Sinai, and hang tough, because there are enemies of peace out there, number one.

Number two, because the enemies of peace know they can drive the Israelis to close the borders if they can blow up enough bombs. They do it periodically to make sure that the Palestinians in the street cannot enjoy the benefits of peace that have come to the people in Northern Ireland. So as long as they can keep the people miserable and they can keep the fundamental decisions from being made, they still have a hope, the enemies of peace, of derailing the whole thing. That's why it's more like an abscessed tooth.

The fundamental realities are not going to be changed by delays. And that's why I said what I did about Ehud Barak. I know that—I don't think it's appropriate for the United States to deal with anybody else's politics, but I know why—you can't expect poll ratings to be very good when the voters in the moment wonder if they're going to get peace or security and think they can no longer have both and may have to choose one. I understand that.

But I'm telling you, the reason he has continued to push ahead on this is that he has figured out, this is one of those political problems that is like the abscessed tooth. The realities are not going to change. We can wait until all these handsome young people at this table are the same age as the honorees tonight, and me. We can wait until they've got kids their age and we've got a whole lot more bodies and a lot more funerals, a lot more crying and a lot more hatred, and I'll swear the decisions will still be the same ones that will have to be made that have to be made today.

That's the fundamental deal here. And this is a speech I have given, I might add, to all my Israeli friends who question what we have done, and to the Palestinians, and in private—God forgive me, my language is sometimes somewhat more graphic than it has been tonight. But anybody that ever kneeled at the grave of a person who died in the Middle East knows that what we've been through these last 3 months is not what Yitzhak Rabin died for and not what I went to Gaza 2 years ago to speak to the Palestinian National Council for either, for that matter.

So those are the lessons I think are still operative, and I'm a little concerned that we could draw the wrong lessons from this tragic, still relatively brief, chapter in the history of the Middle East. The violence does not demonstrate that the quest for peace has gone too far or too fast. It demonstrates what happens when you've got a problem that is profoundly difficult and you never quite get to the end, so there is no settlement, no resolution, anxiety prevailed, and at least some people never get any concrete benefits out of it.

And I believe that the last few months demonstrate the futility of force or terrorism as an ultimate solution. That's what I believe. I think the last few months show that unilateralism will exacerbate, not abate, mutual hostility. I believe that the violence confirms the need to do more to prepare both publics for the requirements of peace, not to condition people for the so-called glory of further conflict.

Now, what are we going to do now? The first priority, obviously, has got to be to drastically reduce the current cycle of violence.

But beyond that, on the Palestinian side, there must be an end to the culture of violence and the culture of incitement that, since Oslo, has not gone unchecked. Young children still are being educated to believe in confrontation with Israel, and multiple militia-like groups carry and use weapons with impunity. Voices of reason in that kind of environment will be drowned out too often by voices of revenge.

Such conduct is inconsistent with the Palestinian leadership's commitment to Oslo's nonviolent path to peace, and its persistence sends the wrong message to the Israeli people and makes it much more difficult for them to support their leaders in making the compromises necessary to get a lasting agreement.

For their part, the Israeli people also must understand that they're creating a few problems, too; that the settlement enterprise and building bypass roads in the heart of what they already know will one day be part of a Palestinian state is inconsistent with the Oslo commitment that both sides negotiate a compromise.

And restoring confidence requires the Palestinians being able to lead a normal existence and not be subject to daily, often humiliating reminders that they lack basic freedom and control over their lives.

These, too, make it harder for the Palestinians to believe the commitments made to them will be kept. Can two peoples with this kind of present trouble and troubling history still conclude a genuine and lasting peace? I mean, if I gave you this as a soap opera, you would say they're going to divorce court. But they can't, because they share such a small piece of land with such a profound history of importance to more than a billion people around the world. So I believe with all my heart not only that they can, but that they must.

At Camp David I saw Israeli and Palestinian negotiators who knew how many children each other had, who knew how many grandchildren each other had, who knew how they met their spouses, who knew what their family tragedies were, who trusted each other in their word. It was almost shocking to see what could happen and how people still felt on the ground when I saw how their leaders felt about each other and the respect and the confidence they had in each other when they were talking.

The alternative to getting this peace done is being played out before our very eyes. But amidst the agony, I will say again, there are signs of hope. And let me try to put this into what I think is a realistic context.

Camp David was a transformative event, because the two sides faced the core issue of their dispute in a forum that was official for the first time. And they had to debate the tradeoffs required to resolve the issues. Just as Oslo forced Israelis and Palestinians to come to terms with each other's existence, the discussions of the past 6 months have forced them to come to terms with each other's needs and the contours of a peace that ultimately they will have to reach.

That's why Prime Minister Barak, I think, has demonstrated real courage and vision in moving toward peace in difficult circumstances while trying to find a way to continue to protect Israel's security and vital interests. So that's a fancy way of saying, we know what we have to do and we've got a mess on our hands.

So where do we go from here? Given the impasse and the tragic deterioration on the ground a couple of weeks ago, both sides asked me to present my ideas. So I put forward parameters that I wanted to be guide toward a comprehensive agreement; parameters based on 8 years of listening carefully to both sides and hearing them describe with increasing clarity their respective grievances and needs.

Both Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat have now accepted these parameters as the basis for further efforts, though both have expressed some reservations. At their request, I am using my remaining time in office to narrow the differences between the parties to the greatest degree possible—[*applause*]—for which I deserve no applause. Believe me, it beats packing up all my old books. [*Laughter*]

The parameters I put forward contemplate a settlement in response to each side's essential needs, if not to their utmost desires. A settlement based on sovereign homelands, security, peace and dignity for both Israelis and Palestinians. These parameters don't

begin to answer every question; they just narrow the questions that have to be answered.

Here they are. First, I think there can be no genuine resolution to the conflict without a sovereign, viable, Palestinian state that accommodates Israeli's security requirements and the demographic realities. That suggests Palestinian sovereignty over Gaza, the vast majority of the West Bank, the incorporation into Israel of settlement blocks, with the goal of maximizing the number of settlers in Israel while minimizing the land annex for Palestine to be viable must be a geographically contiguous state.

Now, the land annexed into Israel into settlement blocks should include as few Palestinians as possible, consistent with the logic of two separate homelands. And to make the agreement durable, I think there will have to be some territorial swaps and other arrangements.

Second, a solution will have to be found for the Palestinian refugees who have suffered a great deal—particularly some of them— a solution that allows them to return to a Palestinian state that will provide all Palestinians with a place they can safely and proudly call home. All Palestinian refugees who wish to live in this homeland should have the right to do so. All others who want to find new homes, whether in their current locations or in third countries, should be able to do so, consistent with those countries' sovereign decisions, and that includes Israel.

All refugees should receive compensation from the international community for their losses and assistance in building new lives.

Now, you all know what the rub is. That was a lot of artful language for saying that you cannot expect Israel to acknowledge an unlimited right of return to present day Israel and, at the same time, to give up Gaza and the West Bank and have the settlement blocks as compact as possible, because of where a lot of these refugees came from. We cannot expect Israel to make a decision that would threaten the very foundations of the state of Israel and would undermine the whole logic of peace. And it shouldn't be done.

But I have made it very clear that the refugees will be a high priority, and that the United States will take a lead in raising the money necessary to relocate them in the most appropriate manner. If the Government of Israel or a subsequent Government of Israel ever—will be in charge of their immigration policy, just as we and the Canadians and the Europeans and others who would offer Palestinians a home would be, they would be obviously free to do that, and I think they've indicated that they would do that, to some extent. But there cannot be an unlimited language in an agreement that would undermine the very foundations of the Israeli state or the whole reason for creating the Palestinian state. So that's what we're working on.

Third, there will be no peace and no peace agreement unless the Israeli people have lasting security guarantees. These need not and should not come at the expense of Palestinian sovereignty, or interfere with Palestinian territorial integrity. So my parameters rely on an international presence in Palestine to provide border security along the Jordan Valley and to monitor implementation of the final agreement. They rely on a non-militarized Palestine, a phased Israeli withdrawal to address Israeli security needs in the Jordan Valley, and other essential arrangements to ensure Israel's ability to defend itself.

Fourth, I come to the issue of Jerusalem, perhaps the most emotional and sensitive of all. It is a historic, cultural, and political center for both Israelis and Palestinians, a unique city sacred to all three monotheistic religions. And I believe the parameters I have established flow from four fair and logical propositions.

First, Jerusalem should be an open and undivided city with assured freedom of access and worship for all. It should encompass the internationally recognized capitals of two states, Israel and Palestine. Second, what is Arab should be Palestinian, for why would Israel want to govern in perpetuity the lives of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians? Third, what is Jewish should be Israeli. That would give rise to a Jewish Jerusalem, larger and more vibrant than any in history. Fourth, what is holy to both requires a special care to meet the needs of all. I was glad to hear what the Speaker said about that. No peace agreement will last if not premised on mutual

respect for the religious beliefs and holy shrines of Jews, Muslims, and Christians.

I have offered formulations on the Haram al-Sharif, and the area holy to the Jewish people, an area which for 2,000 years, as I said at Camp David, has been the focus of Jewish yearning, that I believed fairly addressed the concerns of both sides.

Fifth and, finally, any agreement will have to mark the decision to end the conflict, for neither side can afford to make these painful compromises, only to be subjected to further demands. They are both entitled to know that if they take the last drop of blood out of each other's turnip, that's it. It really will have to be the end of the struggle that has pitted Palestinians and Israelis against one another for too long. And the end of the conflict must manifest itself with concrete acts that demonstrate a new attitude and a new approach by Palestinians and Israelis toward each other, and by other states in the region toward Israel, and by the entire region toward Palestine, to help it get off to a good start.

The parties' experience with interim accords has not always been happy—too many deadlines missed, too many commitments unfulfilled on both sides. So for this to signify a real end of the conflict, there must be effective mechanisms to provide guarantees of implementation. That's a lot of stuff, isn't it? It's what I think is the outline of a fair agreement.

Let me say this. I am well aware that it will entail real pain and sacrifices for both sides. I am well aware that I don't even have to run for reelection in the United States on the basis of these ideas. I have worked for 8 years without laying such ideas down. I did it only when both sides asked me to and when it was obvious that we had come to the end of the road, and somebody had to do something to break out of the impasse.

Now, I still think the benefits of the agreement, based on these parameters, far outweigh the burdens. For the people of Israel, they are an end to conflict, secure and defensible borders, the incorporation of most of the settlers into Israel, and the Jewish capital of Yerushalayim, recognized by all, not just the United States, by everybody in the world. It's a big deal, and it needs to be done.

For the Palestinian people, it means the freedom to determine their own future on their own land, a new life for the refugees, an independent and sovereign state with Al-Quds as its capital, recognized by all. And for America, it means that we could have new flags flying over new Embassies in both these capitals.

Now that the sides have accepted the parameters with reservations, what's going to happen? Well, each side will try to do a little better than I did. [*Laughter*] You know, that's just natural. But a peace viewed as imposed by one party upon the other, that puts one side up and the other down, rather than both ahead, contains the seeds of its own destruction.

Let me say those who believe that my ideas can be altered to one party's exclusive benefit are mistaken. I think to press for more will produce less. There can be no peace without compromise. Now, I don't ask Israelis or Palestinians to agree with everything I said. If they can come up with a completely different agreement, it would suit me just fine. But I doubt it.

I have said what I have out of a profound lifetime commitment to and love for the state of Israel; out of a conviction that the Palestinian people have been ignored or used as political footballs by others for long enough, and they ought to have a chance to make their own life with dignity; and out of a belief that in the homeland of the world's three great religions that believe we are all the creatures of one God, we ought to be able to prove that one person's win is not, by definition, another's loss; that one person's dignity is not, by definition, another's humiliation; that one person's worship of God is not, by definition, another's heresy.

There has to be a way for us to find a truth we can share. There has to be a way for us to reach those young Palestinian kids who, unlike the young people in this audience, don't imagine a future in which they would ever put on clothes like this and sit at a dinner like this. There has to be a way for us to say to them, struggle and pain and destruction and self-destruction are way overrated and not the only option. There has to be a way for us to reach those people in Israel who have paid such a high price and

believe, frankly, that people who embrace the ideas I just outlined are nuts, because Israel is a little country and this agreement would make it smaller; to understand that the world in which we live and the technology of modern weaponry no longer make defense primarily a matter of geography and of politics; and the human feeling and the interdependence and the cooperation and the shared values and the shared interests are more important and worth the considered risk, especially if the United States remains committed to the military capacity of the state of Israel.

So I say to the Palestinians: There will always be those who are sitting outside in the peanut gallery of the Middle East, urging you to hold out for more or to plant one more bomb. But all the people who do that, they're not the refugees languishing in those camps; you are. They're not the ones with children growing up in poverty whose income is lower today than it was the day we had the signing on the White House Lawn in 1993; you are.

All the people that are saying to the Palestinian people: Stay on the path of no, are people that have a vested interest in the failure of the peace process that has nothing to do with how those kids in Gaza and the West Bank are going to grow up and live and raise their own children.

To the citizens of Israel who have returned to an ancient homeland after 2,000 years, whose hopes and dreams almost vanished in the Holocaust, who have hardly had one day of peace and quiet since the state of Israel was created, I understand, I believe, something of the disillusionment, the anger, the frustration that so many feel when, just at the moment peace seemed within reach, all this violence broke out and raised the question of whether it is ever possible.

The fact is that the people of Israel dreamed of a homeland. The dream came through, but when they came home, the land was not all vacant. Your land is also their land. It is the homeland of two people. And therefore, there is no choice but to create two states and make the best of it.

If it happens today, it will be better than if it happens tomorrow, because fewer people will die. And after it happens, the motives of those who continue the violence will be clearer to all than they are today.

Today, Israel is closer than ever to ending a 100-year-long era of struggle. It could be Israel's finest hour. And I hope and pray that the people of Israel will not give up the hope of peace.

Now, I've got 13 days, and I'll do what I can. We're working with Egypt and the parties to try to end the violence. I'm sending Dennis Ross to the region this week. I met with both sides this week. I hope we can really do something. And I appreciate, more than I can say, the kind, personal things that you said about me.

But here's what I want you to think about. New York has its own high-tech corridor called Silicon Alley. The number one foreign recipient of venture capital from Silicon Alley is Israel. Palestinians who have come to the United States, to Chile, to Canada, to Europe, have done fabulously well in business, in the sciences, in academia.

If we could ever let a lot of this stuff go and realize that a lot of—that the enemies of peace in the Middle East are overlooking not only what the Jewish people have done beyond Israel but what has happened to the state of Israel since its birth, and how fabulously well the people of Palestinian descent have done everywhere else in the world except in their homeland, where they are in the grip of forces that have not permitted them to reconcile with one another and with the people of Israel. Listen, if you guys ever got together, 10 years from now we would all wonder what the heck happened for 30 years before.

And the center of energy and creativity and economic power and political influence in the entire region would be with the Israelis and the Palestinians because of their gifts. It could happen. But somebody has got to take the long leap, and they have to be somebodies on both sides.

All I can tell you is, whether you do it now or whether you do it later, whether I'm the President or just somebody in the peanut gallery, I'll be there, cheering and praying and working along the way. And I think America will be there. I think America will always be there for Israel's security. But Israel's lasting security rests in a just and lasting peace. I

pray that the day will come sooner, rather than later, where all the people of the region will see that they can share the wisdom of God in their common humanity and give up their conflict.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Michael W. Sonnenfeldt, chair, Jack Bendheim, president, and Susan Stern, vice president, Israel Policy Forum; Judith Stern Peck, former chair, United Jewish Appeal Federation of New York; dinner emcee Lesley Stahl; Kerry Kennedy Cuomo, wife of Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Andrew M. Cuomo; New York State Comptroller H. Carl McCall; Mark Green, New York City public advocate; musicians Jessye Norman and Billy Joel; author Toni Morrison; Garrison Keillor, host of "Prairie Home Companion"; Speaker of the Knesset Avraham Burg; Israeli Cabinet Secretary Yitzhak Herzog; dinner honorees Dwayne O. Andreas, chair, Archer Daniels Midland Company, Louis Perlmutter, former chair, Brandeis University, and Alan D. Solomont, chair and founder, A.D.S. Group; Mr. Solomont's wife, Susan; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; President-elect George W. Bush; and Ambassador David Ross, Special Middle East Coordinator. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks at the Rededication of the AFL–CIO Building

January 8, 2001

The President. Thank you. What do you think, Mom? She did a good job, didn't she? I thought she was great. [*Laughter*] When Susan said they would collectively bargain for ice cream, I thought to myself, it is only in large families that even John Sweeney would be against unionizing. [*Laughter*] No parents can stand against their united children, if there are enough of them. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, Susan. Thank you, John, for your friendship, your support, for bringing such incredible energy and direction to the labor movement; to all the officers of the AFL–CIO; and Maureen, thank you for your friendship; Mrs. Kirkland; Monsignor.

I would like to thank all the members of the labor movement, and I'd like to thank all the members of my administration who support labor. John said there were too many to mention, and he'd get in trouble, but I want to also say a special thank you to Secretary Alexis Herman for being labor's friend and partner. Thank you.

I think it would be interesting, you know, maybe it's just that we don't have as much to do at the White House these days—[*laughter*]—but we have the largest turnout here of senior members of the administration for any event outside the White House we have ever held. So I would like to ask Mr. Podesta and Martin Baily and Kathy Shaw, from the CEA, and Bruce Reed and Steve Ricchetti and Gene, and Janice Lachance and Aida—everybody here who is part of the administration stand up—Karen, stand up. Everybody stand up, Chuck. Thank you.

You know, John, Karen Tramontano is going with me, and we're exploring whether you can unionize a former President's office. [*Laughter*]

AFL–CIO President John J. Sweeney. Karen will do it. [*Laughter*]

The President. We're ripe for organizing here.

I have so much to thank you for. I thank you for the work you did for the Vice President, for your pivotal roles in the victories in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and so many other places—yes, and Florida, and the victory in Florida, yes. [*Laughter*] You're taking my good joke away. [*Laughter*]

I also want to thank you, those of you from New York, for all you did for Hillary. I am very grateful to you for that. When she was sworn in last Wednesday, I can honestly say it was one of the happiest days of my life. I don't know when I've been that happy since Chelsea was born. And it wouldn't have happened if it hadn't been for so many of you who stuck with her and supported her, and I am very, very grateful.

Senator Kennedy, I would like to thank you for your friendship and your support. In ways that will probably never be a part of the public record, you have been my true friend for a long time, and I thank you.

This is a very emotional moment for me. We're thinking about the last 8 years; that's what you're thinking about. I'm thinking about the last 26 years. In 1974 I ran for