

Week Ending Friday, March 4, 1994

Nomination for Ambassador to Egypt *February 25, 1994*

The President today announced his intention to nominate Edward S. Walker of Maryland as Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt.

“Ambassador Walker’s broad experience in the Middle East and his dedicated service to the United States in the Foreign Service will be a valuable asset to our Embassy in Egypt,” said the President. “I am delighted to nominate him to this position.”

NOTE: A biography of the nominee was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President’s Radio Address *February 26, 1994*

Good morning. Today I’m speaking to you from the First Police District in Washington, DC, the base for hundreds of police officers under the command of Inspector Robert Gales. The men and women who are with me here today and the other police officers throughout our Nation are a lot like you; they’re our neighbors and friends, they’re mothers and fathers, brothers, sisters, daughters, and sons. The difference, though, is that it’s their job to keep our streets, our workplaces, and our schools safe, and it’s a dangerous job. In the last year alone, about 150 police officers were killed in the line of duty. Today I want to talk about two officers, one who died this week in Los Angeles, and the other, killed a few weeks ago just blocks from where I’m sitting now. Both followed in the footsteps of their fathers who also wore a badge. They served with idealism, dedication, and honor, and they died in the line of duty.

For Officer Christy Lynne Hamilton, becoming a policewoman was the beginning of

a new life and the fulfillment of a dream, one she put off until after she raised her two children. She was 45 years old when she earned her badge in Los Angeles just last week. She said, then, the only thing she was afraid of was not doing a good job. No one else thought that was a possibility. She was voted the most inspirational person in her policy academy class. Then, in her first week on the job, she was murdered with a single round from an assault rifle, aimed by a 17-year-old boy who had just killed his father.

Officer Jason White was just 25 years old. He had a new wife, Joie, a new home, a job he loved. The officers here at the First Police District knew him well. He was on the force for 3 years, and every day he made a difference. He worked with young people at risk, he helped citizens set up community patrols, he took on the drug dealers on his beat. And then one night, 2 months ago, he was killed, shot six times with a handgun at point-blank range when he tried to question a suspect.

These brave officers and their other fallen comrades across our Nation left behind people who loved them, respected them, and looked up to them. For them, their relatives, their friends, their coworkers, for all the people in this country who deserve protection, Congress must move to make our streets, our schools, and our workplaces safer.

Last year Congress passed and I signed the Brady law after 7 years of hard struggle. And on Monday it will take effect. It will require background checks of anyone buying a gun. And that will help to keep guns out of the hands of people with prior criminal records and the mentally unfit. The law will prevent thousands of handgun murders.

Consider these figures on firearm crimes that are being released today by the Justice Department. Between 1987 and 1992 about 858,000 armed attacks took place every year. In 1991 and 1992, the annual rate of murder with firearms was 16,000 in each year. This

is where the Brady law will help. Among criminals who used a firearm and had a prior record, 23 percent, nearly one-fourth, said they bought their guns retail. Among murderers, about 5,000 had prior records and were still able to buy a gun in a retail store. Among those who killed police officers, 53 percent had a prior conviction record and still were able to do that.

If the Brady law had been in effect, none of these guns could have been purchased at a retail store. So it's a good start. But we need more, much more. We need a new crime bill that is both tough and smart. Our crime bill punishes serious criminals. It sends this message: Kill a police officer and you face the death penalty. It tells violent felons: Three violent crimes, three strikes, and you're out.

Our crime bill also works to prevent crime. It will give us a stronger police presence, 100,000 more police officers in our communities in the next 5 years. It will help stop young criminals from being better armed than the police by banning assault weapons. And while we take these steps, we encourage all our people to work with officers in their communities to reclaim our streets.

Here at the first district, a high premium is put on community policing. We know this works to reduce crime when officers know their neighbors, know the kids on the streets, when they do things like are being done here, where the officers organize citizen patrols and look after the children. Two officers here, Limatine Johnson and Joyce Leonard, run a safe house for kids where they can play games, watch movies, and learn away from the mean streets. I hear that the kids called Officer Johnson "Officer Lima Bean." And they smile when they do.

Police officers, it has been said, are the soldiers who act alone. But we can't let them be alone. The community must honor their service, respect their example, obey the laws they uphold, and walk beside them. If we do that, we can replace fear with confidence and help to make our country whole again.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the First District Police Headquarters.

Statement on the Church Bombing in Lebanon

February 27, 1994

The killing of people at prayer is an outrage against faith and humanity. On behalf of the American people, I condemn in the strongest possible terms this latest incident in which innocent Lebanese at communion on Sunday morning were killed by bombs planted in a church. I extend my deepest sympathy to the bereaved.

Just as Friday's massacre in a Hebron mosque was aimed at the peace process, this bomb attack seems clearly aimed at Lebanon's reconciliation process. The extremists have a common purpose, to promote division, strife, and war. They must and will not be allowed to succeed.

I call on men and women of all faiths to unite in opposition to the forces of dark hatred. The people of the Middle East deserve a peaceful future. They deserve the right to pray in peace, as we join them in praying for it.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Departure for Chicago, Illinois

February 28, 1994

Bosnia

Q. Can you give us any sense of what is going on in Bosnia and what has happened—

The President. Well, you know the essential facts, that last evening after midnight our time, United States aircraft, flying under NATO authority, warned some fixed-wing Serbian aircraft, Bosnian Serbian aircraft, to land, and when they didn't, they were shot down. There were two warnings. Every attempt was made, to the best of our information, to avoid this encounter.

We have had responsibility for enforcing the no-fly zone since last April. It has been since last fall that there were any fixed-wing aircraft that we knew of violating the no-fly zone, and we're attempting to get more facts now. We're also trying to brief everyone involved in this effort to bring peace to Bosnia about the facts, and if we find out any more