

I urge the Congress to give this legislation prompt and favorable consideration so that Americans will have available a new, comprehensive reemployment system that works for everyone.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 15, 1994.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 16.

**The President's News Conference
With Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin
of Israel**

March 16, 1994

The President. Mr. Prime Minister, friends, we come together today at an important time for the Middle East. We are closer to a lasting peace than would have been thought only a year ago. Yet we are further from that peace than we expected to be only a month ago.

The events of the past several weeks have demonstrated the risks in this great undertaking. The bloodshed in Hebron was a tragic reminder that the forces of reaction will lash out whenever peace becomes a real possibility. We must not let the enemies of peace triumph. We must not allow them to deny Israel and its neighbors a future of hope. And that is why I applaud Prime Minister Rabin's courageous stance against militant extremism. And it is why I have called upon the Prime Minister and Chairman Arafat to find a way to resume negotiations and to do so quickly.

Today we discussed ways to put the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations back on track. We agreed on the need for concrete measures to ensure security for Palestinians as well as for Israelis and for rapid implementation of the Declaration of Principles to give Palestinians control over their own affairs and well-being.

In our meeting, the Prime Minister and I also discussed ways to make 1994 a year of breakthrough in the negotiations between Israel and Syria. This would not only help bolster the agreement already achieved with the Palestinians, it would also help advance

our overall objective of a comprehensive peace, one that encompasses Jordan and Lebanon as well.

President Asad spoke in Geneva of his strategic choice for peace with Israel. Prime Minister Rabin told me today that peace with Syria is a strategic imperative. These two leaders have a great responsibility to the people of their region. As a full partner in the process, the U.S. stands ready to help them achieve that lasting peace that can end the Israeli-Arab conflict and transform the Middle East.

The Prime Minister and I agreed that as the region turns to the business of establishing peace, the Arab boycott of Israel must end. It is a relic of the past, born of animosity and exclusion. For all the peoples of the Middle East to prosper, economic barriers and isolation must yield to dialog and cooperation.

During our meeting today, we also discussed what the United States can do to maintain and enhance Israel's security as it continues to take real risks to achieve peace. We talked about ways the U.S. could help Israel defend against long-term threats to its security. And I reaffirm my commitment to work with Congress to maintain our present levels of assistance and to consider how we might help Israel defray the costs of peace. We've also pledged to do whatever we can to help resolve the cases of Israeli MIA's.

Since the beginning of this administration, the Prime Minister and I have worked to promote the common interest and values our nations share. Today we are working closely together on such issues, including those which now confront the U.N. Security Council. Our efforts have one common purpose, maintaining the principles we both share while doing all we can to promote peace.

This is an historic moment for Israel. And I am profoundly aware, Mr. Prime Minister, of the great burdens you are bearing in your search for peace. You have the admiration and respect of the entire United States and our Nation's pledge of support and steadfast friendship.

As we approach Passover, a time to celebrate freedom and redemption, let us dedicate ourselves to a season of new beginnings

and turn our gauge to the future to make it a future of peace.

Thank you.

Prime Minister Rabin. Mr. President, the Vice President, Secretary of State, dear friends, it was important and worthwhile to meet today with the President and his team, to know and appreciate what we have known for a long time, the friendship and trust between our two countries are profound and now as good if not better than they have ever been. We could not ask for more.

For this, Mr. President, please accept our gratitude. It is good to know that a great nation blessed with values and democracy stands with us for the greatest battle still to come, the battle for peace.

Mr. President, a few months ago, I stood here with you and many others at an historic occasion. We arrived at the beginning of the end of the bloody struggle that has lasted for 100 years. It was clear from the beginning that in spite of the good will on all sides, it would be difficult to bridge in days or in months differences in positions, perceptions, points of view, and hatred that have devastated and grown over so many decades. But we shall overcome these difficulties and reach the day of peace. We shall remain determined in our goal.

In our talks today, I told you, Mr. President, that in my view, we were near the finish line of the talks with the Palestinians on the first stage of the Gaza-Jericho first. Some problems and details have yet to be solved. I am sure that we shall find the right solution once the negotiations are renewed. We will not let the extremists derail the peace process.

On behalf of the state of Israel, I condemn the terrible terms of the killing in Hebron. I repeated this today in our conversation. Since that time, the Government of Israel has taken tough measures that are unprecedented in Israel. We will implement them with determination.

But, Mr. President, we are also victims of terror, whether organized or spontaneous. Our women and children have lived in the shadow of terror for decades. Not a week passes that we don't have to bury our dead. And if only for this reason, we don't think it appropriate to wage new demands after

every terrorist attack. Security is a two-way street. Real leadership must rise above the realities of the day, even if they are painful and bloody, in order to arrive at our strategic goal. Peace is not a tactical option but a strategic objective which takes precedence over everything else.

With you, Mr. President, I call on Chairman Arafat of the PLO to resume talks immediately and act like me, to fight terror as if there were no negotiations and conduct the negotiations as if there was not terror.

We have to complete the negotiations so that in the spring or in early summer, hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza and Jericho will at last be able to conduct their own affairs. We don't seek to rule them anymore.

Mr. President, there is no time to waste. We feel that the window of opportunity that opened after the Gulf war is narrower than we thought. Time is running out. Therefore, 1994 has to be the year of great decisions in the peace process. In this framework we spoke of the options that can be presented to President Asad in order to achieve peace with Syria. I hope that President Asad will respond appropriately, and we shall be able to sign a peace treaty by the end of this year. President Asad said that Syria had made the strategic choice for peace with Israel. That was encouraging. Peace with Syria has always been our strategic choice. We recognize the importance of Syria to a comprehensive peace in the area. We are ready to negotiate peace with Syria that takes account of our mutual needs and interests. There must be give and take on both sides.

We know that as we engage in serious and authoritative negotiations, the point will come where painful decisions will have to be made. The promise of peace and its genuine benefits for all Israelis justifies making such decisions vis-a-vis Syria. We will not compromise on our security. But we will stand ready to do what is required of us if the Syrians are ready to do what is required of them.

At the same time, we would like to promote and advance the negotiations with Jordan as well as with Lebanon. We are hopeful that with them, too, treaties of peace can be achieved this year.

All of us know the time for the Arab boycott of Israel, a remnant of a period of hate and rejection, should be lifted. Mr. President, Prime Ministers of Israel have come in the past with impressive shopping lists. On my list today, I have one item alone, the pursuit of peace.

As Passover, our feast of freedom, is approaching, let me take the opportunity to remind all of us of the fate of the Israeli soldiers missing in action and prisoners of war. I would like to thank the President for the United States support in this regard and express the hope that Passover will also be a time of redemption for them. Mr. President, thank you very much.

The President. Thank you.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, since security is a two-way street, what do you plan to do to wipe out the acknowledged double standard in the treatment of Palestinians? And also, if you're willing to make peace with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan now why don't you make the quantum leap and go for permanent negotiations on peace with Palestinians instead of the step-by-step, very slow struggle of the peace process that means more strife?

Prime Minister Rabin. First, about the second question. You have to refer to the letter of invitation to the Madrid peace conference. This letter of invitation served as the basis agreed on by all the parties that were invited to the Madrid peace conference and the negotiations that followed this conference.

What was written there that the purpose of the negotiations with the three neighboring Arab countries beyond Egypt would be to achieve peace treaties and with the Palestinians to move by two phases. Phase number one, something that was never offered to the Palestinians in the past, not by Jordan when Jordan was in occupation of the West Bank, not by Egypt when Egypt was in occupation of the Gaza Strip, we offered them self-rule to run their own affairs, to have a Palestinian council, self-governing authority as an interim agreement.

What was agreed in signing between the PLO and us in the Declaration of Principles that was signed on the lawns of the White

House? We divided the phases by agreement to Gaza-Jericho first; then to create the overall arrangement, and not later than 2 years after the completion of the implementation of Gaza-Jericho first, to start negotiating a permanent solution.

I believe that sometimes what might look the shortest way is the longest and the one that will not lead to a change in the realities. Therefore, we are committed to the letter of invitation to the Madrid peace conference. We are committed to the Declaration of Principles that was signed here between the PLO and Israel. We are committed to the Cairo agreement that was reached between the PLO and Israel. And I believe to be committed to agreements that were reached is a basic precondition for the efforts to reach more agreements.

Second, you talked about different situations. Let's face it, most of the terror attacks are aimed against Israelis. We, the Government of Israel, in accordance to the international law, are the sovereign, true military government of the territories. It's our responsibility for the safety, the welfare of all the residents, Jews and Palestinian alike. This government, as a result of the terrible tragedy that took place in Hebron, has taken measures that are unprecedented in Israel vis-a-vis those who violate the law.

But we are a lawful country. I can give you an example. I used my responsibility as a Minister of Defense—orders for administering detention of two Israeli residents, not the territories. But in accordance to our laws, they have to be approved by a president of a district court. I ordered administrative detention for 3 months. The president of the district court reduced it to 6 days. I cannot violate the verdict of the court. Whatever the government does comes under the supervision and decision of our courts.

I believe that many people in Israel believe that what we have done is almost encroaching the line of the law. But we are determined to do within the law whatever is needed to fight terrorism from whatever direction it will come.

The President. The question from the Israeli press.

Q. The two alternative issues—[inaudible]—Jerusalem and settlements, are now

de facto on the table. Do you agree that they should wait until the final stage or should you tackle them right now?

The President. You are asking me?

Q. I am asking both of you, Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister.

The President. Well, in terms of the resolution of Jerusalem, the position of the United States has not changed. But that is a matter for the parties to decide in accord with the declaration. It is something to be ultimately decided at a later point. That's what we think should be done.

Prime Minister Rabin. My answer is basically simple. We signed here in Washington the Declaration of Principles. It is written very clearly there that issues that have to be settled once we negotiate permanent solution will not be dealt with now. And it is written very clearly as examples for this kind of issue: Jerusalem, settlements, borders, refugees and others. Therefore, by agreement with the PLO, these issues will be dealt with when we negotiate permanent solutions.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

China

Q. Mr. President, I'd like to ask you about China. There are growing calls for the United States to de-link the issues of trade and human rights. Former Secretaries of State Vance and Kissinger say the United States has to pay attention to human rights but that it also has to have a pragmatic approach. What are you getting out of your current strategy or your current approach to China? And are you thinking about changing it?

The President. Well, I think you can safely assume that we have been and will continue to be spending a good deal of time on the issue of our relationships with China, that our policy is what it has been, that human rights are important, but the other issues are important, too. And I'm confident that we will be able to work through this and strengthen our relationship and our advocacy of human rights over the long run. That's what I think will happen, and we've got some time to do that. And I think you'll see an enormous effort coming out of this administration to try to achieve both those objectives.

Is there another question from the Israeli press?

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, are you going to urge the President of Syria to meet with the Israeli Prime Minister? And did you ask the Israeli Prime Minister the question, if Israel will be ready to leave the Golan Heights to get peace with Syria?

The President. We had quite an extended conversation about this issue, and I believe that the Prime Minister very much wants to make peace with Syria. I talked with President Asad just a few days ago. I'm convinced he wants to make peace with Israel. Since I think both of them want to make peace with each other, the best thing for me to do is not to say anything which will make their task more difficult.

Q. But we need details, Mr. President.

The President. Yes, but they can't come from me.

Q. Mr. President, I'm wondering if you could describe what your view is of the concrete measures that you mentioned early on in your remarks that should be taken to keep peace in Israel, and whether or not you would support the PLO idea for a police force in Hebron?

The President. I think the Prime Minister would like to respond to that also, but let me say, Israel has accepted responsibility on the security issue for law and order, if you will. And even the United Nations in the draft that is being circulated has reaffirmed that. Within that broad framework, I think there are a number of options which can be pursued to deal with this issue. And I think the Israelis have an obligation, as I have said, to come up with some specific initiatives for reassurance on this.

I also think it is important for the PLO not to use this as an excuse not to return to the peace talks. I think the Prime Minister is doing what he can to demonstrate his good faith, has been very firm in reaction to the massacre in Hebron. There are some specifics that have been discussed. I think they will be forthcoming. But I don't think that we should get the two so mixed up that the whole future of the Middle East is, in effect, put on hold.

You like to——

Q. So does that mean you don't support the PLO's presence there, sir?

The President. Well, that's not what I said.

Prime Minister Rabin. Well, allow me first to make it clear. In the agreement, once it will be reached and signed, there is a building—in the past it was 8,000 to 9,000 men as a Palestinian police force in Gaza and Jericho. If by now agreement has been reached, by now there would have been 8,000, 9,000 Palestinian policemen in Gaza and Jericho. The more the negotiations are postponed, the longer it will take them to come.

Second, even if there will be some Palestinian police—and there were in the past, at least 900 Palestinian police in the territories were Palestinian residents of the territories in Hebron and in Ramallah and in—[inaudible]. They resigned because of the Intifada. As long as ours is the overall responsibility for the territories under the military government, using our civil administration, their presence will not relieve us from our overall responsibility.

Therefore, we have to look at it in the context of what is our international and practical responsibility. We, as long as agreement will not be reached that will cover all these areas with the PLO, we will remain internationally responsible to the security of all those who reside there, if there will be or will not be part of any Palestinian police. They will have to come under the control of the government there, and the government is the military government of Israel. Therefore, you can't have separate armed groups. There must be one chain of command of those who have to keep and maintain law and order.

Russia

Q. Mr. President, the Israeli Government is seemingly uncomfortable with the sort of involvement that the Russian Government has sought to assume lately in the Middle East process. Are we seeing increasingly a phenomenon worldwide in which Russia, in the way of making a point that it is still a great nation and deserves recognition, gets in the way of restoring stability back in the Middle East, the Balkans, Central Europe, and elsewhere?

The President. I don't think they have gotten in the way of restoring peace and stability in the Balkans. I think that so far they have been a constructive force. They are a cosponsor of the Middle East peace talks and, therefore, have a right to have their say. I think it is very important, however, if I might turn your question back just a minute, that as a cosponsor, insofar as possible, that we coordinate our actions together and that anything they do is not seen as an obstacle to peace but facilitates it. And the answer to your question, basically, will have to be revealed by the conduct of the Russians themselves in the days and weeks ahead.

I think when we were attempting to get the safe zone around Sarajevo and get the talks back going in the Balkans, the Russians were basically a positive force. Whether they will be such in the Middle East will be revealed by their own conduct in the days and weeks ahead. I hope they will be, and we certainly are willing to coordinate with them. You know, they were here when we had the signing in September, and I have always appreciated the fact that they were a cosponsor of these talks.

Press Secretary Myers. Two more questions.

The President. Brit [Brit Hume, ABC News].

Whitewater Investigation

Q. Do you and Mrs. Clinton still stand by the conclusions of the so-called Lyons report on your real estate investment in Whitewater, or are you uncomfortable with those findings?

The President. Look, I don't have anything else to say about that right now. We are cooperating fully with the special counsel, which is what all of you asked me to do. I wish you'd let them do their work.

Yes.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, do you think that Jews should exercise their right to reside in the middle of Arab cities? And, Mr. Prime Minister, could you also respond to that?

The President. What was the question?

Q. Should Jews exercise their right to reside in the middle of Arab cities in the West Bank? Should they live in Hebron, for instance?

Prime Minister Rabin. I don't understand the question.

Q. Well, there were ideas of evacuating Jews from the middle of Hebron, for instance.

Prime Minister Rabin. Again, as part of the DOP that we signed with the PLO, it is said very clearly that the settlements remain there for the period of—the interim period. I'm not saying it. It is written very clearly in the DOP. Therefore, since it was agreed, I don't see at this stage as a condition for anything even to discuss this issue.

Ames and Pollard Spy Cases

Q. Mr. President, I wonder if you could tell us, and Mr. Prime Minister, the extent to which you've discussed the Jonathan Pollard case again, and how much, if at all, the Ames investigation has interfered with action on it that was presented as imminent several months ago.

The President. We did not discuss it. And the Ames case has not interfered with it inasmuch as the Pollard case is already in the hands of the Justice Department, and the White House is awaiting a recommendation from the Justice Department.

Thank you.

Q. Could you let the Prime Minister answer?

Prime Minister Rabin. In today's meeting the issue was not brought up.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 53d news conference began at 1:11 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria.

Memorandum on Sanctions Against Serbia and Montenegro

March 16, 1994

Presidential Determination No. 94-16

Memorandum for the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury

Subject: Drawdown of Commodities and Services from the Inventory and Resources of the Department of the Treasury to Support Sanctions Enforcement Efforts Against Serbia and Montenegro

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 552(c)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2348a(c)(2) (the "Act"), I hereby determine that:

- (1) as a result of an unforeseen emergency, the provision of assistance under Chapter 6 of Part II of the Act in amounts in excess of funds otherwise available for such assistance is important to the national interests of the United States; and
- (2) such unforeseen emergency requires the immediate provision of assistance under Chapter 6 of Part II of the Act.

I therefore direct the drawdown of commodities and services from the inventory and resources of the Department of the Treasury of an aggregate value not to exceed \$4.5 million to support international sanctions enforcement efforts against Serbia and Montenegro.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Nomination for Director of the Voice of America

March 16, 1994

The President today announced the appointment of Geoffrey Cowan as the Director of the Voice of America (VOA) at the U.S. Information Agency. Cowan will serve as the 19th Director of VOA, the international radio broadcasting service of the U.S. Information Agency. His father, Louis