

And just as I believe that Chairman Arafat is going to do his best to try to diminish terror, I believe that the Prime Minister will do everything he can to fulfill both the letter and the spirit of the agreement. And that is one of the things that the United States has been able to do with the leadership of the Secretary of State and Mr. Ross. And our whole team is to try to work with the parties to make sure that their relationship ripens.

And I will say this: I would urge you to go back and carefully review the text of the statements made not only yesterday at the ceremony but last night at the reception by both Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat. They said some remarkable things, some things that they certainly didn't say here 2 years ago, which, to me, showed that they are kind of opening up to one another and that the level of trust is growing.

Now, we all know that none of us have total control over people who are, in theory, within our dominion. Here in the United States we have crimes committed every day that the President cannot stop. But I think they are proceeding in good faith, and I think that the people in the Middle East will have a high level of confidence in the way the Israelis proceed now.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:20 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With King Hussein of Jordan

September 29, 1995

1996 Election

Q. Mr. President, I don't know if you've heard that Governor Pete Wilson is going to drop out of the Presidential race this afternoon.

The President. No. Are you sure? [*Laughter*] Well, I—that's a very personal decision. It's a difficult road, and I respect the judgment that he would make, or anybody would make under these circumstances, since I've been through it. I hope we will continue to be able to work together on some of our common problems. I said in Los Angeles when

I was there a couple of days ago that the Governor's office worked very closely with us when we were trying to solve the problems of the medical center for Los Angeles County, and there's a lot of important work to do and he still has a very important job.

Q. Does this help your prospects in California?

The President. I don't know.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:45 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Governor Pete Wilson of California. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders

September 29, 1995

Bosnia

The President. Is everyone in? Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to begin a meeting between the congressional leadership and the administration to discuss our progress in Bosnia and where we're going from here. But before we do, let me begin by saying a thank you to the leadership of Congress for their successful effort to avoid any kind of interruption in our Government operations as we work toward a balanced budget over the next several weeks.

This is the kind of cooperation that makes it possible for our country not only to work but to be great. And I hope that we will have more of it. It is also the kind of cooperation, frankly, that was really being celebrated yesterday when we marked another important milestone on the road to peace in the Middle East.

American leadership has worked for peace in the Middle East through Democratic and Republican administrations for a very long time now, step by step, with discipline and determination over years. And yesterday, we celebrated the product of that kind of effort.

Let me also say that I believe we must continue to work together in Bosnia, and I very much appreciate the expressions of support that have come from leaders in both parties for the efforts that we have been making in recent weeks.

We are now closer to a settlement because of the initiatives we've taken than at any time in the last 4 years because of the combined impacts of the NATO air strikes, the United States diplomatic initiative, and the changes that have occurred on the ground. If and when there is a peace agreement, as I have said since early 1993, I believe America must be a part of helping to implement that agreement, because NATO will have to do it in order for it to work, and we are the leaders of NATO.

I have consistently opposed the involvement of our troops in any combat and in this United Nations mission, but this is a very different thing, and I believe it's very, very important that we play a part of it.

I just received an update from our team and the work they're doing, and I can tell you that we are now seeing some serious discussion of the possibility of a cease-fire, which I hope can be successfully concluded as a prelude to getting into the other details of the agreement.

But I'm looking forward to this meeting. I thank Senator Dole, the Speaker, for being here, and Senator Daschle, Congressman Bonior, and all of the others who are here. And we're looking forward to the meeting.

And I thank you for the continuing resolution. If, as expected, it passes today, I expect to sign it as soon as it hits my desk. And as I said, that's a good omen for our efforts to successfully conclude an effort to balance the budget.

1996 Election

Q. Can I ask Senator Dole to comment on Pete Wilson's decision to drop out of the—[laughter]—Presidential race? Is this going to help your prospects of challenging the President next November?

Q. That's a fast jump from Bosnia.

Senator Bob Dole. No, I haven't had a chance to talk to the President about it, so—[laughter].

Q. Does this mean there's no room in the Republican Party for moderate Republicans?

Senator Strom Thurmond. This is not a political meeting.

Senator Dole. Yes—I don't like to answer questions at the President's meeting. I'll be happy to do it later.

Bosnia

Q. Excuse me. Can you tell us more about this possible cease-fire?

The President. No. I mean—and I literally can't tell you more about it. I can tell you that it's being seriously discussed and the parties are talking about how they feel about it and what the obstacles to it are at the present moment. And that's all I can tell you at the present time.

Q. Do you think it's—[inaudible].

The President. No, I didn't say that. I don't know that. I don't know that it's not. I don't know. The answer to that is, I don't know.

Q. Will it happen today or—

The President. I don't know. I think that's highly unlikely.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. in the Truman Conference Center in the New Executive Office Building.

Statement on the Bipartisan Commitment to Our Children

September 29, 1995

All Americans agree that we must protect the lives and future health of our children. The bipartisan "Commitment to Our Children"—in support of this administration's efforts to reduce children's smoking or use of smokeless tobacco products—shows just how deep that sentiment runs through our country. The Representatives and Senators who stood up today for our children deserve the Nation's thanks. These Democrats and Republicans showed that this is not about partisan politics; it is about doing the right thing for our children and families. Public health leaders, children and family advocates, and elected State and local officials from across the Nation have also pledged to support our efforts.

Each day, 3,000 young people become regular smokers. Nearly 1,000 of them will die early from smoking-related diseases. We must reduce children's access to tobacco products and limit the advertising and promotions that tell our children it is cool or glamorous to smoke but do not tell them about the disease and death that also come