

Now it falls to us, all those in Israel, throughout the Middle East, and around the world who yearn for and love peace to make sure it doesn't happen.

Yitzhak Rabin was my partner and my friend. I admired him, and I loved him very much. Because words cannot express my true feelings, let me just say, *shalom, chaver*, goodbye, friend.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:48 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Rabin's widow, Leah.

### **Proclamation 6848—Death of Yitzhak Rabin**

*November 4, 1995*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Today a senseless act of violence has robbed the United States of a close friend and robbed the world of a statesman and courageous champion of peace.

Yitzhak Rabin was a brave man who defended his country for half a century and whose vision and tenacity brought the world closer to peace.

He was a man of hope, a man of wisdom, a man who sought to improve the lives of all those he touched.

The peace process that he began will be his legacy. The people of the United States and the peace-loving people of the world are determined that the peace process will go forward.

As a mark of respect for the memory of Yitzhak Rabin and America's support for peace in the Middle East, I hereby order that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff upon all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions until his interment. I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff for the same length of time at all United States Embassies, legations, consular offices,

and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:26 a.m., November 6, 1995]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on November 7.

### **Statement of Condolence on the Death of Prime Minister Rabin**

*November 5, 1995*

Prime Minister Rabin gave his life to Israel, first as a soldier for its freedom, then finally as a martyr for its lasting peace.

For his example, his friendship to the United States, and his warm friendship to me, I am eternally grateful.

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: The President inscribed this statement in a condolence book at the Israeli Embassy. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

### **Exchange With Reporters Aboard Air Force One**

*November 5, 1995*

#### **Death of Prime Minister Rabin of Israel**

**Q.** This is quite a President gathering, Mr. President, your thoughts as the flight of this—

**President Clinton.** We're all going to pay our respects to Prime Minister Rabin. We all knew him. And we're going to express our support for Israel and for the peace process.

**Q.** President Carter said the other day when he was being interviewed that he thought, given the circumstances, there logically enough would be a pause, not a pause in peacemaking but a reflective pause, and then, of course, the process should gather again. How quickly do you think the Israelis can pull themselves together?

**President Clinton.** I don't have any idea. We don't know yet. We are going to have meetings when we're there; we're going to visit and then maybe we'll have some more—some better thoughts for you then.

**Q.** Mr. President, collectively when you look at the manifest of this trip, what message does it send to the Israelis, Middle East, and the entire world for that matter?

**President Clinton.** Well, I think it should send, first of all, the message that the United States still stands as a genuine friend and a partner to the people of Israel, Republicans and Democrats alike. We have decades of dedication to the cause of peace here, from the work President Carter did with the Camp David accords to the work President Bush did in starting this process that has been consummated in the last couple of years, the Secretaries of State that are here, the leaders of both parties in the Congress—the United States is standing with Israel and standing for the cause of peace. And we're standing strong and deep.

**Q.** President Bush, what goes through your mind, sir, as you consider all the familiar faces on this trip and the message that it may be sending to the rest of the world?

**President Bush.** Well, of course, I'm very grateful to President Clinton for personally inviting me. Barbara and I felt close to Prime Minister Rabin, as do the others here, very close to him. I remember when he visited us in our home up in Maine and all of that.

And so I would simply leave the policy to President Clinton but simply say I'm sure it will be a very emotional event, and I hope that it conveys that the Republicans, Democrats, whatever, are together in the support of Israel and clearly in support of the peace process. And that's all I think we can expect from this.

**Q.** The Syrian track seems awfully tough, even before this. Various approaches have been tried—President Carter actually mediated 16 tough days. You've talked to us on it. Do you have some new tactic? I don't know how many ways there are to go about it, but have you thought of some way to break this stalemate that might work?

**President Clinton.** I think I should defer all substantive conversations about this until after the funeral and after the meetings.

Then I will—on the way back perhaps I'll have something more to say about it. But I think it would be inappropriate—this is a time of national mourning for the people of Israel and a time when all of us who knew Prime Minister Rabin feel a great sense of loss and an enormous sense of respect, even awe, for what he did and for the sacrifice he paid. I'd like for us to take the time to properly honor that, and then on the way back perhaps something will emerge from our meetings which will be useful for me to comment on.

**Q.** Will you be seeing Mr. Netanyahu, or can you give us an idea of who you will see?

**Press Secretary Mike McCurry.** We'll do that for all of you here.

**President Clinton.** Mike has that.

**Q.** President Carter, we haven't heard from you. What are your thoughts about the message that should be sent by this delegation that includes people who were in your administration—yourself of course?

**President Carter.** Well, I've known Prime Minister Rabin for 24 years and admired him personally and as a great leader. I'm honored to be invited by President Clinton to participate. I think it was a very wise thing on the part of the President to put together this tremendously impressive delegation because in this time of sorrow and grief and uncertainty, I think it is very important to every Israeli to know the United States stands beside us with full support.

I wasn't insinuating that the peace process should be delayed, but the comment I made was that the Israelis would have to make this decision, and for a few days at least we shouldn't be pushing them on an exact schedule for the peace process.

But I think it's important, too, for the Israelis to not only know that we are supportive of Israel but also supportive of the peace process. And our coming, I think, is closely related to that.

So I hope that President Clinton's ideas for this mission, burdened as we are with sadness and the personal loss, will be productive for Israel and for the peace process.

**Q.** People have said that one of the causes of this is the polarization that has occurred in Israel because of the peace process and the very vigorous opposition to it. Is there

any lesson for us in the United States with what happened yesterday?

**President Clinton.** Well, of course we've dealt with some polarization of our own. And I think the lesson is that in a free and vital society, you want the widest range of freedom of speech. But words can have consequences; people can be driven to extremes. And our society only works when—any democracy only works when freedom is handled responsibly. And I think that's the lesson here.

The Israelis have been through all these wars, all this tension for all these decades and never had a political assassination before. And I hope—I hope it will never happen again. I hope they—I admire their flourishing democracy; I like the big and raucous arguments they have. But they should do it respecting one another's innate patriotism and dignity and fundamental right to participate. We've got to keep this thing within proper bounds.

But you know, that's something we all have to work on; all democracies have to work on that. Israel doesn't—that's not just a comment about Israel. I'm sure they'll have the time to reflect on all of that. And they are a very great people, a very great democracy, and I'm sure they'll work it out.

NOTE: The exchange began at 6:05 p.m. aboard Air Force One en route to the airport in Tel Aviv, Israel. Former Presidents George Bush and Jimmy Carter were members of the U.S. delegation attending Prime Minister Rabin's funeral. A reporter referred to Likud Party leader Binyamin Netanyahu.

### **Remarks at the Funeral of Prime Minister Rabin in Jerusalem, Israel**

*November 6, 1995*

Leah, to the Rabin children and grandchildren and other family members, President Weizman, Acting Prime Minister Peres, members of the Israeli Government and the Knesset, distinguished leaders from the Middle East and around the world, especially His Majesty King Hussein for those remarkable and wonderful comments and President Mubarak for taking this historic trip here, and to all the people of Israel.

The American people mourn with you in the loss of your leader. And I mourn with you, for he was my partner and friend. Every moment we shared was a joy because he was a good man and an inspiration because he was also a great man.

Leah, I know that too many times in the life of this country you were called upon to comfort and console the mothers and the fathers, the husbands and the wives, the sons and the daughters who lost their loved ones to violence and vengeance. You gave them strength. Now, we here and millions of people all around the world, in all humility and honor, offer you our strength. May God comfort you among all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Yitzhak Rabin lived the history of Israel. Through every trial and triumph, the struggle for independence, the wars for survival, the pursuit of peace, and all he served on the front lines, this son of David and of Solomon took up arms to defend Israel's freedom and laid down his life to secure Israel's future.

He was a man completely without pretense, as all of his friends knew. I read that in 1949, after the War of Independence, David Ben-Gurion sent him to represent Israel at the armistice talks at Rhodes, and he had never before worn a necktie and did not know how to tie the knot. So the problem was solved by a friend who tied it for him before he left and showed him how to preserve the knot simply by loosening the tie and pulling it over his head. Well, the last time we were together, not 2 weeks ago, he showed up for a black-tie event on time but without the black tie. And so he borrowed a tie, and I was privileged to straighten it for him. It is a moment I will cherish as long as I live.

To him, ceremonies and words were less important than actions and deeds. Six weeks ago, the King and President Mubarak will remember, we were at the White House for signing the Israel-Palestinian agreement. And a lot of people spoke. I spoke; the King spoke; Chairman Arafat spoke; President Mubarak spoke; our Foreign Ministers all spoke. And finally Prime Minister Rabin got up to speak, and he said, "First, the good news: I am the last speaker." But he also understood the power of words and symbol-