

Remarks Following Discussions With President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and an Exchange With Reporters

March 28, 2000

President Clinton. Let me begin by saying that I am delighted to have President Mubarak back here. We have a lot to discuss today. I want to talk with him about the peace process in the Middle East, about the movement on the Palestinian track, about my meeting with President Asad, and what further steps he thinks we could take on the Israel-Syria track. And we have a lot of other things to discuss as well.

So I'm looking forward to this meeting, and I want to welcome you here, Mr. President.

President Mubarak. Thank you, sir.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. President Mubarak, the peace process seems to be faltering again, especially after the failure of the Geneva talks. What is your vision, Mr. President? What can Egypt do in order to break this deadlock?

President Mubarak. First of all, I thank President Clinton just for meeting me today. And we used to exchange views every now and then. We have very good relations with the President since he took office 8 years ago.

Today we are going to discuss so many issues about the Middle East, about even bilateral relations. And concerning the Geneva meeting, I cannot say that's a failure. It's a step forward, although no progress between the Israelis and the Syrians, that doesn't make us pessimistic. We have to make much more effort so as to reach peace and an agreement could be signed, for the welfare of the whole area.

Oil Prices

Q. Mr. President, there's word out of Vienna that OPEC has reached a deal now. Are you now looking forward to a decline in oil?

President Clinton. Have they, in fact, announced that?

Q. The Venezuelan representative has.

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I think I ought to wait to issue a definitive comment until they actually vote and reach

an agreement. But my concern has always been that the oil price production be increased to a level sufficient to ensure continued growth in the global economy and continued growth here at home. And that, therefore, by definition, to alleviate some of the serious burdens that some of our people have felt, particularly the truckers and the people who commute long distances.

But I want to wait and see. I've heard some encouraging things about what OPEC will do in combination with what some of the non-OPEC members will do. And in the aggregate, it could be sufficient to get production and consumption back into alignment and to rebuild some of these stocks, which are at their lowest point in a decade. And if that happens, then I'll be encouraged, but I want to wait and see.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. President Clinton, how much faith do you have in peace being concluded before you leave your tenure here?

President Clinton. Well, I think we are making and will continue to see good progress between the Israelis and Palestinians. I went to Switzerland to meet President Asad, to clarify to him what I thought the options were and to hear from him what his needs are. I asked him to come back to me with what he thought ought to be done. So the ball is in his court now, and I'm going to look forward to hearing from him, and we're going to talk about what else I can do, what else we can do together.

President Mubarak has been at this longer than I have, and we're going to keep working.

Q. President Clinton, your term ends in a few months now. Do you think the Israelis are ready to go along and finalize the peace process during that period? And what do you think the steps that they are going to take? For President Mubarak, do you foresee a solution in the near future?

President Clinton. Well, I think they are making very serious efforts. And I think Prime Minister Barak would like to do this as quickly as he can. And I can tell you they have made very, very serious efforts on all tracks, and I think you will continue to see progress at least on the Palestinian track and, of course, I hope we'll have some progress

on the Syrian one, as well—as well as in Lebanon.

President Mubarak. This information concerning the Middle East problem cannot stay as it is now. Tremendous efforts are being done by the United States with the cooperation with us. And I hope that we could reach a solution between the two sides, and especially I may meet with Mr. Barak soon after I return back to Cairo, to see what could be done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:41 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria and Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Radio Remarks on Sightseeing Flights Over the Grand Canyon

March 28, 2000

There may be no place on Earth more stunning than the Grand Canyon. It's important to preserve and protect it, so that the millions who visit each year can enjoy the Canyon in all its splendor. Today I am announcing an important new measure to carefully manage sightseeing flights over the Grand Canyon. With this action, we can allow continued access to all, while also helping to restore the natural quiet of this timeless treasure.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 8 p.m. on March 17 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 28. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Statement on the OPEC Production Decision and the Legislative Agenda for Energy Security

March 28, 2000

Today's announcement that OPEC members will increase production is a positive development. These increases will help sustain worldwide economic growth and provide greater balance between oil supply and de-

mand. While oil prices are projected to fall this year, we will continue to closely monitor developments in world oil markets in the coming months.

Congress should waste no more time in getting to work on the critical measures to improve America's energy security that I have proposed. Congress has failed to act on energy security measures, including new tax incentives to support domestic oil producers, tax incentives and investments to promote the use of alternative and more efficient energy technologies, the establishment of a regional home heating oil reserve, and reauthorization of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. These measures should be passed into law without delay.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Debbie Stabenow

March 28, 2000

Thank you. Now, only a politician who is not running for office would take a stand on the Final Four before the results are in. *[Laughter]*

Thank you very much. Debbie, I am a huge basketball fan. And I already lost my State school and my daughter's alma mater in the NCAA, so I'm just watching it with great fascination. It's been a good tournament.

I want to thank Senator Torricelli for all that he has done for the Democrats, and the Senate candidates in particular. And I thank Carl Levin for more than I can say. You have no idea all the good things that he does in the Senate, many of which are not vote-getting issues; they'll never make the headlines. But someone needs to be going to work every day who cares about public policy and good Government and the way this country works. And Carl Levin does. You should be really proud of him. He's a really good man.

I want to thank Gary and Bill and Michelle for helping Debbie to raise the money necessary to wage a campaign against an incumbent Senator of the other party. It's a difficult thing to do. And she is in good shape, but she needs your support to do it. And I want to thank John Conyers and Sandy Levin for being here, and so many other of my friends