

Sandy approved

Dear Mr. Berkowitz:

I received your letter concerning the Seeds of Peace Youth Summit. I am sure you know of the mission of this exciting project which brings together young people from both the Palestinian community and the Israeli community. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to participate in this conference which seeks to erase the fears and stereotypes of young people so they can strive side-by-side to bring peace to their homelands and the Middle East region as a whole.

I was struck by the aspirations of these young people as they try to bridge their differences and talk about the very human cost of a lack of peace and the benefits of working together on education, health care, and economic opportunities. With the promise of shared hopes and values in these areas, I believe that the Palestinian and Israeli people can live together in peace and cooperation.

Regarding my comments on a Palestinian State, let me assure you I was expressing my own personal opinion only. The position of the Clinton Administration has been stated repeatedly and has not changed: the question of the status of the West bank and Gaza is an issue which Israel and the Palestinians have agreed should be discussed and resolved by direct negotiation in the permanent status phase of their negotiations. The United States will not prejudge the outcome on any of these issues.

Words cannot express the depth of my admiration for Israel and its citizens in their struggle for peace. Watching the interaction between the young Israelis and Palestinians involved in the Seeds of Peace program inspires great confidence that true peace between these communities is not merely a dream, but a vision that will be realized in our lifetimes. I will remain committed to the goal of a secure and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Sincerely,

Mr. Howard P. Berkowitz
National Chairman
Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
823 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

58 EAST 68TH STREET • NEW YORK • NEW YORK 10021

Tel 212 434 9400 Fax 212 734 1594

Henry Siegman
Senior Fellow
Director, US/Middle East Project

May 29, 1998

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

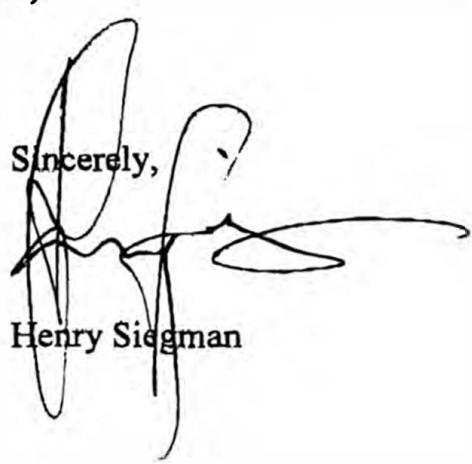
Dear Mrs. Clinton,

Your recent observations on the benefits of eventual Palestinian statehood for the stability of the Middle East drew a number of vigorous responses, especially from the Jewish community.

I thought, therefore, that you might be interested in the views of a former National Director of the American Jewish Congress, currently with the Council on Foreign Relations, that were published recently in the Washington Times (of all places!).

My very best wishes go to you.

Sincerely,



Henry Siegman

HS:bm
enc.

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

May 15, 1998

How to pressure Israel

By Henry Siegman

If Hillary Clinton's statement that Palestinian statehood is necessary for Middle East peace reflects President Clinton's view, the administration may yet get it right in its efforts to prevent the complete collapse of the hope for peace and a return to violence in the region.

Nearly a year ago, an independent task force of the Council on Foreign Relations found that the peace process, for all practical purposes, had come to an end. Even then, the incremental steps called for by the Oslo accords no longer served to build confidence or to move the process forward. This is not because of a lack of trust between the parties but because of a fundamental disagreement between them about where the peace process should lead.

Unlike Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Netanyahu rejects the notion that the process should be open to the possibility of an independent Palestinian state in most of the West Bank and Gaza, thus removing whatever incentive Palestinians might have to fight terrorism that threatens Israel's security. Palestinians are hardly likely to engage in such a struggle if they are told that no matter what they do, they will never achieve national independence. It is unfortunate that it took so long for U.S. policymakers to understand this simple truth.

If the U.S. is serious about its responsibilities to Israel and to the larger region, it must at least be able to assert the simple proposition that the peace process can proceed only if the fundamental aspirations of both parties define the goal of that process. This means not only security for Israel but statehood for the Palestinians. Absent these goals, the peace process is an illusion.

American recognition of the conditions for progress in the negotiations is not to impose a solution on the parties; it is to state the obvious. It is also to say that the party that refuses to accept those minimal conditions is not serious about peace.

Henry Siegman is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

It is true that Secretary of State Warren Christopher, in a note for the record, said that Israel will itself decide the size of its withdrawals from the West Bank. But that same letter also refers to Israel's commitment to three withdrawals, which those who invoke Mr. Christopher's

Far more important to Israel's security is U.S. friendship and support.

letter choose to ignore. More important, the Christopher note assumed good faith efforts by Israel's government to fulfill the spirit of the accords. It cannot be invoked to justify proposals for withdrawals so de minimis as to contradict the very spirit of the agreement and to humiliate Palestinian leadership.

Those who oppose a public finding by the administration that recognizes the centrality of Palestinian statehood argue that it would not serve to change Mr. Netanyahu's opposition. Indeed, it may well convince him to pull out of the peace process altogether. It is a specious argument, because Mr. Netanyahu pulled out of the peace process long ago. The Hebron agreement that he signed in March 1997 was not intended by him as a bridge to further progress but as closing the book on the Oslo agreement, whose underlying principle, the exchange of land for peace, he never accepted.

On the other hand, a clear statement of what the U.S. believes to be a fair and necessary condition for good faith negotiations may well convince the Israeli public of the failure of Mr. Netanyahu's policies. Israelis understand that their most important security asset is not a few percentage points of West Bank territory. Even Moshe Arens, an Israeli hawk and former foreign and defense minister, said he is confused by the argument over certain percentages. "I have no idea what it's all about," he said. "I assume whoever is conducting the negotiations knows. I certainly hope so."

Far more important to Israel's

security is U.S. friendship and support, which in turn are based on an American belief in Israel's reasonableness and the sincerity of its commitment to peace. Israelis will not for long continue their support of a leader who jeopardizes that belief and who has managed to compromise the trust of an American president considered the best friend Israel ever had.

But even if this Israeli government were not to change its position, American support for Palestinian statehood would achieve a number of important purposes. It would give Palestinians a reason not to despair and not to resort to violence, for it would finally give them something to lose were they to do so. Equally important, it would halt the dangerous hemorrhaging of support for the U.S. in much of the Arab world, which is contributing to the destabilization of friendly Arab countries. And it would establish a marker for the minimal conditions for an Israeli-Palestinian agreement that sooner or later the parties will have to accept if serious negotiations are to resume.

There is nothing more mischievous than the notion, advanced by House Speaker Newt Gingrich and others, that a U.S. assertion of what it believes to be the necessary conditions for useful negotiations constitutes blackmail of the Jewish state and the imposition of an American solution. Mr. Gingrich and his fellow congressmen have no hesitation whatever in imposing their views on the foreign policy of democratic and friendly countries like England, France and Germany toward Cuba and Iran — even imposing sanctions on those countries, something President Clinton would not do to Israel.

As poll after poll has established, a majority of Israelis understand and accept, however reluctantly, that a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza is unavoidable if there is to be an agreement with the Palestinians and with the surrounding Arab countries. It is only in the fevered imagination of Israeli messianists and in the demagogic posturing of U.S. congressmen who pander to the most hawkish elements of the American Jewish community that the notion of Israel's permanent rule over nearly 3 million Palestinians survives. The administration must not cave in to their recklessness.

*for Palestine reg*RETURN TO ENTERTAINMENT: [NORMAL](#) || [LOW-GRAPHICS](#)

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PBS seeks to recapture the century

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LOS ANGELES (June 12, 1998 01:51 a.m. EDT <http://www.nando.net>) -- It's called "People's Century," and the epochal, ongoing PBS series strives to carry out its millennial theme: How the events, discoveries and people of the 20th Century have brought about changes in the human condition.

This year's 13 segments, coproduced by WGBH Boston and the BBC, began in April and continue on Mondays on most public stations. Monday's episode, "Master Race," deals with how the Nazis seized power in Germany and the devastating consequences.

Another 13 segments will appear in 1999.

As executive producer, Zvi Dor-Ner has lived with "People's Century" for more than five years. Israeli-born, he began as a cameraman at WGBH in 1966 while earning a degree in communications at Boston University.

He worked in television in his home country until 1979, when he returned to WGBH. He has produced such acclaimed documentaries as "Apollo 13: To the Edge and Back" and "Columbus and the Age of Discovery."

Reviews of the waning 20th Century have already appeared and more will flood television and the press before the final countdown. So how is "People's Century" different?

"When we first started writing outlines, we considered many themes," Dor-Ner explained in an interview from Boston. "We discussed in which ways the century was different.

"Eventually we concluded that the role of ordinary people changed enormously. It is the century of mass politics, mass education, a time of vast improvement in public health, greater communication and transportation.

"Of course not all of the changes brought good results. They also produced the Nazis and the Holocaust.

"But considering everything, this could be considered the Century of the Common Man. And that's what we have stressed in the series."

Creating a 26-hour history of the century without repeating film clips that have been seen again and again has benefited from related events at the start and end of the century -- the rise of totalitarian government and the eventual breakup of the Soviet bloc.

"The end of the Cold War helped our research greatly," Dor-Ner said. "The Soviet Union was falling apart. The film archives in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Russia, too, became available.

That contributed a tremendous amount of new material.

"The other way to present new material is to look at events afresh. We searched for archival images that would best tell our story. Much of the material has never been seen before."

Although the concluding 13 episodes of "People's Century" will not begin until next April, all have been completed. They will cover such subjects as nuclear energy, Asia's economic rise, medical advances, environmental dangers, guerrilla wars, equal rights and television.

As often happens with big PBS series, this one has produced a book, "People's Century: The Ordinary Men and Women Who Made the Twentieth Century" (Times Books, \$60) by Godfrey Hodgson.

But there is no rest for Zvi Dor-Ner. He has already jumped into a project called "Millennium Day Broadcast," which seems as massive as "People's Century." He explained:

"It's an idea that emerged out of working on 'People's Century': a television event for Dec. 31, 1999. It will be a 24-hour broadcast from around the globe, coming from each time zone as it enters the 21st Century. PBS, BBC and ABC are combining on the production. It is indeed a mammoth operation."

By **BOB THOMAS**, Associated Press Writer

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From: New York Now | Television |
Friday, January 22, 1999

Making Sense Of the Middle East

★ ★ ★ ½

THE 50 YEARS' WAR: ISRAEL AND THE ARABS. Sunday and Monday, 9 p.m., Ch. 13.

To many Americans, perhaps most, the dispute between Israel and the Arab states is one of those eternal conflicts that seems to have had no concrete beginning and no foreseeable end — a morass of continuing, cloudy contradictions.



ERIC
MINK

"The 50 Years War: Israel and the Arabs" cuts through this murkiness with remarkable clarity and detail. Setting aside the conflict's supposed biblical origins, the two-part/five-hour documentary airing Sunday and Monday nights (WNET/Ch. 13) wisely chooses to concentrate on modern times:

It identifies the key developments that have propelled events from 1948 to the present.

It finds virtually *all* of the major players and puts them on screen — sometimes via interviews recorded many years earlier, sometimes in newly conducted sessions — to explain what they did, why they did it and, in some cases, what they think about it with the benefit of hindsight.

These include everyone from Harry Truman, Richard Nixon, George Bush and Jimmy Carter, to Anwar Sadat, Yasser Arafat, King Hussein, Dr. George Habash and Hanan Ashrawi, to David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir, to more generals, defense ministers, security/intelligence advisors, secretaries of state and assorted diplomats than you can shake a passport at.

And it illustrates the history with astoundingly relevant and vivid footage that could only have been unearthed through an exhaustive search through film and tape libraries, both here

and abroad.

"The 50 Years War" was produced by Norma Percy of Brian Lapping Associates as a joint project of public station WGBH in Boston and BBC London. Percy's superb touch has been evident in documentaries about Watergate and the Bosnian civil war, both of which aired in the U.S. on cable's Discovery Channel.

In the end, "The 50 Years War" — despite a dense and wordy narration — amounts to a vital road map through the historical minefield that is the Middle East. Watch all five hours, and you cannot help coming away with a deeper, clearer understanding.

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To Brian Lapping Associates, London, for *Yugoslavia, Death of a Nation* on The Discovery Channel.



Press the image for a clip of the winning piece in RealVideo format.

This five-part epic series, made for the British Broadcasting Corporation and The Discovery Channel, untangles the political and military events that led to the dismemberment of the country that was Yugoslavia. It integrates rare video footage of council meetings and events



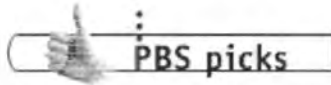
Brian Lapping's acceptance speech (Press for RealVideo).

that had never been televised before with interviews of the heads of all six rival states. The documentaries carefully explain how Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic systematically and brutally increased the territory under his control. Narrated by CNN's Christiane Amanpour, who has become the voice of authority on the region, this series accomplished what other media have not yet managed to do. It sorted out the characters involved and found visual documentation of the crucial events and decisions that led to Yugoslavia's collapse. *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation* makes other coverage of this subject pale by comparison.

▲ TOP

TOP ▲

The check is no longer in the mail.



THE 50 YEARS WAR: ISRAEL AND THE ARABS

Leading statesmen, generals, terrorists and others who made the headlines in one of history's most bitter and enduring struggles tell the story of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the two-part **THE 50 YEARS WAR: ISRAEL AND THE ARABS**. The two-and-a-half-hour programs air on PBS Sunday-Monday, January 24-25, 1999, 9:00 p.m. ET (check local listings) as part of History's Best on PBS, a weekly block of primetime programming devoted to American and world history.

Opening with the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states in 1947, the program charts the ensuing half-century of enmity, warfare, mediation and negotiation.

Among the current and former heads of state and prime ministers interviewed or featured in the series are Benjamin Netanyahu, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir of Israel; King Hussein of Jordan; Yasir Arafat of the Palestine Authority; Hafez al-Assad of Syria; Jafaar Numeiry of Sudan; and U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton, George Bush and Jimmy Carter.

Also appearing are foreign ministers, defense ministers, commanders in the field, heads of intelligence and guerrilla leaders on both sides, as well as high-ranking officials in the United States and the former Soviet Union. Some participants have never spoken publicly before. One was thought to be long dead. Shams Badran, Egypt's war minister during the Six Day War, was thought to have died in prison after his country's humiliating defeat - until producers for **THE 50 YEARS WAR** located and interviewed him in Europe, where he is an agricultural feed salesman.

Two years in the making, **THE 50 YEARS WAR** was filmed in Israel, the Palestinian autonomous areas, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the United States and Russia. The first episode covers Israel's struggle for statehood, including the surprising victory against Arab armies in 1948 and 1967. The film also traces the establishment and campaigns of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Coverage of the Palestinian and Israeli conflict includes a wealth of new and surprising detail. The concluding program features a fresh behind-the-scenes history of the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the Camp David peace accord in 1978, the start of the Palestinian "Intifada" uprising in 1987, the Oslo agreement in 1993 and the current attempts to consolidate a shaky reconciliation.

Widespread acclaim greeted **THE 50 YEARS WAR** when it recently aired in Britain:

- "An amazing cast - almost every key player in the life and death struggle between Israel and its Arab enemies ... a ringside seat in the making of history." - Daily Mail
- "A complex political story given a human face." - Time Out
- "This is recent history told with authority and verve, plus a few surprises." - The Sunday Times
- "A gripping insight into international diplomacy and military strategy." - The Observer

Underwriters: Public Television Viewers and PBS. Co-producers: WGBH Boston and BBC London. Producer: Brian Lapping Associates. Series producer for Brian Lapping Associates: Norma Percy. Executive producer for WGBH: Zvi Dor-Ner. Format: CC

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Leading statesmen, generals, terrorists and others who made the headlines in one of history's most bitter and enduring struggles tell the story of the Arab-Israeli conflict in this two-part program. Opening with the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states in 1947, the program charts the ensuing half-century of enmity, warfare, mediation and negotiation. Among the current and former heads of state and prime ministers interviewed or featured in the series are Benjamin Netanyahu,

Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir of Israel; King Hussein of Jordan; Yasir Arafat of the Palestine Authority; Hafez al-Assad of Syria; Jafaar Numeiry of Sudan; and U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton, George Bush and Jimmy Carter. The first episode covers Israel's struggle for statehood, including the surprising victory against Arab armies in 1948 and 1967. The film also traces the establishment and campaigns of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Coverage of the Palestinian and Israeli conflict includes a wealth of new and surprising detail. The concluding program features a fresh behind-the-scenes history of the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the Camp David peace accord in 1978, the start of the Palestinian "Intifada" uprising in 1987, the Oslo agreement in 1993 and the current attempts to consolidate a shaky reconciliation. (1998)

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U.S. Assistance to Improve Health Care in the West Bank and Gaza

In comparison with other lower-middle income economies, the West Bank and Gaza health care system is impressive and its population enjoys relatively good public health. Infant mortality is 28 per 1,000, slightly better than Jordan (32.3) but much worse than that of Israel (8.4). The life expectancy is 71.4 years, approximately seven years less than that for Israelis. Extensive donor support coupled with planning by the Palestinian Authority has enabled most of the population to have reasonable physical access to health facilities although treatment often comes with financial difficulty for many: nearly 20% of Palestinians live below the poverty line of \$600 per year.

The \$7 billion international assistance effort for the Palestinians is extensively coordinated among the roughly 40 countries and multilateral institutions that provide donor funds. Countries concentrate on different areas so that the overall impact of donor assistance is evenly spread among the sectors that require development. Belgium, Denmark, the EU, Italy, Japan, Spain, and Sweden provide extensive funding for health care development projects. Activities underway include hospital construction, provision of ambulances, family planning activities, and stocking of health centers, to name just a few.

Because there is already so much concentration on health care, the United States focuses its assistance in other areas such as water, economic opportunity, and democracy and governance. We do, however, monitor donor activities in the health care sector closely and have initiated projects in several areas not comprehensively addressed by others:

Maternal and Child Health Pilot Initiative: High fertility rates, limited postpartum care systems, and close birth spacing are complicating the health and well-being of mothers and babies in the West Bank and Gaza. The U.S. will provide \$4.5 million to fund counseling and outreach support to mothers and their newborn in order to mitigate circumstances that negatively impact their well-being.

Laboratory Training: We anticipate providing approximately \$140,000 to the Centers for Disease Control for its work, in conjunction with a private sponsor, to provide laboratory training. Assessment of specific training needs is currently in progress.

Regional Activities: We have provided \$1.05 million to the Middle East Cancer Consortium, based in Bethlehem. The MECC, which also receives contributions from the National Cancer Institute, facilitates data exchange and contact among experts in Israel, Egypt, the West Bank/Gaza, and Jordan. We are also funding a \$127,000 study comparing health behavior among school-age children in Israel, the West Bank/Gaza, and the U.S. as part of our Middle East Research Cooperation (MERC) program.

U.S. Assistance to Improve Health Care in the West Bank and
Gaza

drafted NEA/IAI:DSMeale ext. 647-2647
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Cleared

NEA/IAI:JWalles OK

AID/ANE:DYoung/LLeDuc OK

File Puerto Rico

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
House of Representatives
The Capitol
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901

Hon. Anibal Acevedo Vilá

House Minority Leader
Popular Democratic Party

October 2, 1998

Hillary Rodham-Clinton
Office of the First Lady
100 Old Executive Building
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mrs. Rodham-Clinton:

On your recent visit to Puerto Rico, extending the needed federal emergency help to our people after Hurricane Georges path of destruction, several out of the ordinary events took place. Since it involves the logistics and organization established by the White House, before and during your visit, I call your attention upon them.

Fifteen minutes before your arrival to the airport, my office received a phone call from Mr. Fred DuVal to confirm my attendance to the Official Protocol Welcome. When one of my assistants informed Mr. DuVal that no invitation had been extended nor received, he apologized directly to me, took the necessary information for the security screening, and assured me that everything was set and that I would not confront any problems upon my arrival.

Although running against the clock, I arrived to the airport with enough time for your welcome, but the results were not what I expected. An employee of the Governor of Puerto Rico did not allow me to access the "VIP" area. Consequently, I called Mr. DuVal through my cellular phone and he spoke directly with the employee, but when the conversation finished it was already late since you had step down from the airplane. Before leaving, I notice that the same thing was done to the Senate Minority Leader, Hon. Antonio Fas-Alzamora.

Once again, I spoke with Mr. DuVal and told him about the lack of respect of the Governor's employee towards his instructions and the treatment I received. Mr. DuVal assured me that this was an extraordinary situation and asked to "please" be at your departure, not before assuring me that he would personally take control of security and the entire event for both the Senate Minority Leader and myself

After several communications between my assistants and DuVal's office the

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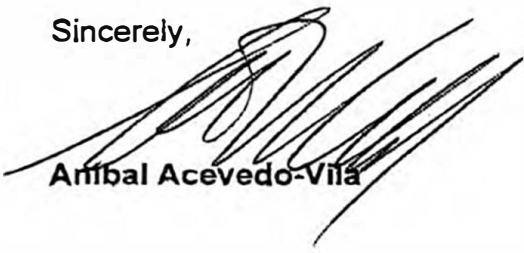
arrangements were made, the names of the security contacts were given and the entrance was assured. I arrive half an hour early to the airport and the same employee was there. He told my assistant that he had received several calls giving him specific instructions for our attendance, but once again he did not follow them and defied the White House instructions. He let us in when you were already boarding the airplane, although he had available transportation for us to meet you on time.

The name of the Governor's employee is Rafael Martínez-Colón who is the Auxiliary Sub-Secretary of Administration in the State Department of Puerto Rico. I notified Mr. DuVal of my amazement and disgust with the entire operation and he expressed that the lack of civility, respect and organization of the Governor's employee was an insult to the authority of the White House and instructions over the organization of your visit to Puerto Rico.

Consequently, I am forced to express my deepest aversion towards this shameful situation, which was the result of the local government employee's actions and of the White House Staff lack of organization who were in charge of your visit to Puerto Rico. As Minority Leader of the Popular Democratic Party in the House of Representatives I must repudiate this treatment and the means of dealing with something so simple like controlling who can welcome you to simply say "thanks for your sincere concerns towards our people's needs". In order to get things done right, they have to be made in advance and with strict measures to guarantee their success.

Therefore, I use this mean of communication to express my most sincere appreciation for your prompt response to Puerto Rico's needs. I hope that during my next visit to Washington D.C. we can meet in your office or in the place of your preference in order to personally thank you on behalf of my people. For now I can only regret this entire episode.

Sincerely,



Anibal Acevedo-Vila



Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
House of Representatives
The Capitol
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901

Hon. Aníbal Acevedo Vilá

House Minority Leader
Popular Democratic Party

October 2, 1998

Hillary Rodham-Clinton
Office of the First Lady
100 Old Executive Building
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mrs. Rodham-Clinton:

The path of the Hurricane Georges through Puerto Rico left a trail of unprecedented damages and sufferings. On your recent visit to the Island you had the chance to directly see and feel the pain of entire families who lost their houses, their belongings and in many cases their positivism towards life.

As you so clearly stated, these are times of working together for the benefit of all Puerto Ricans. The emergency help sent by the Federal Government will facilitate the reconstruction of houses and the recovery of our stability. Therefore, in order to achieve this common goal it is indispensable to reorganize the actual operational structure in Puerto Rico of the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA").

Today, more than eleven days after the hurricane passed, there are still thousands of families that have not being able to contact a FEMA representative to notify their losses or to get any kind of orientation regarding the benefits available. The problem resides in the organization of the relief operation. Instead of help going directly to the municipalities FEMA is using the local central government as intermediaries which has the result of delaying the entire process.

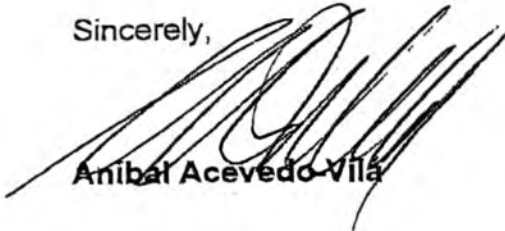
Consequently, I wrote a letter to Mr. James Lee Witt, Director of FEMA, recommending several measures to assure an effective and prompt attention of the emergency needs. Since the one eight hundred (1-800) number provided to contact FEMA is not enough when compared with the demand the following measures were proposed: first, increase the number of Spanish speaking phone operators since less than thirty percent (30%) of Puerto Rico's population speak English fluently; second, establish temporary FEMA offices in each one of Puerto Rico's municipalities in order to speed and facilitate the access to the emergency help; and third, FEMA personnel should visit the different emergency shelters to obtain the necessary information and guarantee the relief of the persons that qualify for the federal help.

2

I assure you that the implementation of these measures will accelerate the reconstruction of Puerto Rico after this meteorological disaster. And after your expressed concerns towards our needs, I understand that you will do everything in your power to put them into effect. Your efforts will be deeply appreciate by all Puerto Ricans.

Once again, on behalf of the People of Puerto Rico I thank you for your visit to our Island and for the expressed concern toward our people's needs. Also, I appreciate your efforts in the implementation of these proposed measures.

Sincerely,



Anibal Acevedo-Vila

- Enclosure



Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
House of Representatives
The Capitol
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901

Hon. Anibal Acevedo Vilá

House Minority Leader
Popular Democratic Party

September 29, 1998

Mr. James Lee Witt
Director
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C. Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Mr. Witt:

As part of my responsibilities as Minority Leader in the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, I have visited several communities of this island that were severely affected by Hurricane George.

Surprisingly, six (6) days after the hurricane passed through Puerto Rico, FEMA's presence in the communities hardest hit has not been felt. FEMA is providing its economic assistance through central government agencies instead of working with the municipal governments or local entities directly. The central government agencies have not responded adequately to the communities' needs. In many cases, the municipal governments alone have provided economic support and other assistance to persons in extreme need.

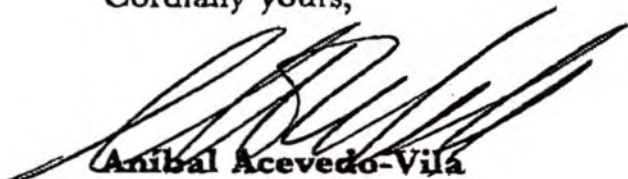
In view of the above, I respectfully request the FEMA to provide its services directly to the municipal governments or local entities, establishing a FEMA center in each of the 78 municipalities in order to serve the people in need faster.

Mr. James Lee Witt
Director
Federal Emergency Management Agency
September 28, 1998

Page 2

FEMA also provides assistance through a program which reimburses expenses that local entities and/or municipal governments have incurred in order to respond to an emergency. This assistance is also being channeled thru the central government. In order to expedite the payment of such reimbursements, I respectfully request that they be paid directly to the local entities and/or municipal governments.

Cordially yours,



Anibal Acevedo-Vila

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 7, 1998

PRESS BRIEFING BY
MIKE MCCURRY
AND JIM LYONS

The Briefing Room

1:55 P.M. EDT

MR. MCCURRY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the White House press briefing room. So?

Q So what about Mrs. Clinton's statement?

MR. MCCURRY: What else? (Laughter.) Let's canvas the room here, see where we want to start today.

The President, I expect when he meets with the mayors, he will start at the outset by noting the importance of Ambassador Ross's trip to Israel at the request of Prime Minister Netanyahu, and note that this is an important moment for us to build on the ideas that the United States has presented as we see if we can't achieve something that Prime Minister Netanyahu himself has really put in motion -- the concept of an accelerated permanent status dialogue on final status issues.

And that's where our focus will be today, and we'll deal with wherever your focus might be.

Q -- going to answer the question about Mrs. Clinton

-- does she now regret that she spoke as she did?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't spoken with her to see if she regrets it. I think her spokesman made clear she was not reflecting administration policy, because we have made abundantly clear our view of so-called final status issues. They are issues that should not be prejudged because the parties themselves are going to have to grapple with them and make the difficult choices that they will have to make in the context of the Oslo process as they look ahead to settlement of those issues during the course of the coming year.

Q Well, if I may, is she as free as the normal citizen of the country to express a contrary view given her position and given her association with her husband who does set administration policy?

MR. MCCURRY: She's free to be as outspoken as she wishes to be. But I think she also, as she so often does, responds to the very human aspirations that people express. And in this case, you'll not that she was addressing young people from both the Palestinian community and the Israeli community. They had come together in the interest of trying to bridge their differences to talk about the very human cost of a lack of peace and the things that could arise from people working together, in terms of education and health care -- those things that presumably a peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis would foster.

So in a very real and a very human way, the abundant opportunities that would exist for both sides if they were able to bridge the gaps that they have between and move forward in this

process is something that the First Lady responded to in a human way. That's not a surprise given who she is. But she would be the first to say that she was not reflecting the administration view, and our views on those subjects are well known.

Q To go back to this notion of human aspirations, does the President in any way share her view that this would be a desirable outcome?

MR. MCCURRY: The President has but one view, which is the administration's view that the peace process is defined by those agreements that the parties themselves have reached, and the identification of issues that they have declared final status issues are to be resolved in the kind of direct dialogue that we are doing so much to encourage. That's the President's one and only view.

Q But, Mike, you said that her personal views are not in contradiction with the administration's policy. Does the President have a personal view on this?

MR. MCCURRY: I just indicated -- the President has but one and only view and I just expressed it.

Q So he disagrees with the First Lady?

MR. MCCURRY: I said, the President has but one and only view, and he just expressed it.

Q But does he disagree with what Mrs. Clinton said?

MR. MCCURRY: That view expressed personally by the First Lady is not the view of the President.

Q Mike, is the First Lady -- was the First Lady yesterday aware of precisely what administration policy was and deliberately put some distance between her and it, or did she make a gaff? And would you admit it if she had?

MR. MCCURRY: Her staff has indicated to me that this was not part of any kind of calculated strategy. And I think it speaks for itself when an immediate clarification is issued by her staff that this is something that she did not say in the context of any formal administration policy-making role.

Q Do you think it's appropriate to have the First Lady of the United States contradicting U.S. policy?

MR. MCCURRY: I think it's very appropriate for the First Lady of the United States to participate in dialogue with young people from the Israeli community and the Palestinian community who are trying to better understand each other and understand what opportunities arise because of peace -- yes, I do.

Q Mike, Clinton is going to be addressing the World Health Organization in Geneva I think on May 14th, and apparently Castro will be addressing the same body the same day. Is there any chance that they'll get together there?

MR. MCCURRY: I highly doubt that. It's been our custom to refrain from any high-level engagement with Fidel Castro.

Q Mike, is Monday a hard deadline? Is the U.S. offer to Netanyahu and Arafat off if Netanyahu does not change his mind over the weekend?

MR. MCCURRY: Our invitation to both parties is for the commencement of accelerated status discussions that would begin here on Monday. We think it's important, because of where we are in the process -- building off the progress that was made in London by the discussions that the Secretary of State guided, it's important to keep that momentum going. But until Ambassador Ross has an opportunity to talk with Prime Minister Netanyahu and presumably to Chairman Arafat as well at some point, until he has that opportunity to see what creativity the Prime Minister wants to bring to these very difficult issues, I think we should refrain from a lot of speculation. We don't know at this point whether the government of

Israel wishes to accept the President's invitation. We'll have to see how that develops in coming days.

Q If I could follow up -- Arafat has agreed to come. Would such talks begin with Arafat in Washington on Monday without Netanyahu?

MR. MCCURRY: It's designed to be a discussion in which both parties can engage on those issues that divide them, and proceeding with just one party would be of questionable utility.

Q Would there be a big deal if they waited a week or two weeks to do it?

MR. MCCURRY: I think the important thing is that these parties begin the hard work of narrowing the gaps that still exist between them. And they did some considerable new thinking on these issues in the context of the London meetings, and providing a forum in which they can build on that thinking and actually start to resolve some of the differences that exist is an important thing to see accomplished.

Q So is it this Monday or never?

MR. MCCURRY: There's an invitation for Monday, and we'll see how the response to those invitations go.

Q -- the President's invitation now is contingent on the acceptance of the idea of a 13.1 percent withdrawal from the West Bank?

MR. MCCURRY: We've never detailed elements of the so-called American ideas that we've put forward, for the simple reason that we have not seen fit to require these parties to negotiate that way in public. We have certainly put forth ideas; we've certainly suggested that the invitation to the meeting Monday is suggested to be on the basis of those ideas that we've put forward because that should be the starting point for the kind of accelerated status negotiations that the parties need to have.

But it's clear from the Prime Minister's invitation to Ambassador Ross and from his discussion with Secretary Albright today, that he has been doing some thinking about these ideas that we have put forward. I think it's very important for our special Ambassador to hear him out and to see how he wishes to address these issues, especially within the context of the discussions he will no doubt have with his own government.

Q -- there can be a meeting of the minds on a different level. I guess I'm asking whether we could modify our ideas, along with the Prime Minister, and have the meeting Monday on some other basis?

MR. MCCURRY: Secretary Albright has made clear, and we

would reiterate, we are not going to water down our ideas.

Q Okay, that's the answer.

Q Mike, is the First Lady in the dog house?
(Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: I'm sorry, say again.

Q Is the First Lady in the dog house?

MR. MCCURRY: I think that's self-evidently not.

Q Mike, the question of being -- you said before that her ideas aren't administration policy, but you also said she's free to speak, to say whatever she wants, which is sort of like a halfway -- that it was fine for her to say this, which sends a message, makes people in the Middle East think that she might indeed be representing where U.S. policy is going.

MR. MCCURRY: I strongly suspect the people of the Middle East, knowing this administration and this President's thinking quite well, and having heard the almost instant clarification made, will not have any question in their mind what administration policy is and will be.

Q Well, does the White House think it was a mistake for the First Lady to have said this?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not going to express that view. I think I rather stick with what the facts are. The facts are she said something in the context of an interesting conversation with some young people. Her office and her press secretary very quickly indicated she was not articulating anything new about administration policy and reiterated what our policy is, has been, and will be. And I think we move on from there.

Q Mike, if I can try one last time -- can you think of any other instance where the First Lady has publicly articulated a policy on any subject that's not administration policy?

MR. MCCURRY: On the subject of the Middle East, I can think of numerous time when people in the administration in different capacities say things --

Q No, the First Lady.

MR. MCCURRY: -- given the heavy nuance that applies to this subject, which instantly become part of the ping-pong match between the parties and part of the dialogue that exists. One of the reasons why, for all practical purposes, we are very careful and very opaque in the things we say about this process, because we want these

parties to talk to each other and not to respond to the external debate that is often used to divide these parties who are groping for a way to make progress on peace. And I think the First Lady would be the first to say she would not want anything about any remarks that she made be used as a way to further divide these parties that need to come together.

Q Would you expect her to continue to express her personal views then?

MR. MCCURRY: I expect that she will always continue to express her views, but I doubt that she will venturing into the Middle East peace process anytime soon. (Laughter.)

Q How worried are you, Mike, that her comments may make it more difficult for Netanyahu's Cabinet to accept the American proposals?

MR. MCCURRY: I think, based on the reaction that I've seen so far from Jerusalem today, I don't have a concern about that. I know that the important thing is that the Prime Minister had conversations with the Secretary of State today, and as a result of those conversations, our special Middle East Coordinator is about to leave for Israel. I think that we should keep an eye on reality here, even while we play the game of gotcha that we have to play in another context. I think we really do need to kind of keep focused on what counts and what will ultimately matter.

Q Who asked for that meeting, Mike, in that telephone conversation?

MR. MCCURRY: The Prime Minister did.

Q I have several questions about tonight. Can you tell us when the President decided to speak to the Arab American Institute? Are there concerns about that coming at this particular time and how that looks? And can you tell us what he's going to say tonight?

MR. MCCURRY: As I indicated earlier today, this is an event that has been on his calendar for quite some time. It's been designed by our Office of Public Liaison here. It is part of the outreach that we make to a variety of diverse communities here in the United States and it will focus principally on the domestic issues that the Arab-American leaders are addressing in the context of their meeting here.

They have a number of things that they want to talk about that the President thinks are relevant to his initiative on race. He will certainly, to the degree necessary, reiterate some of the same things he will say in front of the mayors right now that are generally about the Middle East. But this is much more likely to be a discussion about the reality of life for the American -- Arab Americans here in the United States and what they face here,

domestically, as opposed to issues related to the peace process.

Q It may have been scheduled for a long time, but it's happened to have fallen at sort of a critical moment. And given what Gingrich has said and what the First Lady has said, is there concern about the appearance of him going before this group at this time?

MR. MCCURRY: I think that it's always a good appearance when the President is reaching out to diverse populations and communities and interacting with them on the issues that concern them. And he's done so -- the Secretary of State, following her meetings in London, had a very important conference call with the conference of major Jewish organizations, so our interaction with communities that follow the Middle East peace process here in the United States has been intense, and it has been focused on all communities that have some interest in that question. Although that's not the purpose of the session, if that serves that ancillary purpose, that's not unwelcome.

Q This morning I asked you whether or not the President would go off message and hold forth on either the First Lady or Mr. Ross's trip, and you said you doubt it.

MR. MCCURRY: You're correct, I probably indicated I doubted the President would go off message because he tends to be very good at staying on message. I think he does want to address this question this afternoon.

Q This is the message?

MR. MCCURRY: The message of meeting with the mayors is about education, local public education. But as we frequently do, we manage to let other things stray in there when we know they're of interest to others.

Q I think it's just a brilliant ploy to keep from talking about Kenneth Starr.

MR. MCCURRY: That's the first that subject has come up today, isn't it?

Q Mike, to look ahead a bit on Monday, assuming for a moment that Netanyahu is interested in coming to the United States, does the administration envision the President meeting with Arafat and Netanyahu? Is the ultimate goal to get them all together within several days?

MR. MCCURRY: If they are both here and there intent being here is to launch what would be critical discussions on final status issues in the accelerated timetable that the Prime Minister had called for, I can be reasonably certain that the President would

want to take the opportunity to see them both.

Q And try to get them together?

MR. MCCURRY: I think we would want to more celebrate the fact that the parties are ready and willing to begin critical dialogue on those issues. And I don't want to speculate about what format those discussions take because we don't even know at this point whether the Prime Minister plans to be here.

Q The U.S. has been pressing Indonesia to follow the IMF plan. There were six dead in riots yesterday, riots against the austerity measures. If things continue to deteriorate, what would you advise next?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's not that we would advise something new, it's we would continue to call on the government of Indonesia to respect the individual human rights of those who are voicing legitimate dissent, that they exercise extreme caution as they try to bring and restore order, and most importantly, that they address the fundamental concerns that many people in Indonesia have about the status of their economy. And we think that the road to recovery for their economy is built around the work that we are doing through the IMF to bring economic stability to both their financial institutions and to the regulation of their enterprises.

Q Mike, on Indonesia, if I could follow up on that, is the United States preparing to pull out of military cooperation with Indonesia?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, we have, I think, fairly limited military-to-military engagement with them now. I had heard anything to that effect, but I can check further with that.

Q Will today's meeting with Jim Lyons and his announcement on economic packages be in place of a possible meeting between Blair, Ahern, and Clinton in England?

MR. MCCURRY: No, it would be -- I mean, we will continue to look for ways to engage with the government of the United Kingdom and the government of the Republic of Ireland on the peace process in Northern Ireland, but this is rather a different statement. It is that our interest in peace in Northern Ireland is an ongoing and long-term interest; that the importance of the referendum coming up later this month cannot be understated, but that our commitment to these parties and to the work we have done to promote economic opportunity in Ulster will continue, and that we will pursue these initiatives into the future because they build a platform upon which both communities can take the opportunity of the peace agreement to build better lives for their people.

Q Can I follow up on Ireland?

Q Considering the First Lady's interest now in global peace processes, she's now added going over to Ireland -- do you have any details on that?

MR. MCCURRY: The President will have a statement in --and probably Mr. Lyon's here shortly, correct -- to tell you more about that. But the President has asked the First Lady to go to Belfast this fall to participate in a conversation with the Protestant and Catholic communities on ways in which they can reconcile differences and build on what we will hope will be a new environment of peace brought about by the Good Friday Agreement.

Q Could you take a follow-up on Ireland? I know you said it earlier, but could you explain for the cameras why the President will not be going to Ireland at this time?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, he made a good -- as we told you he would -- make a good assessment of what the situation is, whether in the best interests of achieving approval of the agreement that has been reached by the parties under the auspices of the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland. And based on all of our conversations with the parties and with the two governments, we decided to keep the focus where it should be -- on the work that the leaders of the communities are doing to bring the agreement to their constituencies, to argue its merits, and to make the decision that people freely need to make.

At this point, we ventured that our own participation in that discussion would not do anything necessarily to hurt the process, but would not likely do anything to contribute to a very good and spirited debate that's already underway. So the President, I think, felt it was best to leave the arguments to those who actually have to make the decision.

Q The Office of the Independent Counsel says that the allegations made in David Kendall's letter yesterday on the leaks about the executive privilege decision are false, that they did not leak that information.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that's contrary, as you know from Mr. Kendall's letter, to what has been reported by one news organization very directly. That news organization now says that their reporter may have mischaracterized, and I take it to mean that that's -- the reporter didn't quite protect the source the way the reporter may have should. But I think that Mr. Kendall's letter still stands on its own and on its merits and ought to be addressed by the court and by Mr. Starr himself.

Q What do people around here make of the motivation behind the Speaker's comments on the peace talks yesterday? Is this just a sort of genuine philosophical disagreement over these negotiations, or is this a sign that partisanship -- that relations have gotten so tense that partisanship is sort of working its way into areas where maybe it wouldn't have in the past?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, I'm hesitant to accept the latter interpretation. I think if we've reached a point where the Republican leadership in the House believes they can make political gain by intruding on what is one of the most sensitive diplomatic processes underway anywhere in the world, that is a very unwelcome development. But I'm not going to suggest that that is the Speaker's motive. I think that he has always been very legitimately concerned about the role the United States plays in the Middle East peace process.

But I think, in a way, the reason the President made very clear to the American public what we are trying to achieve yesterday at his press conference was to allay any concern that there was a desire on the part of our government to pressure one side or the other. We have exhaustively, through thousands of hours of conversations in in the last 14 months, assessed where these parties are and what, in our judgment, they need to address if they are going to together make forward progress in their own dialogue. And we've put those ideas forward, and at a time when neither party was responding to each other, they have responded to the ideas that we have presented, which are not necessarily the best solution from our point of view, but they certainly reflect what we think is at least a minimal basis upon which Arab, Palestinian, and Israeli can agree to move forward on the issues that divide them.

Now, all of that, we have spoken to the Speaker about many times and he may have made a legitimate judgment that our assessment is not a correct one. But I think that the President is confident, based on the judgment of Secretary Albright and Ambassador Ross who have in a painstaking way dealt with these parties -- he's confident that they have handled our intervention in this process exactly right and it has produced what we think is an important outcome.

For the first time in some time, Prime Minister Netanyahu has indicated a willingness to bring some new creativity to his thinking about the issues that have separated the Palestinian Authority and the government of Israel in these issues that have separated the Palestinian Authority and the government of Israel in this dialogue. And that's an important achievement and something that I think we want to build on.

Q -- Speaker's motives might be in telling his fellow Republicans to refer no longer to White House scandals but to White House crimes.

MR. MCCURRY: I don't know. If he's got evidence of crimes, I think that would probably be news to Mr. Starr, and he probably should go see Mr. Starr. He has not done so, so that would indicate to me that this is hollow rhetoric rather than factual information.

Q Does the administration think that Chairman Burton

dealt appropriately with Dave Bossie?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, since the Speaker and the Chairman disagree on how Mr. Bossie was dealt with, it's impossible for me to comment because I don't know what the truth is.

Q Do you have some greater understanding of what happened?

MR. MCCURRY: No. You've got contradictory reports from the Chairman and the Speaker about what happened. And we're not in any position to know.

Q Is his departure, under whatever circumstances, welcome?

MR. MCCURRY: There's nothing about Chairman Burton's handling of this inquiry in recent weeks that is welcome.

Q Has the President decided yet whether to appeal the executive privilege ruling by the --

MR. MCCURRY: I can't even tell you whether there is such a decision, so I'm in no way in a position to know.

Q Would Burton's removal as leader of this investigation be welcomed for the White House?

MR. MCCURRY: He's been removed, so it's a moot point what our thinking on that is. Oh, Burton?

Q Yes, Burton.

MR. MCCURRY: Our strong suspicion here is it would just transfer to some other venue, so I don't know if it would make that much difference.

Q Do you know if there's any difference between Bill Thomas, for instance, and Dan Burton --

MR. MCCURRY: It might raise the intellectual level of the dialogue, but beyond that I don't know -- (laughter.)

Q Mike, you were asked about a week ago about the White House's position on whether the President has to personally assert executive privilege had changed, ---- and you said no, and the Counsel's Office said --

MR. MCCURRY: I did not say that. I said that it would be important, very important, for me to check further with counsel on that. And my own guess -- and it's only a guess -- is that that is an issue that is going to be directly addressed in some of the



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March 19, 1999

Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Clinton,

I was honored to have been in attendance at yesterday's moving program at the White House. The respect and love expressed by Lea and Dalia Rabin for you and President Clinton was palpable. Indeed, the Rabins embraced you both, in word and in deed, as part of their extended family. It is no surprise that they conferred upon you the "Shalom Chaver Award for International Leadership" and have dedicated the Yitzhak Rabin Center's Peace Gardens in your honor. Thank you for including me at such an auspicious occasion.

In the context of the quest for peace, as you know, concerns have been raised within our community about your views on the establishment of a Palestinian state. Most recently, several individuals with whom you have met have offered conflicting interpretations of your position in this regard. I would respectfully request a clarification of where you stand on this crucial issue.

Once again, I appreciate the opportunity to have been with you at the White House.

Sincerely,


Michael S. Miller
Executive Vice President