

## The President's News Conference With President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt *July 1, 1999*

*President Clinton.* Good afternoon. I'm delighted to welcome President Mubarak back to the White House. He is our longtime partner in building a safer and more peaceful world.

Once again, we now have a real chance to move the peace process forward in the Middle East. Egypt has been central to that process and to all the progress which has been made since the Camp David accords over 20 years ago. Egypt will continue to play a leading role to address the important tasks ahead, building on Oslo, Wye River implementation, reaching a permanent status agreement between Palestinians and Israelis, widening the circle of peace to include agreements with Syria and Lebanon, revitalizing talks between Israel and the Arab world on a host of other important issues from the environment to water resources to refugees to economic development. There are, to be sure, major challenges ahead, but the will of the people for peace is strong.

President Mubarak and I also discussed our common determination to fight terrorism in all its forms.

With regard to the peace process, let me just say one other thing. The best way for the Israelis to have lasting security is a negotiated peace based on mutual respect. That is also the best way for Palestinians to shape their own future on their own land. A negotiated peace is the best way for all the people of the region to realize their aspirations.

Let me just say also that over the last two decades, under President Mubarak's leadership, Egypt has done much to fulfill the aspirations of its people. Economic growth has been strong and sustained; inflation has been held in check; the GDP per person has increased by a factor of five. Egypt is building a modern infrastructure in roads, powerplants, communication systems. Civil society has grown, with work ahead to strengthen it, so that all Egyptians participate in building a better future.

Among the reasons for all this progress, two stand out, both advanced by President

Mubarak's wise leadership. First, Israel's—excuse me—Egypt's deepening peace with Israel that has freed resources and energies of the people. A broader regional peace will be good for prosperity, for progress, and for freedom.

Second, Egypt's economic reform, with expansion of the private sector and free markets. The work of President Mubarak and Vice President Gore on our U.S.–Egypt partnership for growth and development, which they will advance later today, has been crucial. The President is committed to continuing the reforms, and America will continue to help.

Today we discussed a number of other issues. I'd like to mention just one: Kosovo. I am profoundly grateful to Egypt for supporting the stand taken by NATO. Already, more than half the refugees have returned to Kosovo. There is still much work to do, and I thank Egypt for its commitment to provide Egyptian police officers for the civilian police implementation force there.

But we have made a powerful statement together. The future belongs to those who reconcile human differences, not those who exploit them. The future belongs to those who respect human rights, not those who destroy people because of their religion, their race, or their ethnic background.

I hope we can carry some of the momentum from what we have achieved in Kosovo to the Middle East, as we seek there to promote tolerance and a durable peace. As we do, the leadership of President Mubarak, as always, will be critical.

Mr. President, welcome. The floor is yours.

*President Mubarak.* Thank you. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I was very pleased to see my friend President Clinton and exchange views with him on matters of common concern. As usual, our talks this morning reflected the similarity and the convergence of our views. We value our solid friendship with this great Nation and consider it one of the pillars of our policy.