

[Happy holiday. Happy holiday to the people of Israel; happy holiday to the people of Jordan. Let this be an end to war, violence and hostile activity. And let us know no more war.]

Your Majesty King Hussein I,
President Clinton,
President Weizman,
The Foreign Ministers of our countries,
Distinguished guests from all over the world,
The peoples of Jordan and Israel,

From this podium, I look around and I see the Arava. Along the horizon, from the Jordanian side and the Israeli side, I see only a desert. There is almost no life here. There is no water, no well, and not a spring only minefields.

Such were the relations between Israel and Jordan during the last 47 years: a desert. Not one green leaf, no trees, not even a single flower.

There comes a time when there is a need to be strong and to make courageous decisions, to overcome the minefields, the drought, the barrenness between our two peoples.

We have known many days of sorrow, you have known many days of grief but bereavement unites us, as does bravery, and we honor those who sacrificed their lives. We both must draw on the springs of our great spiritual resources, to forgive the anguish we caused each other, to clear the minefields that divided us for so many years and to supplant it with fields of plenty.

For nearly two generations, desolation pervaded the heart of our two peoples. The time has now come not merely to dream of a better future but to realize it.

Leaders should clear the path, should show the way, but the road itself must be paved by both peoples. I don't believe that we would have reached this great moment without the desire for peace in the hearts of both peoples; in the hearts of the soldiers and the intellectuals, in the hearts of the farmers and of the lorry drivers who drive through the Arava highways in Jordan and Israel, in the hearts of teachers and of the little children.

Both nations were determined that the great revolution in the Middle East would take place in their generation.

From this podium, I look around and I see the Arava and I see you: our generation and the next. We are the ones who will transform this barren place into a fertile oasis. The drab browns and the dull grays will burst forth in living vibrant greens.

Your Majesty, Peace between states is peace between peoples. It is an expression of trust and esteem. I have learned to know and admire the quiet and the smiling power with which you guard your nation and the courage with which you lead your people. It is not only our states that are making peace with each other today, not only our nations that are shaking hands in peace here in the Arava. You and I, your Majesty, are making peace here, our own peace, the peace of soldiers and the peace of friends.

President Clinton, Thank you for your tremendous support throughout the entire process, which was vital for the achievement of this final result.

I would like to thank many others on the Israeli side, on the Jordanian side, that worked very hard

day and night that we be allowed to reach this great moment. The Foreign Minister of Israel; the head of our team, Elyakim Rubinstein; Ephraim Halevy; and many others that no doubt contributed a lot to this great achievement.

As dawn broke this morning and a new day began, new life came into the world babies were born in Jerusalem. Babies were born in Amman. But this morning is different.

To the mother of the Jordanian newborn a blessed day to you. To the mother of the Israeli newborn a blessed day to you.

The peace that was born today gives us all the hope that the children born today will never know war between us and their mothers will know no sorrow.

Allow me to end by the simple words: Shalom, Salaam, Peace.