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Remarks on King Hussein's Death
Amman, Jordan
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HEADLINE: REMARKS BY PRESIDENT CLINTON AND
FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
TO U.S. EMBASSY STAFF AFTER MEETING WITH
JORDAN'S NEW KING ABDULLAH
U.S. EMBASSY,
AMMAN, JORDAN

BODY:

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you very much. Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you all. I just want to express our personal appreciation to all of you for the incredible support that you have given to us in this very difficult time as we have come here to pay our last respects.

I also, on a personal note, wish to acknowledge the deep sadness that the entire American people feel. You see before you four leaders of our country who really represent many, many Americans who could not be here, but whose hearts are with the people of Jordan. I also hope you know that the friendship between our families on a personal level and between our countries is very, very deep. And we will be there in friendship and support in the months and years ahead.

As I was visiting with Queen Noor a few minutes ago and expressing our personal condolences, I could not help but think how much better off this region and our world would be if not only leaders but all of us stopped to think, "How would King Hussein have acted? What would he have said?" If we could bring the same sense of humility and openness and stability to all of our relationships that he brought and that I saw him bring not only to presidents but to every person he encountered. That would be one way to honor the legacy of this extraordinary man and this very great leader.

Thank you, as part of the American community and the Jordanian nationals who work with the Americans here at the embassy, for representing our country in good times and hard times. We're grateful to you for the service that you give. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to begin, if I might, by thanking President Bush, President Carter and President Ford and this congressional delegation for coming on very short notice all the way to Jordan to make a clear and unambiguous statement about our regard and respect and gratitude to King Hussein and the people of Jordan. I thank them very, very much. (Applause.)

I want to thank Ambassador Burns and all of you in the embassy community for representing us in a difficult and challenging part of the world and a wonderful country. I thank all the Jordanian nationals who work for the United States. We are honored by your efforts, and when Jordanians and Americans work

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together in our embassy here in Amman, they symbolize the partnership that we hope will always exist between the United States and Jordan.

Most of what I would have said has already been said so eloquently by those who have spoken before. I would just like to make a couple of points about King Hussein and about King Abdullah. First of all, Hussein really did bring people together. You know, I was looking at the four of us, here we are, two Democrats; two Republicans. We have agreed on many things. We've disagreed a thing or two over time. But we know that America's interest and America's heart were close to this king and this country.

I looked at the Israeli delegation today -- (laughs) -- I could hardly believe my eyes. (Laughter.) All the candidates for prime minister were there.

(Laughter.) They were all walking together. You know, I don't know if they talk at home, but they were all talking here. (Laughter.) I thought, it was as if Hussein was hugging them all, you know. (Laughter.) It was really a beautiful sight. People coming from all around the world, countries that are at each others' throats here meeting in peace and friendship and the sanctity of the umbrella of this great man. He worked with every American president since President Eisenhower -- an amazing thing.

The second thing I would like to say is that he really was driven not by the title he had but by the responsibilities it bore. And he was ennobled not by the title, but by the strength of his own character and his vision and his spirit. It was unbelievable to me when we talked right before we started this last round of peace negotiations at Wye, and I knew how ill he was. He said, "Well, I would be willing to come down there if you think it would help." I said -- (laughs) -- "If I think it would help?" I said, "This whole thing's about to come apart. Of course it would help." I said, "If you come down, they won't have the courage to walk away here without an agreement." And so he did. And he took a house, and some days he could only work 30 minutes or an hour, but every day we needed him in that long Wye peace accord, he was there. Every day he was there, he was there, no matter how sick he was, no matter how bad he felt.

And his son, the new king, told me tonight, he said, "You know, the truth is it put some days on his life, because he was doing what he believed in." And all the icy atmosphere of those tense talks would immediately disappear when Hussein walked in the room, because all the differences and animosities and grievances seemed small in the face of this very large presence. And it was almost as if the more frail his body became, the more powerful the essence of his spirit was. Every Jordanian citizen can be proud of that -- can be proud the on every continent and every country of the world, people said, "That is the sort of person we all ought to be."

The last point I would like to make is that I would like to join the previous speakers in saying that I have great confidence in the young king of Jordan. I had a very good meeting with him today. He clearly understands his mission. He said in the most moving way, he said, "I and all of my brothers and sisters have absorbed our father's teaching. We know what we are supposed to do. And I intend to do it." And he said it in a way that exuded the quiet, humble confidence that I saw so often in his father.

And finally, just on a purely personal note, I was deeply honored to be able to bring Queen Noor's mother and father over on the airplane with me. They are in this audience tonight, because we are leaving from here. And I think we should let them know that our prayers and support are with them, and we are grateful that their daughter, a daughter of America, has been a magnificent queen of Jordan and a great friend to the people of both countries.

Hillary and I have had so many unbelievable experiences as a result of the great honor of serving in the White House. But among those I will treasure most

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every day of my life are the times we had with the king of Jordan. He made us
all a little better, and always will.
T you very much. (Applause.)
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