

11-15-00  
Funeral of Mrs. Rubin

**Embassy of the United States Tel Aviv  
Press Section**

**U.S. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton  
at the  
Funeral of Mrs. Leah Rabin**

**Har Herzl Cemetery, Jerusalem  
November 15, 2000**

To Dalia, Yuval, and to the entire Rabin family, to all of the dignitaries gathered here. On behalf of my husband, who wanted so much to be here in person, and on behalf of our nation, I come to pay tribute to a wonderful woman, a dear friend, an ambassador of peace, a woman of valor, whose "candle goeth not out by night." The last time I spoke to Leah was a week ago, just a few days before she passed away. I called to give her a report on my election, which I had done periodically to keep her up to date. She didn't want to talk about her health; she wanted to talk about what mattered most to her: her children, her grandchildren, my election (at that moment), and all the children of Israel.

When I think of her, I think of a woman of extraordinary breadth of interest and energy and life force. She cared about so many things. What mattered to her was literature and art. I think on every trip she took to Washington, she found time to go to a museum. She was the kind of visitor to the White House who always noticed if I even moved a painting. She was a woman not without controversy -- something I can relate to -- but she was a woman who cared deeply and lived fully. What mattered most of all to her was that she was a soldier's wife, a general's wife, a prime minister's wife, who shared with her dear husband a dream of a secure Israel at peace with her neighbors.

She carried on that dream in the last five years of her life. But it was a dream that she and Yitzhak had made together, because wherever he went, she went. Nothing could separate them: not distance, not years, not death.

When I think of the time that I spent with her, it is not the official occasions or the historic moments that stand out, but the more quiet and personal ones:

the jokes that passed among us; the hard time that she gave me because I wouldn't let the Prime Minister smoke in the White House; or the way she would reach over and primp her husband, this great warrior and peacemaker before he went out in public, straightening his tie, fixing his hair and wiping his face. But like Leah in the Bible, Leah was not only the wife of a towering figure, she was a mother of Israel. It was on this ground that she and Yitzhak married during the War of Independence. It was on this ground that they built a family they were so proud of, and it was here that they worked with so many to build a country. It was on this ground that they built lives that spanned periods of war and peace, hope and fear. Their lives were and are Israel's history. Now their legacy must be Israel's future.

Just two years ago, Leah brought Bill and me to this very spot to pay respects to her beloved husband. She spoke of her own deep loss and the loss of the Israeli people. Now these two partners in love and peace will lie side by side again for all eternity. And it was here that my husband bent down and placed a stone from the grounds of the Wye River Plantation on the Prime Minister's gravestone. He promised his friend he would never give up on peace and security for Israel. Today, I wear a pin that Leah gave me on one of her visits to the White House which embodies that same promise from the American people -- that we will always stand by Israel, especially in difficult times like these.

It is a great testament to this woman that even when she faced tremendous personal tragedies, she was still the one that many turned to for strength. All of us would have understood if she had turned away, if she had said "enough." But she never did. No assassin's bullet could take away her uncommon courage, no disease could stop her from working tirelessly in Israel and around the world to keep her husband's flame alive.

The late poet Yehuda Amichai wrote a poem that in many ways could have been written by or about her, especially as it relates to her hopes for her newest grandchild born on Monday. The poem ends and I quote: "I don't want to fulfill my parents' prophecy that life is war. I want peace with all my body and all my soul. Rest me in peace."

To Leah, my dear friend, we pray today that you rest in peace, and may all of us in your name, go towards peace.