Extent

250 folders, 10,167 pages

Summary

This collection consists of the speechwriting files of Edward (“Ted”) Widmer. Widmer served as Speechwriter (mainly on foreign policy) to President Clinton from 1997-2000. He composed remarks for subjects dealing with such countries as China, Russia, Senegal, Argentina, Northern Ireland, Venezuela, Turkey, Mexico, and Great Britain. The records in this collection include speech drafts, memoranda, reports, papers, handwritten notes, background materials, and schedules. Widmer’s scrawl can be found on napkins, note cards, and the back of other documents; extensive revisions by President Clinton are sprinkled throughout the material.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in FOIA 2006-0471-F are a selective body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related materials. Edward (Ted) Widmer served as President Clinton’s chief foreign policy speechwriter from 1997-2000. In this capacity he worked on remarks for a wide variety of subjects dealing with countries such as China, Korea, Argentina, Ghana, Canada, the Czech Republic, Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Russia, and Venezuela. For a few months at the tail end of the Clinton Administration, Widmer filled the position of senior advisor to the President for special projects. He dealt mainly with matters related to history and the awarding of scholarships. After Clinton left office, Widmer spent his time writing books and holding a series of academic posts. He became the first director of the C.V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience, and on July 1, 2006 was named the head of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. He received the 2001 Washington Irving Prize for Young America: The Flowering of Democracy in New York City. His most recent work is Ark of the Liberties: America and the World, a history of U.S. foreign policy. It should also be

noted that Widmer conducted interviews with Clinton while Clinton was in the process of writing his autobiography, My Life. FOIA request 2006-0471-F consists of speech drafts, memoranda, handwritten notes, newspaper articles, publications, schedules, reports, and papers. Many of the speech drafts are marked up with extensive critical comments and suggested revisions. Widmer's handwritten notes can be found on scraps of paper, napkins, and the back of other records. In many cases, he seems to be writing out speeches with phone numbers, obscure references, and assorted data thrown into the mix. Widmer clearly knew a lot about foreign policy and supplied President Clinton with any number of astute speeches on difficult subjects.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that were responsive to this FOIA request were found in this collection area—Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files. Staff and Office Files are processed at the folder level by staff members within their individual offices and document all levels of administration activity.

Access

Collection is open to all researchers. Access to Clinton Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 USC 2201) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 USC 552, as amended) and therefore records may be restricted in whole or in part in accordance with legal exemptions.

Copyright

Documents in this collection that were prepared by officials of the United States government as part of their official duties are in the public domain. Researchers are advised to consult the copyright law of the United States (17 USC, 101) which governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Provenance

Official records of William Jefferson Clinton’s presidency are housed at the Clinton Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the Presidential Records Act (PRA).

Subject Headings

Speechwriting
Speechwriters
Speeches, addresses, etc., American

Processed by

Staff Archivist, 2009. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

Last Modified Date

2009-07-21

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