

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. transcript	Internal Transcript (12 pages)	08/02/1994	P5 2512

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Speechwriting
OA/Box Number: 8169

FOLDER TITLE:

BC [Bill Clinton]/Opening Statement News Conference 8/3/94

Rich Sheridan
2012-1004-S
ms557

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

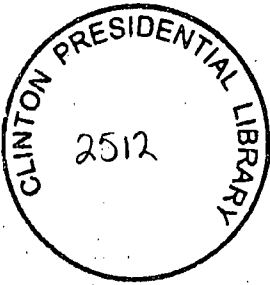
C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]



CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

THE WHITE HOUSE

(Office of the Press Secretary)

Internal Transcript

August 2, 1994

DISCUSSION OF PRESIDENTIAL PRESS CONFERENCE

THE PRESIDENT: That was a great event. We ought to do more of those. We should have done telecommunications.

Q I think the other thing people are starting to notice is that you've been consistent on talking about your accomplishments.

Q Friday's going to be a very good event in the Rose Garden.

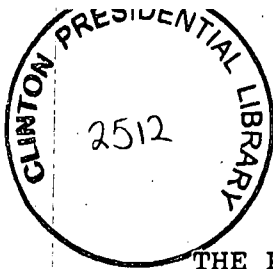
Mr. President, this is a beginning of a four-hour block of time that we have between today and tomorrow on the press conference. We've divided it today, going through the opening statement first that Don can summarize what our current thoughts are based on some pre-meetings we had yesterday.

We would then like to go into foreign affairs questions for 30 minutes, and then turn to health care where the rest of the health care team will come back for that, and a little bit on the other domestic issues -- crime, perhaps welfare reform, a bit on the economy -- it will be mostly economy tomorrow. And then at the end Whitewater.

So we have the steno here to tape your thoughts for the purposes of the opening statement only, so that Don can have that for when he's writing so we are sure that we capture any thoughts that you might have.

Today we thought we should go through the basics within each of these areas so that if there are any other additional materials you need overnight so that when we meet tomorrow we have that for you so that we're not left with that tomorrow. Tomorrow we would see some period of the two-hour division of time in the Family Theater with questions and answers in a more regularized format of the press conference.

The three objectives we see for the press conference tomorrow -- the first, of course, is to allow you the chance in prime time, which you haven't had the opportunity to do since March --



CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

THE PRESIDENT: Is that the last time I had a prime-time press conference?

Q Correct.

THE PRESIDENT: Too long.

Q Yes -- to talk about an extended format on health care. That will be the bulk of the five-minute opening statement that will be suggested to you.

Secondly, hopefully, with the House passage of the crime bill that provides a chance to pivot off that to show that the Clinton agenda, the American people's agenda, can work; that we're making some success; that it can be done as a pivot off into health care.

And third is an opportunity to show through demeanor and calmness -- your four-year leadership, particularly in trouble spots of Rwanda and Haiti and Bosnia. There are obvious snares of Whitewater, the polls, of elections, of all the other stuff -- they can provide that -- the possibilities of occurring during the course of the press conference. We think we have a plan here that can --

Q Mr. President, there are three touchstones you can keep coming back to. The first one is that you're calm, you're just out here doing your job. But number two, is that you're showing confidence and that's what a lot of -- keys off of. And the crime bill and other things we're making progress on. And, finally, commitment -- just as you stated it today. You've had this vision -- (break in tape.)

THE PRESIDENT: That's what I think we ought to say.

Q The third important piece of this opening statement is to try to take advantage of the momentum on the crime bill to make it work for the health care reform situation; that we've made this forward motion on so many things that matter -- just today on crime and then keep moving towards this historic -- taking advantage of this historic moment.

As you have before you -- I've drafted a little language here just for the first paragraph that we can come back to. Let me just go to the topics that I think we want to cover in this. We may decide that we can't fit them all in during one -- 45 minutes.

I would spend a minute and a half after a brief opener on the crime bill, talking about how we have this historic moment on the House floor today with passage of the toughest, smartest, largest crime bill in the history of the country. You recite the key features and elements of the bill as you've done many times.

And I think you end that part of it by saying, as this bill becomes law we have to remember that the responsibility now falls to all of us, the American people, to make this work, so that we can renew and restore our communities and take advantage of these tools that we're going to be providing to do that. I think that's an important thing for you to underscore. It's just a sentence, but it will then work you immediately into one minute on the economic accomplishments because we are coming up to the first anniversary of the passage of the economic plan. And as we know, the American people have --

THE PRESIDENT: Are we going to have an anniversary event on that?

Q Friday.

Q A big event.

THE PRESIDENT: That's good.

Q And a briefing Thursday with the seven Cabinet officers.

Q The American people are taking the responsibility for making that plan work. And I think we spend a minute there talking about the accomplishments in the light of this first anniversary -- deficit reduction, job creation and these new manufacturing job numbers that are out are fantastic.

I wouldn't spend much more time on it than that. Now, there is one tactical question that will come back to you on that, but -- What? You don't --

THE PRESIDENT: No, I just --

Q It's hard to believe it's been a year. (Laughter.)

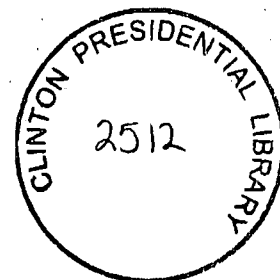
THE PRESIDENT: If we had actually devised a strategy to cover all this up to the American people we would have been less successful than we have.

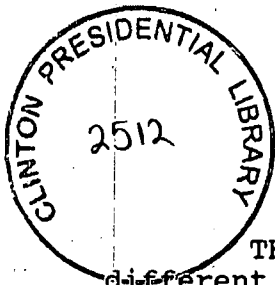
Q Maybe we should tell people we did have a strategy to cover it up and then they'll give us credit for competence.

THE PRESIDENT: No, if we said that then the press would start to --

Q Anyway, after that one minute I think you go into health care. And it's the same thing that I just said. We made this momentum on crime and on the economy; we're continuing to move forward.

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY





CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I agree with that. But I have a little different take on this, because I don't want to get to -- we succeeded I think in generating enthusiasm for universal coverage again, and sort of getting the debate back a little more toward our way about it. But I think that I would like to make this argument. I may be wrong about this -- and you all feel free to correct me. I would like to say something like this -- particularly if you lead with crime instead of the economy -- is that we're coming up on the one-year anniversary of the historic vote on the economic plan, when I first advocated that economic plan and they said the world would come to an end if it passed.

Well, you go through three years of deficit reduction, smallest government since Kennedy, historic budget cuts, taxes on the very wealthy, blah, blah. And the results are clear. If you make a tough decision in a tough time and you think about the future, you can be borne out. And you can even say the same thing happened on NAFTA and talk about how we're sending five times as many cars to Mexico as we did last year. And they said the world would come to an end on NAFTA; it's working. Take a tough decision in a tough time.

Now, this health care thing is a tough decision. At least a lot of our members are now realizing that they can actually get reelected if they run on this economic plan instead of running away from it; if they run on the consequences and they run on the specifics. I just think there's something to be said for that. I don't want to make too much of it, but if you want to build on the crime bill --

Q Tough votes count.

Q The reason I put the crime bill first, the only reason is because we will be in a news cycle that will just have taken account of that. But I think it's probably better to open with the economy and say you did this with crime, too, and now we're going to go to health care.

And the point that you raised about "they said it couldn't be done, the world would come to an end" was, in fact, what I referred to as a tactical thing we needed to come back to because it is a very important question about whether we -- I think it's all a matter of tone. We don't want to --

THE PRESIDENT: If we do it, the reason I kind of wanted to mention NAFTA is to point out that I didn't want to run off all the Republicans before we got started on it. And a lot of Republicans voted for NAFTA -- the same sort of Chicken Little character to the debate.

Q I prefer the economic opening, very briefly, they said it wouldn't work, and now here he is. Now we're at two historic votes,

so that you set up health care first and then crime. But you set up in the minds of people two historic votes; if you win both you win two, if you win one and don't win the other you've won one of the two. You're at least getting one --

THE PRESIDENT: Because we know that the voters think that crime is as important. They just don't identify as much with me. They think it's more important, but they don't identify with me as much, although they did back at the time of the State of the Union.

Q I just wonder whether it will sound odd when it's just happened.

Q I think it's odd to hold a press conference which is supposed to be about health care -- what you're really trying to drive home is the historic vote coming on health care.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right.

Q What's nice about that, if you all like this idea of the responsibility of the American people, all of us, to make these things work -- be the end of your opening. It would be a good encompassing end.

Q What we need to do on health care with the prime-time audience -- it isn't enough to just say we have an historic vote.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we want to take as much time as we can on health care.

Q Let me just say the three things that Stan and I think we need to do on health care, and then we'll talk about where they fit in. They know this, the American people know -- (break in tape)

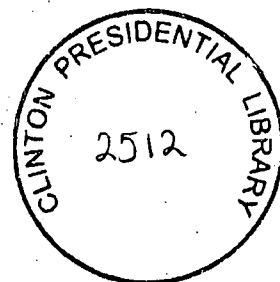
THE PRESIDENT: -- a whole series of veto questions -- is that really what you want to do? That seems to me the political difficulty in doing that.

Q You mean by heightening and emphasizing the vote coming up?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we think that a vote -- if we do this -- we're doing this press conference tomorrow night, right? We think that a vote could come in one week. I think it's okay to say that, the votes on this will start to come within a week. It's right here on us.

I think the question is, are you -- Stan was, the last time we visited on this, Stan was of the mind that we had to be seen as fighting but given where he gauged the American people, I didn't want to put

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY



myself right in a veto box, no matter what they passed, if they didn't pass an employer mandate. Do you still believe that? Then you've got to be damn careful how you characterize this vote coming out, or you're going to have a whole series of veto questions at this press conference. We'll get one or two anyway, probably, but if I say it in terms that are too stark, that will be the only question of the deal.

Q I think one way you could affect that is by saying -- (inaudible.) In fact, I think that's the only way you can -- the only way I can see you can handle it. Because I agree with Mandy, I think that you need to focus on the upcoming vote because I think the people still think that this is someplace in the far distant future. They're totally confused about where it is.

Q The press don't.

Q The press is getting there.

Q The American people might understand the immediacy of the vote, but the press, particularly the health care reporters --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they've been giving me a lot more coverage in the evening news, to be fair, and it's gotten much more balanced. It's gotten much more substantive and less political in the last week, I think, a lot of it has. At least I've seen two or three stories that were straight substance.

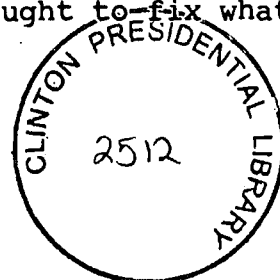
Q There's an easy way to prevent it. Every time they ask you a question, what do you do if you lose -- no ball player ever talks about losing before he steps on the field.

Q We're going to win. I'm here to talk about what I want to sign, not what I want to veto. You can get out of all of those.

Q I think there's a way for him to underscore this is an important vote and he wants the American people to focus on this issue now -- without saying this is the make or break moment in health care.

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, let me say, remember what works. The first thing we need to do is to say we started out doing this because -- right? -- more and more people were losing their coverage. So it's not just the people without coverage, it's the coverage of the people -- we're increasing the number of people losing their coverage. Most Americans do not know that we're going in the wrong direction. They just may know somebody is in trouble, because the costs are out of hand for both private citizens and the government. And so we were worried about coverage and quality and cost. And we sought to fix what was wrong with the system and keep what was right.

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY



You can say all these sentences in 10 seconds. I think it's important that we state the basic premises. We believe that the only way to fix what was wrong -- that is spiraling costs, greater insecurity of people with insurance, and more and more people losing their insurance -- and fix what was right is to build on the existing system of employers and employees sharing the burden of buying insurance.

But -- and so we presented a bill to that effect. Then we asked members of Congress of both parties and we asked health care providers and we asked ordinary citizens throughout the United States to review it, comment on it and make suggestions. Their basic suggestions were to the effect that this was a big issue and it ought to be -- there ought to be less bureaucracy, more flexibility for people at the state level, that small businesses ought to have the opportunity but not be required to join bigger buyer coops, and more financial help ought to be given to small businesses, and we ought to phase it in over a longer period of time. And we adopted those things, or those things -- we responded to that because we know that works. That's apparently what the folks -- we adopted those things.

Now we're coming to a vote in which some difficult decisions will have to be resolved. And we know of no -- we have no example anywhere of where you can cover everybody and hold costs down and maintain quality and choice unless there is some sort of shared responsibility. And we've seen it in Hawaii, it works there. You do a Hawaii riff -- and so there are others who say it can be done others way, but we know this works and we ought to -- I just think you've got to -- if you don't go back to those first two or three introductory sentences -- what are our objectives -- and you really explain --

after states....

Keep in mind, a lot of Americans are still coming to grips with it. They haven't heard it a thousand times, they haven't digested it. And I think we're making a big mistake not to go back to basics here. And I think we can do this in two and a half minutes.

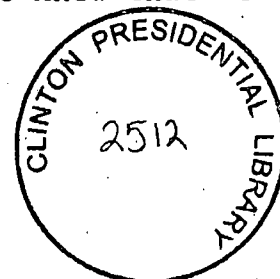
Q Most people support the universal -- what they would like to know if they can do that without creating bureaucracy, having choice, keeping the quality --

THE PRESIDENT: A lot of them want to know they can keep their own plan if they like it.

Q Right -- so that -- I don't think you have to spend a lot of time on the universality, other than the fact that it's central and uncompromised and it's in these bills going to the floor. I think the weight of our discussion ought to be on the reinsurance piece. And I think that --

THE PRESIDENT: But the American people need to know that we

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY



have given them reassurance, but that the biggest controversy is over whether it should be universal or not. They need to know, in other words, they've been all for -- the Congress so-called Clinton plan because of all the disinformation that's been put out in our plan on all these areas in which they need reassurance. They've never varied in their support for the fundamental elements of our plan. So we have to tell them that here's the reassurance of the things you care about, but the vote is about X.

Q The vote is about universal by way of mandates or shared responsibility. We have to come back and define that.

THE PRESIDENT: You do. And you say that we just know of no other way to do this now.

Q Your problem is you have only got five minutes here. You've already loaded it with too much.

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't use more than a minute and a half when I was describing those two or three sentences.

Q Isn't the central theme here the sense of history that has to be conveyed to the American people, that this is a moment in history we can't let pass us by?

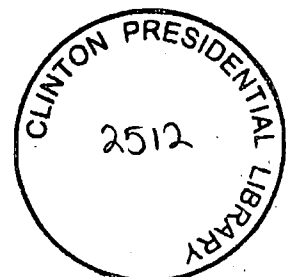
Q Sure. And I believe we can do that with the opening paragraph -- the whole thing that we're doing and through various tones and choices of words to drive that throughout. And then a paragraph that brings us back to if we go into these votes we have to keep in mind that we have a rare opportunity to do this thing for the American middle class that will help them into the 21st century. We dare not lose that moment.

Q I think there's some difference here about what point you're trying to convey and why you're holding a press conference. I thought we were trying to hold it to tell people that there's an historic vote coming up and we need your support. We need you to be pushing, writing letters and telling your congressmen, because this is the moment and if we don't take it now, we may lose it for another generation. And if we go in with the notion that we're confident we're going to win -- any American to pick up a pen and call their congressman -- I think that creates apathy on their part.

THE PRESIDENT: See, I wanted to end the five-minute statement -- I mean, I sort of wanted to end the five-minute statement with we need your help now.

Q This is your opportunity. If you don't take advantage, you're not going to get --

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY



THE PRESIDENT: You need to know, I mean, there's going to be a vote in the next day or two on this crime bill, and a week later, it's going to be a vote on health care, and two of the most historic issues of this generation are going to be decided within 10 days, two weeks.

Q If you take that theme you were talking about earlier, about setting up each of these as people said it couldn't be done, but we've proved on the economic plan, we've proved on crime, you can set a health care thing that way, too. We have this historic moment, and people are once again saying we can't do this. And you can go through all of the things we've done to make sure that it's good and they should. But you can say both it can be done, you can have the quality health care system that covers everyone, and you know what it looks like -- it's Hawaii; we should have it for the rest of us.

But also, we can have this vote. We can win this, and then make it their choice -- if they get involved, if they speak out as they did on the crime bill.

Q This may play off of this point, and there's a different tone and maybe -- and the historic moment -- and maybe it's not elevated enough, it may not be what we want to do. One thing the crime bill illustrates -- it's going to pass, and it's going to pass with a lot of Republican votes. The thing the people fear is that this is just all talk that's going on in this town and nothing can happen that's for them. And one other possibility here is use the crime to pass through the crime bill supported by Democrats and Republicans to show that people can rise above politics. It doesn't have to -- they can bring different points of view together, Democrats and Republicans, and you can do an historic and big thing for the people.

That's what health care ought to be. I think you ought to be inspiring and you draw them in to want to join so people could reclaim their health care. Use crime to illustrate what's possible.

Q I thought that --

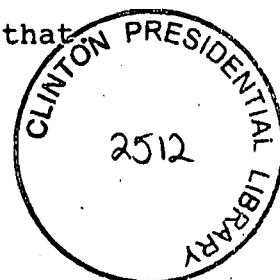
Q From this weekend.

Q We shouldn't be bound by a 30-second spot. One of our problems here is people don't know enough about health care. Crime is happening. We should use this moment -- they risk experienced it for the first time --

THE PRESIDENT: That crime was happening. They didn't know it.

Q You should use this to let them know that

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY



THE PRESIDENT: We assume people know about things. There's been nowhere near the publicity of the crime bill there was on Whitewater, for example. You can see that --

Q Or O.J.

THE PRESIDENT: Or O.J. Simpson or --

Q We should let them know --

Q Up until what Stan said, I was thinking structurally we needed to flip crime and health. I now think you come out of health can say, look, crime is the example of how we get to the higher plane and deal with these problems.

Q You don't want to end on the appeal on health?

Q That's the question.

Q No. You can do the --

Q But it's not done yet, we have one more important vote.

Q As we move forward on that, show how we were able to move forward on that. Let's remember that as we go farther into the health care debate. I'm sorry, George -- one other thing: The question arises whether you want to say anything in a sentence or two about Rwanda and thanking the American people for their assistance and asking them to continue to do that; and if we do it, whether we do it at the very top or the very bottom.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you do it at the top as part of what we're doing.

Q I think you have so little time in the five minutes that you may want to consider using that in an answer.

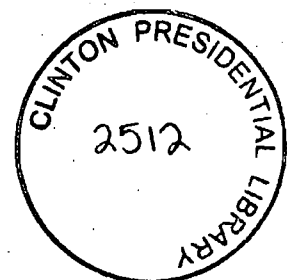
THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I can do it in an answer.

Q You were live television when you went and announced -- it wasn't prime time, but there's no reason to go --

Q This is your statement from the March. You'll see at the end is where we're talking about beginning now with this rare moment that we're dealing with. So I think there's a nice bridge there.

Q Do you know why we're going to hold off on the foreign affairs thing?

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY



Q Yes, Tony is now at those Haiti meetings. We will have more time tomorrow on foreign affairs. I think what he would say was like the overall piece of getting things done -- Israel and Jordan, Rwanda, the Haiti resolution. But he needs to do that tomorrow --

Q And we won't have a long discussion -- from Secretary Christopher's point of view, the most important thing to do on foreign policy is resolving where you are on Haiti and what your plans are for -- have a lot to do with what you say when you have a question. And there is a meeting starting in a couple of minutes on your options on Haiti. And the hope is that you will have a chance to focus on that with some recommendations to you. But the other thing is the folks over at State feel and Defense feel, too, that this is an opportunity to say something very strong about Rwanda in terms of what the Defense Department folks have done, the military has done, as well as private citizens.

THE PRESIDENT: It's been a great success story. Something the American people should be very proud of.

Q Harold, I think we should turn to health care now.

Q Okay.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm inclined to think you're right, Stan, about we're capable of doing these things together. But sometimes, when we haven't -- I mean, I still think you ought to go back to that economic vote and say it was a courageous vote that had to be done for America, and look what it gave us. It broke the back of our denial, of our continued paralysis.

Q -- NAFTA -- one of the reasons people liked NAFTA was it went beyond politics.

THE PRESIDENT: Exactly.

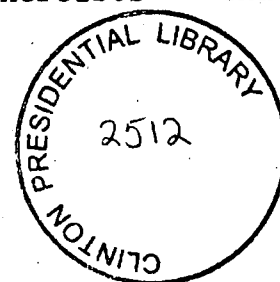
Q -- everybody thinks that others will vote for it.

THE PRESIDENT: You think -- if I say too much about Haiti tomorrow night, that will be the story.

Q Well, you're going to have to answer questions.

Q You're going to have to answer questions. You need to have in mind what content -- you're conveying some sense that this is moving forward. For example, we may be moving towards gathering the Argentineans and Dominicans involved now in training exercises -- that kind of thing --

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY



THE PRESIDENT: Good.

Q -- we don't mention any foreign policy in the opening.

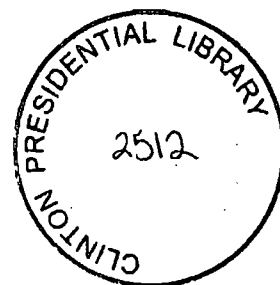
Q No, I do not think so.

THE PRESIDENT: Will we have a problem with the people if we don't?

Q Not the people. I'm just wondering if the press --

Q I think it will be a very clean opening statement. You've got to get ready to grab people by the lapel --

END



CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY