

Ben Wattenberg believes that raising academic standards will not improve education unless students are held accountable for meeting the standards, and tested to see if they have. The Secretary agrees with this position. Many in the education and civil rights communities have opposed holding students accountable until they are all first provided with equal and adequate opportunities to learn the material on the test.

Footnote 1

High stakes tests are those that hold students personally accountable for their performance. The test results "count" for individual students, because they are used to determine issues such as whether a student is promoted or held back; placed in special programs (such as gifted and talented programs); or receives a high school diploma. Not all tests are high stakes tests; many tests are instead used to evaluate educational programs, improve curriculum, and hold schools and school systems accountable.

DRAFT

November 14, 1995

MEMORANDUM TO:

ERSKINE BOWLES

CC:

GEORGE STEPHANOPOLUS
MICHAEL MCCURRY
GENE SPERLING

FROM:

LESLIE T. THORNTON

SUBJECT:

BEN WATTENBERG & THE
GOALS 2000: EDUCATE AMERICA ACT

BACKGROUND

Secretary Riley, Mike Cohen and I thought it might be useful for you to have our thoughts on the substantive and procedural issues raised by Ben Wattenberg in his new book, *Values Matter*, regarding Goals 2000. While we have only received one phone call on the issue since Wattenberg's *Washington Times* column appeared on November 2, 1995, we are concerned that opponents of Goals 2000 may use the issue in efforts to defeat the program. Moreover, while at first the stories seemed to focus less on the specifics and, where there were specifics, more on the welfare issue than the education issue, recent appearances by Wattenberg indicate a trend toward specifics about Goals 2000. ^{On Nov. 13,} ~~Last evening,~~ for example, Wattenberg [did] a PBS special called "Values Matter Most" during which he apparently discussed Goals 2000 in some detail (including using a visual of the bill signing).

Secretary Riley recalls that the issue Wattenberg ^{is} ~~seems to be~~ focusing on – high-stakes testing – is one that he (Wattenberg), has been worrying with since prior to the bill's passage. ^{of students} The Secretary thinks Wattenberg's personal interest in this issue may, in part, explain his [interest] in using Goals 2000 as his examples of [fill in] to it. However, his analysis of the issue as it relates to the strength or weakness of the bill makes important ^{factual} and interpretive errors. Indeed, the premise on which his argument is based is flawed in that it established expectations for Goals 2000 that no one in the development of the bill actually held.¹

¹ Wattenberg implies that at some point between the campaign and the introduction of Goals 2000, the President and Administration education officials working on these issues intended to use Goals 2000 either to develop a national high stakes test or to require states to require their own high stakes tests. This is simply not true. In fact, because these approaches run counter to the very strong views both the President and the Secretary hold regarding state control of education, we would have never considered this.

THE ISSUE OF HIGH STAKES TESTING

Wattenberg argues in his book that Goals 2000 is flawed because it contains a provision that prohibits states from using "high-stakes" tests² for five years after the bill's enactment. Wattenberg says this provision was inserted without our approval and discovered by us just before the bill's signing, implying that **[what is Wattenberg's point – Mike, can you fill in?]**

The truth is, while we would have preferred no restrictions on high stakes testing, and our original draft of the bill contained no restrictions on the states' use of them, House Democrats led by Bill Ford, insisted on a number of changes, including this one. And we agreed. After consultation with Bill Galston, and after a meeting with the President, we agreed to restrict the use of high stakes tests to help ensure that students (who might not have had the benefit of a high standards education) receive the instruction and preparation they need to perform successfully on the test. In the end, the bill reflected a substantial compromise, on the part of House Democrats, toward the Administration's position.

Moreover, the restriction that Wattenberg criticizes is linked to what came to be known as NESIC – the National Education Standards and Improvement Council – which at the Administration's election, has never been appointed. The provision *permits* NESIC to certify state assessments if the assessments will not be used for making decisions regarding graduation, grade promotion, or retention for five years from the date of enactment (March 31, 1994). But, **no state is required under this provision to seek NESIC certification as a condition of receiving funds under Goals 2000 or any other federal education program.** Thus, the restriction Wattenberg exemplifies as a failing in the bill will, in fact, never come into play as long as NESIC goes unappointed. Moreover, even if NESIC were appointed³, the provision does not condition the receipt of funding under Goals 2000 upon NESIC's certification.

As importantly, Wattenberg ignores the fact that there is no restriction whatever on high-stakes testing in the section of the bill that controls distribution of almost all the

type of approach.

² High-stakes tests are tests or other sorts of assessments that ~~do more than~~ ^{have important consequences} ~~measure the taker's aptitude or competence in the particular subject.~~ These types of tests ~~have consequences like whether the taker is proceeds to the next grade, whether the taker is~~ ^{for individual students.} ~~retained], or whether the taker may graduate.~~

³ In fact, NESIC will not be established. The President has agreed not to appoint it; the House of Representatives has voted to eliminate it; and neither the House nor the Senate FY 96 appropriations bills contain funding for it.

²
Count for individual students, because they are used to determine such issues as whether a student is promoted to the next grade or held back; placed in special programs such as gifted or talented; or receives a high school diploma. Many testing programs are not high stakes. They are used to evaluate educational programs, schools, or school districts, with no consequences for individual students.

funding to states. Under the Goals 2000 reform grants to states, making up 98% of the overall funds, states may develop tests or other assessments that have high-stakes consequences, without any delay in time. The administration worked very hard to have removed from the House-passes bill restrictions that would have applied to states using Goals 2000 funds to develop tests. **[Mike – this makes no logical sense, really. How did we end up with the NESIC restriction in and also no restriction here? It's a little confusing]**

As a practical matter, as well, Wattenberg's argument fails. Wattenberg argues that Bill Clinton's early conception of national standards and examinations (as reflected in his campaign positions) was predicated on the notion that there would be consequences for individual students based on performance. He suggests that this idea was to have been incorporated into Goals 2000. However, the President and the Secretary have consistently taken the position that determining whether there should be consequences for student performance is clearly a matter of state rather than federal policy. Indeed, in developing his 1991 education reform legislation in Arkansas, then-Governor Clinton rejected the idea of imposing new, standards-driven high stakes testing for Arkansas students. It is unlikely that two years later he would have favored an approach in which the federal government would have taken that discretion away from other governors. Had Goals 2000 required states to conduct high stakes testing as a condition of receiving federal funds, we would have been accused of the kind of federal intrusion into state and local education matters that Wattenberg and other moderates and conservatives typically resisted when initiated by liberals in Congress. And they would have been right.⁴

⁴ The only other way to require high stakes testing through Goals 2000 would have been to use Goals 2000 to create national tests tied to national standards, and require students to take them as a condition for high school graduation, college admission, or some other significant opportunity. However, in order for this approach to work, there would have to be a uniform national curriculum geared to the national standards. Otherwise, students throughout the nation would not have had comparable chances to study and prepare for the exam—the whole point behind high stakes testing.

This is in fact pretty close to what Lamar Alexander proposed under America 2000—American Achievement Tests geared to world class standards. This may sound good, but going down this route would have been disastrous educationally and politically. The national standards initiated by the Bush Administration are too varied, and in some cases too weak and controversial, to support high stakes national testing. As Wattenberg himself observes, some of the standards contain a cafeteria of curriculum choices, rather than a well chosen selection of vitally important topics.

In addition, there was virtually no support for such an approach any place on the political spectrum. Neither liberal Democrats nor moderate Republicans in Congress who supported Goals 2000, nor governors of any political persuasion, had any interest in proposals to create a national curriculum. Most would have strongly opposed any such proposals in Goals 2000. Further, as the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (appointed by Lamar Alexander and co-chaired by Carroll Campbell and Roy Romer) recommended in 1992, creating a national system of standards and assessments would require the establishment of a body independent of the U.S. Department of Education (such as NESIC) to oversee the

(continued...)

Though Wattenberg will not credit the administration for it, the fact is that when Goals 2000 emerged from the Congress, it preserved and indeed reflected well the principles that provided the foundation of the Administration's approach to education reform: (1) an emphasis on academic standards and a focus on results; (2) federal support for local and state reform efforts rather than a separate federal approach to reform; (3) tremendous flexibility for states, localities and schools in how they approach reform and use federal funds; and, (4) support for broad-based, grass roots involvement in education reform.

⁴(...continued)

effort. NESIC has already been severely and inaccurately criticized as a "national school board" mainly by those from the previous Administration (Lamar Alexander, Lynne Chaney, Diane Ravitch and Checker Finn) who proposed national standards and tests.

Establishing a high stakes national test would have in fact come close to turning NESIC into a national school board with the power to determine curriculum for the nation. This would have been a substantial expansion of federal power and influence, and would have earned the criticism of the moderates and conservatives Wattenberg worries most about satisfying.

TO: Secretary Riley
FR: Mike Cohen
SUBJ: Ben Wattenberg's analysis of Goals 2000

Ben Wattenberg's book argues that the House Democrats significantly weakened Goals 2000, by failing to provide for high stakes testing of students, and by incorporating input (opportunity-to-learn) standards. As we discussed, there are a number of important factual and interpretive errors in Ben Wattenberg's analysis of Goals 2000. In particular:

- o Wattenberg provides an inaccurate and incomplete picture of the provisions regarding testing in Goals 2000. He focuses on one relatively unimportant provision, and misses the much more important point that states participating in Goals 2000 are completely free to attach consequences for students to their tests.
- o Wattenberg establishes expectations for Goals 2000 that were never held by anybody involved in its development, including President Clinton. He writes as though at some point between the campaign and the introduction of Goals 2000 the President and those of us in the Administration working on these issues planned to use Goals 2000 either to develop a national high stakes test, or to require states to develop their own. Yet neither of these approaches was ever seriously considered, because they both run counter to the very strong views both you and the President hold regarding state control over education.
- o Wattenberg seems to take many of his cues about the strengths and weaknesses of Goals 2000 from individuals who have no stake in the success of this program or this Administration, such as Diane Ravitch, Lamar Alexander and Carroll Campbell. While each of these has been involved in the standards-driven reforms promoted by Goals 2000, each has also abandoned previously held bipartisan positions when maintaining those positions would have meant supporting Goals 2000 and the Clinton Administration.

I elaborate on each of these points below.

1. Ben Wattenberg has an inaccurate view of Goals 2000 and high stakes testing.

Wattenberg argues that Goals 2000 is seriously flawed because of a provision that prohibits states from using assessments for

decisions regarding grade promotions, retention, or graduation for five years after the enactment of Goals 2000, if these assessments are submitted by the state--on a voluntary basis, with no financial or other tangible incentives involved--to the National Education Standards and Improvement Council for certification. He further asserts that this provision was inserted without our knowledge, and wasn't discovered until just before the bill was signed into law.

In fact, we knew exactly what provisions regarding high stakes testing were in play at every step of the legislative process. Because of our efforts the final version represented a substantial compromise on the part of House Democrats toward the Administration position. Further, the provision Wattenberg references in his book is an exceedingly minor provision, rendered even less significant by the fact that NESIC has never been appointed, and won't be. In effect, Wattenberg highlights a restriction that will never come into play, and would not have mattered much if it had. In the meantime, he overlooked the far more significant fact that there is no restriction at all on high stakes testing in the most important part of the Act--the education reform grants program to states, through which more than 98% of the funds are distributed. States participating in Goals 2000 are able to develop tests with Goals 2000 funds and use them for high stakes purposes as soon as they want to, without any delay imposed by Goals 2000. The reason for this is that the Administration, along with Senate supporters, worked very hard to remove from the House-passed bill restrictions that would have applied to any state using Goals 2000 funds to support the development of assessments. The attached Fact Sheet describes in more detail the provisions related to high stakes testing in Goals 2000.

Wattenberg is correct in pointing out that our original draft of Goals 2000 contains no restrictions on high stakes testing, and that we would have preferred none. However, as he also points out, these restrictions were necessary in order to guarantee that the bill was introduced and considered in the House. They were one of ten changes Bill Ford insisted be accommodated before the bill was introduced, and one of five we ultimately agreed to, in close consultation with Bill Galston and after a meeting with the President. And, throughout the legislative process, we worked very hard to move it back to our original position. While Ben Wattenberg doesn't recognize it, we accomplished this where it really mattered.

In fact, it should be noted that when Goals 2000 emerged from the Congress, it preserved and indeed reflected well the principles that provided the foundation of the Administration's approach to education reform: (1) an emphasis on academic standards and a focus on results; (2) federal support for local and state reform efforts rather than a separate federal approach to reform; (3) tremendous flexibility for states, localities and schools in how they approach reform and use federal funds; and, (4) support for

broad-based, grass roots involvement in education reform.

2. Ben Wattenberg expresses unrealistic expectations that Goals 2000 would require or create the tools for high stakes testing. Wattenberg argues that Bill Clinton's early conception of national standards and examinations (as reflected in his campaign positions) was predicated on the notion that there would be consequences for individual students based on performance. He suggests that this idea was to have been incorporated into Goals 2000. Yet, this was never seriously proposed during the campaign or once the drafting of Goals 2000 began.

You and the President have consistently taken the position that determining whether there should be consequences for student performance is clearly a matter of state rather than federal policy. (In developing his 1991 education reform legislation in Arkansas, then-Governor Clinton rejected the idea of imposing new, standards-driven high stakes testing for Arkansas students. It is unlikely that two years later he would have favored an approach in which the federal government would have taken that discretion away from other governors.) Had Goals 2000 required states to conduct high stakes testing as a condition of receiving federal funds, we would have been accused of the kind of federal intrusion into state and local education matters that Wattenberg and other moderates and conservatives typically resisted when initiated by liberals in Congress. And they would have been right.

The only other way to require high stakes testing through Goals 2000 would have been to use Goals 2000 to create national tests tied to national standards, and require students to take them as a condition for high school graduation, college admission, or some other significant opportunity. However, in order for this approach to work, there would have to be a uniform national curriculum geared to the national standards. Otherwise, students throughout the nation would not have had comparable chances to study and prepare for the exam--the whole point behind high stakes testing.

This is in fact pretty close to what Lamar Alexander proposed under America 2000--American Achievement Tests geared to world class standards. This may sound good, but going down this route would have been disastrous educationally and politically. The national standards initiated by the Bush Administration are too varied, and in some cases too weak and controversial, to support high stakes national testing. As Wattenberg himself observes, some of the standards contain a cafeteria of curriculum choices, rather than a well chosen selection of vitally important topics.

In addition, there was virtually no support for such an approach any place on the political spectrum. Neither liberal Democrats nor moderate Republicans in Congress who supported Goals 2000, nor governors of any political persuasion, had any interest in proposals to create a national curriculum. Most would have

strongly opposed any such proposals in Goals 2000.

Further, as the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (appointed by Lamar Alexander and co-chaired by Carroll Campbell and Roy Romer) recommended in 1992, creating a national system of standards and assessments would require the establishment of a body independent of the U.S. Department of Education (such as NESIC) to oversee the effort. NESIC has already been severely and inaccurately criticized as a "national school board" mainly by those from the previous Administration (Lamar Alexander, Lynne Chaney, Diane Ravitch and Checker Finn) who proposed national standards and tests.

Establishing a high stakes national test would have in fact come close to turning NESIC into a national school board with the power to determine curriculum for the nation. This would have been a substantial expansion of federal power and influence, and would have earned the criticism of the moderates and conservatives Wattenberg worries most about satisfying.

Unfortunately, in his analysis of Goals 2000, Wattenberg gives no evidence that he is aware of either the educational or the political consequences of trying to use Goals 2000 to require high stakes testing.

3. Ben Wattenberg is taking his cues on Goals 2000 from many political figures who have dramatically abandoned previously held positions related to the education reform issues in Goals 2000. Wattenberg relies heavily on Diane Ravitch's book for his analysis. He uses as evidence that Goals 2000 fails to seriously promote standards and a focus on results the opposition of Lamar Alexander and Carroll Campbell. He may think he is relying on people who represent a moderate, progressive and consistent approach to education reform, who provide a benchmark against which to judge Goals 2000.

He utterly fails to recognize that each of these critics of Goals 2000 has substantially shifted away from previously held positions which in fact are reflected in Goals 2000 as proposed and as enacted. They have all been involved, in one way or another, with promoting national standards, a national standards council, input standards for schools, and federal involvement in education reform. They have all walked away from these positions now. Nowhere is this more dramatic than Lamar Alexander, who initiated national standards as Secretary of Education, no asserting that the American people are not so stupid that they need someone in Washington telling them what kids should learn.

The only player Wattenberg cites who has remained steadfast in his education views is Al Shanker. Unfortunately, you can't tell from reading Wattenberg's analysis that Al has been one of the strongest and most consistent supporters of Goals 2000. This is evident from reading Shanker's columns and other public statements over the past 2 years. Al, like the President, liked

our earlier drafts of the bill better than the final version.
And Al, like the President but unlike Ben Wattenberg, knows that
Goals 2000 significantly moves education in this country in
precisely the right direction.

BEN WATTENBERG

This column is based on an exclusive interview with President Clinton.

President Clinton phoned me the other day to chat — for almost an hour — about my new book, "Values Matter Most," which he has been reading and skimming. He praised it and its theme, and discussed the current political situation. I was thrilled, but somewhat surprised by the praise because the book is sometimes quite critical of Mr. Clinton. Roughly, this is the theme of the book: Economics is no longer the No. 1 political issue. Values are; social issues are. Democratic liberalism linked the national party to softness on these non-economic issues, leading to defeats. A political "Z" pattern then unfolded. In 1992, Mr. Clinton valiantly pulled the party of the left toward the center, stressing social issues, calling for "personal responsibility" and "no more something for nothing." But once elected, Mr. Clinton and a liberal Democratic Congress reverted toward the liberal left. The Republicans exploited this turn in

President vows to get it right this time

1994 and are now legislating toward the center-right. Mr. Clinton is reverting — trying to recapture the New Democrat flag. Left, right, left, right — the zigzag politics of Zorro. Mr. Clinton's 1993-94 zig to the left, I explain in the book, deeply disillusioned me and Democrats of my stripe. Mr. Clinton understands. I report what he said about the book not just because I could bundle such words forever. The president said it was the "most honest criticism of the administration." At another point in the conversation he said that it "hit on substance and helped him gain perspective," that it was "honest, open, not mean-spirited, the kind of book any president would appreciate." He also noted several times that there are some things in the book he doesn't agree with, and there are some things about which we would probably never agree. Mr. Clinton told me he had recent-



ly been thinking through the current political situation and had come up with a phrase to describe it: "Values matter most." Accordingly, he had been somewhat astonished when he received a set of page proofs of a book with that very title. He says that in 1993 and 1994 he was too interested in the "legislative scorecard rather than in philosophy." He was "so anxious to fix the economy" that he "changed philosophically and missed the boat." He "lost the language" that had shaped him as a New Democrat concentrating on values. He behaved "like a prime minister, not a president." After the 1994 election, he realized he had created "a cardboard cutout" of himself. I said I had not been pleased with his welfare bill, which I thought was soft and weak. He agreed, saying, "I wasn't pleased with it either." He said he should have introduced a welfare bill as

soon as he saw that his health care program was in trouble. He agreed with my analysis in the book that his education plan, "Goals 2000," started out as a fine piece of work, but didn't end up that way. (We differed about the crime bill.) He said he had "let Democrats down" by not drumming home his message about values. Mr. Clinton has said before that he had been portrayed in an unfavorable way. Now he is apparently saying that much of that portrayal was accurate and was his own fault. Moving on, he intends to recapture that New Democrat ideology. How? He said he thought the Democrats in Congress had done more moving to the center in 1993-94 than is generally acknowledged, citing, for example, the fact that the Congressional Black Caucus had supported the crime bill. He noted that the percentage of federal employees in the work force

today is the lowest since 1933. He thinks the recent Senate vote on welfare, with three-quarters of the Democrats voting in favor of a very tough bill, demonstrates that the Democratic move to the center is intensifying now. He is hopeful that the House-Senate conference will present him with a welfare bill that is tough, but not harsh, and that he can sign it. He hopes he and the Democrats will be able to compromise with the Republicans on an "honorable budget." That, and more, he believes will show his true colors and show that he, and the Democrats are now, really, New Democrats. The "Z" is stunning politics. It will surely alienate the Democratic left. It will likely raise fresh credibility problems about the president. It's the right path for the country. And while it will be difficult in any event, it's the only way Mr. Clinton can win.

Ben J. Wattenberg, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, is a nationally syndicated columnist.

PHILIP TERZIAN

Three times in the past two decades the residents of Quebec, Canada's largest province, have expressed their evident desire to secede from the Canadian federation and form their own republic. In 1977, the Parti Quebecois, which advocates independence, gained power in the province for the first time in its history, led by a rabble-rousing TV anchorman named Rene Levesque. Three years later, at Mr. Levesque's direction, Quebec held a referendum on secession from Canada, but secession lost by a margin of 20 percent. Since then the PQ has lost power in Quebec, and then regained it, while Rene Levesque has died. But his vision of a separate, French-speaking nation, divorced from Canada but within North America (especially the North American economy), is still very much alive. The fact that, on Monday, the voters of Quebec chose to remain within the Canadian federation by the slimmest of possible margins (50.25 percent to 49.75 percent) suggests that indepen-

Vive Quebec libre: Saga without end?

connection with the rest of British Canada, and pensioners fearful of losing their checks — but both of these segments of the populace suffer from diminishing numbers. Time and demographics are on the side of independence. Indeed, if the angry words of Quebec's premier, Jacques Parizeau, and the equally vehement PQ leader, Lucien Bouchard, mean anything at all, they mean Quebec intends to vote again, and soon. Mr. Parizeau blamed the unfavorable outcome on immigrants and Big Business — what used to be called outside agitators — and announced his resignation. Mr. Bouchard was content just to threaten the rest of Canada, and call his opponents names. Now, as we say, the defining

means, and twice the voters of Canada have rejected such efforts. Who can blame them? The Canadian government has sought to keep Quebec in the federation by granting it special constitutional privileges, including financial concessions, thereby making it more equal than the rest of Canada's provinces. Quebec is big and prosperous. It is true, but it is not that big: Three-fourths of Canadians reside outside Quebec, along with the bulk of the Canadian economy. This vote will not promote healing; it will exacerbate tensions. For the past 30 years, English Canadians have sought to accommodate resentful French Canadians: The national flag was changed, the national anthem was discarded, Canada's Scots-English origins were expunged from the curriculum, all vestiges of Canada's British background — the Royal Mail, the currency, even the Queen — were decisively expunged. Bilingual signs greet visitors to the Yukon and beyond. Canadians have probably reached the limits of their nation-



WITH A MIRACULOUS SAVE, CANADA DEFEATS THE QUEBEC SEPARATISTS.

don. But these would be just temporary contrivances not to take its course.

TO: Secretary Riley

FR: Mike Cohen

SUBJ: Ben Wattenberg's analysis of Goals 2000

As we discussed, there are a number of important factual and interpretive errors in Ben Wattenberg's analysis of Goals 2000, especially with regard to how Goals 2000 treats high stakes testing and opportunity to learn standards.

High Stakes Testing

Wattenberg argues that Goals 2000 is seriously flawed because of a provision that prohibits states from using assessments for decisions regarding promotions, graduation or retentions for five years after Goals 2000 was enacted, if these assessments were submitted by the state to the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) for certification, on a voluntary basis. He further asserts that this provision was inserted without our knowledge, and wasn't discovered until just before the bill was signed into law.

In fact, we knew exactly what provisions with respect to high stakes testing were in play at every step of the legislative process, and the final version represented a substantial compromise on the part of House Democrats toward the initial Administration provision. Further, the provision Wattenberg references in his book is an exceedingly minor provision, rendered even less significant by the fact that NESIC has never been appointed. In effect, Wattenberg highlights a restriction that will never come in to play, and would not have mattered much even if it had. In the meantime, he overlooked the far more significant fact that there is no restriction at all on high stakes testing in the most important part of the act--the education reform grants program to states, through which more than 99% of the funds are distributed. States participating in Goals 2000 are able to develop tests with Goals 2000 funds and use them for high stakes purposes without as soon as they want to, without any delay imposed by Goals 2000.

Here are the facts.

Our initial drafts of Goals 2000 contained no restrictions on high stakes testing, and we didn't want any. House Democrats repeatedly insisted on such restriction. Shortly before the Administration proposal was finalized, Bill Ford gave us a list of ten bottom line issues for the House Democrats, and indicated that the bill would not move unless these were all met. One of these issues involved restrictions on high stakes testing. We reviewed these issues internally and with Bill Galston, determined which changes we could live with, and reviewed these with President Clinton. With his approval, we agreed to add restrictions on high stakes testing in the three places the House Democrats insisted they be placed:

- States could not receive NESIC certification for tests that would be used for high stakes purposes within five years.

- States that received funds under a competitive grants program authorized in the bill, to support the development and field testing of new assessments, could not use those assessments for high stakes purposes within five years.
- States participating in Title III of Goals 2000, the formula grants program for education reform, could not use Goals 2000 funds to develop assessments which would be used for high stakes purposes within five years.

While we would have much preferred to not include any of these provisions, we thought their practical impact would be minimal, for two reasons.

First, it is widely accepted on all sides of the debate that legal precedent and basic fairness would require a 3-5 year phase in period for any high stakes testing, simply because students need to be exposed to new curriculum content before they are held accountable for demonstrating they have learned it. Since the prohibitions would apply to tests that, in almost all cases, were not yet even under development (a 1-3 year process itself) as a practical matter these restrictions would not have any impact on actual testing practices in the field. We checked extensively with state school chiefs before agreeing to this provision, and could not find any instance in which the proposed restrictions would slow down the pace of high stakes testing.

Second, the restrictions applied only to limited circumstances--voluntary NESIC certification, or the use of specific federal funds for the development of the assessments. States intent on high stakes testing on an earlier timetable still had the same options open to them they would have without Goals 2000--use state funds or funds from other federal education programs (such as Title I) to develop the tests, and use them however they want. No state would be required in any way to submit it assessment to NESIC, and we were never highly confident that many would.

As the bill worked its way through the Congress, we worked very hard to move it back to our initial position. We decided that the provision that was most important to remove was the restriction in the Title II grants program---what people clearly have in mind when they talk states participating in Goals 2000. This is the program with the largest amount of money and affecting the largest number of states--the 46 currently participating. We succeed in removing this provision from the final bill, and gladly took this victory in exchange for leaving in the two other provisions that applied in far more limited circumstances.

With respect to the provisions that remained, let me add two important points. First, as you know, NESIC has not been and will not be appointed by the President. The House has approved legislation to eliminate NESIC, and neither the House nor the Senate will appropriate funds for it. So the provisions related to NESIC and high stakes testing are moot.

Second, the restriction on using the competitive grants funds for high stakes testing has not been a serious obstacle to participating in that grants program. In September we awarded 11 grants to consortia involve 2x states. Overall YY states applied for these funds.

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High Stakes Testing

Wattenberg argues that Goals 2000 is seriously flawed because of a provision that prohibits states from using assessments for decisions regarding promotions, graduation or retentions for five years after Goals 2000 was enacted, if these assessments were submitted by the state to the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) for certification, on a voluntary basis. He further asserts that this provision was inserted without our knowledge, and wasn't discovered until just before the bill was signed into law.

In fact, we knew exactly what provisions with respect to high stakes testing were in play at every step of the legislative process, and the final version represented a substantial compromise on the part of House Democrats toward the initial Administration provision. Further, the provision Wattenberg references in his book is an exceedingly minor provision, rendered even less significant by the fact that NESIC has never been appointed. In effect, Wattenberg highlights a restriction that will never come in to play, and would not have mattered much even if it had. In the meantime, he overlooked the far more significant fact that there is no restriction at all on high stakes testing in the most important part of the act--the education reform grants program to states, through which more than 99% of the funds are distributed. States participating in Goals 2000 are able to develop tests with Goals 2000 funds and use them for high stakes purposes without as soon as they want to, without any delay imposed by Goals 2000.

The attached fact sheet describes what can be done.

Here are the facts.

Our initial drafts of Goals 2000 contained no restrictions on high stakes testing, and we didn't want any. House Democrats repeatedly insisted on such restriction. Shortly before the Administration proposal was finalized, Bill Ford gave us a list of ten bottom line issues for the House Democrats, and indicated that the bill would not move unless these were all met. One of these issues involved restrictions on high stakes testing. We reviewed these issues internally and with Bill Galston, determined which changes we could live with, and reviewed these with President Clinton. With his approval, we agreed to add restrictions on high stakes testing in the three places the House Democrats insisted they be placed:

- States could not receive NESIC certification for tests that would be used for high stakes purposes within five years.

NOTE TO MICHAEL MCURRY, GEORGE STEPHANOPOLOUS, AND GENE SPERLING

Attached is an analysis Mike Cohen prepared for me regarding Ben Wattenberg's description of Goals 2000. As you can see, Wattenberg's account of Goals 2000 is both inaccurate and misleading. I think it is important that the President has an accurate understanding of the issues that have been raised, and I urge you to pass this on to him.

I also believe it is extremely important that, within the next several days, the President make a clear, highly visible statement of his unambiguous support for Goals 2000. In addition to the importance of signaling clear Presidential support in the context of the FY 1996 appropriations process, it is also important to counter any impression in states where participation in Goals 2000 is at risk, that the President agrees in any way with criticisms of the program.

As you know, participation in Goals 2000 has been highly controversial in a number of states, including New Hampshire, Virginia, Alabama and Montana. It is also a major issue in California, where Pete Wilson is reluctant to accept \$42.1 million in Goals 2000 funds. Educators and business leaders are attempting to counter the pressure on Wilson from the far right and persuade him to continue California's participation in Goals 2000.

I fear that copies of Ben Wattenberg's piece in the Washington Times are already being faxed to Goals 2000 opponents in these and other battleground states, and will be used to make the point that "even President Clinton knows that his Goals 2000 program isn't any good." If we can't effectively and quickly counter this, it will be extremely difficult to win in these states.

Clinton Says Welfare and Education Plans Were Flawed, Pledges to Move Right

By Ann Devroy
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Clinton, already in trouble with fellow Democrats for saying they pushed him into raising taxes too much, now says that his first welfare reform and education proposals were flawed and that he intends to return to the more conservative Democratic themes that got him elected.

Clinton's statements were recounted by Ben Wattenberg, a conservative Democrat and columnist who has written a new book. Clinton called the author last week to discuss it, and they spoke for more than an hour. Wattenberg said in an interview that the president accepted his thesis that

Clinton had engaged in the "zigzag politics of Zorro," zigging to the right to get elected, to the left his first two years in office and now back to the right again.

That zigzagging has created for Clinton a huge credibility problem among congressional Democrats, and the White House recently has been engaged in a major damage control effort in Congress, trying to convince his party's lawmakers that the president will not abandon them in some new zigzag over the budget.

White House Chief of Staff Leon E. Panetta met with House Democrats yesterday for a pep rally that included trying to calm fears of presidential defection.

"It was successful in that it allayed a lot of fears among Democrats that the presi-

dent was headed in one direction and we were headed in another," said Rep. Bill Richardson (D-N.M.).

However, some Democrats blistered Panetta over Clinton's recent remarks seemingly disavowing the Democrats' 1993 budget and tax increase package and taking other steps to distance himself from congressional Democrats.

"Some complained that the administration undercut the Democrats," said Rep. Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.). "Leon said the president shouldn't be judged based on one or two comments. The Republicans and the press are anxious to divide us, but our numbers are strong and we don't want to be divided."

Administration officials were fearful

yesterday that Wattenberg's description of his conversation with Clinton will add fuel to the fire. White House press secretary Michael McCurry disputed several parts of the Wattenberg statements and suggested he was selectively reporting based on his own conservative philosophy.

Wattenberg said Clinton told him he "wasn't pleased" with his own welfare program and agreed it was "soft and weak." He expressed support for the far tougher Senate welfare reform bill now in Congress, legislation some liberal Democratic senators are trying to get Clinton to abandon.

In addition, Wattenberg said the president agreed with him that Clinton's program to set national goals for education

achievement had been too watered down by congressional Democrats.

In their conversation, Wattenberg said, Clinton told him he was "so anxious to fix the economy" in 1993 that he "changed philosophically and missed the boat" by abandoning the "new Democrat" programs.

Clinton "does not recall saying" he had "changed philosophically," McCurry said. "He's disputing that quotation."

Wattenberg said Clinton's return to new Democratic ideology "will surely alienate the Democratic left" and "likely raise fresh credibility problems about the president." But he argues that it is the "right path" for Clinton and "the only way Clinton can win."



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the work ethic, offering support to able-bodied Americans whether they work or not. . . AFDC also seemingly undermines families, because it is available, by and large, only to single parents (mainly mothers).

But more than symbolism is involved, since welfare is implicated in America's most difficult social problem—the existence of whole neighborhoods, mostly African American, where there are precious few intact, working families. Welfare may or may not have caused this underclass, but welfare is clearly what sustains it. And the underclass, in turn, drives the crime problem, the race problem, the "urban crisis" and the general sense of social decay ("12-year-olds having babies, 15-year-olds killing each other").*

My sense is that Kaus probably overstated the political reward of welfare. I'm not sure welfare alone would have made for a Democratic realignment. But overstatement is not the same as wrong. Far from it in this case. Welfare is a big, big, player, for all of the reasons that Kaus says. And Clinton had a handle on it first, in a manner that defined his 1992 campaign. And then he blew it.

EDUCATION

Why, by November 8, 1994, did the Clinton administration, and by extension the whole Democratic party, look like Old Democrats, not New Democrats? Some reasons have been mentioned: Clinton's personal views, his wife's views, the liberal Democrats hired to staff the new government, the general cause-group liberal tilt of the Democratic party, the "look-like-America" hiring quotas, and the role of the liberal Democratic Congress.

What happened to Clinton's education program is one case history of just how tough that Congress can be, even with a Democratic president. Recall that Clinton had committed himself to the central national goals of the educational reform movement. He believed that the state educational system must stress outputs, not inputs. This meant a variety of tough nationally certified nongovernmentally produced

content standards, from which the states could voluntarily choose or not, as they saw fit. It meant that the whole deal wouldn't be worth much unless the states would apply tests and stakes to the newly developed curricula. Without such stakes, it would just be the same old funny money game.

In his campaign document, "Putting People First," we find Governor Clinton pledging to "establish tough standards and a national examination system." Speaking to education groups during the campaign, he said America needed "a meaningful set of national exams." He continued to bring up this theme as late as the 1994 State of the Union Address.

Clinton was unable to make it happen, although he tried and had some of his best people working on it.*

Clinton's original version of an education bill, entitled "Goals 2000," embodied the standards-tests-stakes idea. It was drafted by Secretary Richard Riley's Department of Education, working in coordination with Bill Galston at the White House. It was sent to the House Committee on Education and Labor, chaired by William D. Ford, a sixteen-term Democrat from Michigan.

To give a flavor of the regnant philosophy in the Democratic liberal realm, consider what happened at a closed meeting with a number of education professionals not long before the bill was drafted. Chairman Ford's chief counsel on the Education and Labor Committee, Jack Jennings, said this: "The chairman is unalterably opposed to assessments with consequences." Translated into American: "Billy Ford is against tests that count." (Jennings told me that he said no such thing, but several people in the room have verified the account.)

Now, this interesting comment does not mean that chairman Ford is a nasty man. He is a liberal Democrat, with a recent rating of 95 out of a possible 100 in the liberal Americans for Democratic Action ratings. The liberal position in this matter is that any sort of stakes or consequences that are connected to tests will hurt inner-city black and Hispanic children because they will likely do poorly on the tests. Therefore, say the liberals, don't do it.

* Some of the material here is detailed in an important book, *National Standards in American Education*, by Diane Ravitch.

* Excerpted with permission from *The New Republic*, copyright © 1994 *The New Republic*, Inc.

Others say otherwise: Minority children need tests with stakes even more than suburban students; minority students won't be able to compete in the real world without hitting such marks; tests without standards are something for nothing—they are not only worthless but harmful to poor and minority students.

In any event, there was a tough interchange between House heavyweights and Clinton subalterns about the draft education bill. The Clintonistas were told that the draft bill would be DOA if it were not changed substantially.

That is a tough abbreviation in the world of Washington. "Dead On Arrival" was the harsh greeting extended to Republican legislation by the Democratic Congress during the time of Presidents Reagan and Bush. DOA informs the executive branch that its legislative proposals are to be scrapped and that any work on an alternative would start from scratch. But this was different: These were Democratic barons of Congress quietly telling a Democratic president to stuff it or play ball.

Clinton played ball, at least early on. The White House and the Department of Education did what they were told to do. They revised the bill. What was ultimately sent up to the Congress was legislation that chairman Ford and his liberal colleagues would deign to consider before attempting to change it. In effect, such a congressional strategy tended to give the most liberal group of congressional Democrats not only veto power over a Clinton proposal, but shaping power as well.

For example: The liberal Democrats, particularly on the House side, didn't like outputs over inputs. After all, outputs might show that minorities, an important part of their constituencies, weren't doing well. On the other hand, inputs—like more teachers and more money—bring goodies to their voters and solace to supporters in the teachers' unions, particularly the liberal National Education Association (although, as seen earlier, rising inputs do not seem to improve outputs).

The bill that finally went forward from the Clinton administration had lots about inputs in it, officially now called "Opportunities to Learn Standards." Liberals hoped, and moderates and conservatives feared, that such input standards could be invested with a force of law and turned into a new round of massive spending on schools, possibly court ordered. It was said by moderates and conservatives that OTL

really stood for "Opportunity to Litigate." And that could happen without doing anything at all to bring about the trinity of standards, tests, and consequences—the very criteria designed to bring intellectual rigor and discipline back to the schools.

Clinton pushed back on the liberals' view of OTL, and a compromise was reached. Ultimately, "Goals 2000" encouraged but did not demand states to set up OTL programs.

There was no compromise concerning testing and consequences. The Senate wanted language in "Goals 2000" that would permit the use of standards-related tests three years after the enactment of the bill (the delay appropriately deemed necessary so that students and teachers would have time to prepare before any "consequences" came into play). The Clinton White House also wanted that sort of a provision. Alas, the House version of the bill had a very different provision in it. What emerged, apparently without White House knowledge, was a provision that stipulated:

- (C) The [National Education Standards and Improvement] Council shall certify State assessments only if: . . .
- (ii) such assessments will not be used to make decisions regarding graduation, grade promotions, or retention of students for a period of 5 years from the date of enactment of this Act.

Of course, the bill had only a five-year term. In other words, in the final version, tests could not be used with consequences. Team Clinton never knew what hit them. Clinton signed the bill into law. Later, I asked Al Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers what he thought. "Stakes have to be the centerpiece of any serious move to standards," he said. "The failure to get stakes in the bill undermines everything else. It's an educational tragedy."

In all, from the point of view of pro-standards advocates, it wasn't even half a loaf. Voluntary academic standards (outputs) might be encouraged in many states (although many states have acted on their own). Inputs would also be encouraged. There could be testing. *But the test results could not be used to hold students accountable.* The funny money standard was not repealed. A student could still

go through school, socially promoted, grade inflated, socially warehoused, and undisciplined.

Shortly after the passage of the "Goals 2000" legislation, the Congress took up the once-every-five-years business of renewing the Elementary and Secondary School Act (ESEA). Unlike the mere \$400 million in "Goals 2000," ESEA is America's principal federal education program, disbursing \$7 billion per year, ostensibly to poor schools, but in fact landing at about 90 percent of all schools.

The original intent of the president, his education aides, and Secretary Riley was to take the standards-tests-stakes ideas that were to be embodied in "Goals 2000" and link them nonoppressively to the big money of ESEA. What happened instead is that what got linked to ESEA was the mush that emerged in "Goals 2000." Many moderate education experts felt a sense of great letdown. There had been a chance, they believed, to get outputs, not inputs, and consequences and stakes, thereby breaking up the something-for-nothing situation in the classroom.

Prostandards Republicans such as Governor Carroll Campbell of South Carolina and former Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander were driven to a point where, by 1995, they ended up working hard to repeal the bill. Other Republicans, mostly conservatives, who had been working against the standards concept all along (on anti-Washington control grounds) intensified their opposition.

Clinton loyalists made the case that despite its flaws, the bill moved one more step toward the goals set up by the standards movement. States, schools, and parents would think about serious world-class standards and there would be some additional federal money to help develop such curricula, with stakes and consequences if the states wanted it that way.

How did Clinton get into this particular mess? It was the Congress—the Congress driven by a Democratic majority, a Democratic majority driven by a liberal majority, rolling a rollable president.

The "Goals 2000" bill was signed on March 31, 1994. It received scant attention in the press and on television. Later in the year President Clinton referred to it a few times in speeches, but there the story ended. Insofar as it was at least a partial step in the right direction, the

president never managed to get the standards idea recognized by the voters. A chance to kick-start the concept of standards was missed.

The size of the loaf shrank further, due to a strange set of events. An early set of draft standards, "National Standards for United States History: Exploring the American Experience" (NSUSHEAE), was published in late 1994. Perhaps the most important statement in the document appeared up front: "This paper does not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the United States government, and no official endorsement should be inferred."

Moreover, even if the standards did represent the U.S. government, they would have represented the administration of George Bush, not Bill Clinton. The grant money for the preparation of the standards was given to the UCLA Center for History in the Schools by the Bush administration, largely by the National Endowment for the Humanities, whose Bush-appointed chairman was Lynne Cheney. Although the history standards were published by a Bush-funded private group, they were published on Clinton's watch and created a mini-tempest, which offered Clinton an opportunity to show where he stood.

The first blast at the history standards appeared on the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* in late 1994, written by Cheney, who was surprised by the results of her grant. She described the content of the standards as an exercise in political correctness, noting that Senator Joseph McCarthy was mentioned nineteen times and Senator Daniel Webster not at all. Soon nonliberal columnists were on the attack.

The whole document strains to promote the achievements and highlight the victimization of the country's preferred minorities, while straining equally to degrade the achievements and highlight the flaws of the white males who ran the country for its first two centuries.

Charles Krauthammer, *The Washington Post*, November 6, 1994

The standards are . . . crude anti-Western and anti-American propaganda. . . . (The standards) are beyond salvage and need to be junked.

John Leo, *U.S. News and World Report*, February 6, 1995

mush served up in 1994, but not as tough as the conservative House version. Vigorous evolutionary change.

That was interhouse dilution. There was intrahouse dilution going on as well. In the Senate, where some center Democratic votes are needed to prevent filibusters, Dole was not able to pass a tough regulation bill that mandated sunset clauses, cost benefit analyses and other reform ideas that some moderates thought went too far. Back to the drawing boards it went. In the House, fifty-one Republicans joined with Democrats to soften the impact of tough cuts in environmental law. Then the Republican leadership managed to push the bill through on a 210-210 tie vote, which allows passage. But tie votes do not bespeak nonincremental change as the legislative process moves forward.

There were many other straws in the moderating winds. Gingrich did not want to move forward with an anti-affirmative action bill until Republicans could replace it with a credible conservative war on poverty. White House sources kept stressing that Clinton's pro-affirmative action speech also endorsed ideas that gave preference by income and economic geography, but not by race.

The Congress was moving toward diminishing the money pot in the "Goals 2000" legislation. But states most everywhere were moving toward standards and tests, some of them with consequences.*

In Dallas in mid-August, politicians of both parties arrived to pay homage to Ross Perot and his convention of the "United We Stand" party.

Colin Powell was preparing for a book tour that would take him to every politically important spot in America and give him more television face time than all the other contenders put together.

Within the current political spectrum, both Perot and Powell should be considered centrists.

Moreover, Clinton continued to ditch or demote his populist counselors of the pro-porcine left and looked toward more centrist advisers as he continued to reinvent himself as a New Democrat for the 117th time.

* *Making Standards Matter—A Fifty State Report on Efforts to Raise Academic Standards* (American Federation of Teachers).

In August, *Newsweek* headlined that "A once hot Democratic political clique slips from favor," and that Stanley Greenberg, Paul Begala, and Mandy Grunwald were down or out, and Stephanopoulos was "left out of key weekly political strategy meetings with the boss." More centrist consultants, Doug Schoen and Bob Squires, joined Morris. White House spinners said there had been lots of moderates there all along, but they had been in mufti. Now, emerging from phone booths, capes flying, a small army of supermoderates would play a role. In an eleven-day span Clinton, the man who earlier sought a budget passed by "getting all the Democrats," used the term "common ground" seven times in speeches.

All this does not mean that "the center" invariably provides the best policy prescriptions. I think that the original House provision on no-welfare-to-teenage-mothers makes sense because it sends a signal that American government will no longer subsidize and encourage irresponsible behavior. But brokered end games do tend to yield safer results. The winners aren't as happy, but the losers don't go away and try to start revolutions. If it is seen that the winners are moving in the right direction, they will keep on winning, and keep on going.

America is a vastly successful nation. Such nations do not need revolutions to make progress. They do need vigorous evolutions, from the center, dealing with their most pressing problems. Amidst all the scare-talk of "train wrecks" between the Congress and the president, it seemed as if evidence was what we were getting.

A STREETCAR NAMED RETIRE

Someone else was looking for a center. In mid-August 1995, Senator Bill Bradley (D-N.J.) announced that he would not seek reelection in 1996. What he did was important. What Bradley said—that the Democratic party is ideologically bankrupt, and that he might run as an independent candidate for the presidency against Bill Clinton—was more important.

If the Democratic party goes splat!—which is not impossible—future political historians may set the clock of change ticking from the day Bradley went public with his remarkable views. Here is an excerpt from

dent. Republicans in the House said major cuts were needed to balance the budget, reduce the bloat of government, and lessen the tax burden it imposes. Democrats said the cuts were draconian, that government did good things, and that the tax cuts were "for the rich."

Democrats said the appropriations bill passed by the Republican House, dealing with the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, was the most draconian of all.

**GOP: SPENDING BILL SENDS CLEAR SIGNALS ON PRIORITIES—
DEMOCRATS DECRY WORK OF "WRECKING CREW"** (*Washington Post*,
August 5, 1995)

An analysis of the bill showed that the 1995 level of spending was \$67 billion, which would be reduced to \$61 billion for 1996, a 9 percent decrease. The appropriators made big cuts in the Goals 2000 program, in funds for bilingual and immigrant education, and in the Corporation for Public Broadcasting—but increased spending at the National Institutes of Health, in the Ryan White AIDS programs, and marginally in Job Corps. It was generally thought that most but not all of the cuts would survive in the Senate. President Clinton threatened vetoes, which would likely diminish the cuts somewhat more, down from the 9 percent proposed by the wrecking crew for the most draconian appropriations bill in a draconian season.

How did Greater Welfare make out in the process? As its five major programs—Medicaid, Food Stamps, AFDC, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and SSI—are "entitlements," they are not subject to the normal appropriations process. An estimate by the Senate Finance Committee showed that the five-year impact of Clinton's first budget, set at the "current law" baseline, would have increased spending 43 percent. Clinton's second budget would have increased it by 40 percent. The original House budget would have increased it by 22 percent. The final House/Senate conference bill increased Greater Welfare spending by 24 percent, from \$187 billion to \$231 billion.

The Republican entitlement cuts as of early September 1995 were only grand totals, without the specific spending allocations that would show just who would lose out with a decreased rate of increase. Those

decisions were scheduled to be made public later in September, with the specifics for Medicare spending cuts promising to ignite political fireworks. Republicans sought a \$270 billion budget cut over seven years—to save Medicare from bankruptcy. Democrats said the cuts would cost the elderly and harm their health.

In almost all these matters the Republicans claimed that what was happening was a "decrease in the rate of increase." Democrats said this was disingenuous because upward adjustments had to be made to account for compounded inflation and for the projected increase in the number of recipients. My sense is that the cuts, that is, the decrease in the rate of increase, are not draconian, which is in any event a somewhat imprecise term. Insofar as the cuts reduce the growth of Greater Welfare, there will be less incentive for value-busting behavior.

The arguments fueled speculation that the federal government would be closed down during that train wreck:

**REPUBLICANS PONDER BUDGET "MELTDOWN"—DEADLOCK COULD
HALT GOVERNMENT** (*Washington Times*, August 21, 1995)

WHITE HOUSE ISSUES FEDERAL SHUTDOWN PLAN (*Washington Post*,
August 24, 1995)

**A BUDGET TRAIN WRECK? ALL SIDES PREPARE FOR A COLLISION
THAT COULD SHUT DOWN GOVERNMENT.** (*US News & World Report*,
August 28, September 4, 1995)

The train wreck for which the White House was preparing concerns what happens when all or parts of the federal government legally run out of money. That occurs at the end of the fiscal year (September 30) if appropriations and entitlement spending levels are not agreed to by Congress and the president, or when the federal debt limit is exceeded (a moment that was expected to occur in November 1995).

Train wrecking is a game of chicken. The Republican Congress passes budget bills with cuts deeper than the Democratic president wants, with policy changes embedded in the cuts, and says to him, if you veto this, you, Mr. President, will be shutting down the government

Temp

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FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

DATE:

11-2-95

TO:

Mike Smith

Fax Number:

401 3095

Voice Number:

Number of pages (including cover sheet):

10

FROM:

Ken Apfel

REMARKS:

Immediate Attention

- 9 -

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Q Did you get the feeling at all that the Republicans are too focused on the money and the troops and not what's going on in Dayton?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that has been a concern of ours. The degree to which that specific point was addressed in this meeting, but that has been a concern of the administration. I think a lot of people are rushing to put the cart before the horse, that we've got to get a peace agreement, and that the parties are willing to honor and abide by before we can begin to finalize the plans for the implementation force, and we certainly are not there yet, and there are many obstacles that exist to achieving that.

Q Did you have any chance, Mike, to talk with the President further about the substance or meaning of his conversations with Ben Wattenberg, particularly --

MR. MCCURRY: I did --

Q -- whether he feels that his thoughts were reflected accurately in that column Mr. Wattenberg is publishing?

MR. MCCURRY: He had some specific concerns, and I had a chance to show it to him at the end, and there are just some things that he does not -- his recollection of the parts of the conversation are different from those as reported by Mr. Wattenberg. And specifically, he said that there's one direct quotation attributed to him about changing philosophically, and he does not recall that. He recalls on issues like both welfare reform and Goals 2000, there were very nuanced discussions of policy in which the President was making a much larger set of arguments, and they've been truncated here, as you can imagine. It was apparently about an hour-long conversation which had been boiled down to one column, and they reflect Ben's point of view and what Ben has been arguing for 15 years within the Democratic Party, and I think extracted from a long conversation there some specific points there.

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MR. MCCURRY: No, no.

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MORE

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MORE

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- 10 -

MR. MCCURRY: I assume so. I think it was on Saturday;
that's all I know.

Q Last Thursday it was supposed to be.

- 11 -

MR. MCCURRY: Say again?

Q It was supposed to -- Mr. Wattenberg last Thursday.

MR. MCCURRY: Someone had told me Saturday. "Thursday -- okay.

Q That's what Wattenberg says. Did the President say anything about the comments that he was more like a prime minister than a president?

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THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

6:00 P.M. EST

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Office of Management and Budget
Program Associate Director for Human Resources
260 Old Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20503

Fax #: 395-5730

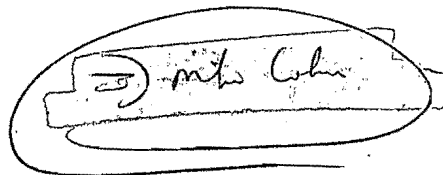
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DATE:

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TO:

Mike Smith

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Voice Number:

Number of pages (including cover sheet):

10

FROM:

Ken Apfel

REMARKS:

Immediate Attention

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raised that point. They did not get specific about the form in which such an expression of support would take. There have been various suggestions, from resolutions to other ways in which that might occur, and I don't know that they specified how that would happen. I think the President was much more interested and keen on telling them here's how things look as we open the peace talks in Dayton, here's how the NATO planning is going, what the requirements are, here's what we understand we have to do in order to persuade your members that this is the right thing to do and right for the United States of America, and that -- it's fair to say the President pledged to make that case and to take it before both the Congress and the American people.

Q Did you get the feeling at all that the Republicans are too focused on the money and the troops and not what's going on in Dayton?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that has been a concern of ours. The degree to which that specific point was addressed in this meeting, but that has been a concern of the administration. I think a lot of people are rushing to put the cart before the horse, that we've got to get a peace agreement, and that the parties are willing to honor and abide by before we can begin to finalize the plans for the implementation force, and we certainly are not there yet, and there are many obstacles that exist to achieving that.

Q Did you have any chance, Mike, to talk with the President further about the substance or meaning of his conversations with Ben Wattenberg, particularly --

MR. MCCURRY: I did --

Q -- whether he feels that his thoughts were reflected accurately in that column Mr. Wattenberg is publishing?

MR. MCCURRY: He had some specific concerns, and I had a chance to show it to him at the end, and there are just some things that he does not -- his recollection of the parts of the conversation are different from those as reported by Mr. Wattenberg. And specifically, he said that there's one direct quotation attributed to him about changing philosophically, and he does not recall that. He recalls on issues like both welfare reform and Goals 2000, there were very nuanced discussions of policy in which the President was making a much larger set of arguments and they've been truncated here, as you can imagine. It was apparently about an hour-long conversation which had been boiled down to one column, and they reflect Ben's point of view and what Ben has been arguing for 15 years within the Democratic Party, and I think extracted from a long conversation there some specific points there.

But the President, for example, on Goals 2000, specifically said that was a discussion more about the introduction of Secretary Riley's initial bill, which focused much more on outputs as they would be measured. The President said, certainly that bill

M was stronger as it initially was introduced, but what came out was a very good bill and was well worth fighting for and is well worth continuing to fight for. So I think they just have a somewhat different recollection.

Q Do you know where the President was when he placed this call or at what time of day or anything like that?

MR. MCCURRY: No, no.

Q You assume he was here in the White House, though?

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MR. MCCURRY: I assume so. I think it was on Saturday;
that's all I know.

Q Last Thursday it was supposed to be.

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MR. MCCURRY: Say again?

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