



Presidential Oral History Program

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William J. Clinton Presidential History Project

Briefing Materials

Edward L. Widmer

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EDWARD (TED) WIDMER NEWS TIMELINE

Prepared by Monica Gray

Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 08/15/2007

1993-1997 Widmer works as a History and Literature lecturer at Harvard, where he receives the Stephen Botein Prize for Teaching Excellence. ("Ted Widmer," Harvard College History and Literature Centennial Celebration, <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~histlit/centennial/participants.html#>, 10/14/2006)

1997-2001 Widmer serves as Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and as Director of Speechwriting for the National Security Council. ("Ted Widmer")

1998

March Widmer is a member of the traveling staff accompanying the President and his official delegation to Africa. (William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum Archives, 03/20/1998)

The Australian reports that Clinton gave the "most moving speech yet of his African tour" in Kigali. Following a meeting with survivors of the Rwandan genocide, Clinton says, "The international community, together with nations in Africa, must bear its share of responsibility for this tragedy....We did not act quickly enough after the killing began. We did not immediately call these crimes by their rightful name - genocide." Clinton pledges \$1.2 million to a fund for genocide survivors and \$30 million to help establish efficient and impartial judicial programs in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. "There can be no peace in Rwanda that lasts without a justice system that is recognized as such," declares Clinton. (*The Australian*, 03/27/1998)

August Widmer is a member of the traveling staff accompanying the President and his official delegation to Russia. (William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum Archives, 08/29/1998)

Widmer is a member of the traveling staff accompanying the President and his official delegation to Northern Ireland and Ireland. (William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum Archives, 08/29/1998)

September Clinton warns students at a Moscow University against a return to "failed policies of the past." The President then gives a speech at the Moscow State University of International Relations, where he declares: "Whether we like it or not, we must build the future together, because whether we like it or not . . . we will be affected by what you do and you will be affected by what we do." (*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 09/02/1998)

During a speech in Belfast, Clinton advises business and political leaders in Northern Ireland to embrace peace. "Do not let it [peace] slip away....It will not

come again in our lifetime.” In the aftermath of a bombing which killed 28 and wounded more than 200 people in Omagh, Clinton thanks his audience of over 500 people for “standing up in the face of such a soul-searing loss.” Clinton later speaks before a crowd of 20,000 in Armagh. He says Northern Ireland offers hope to a world ridden with violence and, after alluding to conflicts in the Middle East, Kosovo, and Africa, Clinton says, “Do not tell me it has to be this way....Look at Northern Ireland.” (*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 09/04/1998)

1999

March

Widmer is a member of the traveling staff accompanying the President and his official delegation to El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala (William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum Archives, 03/05/1999)

Clinton defends the “justice and fairness” of U.S. immigration policies in a speech to El Salvador’s legislative assembly. Claiming illegal immigration “punishes hard-working people who play by the rules and who wait their turn to come to the United States,” Clinton acknowledges historical strife which has affected Central American - U.S. relations. The President promises to collaborate with Congress to craft “more even-handed” immigration laws. “Our treatment of people from Central America should reflect what they suffered rather than who caused the suffering....This is wrong and we should change it,” states Clinton. (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 03/10/1999)

July

Widmer is a member of the traveling staff accompanying the President and his official delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina. (William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum Archives, 07/29/1999)

In Bosnia, Clinton participates in a summit where representatives from forty nations including Russia, Britain, Germany and France craft the Balkans Stability Pact. The agreement is intended to secure peace, prevent corruption and promote economic prosperity in South Eastern Europe. In a speech delivered at a high school in Sarajevo, Clinton says, “The war is over, but we have to build a better peace for Bosnians and all the people of southeastern Europe.” Clinton states that so long as Slobodan Milosevic remains Yugoslavia’s President, Serbia will be excluded from the Pact. “A decade-long campaign by Mr. Milosevic to carve out a greater Serbia has left more than a quarter-million people dead, uprooted millions more and undermined the stability of this entire region....Serbia will only have a future when Mr. Milosevic and his policies are consigned to the past.” (*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 07/31/1999)

November

Widmer travels to Europe as part of the traveling staff accompanying the President and his official delegation. In his ten day trip throughout southern Europe, the President travels to Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Kosovo (William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum Archives, 11/13/1999; *The Washington Post*, 11/16/1999)

Clinton begins a five-day visit to Turkey by delivering a speech calling for improvement in three areas: human rights, relations with Greece, and in the treatment of Turkey's Kurdish population. Speaking before the Turkish parliament, Clinton says, "The future we want to build together begins with Turkish progress in deepening democracy at home.... There is still far more to be done to realize the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." Clinton invites a future "in which tolerance is an article of faith, and terrorism is seen, rightly, as a travesty of faith . . . and, specifically, a future in which nations that are predominantly Muslim are increasingly partners with nations that are not." The President concludes: "Our vision of a Europe that is undivided, democratic and at peace for the first time in all of history will never be complete unless and until it embraces Turkey." (*The Washington Post*, 11/16/1999)

In a demonstration against Clinton's arrival in Athens, *The Boston Globe* reports an estimated 10,000 anti-American protestors congregate in the city's central Syndagma Square, "setting fires, throwing rocks, and clashing with tear gas-wielding police." Later that day, Clinton gives a speech saying, "I have come here as a phili mou, a friend of Greece... And I look forward to experiencing that wonderful quality of Greek hospitality known to all the world as phyloxenia." Despite differences with the U.S. over Kosovo, Clinton contends that Greece and the U.S. have historically formed alliances in times of military and political adversity. He adds that Greece is among only seven countries worldwide that has backed the U.S. in every major international conflict in the last hundred years: "As in all friendships, we have not always agreed... but we have never broken ranks, because of our shared devotion to democracy and freedom." (*The Boston Globe*, 11/20/1999)

Clinton travels to Florence, Italy to participate in a two-day 'Third Way Conference' with Italian Premier Massimo D'Alema, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. The leaders focus on finding a "third way" in politics, or an avenue agreeable for the left and right that links economic expansion with social equality. Clinton proclaims: "If I had to leave tonight and never have another thing to say about public life, I would say, 'If we could find a way to enshrine a reverence for our common humanity, the rest would work out just fine.'" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 11/21/1999)

During a three day visit to Bulgaria, Clinton thanks citizens for joining Romania in offering NATO support during the Kosovo air campaign. "We are committed to supporting them [Bulgarians] over the long run, economically, politically and militarily... I think we will be doing it for many years." Clinton does not offer Bulgaria NATO admission, as *The Irish Times* reports the Republic desired. In a speech addressing approximately 15,000 in the capital Sofia, Clinton appeals to Western businesses to invest in Bulgaria: "This is a wonderful country. Come here and help Bulgaria build a future." (*The Irish Times*, 11/23/1999)

In his first visit to Kosovo since NATO bombings on Yugoslavia ended five

months earlier, Clinton delivers a speech to several thousand Albanian Kosovars in a gymnasium in Ferizaj. "You can never forget the injustice that was done to you. No one can force you to forgive what was done to you. But you must try....I beg you who are parents, do not let the children's spirits be broken. Do not let their hearts harden....Give them the tomorrow they deserve." Clinton proceeds to make a plea for peace in reconstruction: "We won the war...but listen, only you can win the peace. The time for fighting is passed." (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* – Missouri, 11/24/1999)

2000-2001 Widmer serves as Senior Advisor to the President for Special Projects. As head of the Clinton Administration History Project, Widmer advises Clinton on subjects related to history and scholarship, including the Clinton Oral History Project.

May Widmer is a member of the traveling staff accompanying the President and his official delegation to Portugal. (William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum Archives, 05/29/2000)

While visiting Portugal, Clinton praises the country for sending troops to Kosovo and for offering flood relief to Mozambique. Clinton makes a brief speech at the waterside Tower of Belem where he highlights global crises such as the African and Asian AIDS pandemics. He also cites the "the economic gulfs separating the wealthiest from the rest of the world." He says, "These problems require innovation, imagination and courage. Portugal's history is filled with those qualities, and I believe Portugal again will lead the way." (*The Star-Ledger*, 05/31/2000)

Widmer is a member of the traveling staff accompanying the President and his official delegation to Germany. (William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum Archives, 05/31/2000)

June In western Germany, Clinton accepts the Charlemagne Prize, an award given to honor his efforts to establish peace in Europe. Clinton, the first U.S. President to have received the Prize, delivers a speech in which he advises Europe to become less dependent on the U.S. militarily and diplomatically. "There is a perception in Europe that America's power-- military, economic, cultural-- is at times too overbearing.... If, after Kosovo, European countries strengthen their own ability to act with greater authority and responsibility in times of crisis, while maintaining our transatlantic link, I think that is a good thing." The President states that the U.S. and Europe have "two big pieces of unfinished business." First, they must help stabilize southeastern Europe and "de-Balkanize the Balkans." Second, the countries should strive "to encourage a Russia that is fully democratic" and strive to prevent NATO and the EU from being "shut to Russia." (*The Washington Post*, 06/03/2000)

Widmer is a member of the traveling staff accompanying the President and his official delegation to Russia. (William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum Archives, 06/04/2000)

Speaking before both houses of the Russian parliament, the State Duma and the Federation Council in Moscow, Clinton urges Russia to become a more open country that protects "private property, free speech, religious expression and equal justice," reports *The Washington Post*. Clinton says, "A strong state should use its strength to reinforce the rule of law, protect the powerless against the powerful, [and] defend democratic freedoms.... The answer to law without order is not order without law." Expressing concern in regard to the country's military initiatives in the Chechnya region, the President questions whether "any war can be won that requires large numbers of civilian casualties and has no political component bringing about a solution." Clinton states: "I know you disagreed with what I did in Kosovo," but insists "the United States wants a strong Russia... strong enough to meet threats to its security... to give its people their chance to live their dreams." (*The Washington Post*, 06/06/2000)

Widmer is a member of the traveling staff accompanying the President and his official delegation to Ukraine. (William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum Archives, 06/05/2000)

In the Ukrainian capital Kiev, Clinton praises approximately 70,000 citizens at St. Michael's Square for their success in forming a democratic state. "Today the oppressors are gone. Stalin is gone. The Nazis are gone. The Soviet Union is gone. But you, the people of Ukraine, you are still here, stronger than ever." Clinton says America supports Ukraine in her continual push toward a free market democratic state. "Communism has lost in Ukraine, but a full commitment to free market democracy has not yet won.... If your children are to live their dreams, it must win. Do not give up. Keep on fighting.... America believes Ukraine has a right to a place among the nations of Europe.... We reject the idea that the eastern border of Europe is the western border of Ukraine. We can, and we will, keep the door to the transatlantic community of democracies open to Ukraine." In conclusion, Clinton exclaims, "Slava Ukraina," or "Glory to Ukraine." (*St. Petersburg Times*, 06/06/2000)

August

Widmer is a member of the traveling staff accompanying the President and his official delegation to Africa. (William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum Archives, 08/26/2000)

Speaking out against AIDS at a women's conference in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, Clinton asks: "Is it harder to talk about these things than to watch a child die of AIDS who could have lived if the rest of us had done our part? ... Is it harder to talk about than to comfort a child whose mother has died?" In his speech, the President emphasizes that the spread of AIDS is not inevitable: "We have to break the silence about how this disease spreads and how to prevent it."

And we need to fight AIDS, not people with AIDS....AIDS is 100 percent preventable...if we are willing to deal with it openly and honestly....In every country, in any culture, it is difficult, painful, at the very least, embarrassing to talk about the issues involved with AIDS.” Clinton says despite having embraced civilian rule in 1999, AIDS will prevent Nigeria and future generations from embracing total independence. “I am amazed at the courage of the people of Nigeria in struggling against the oppression that you endured for too long until you got your democracy....I urge you now to show that same kind of courage to beat the tyranny of this disease so you can keep your democracy alive for all the children of Nigeria and their future.” (*The New York Times*, 08/28/2000)

December

Widmer is a member of the traveling staff accompanying the President and his official delegation to Ireland, Northern Ireland, and England. (William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum Archives, 12/11/2000)

In Dublin, Clinton stresses the importance of sustaining peace in the midst of religious disputes with Northern Ireland. Speaking before national leaders, including Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern at a Guinness brewery, Clinton says, “The people have embraced the peace and I don’t think they want to go back....There are still a few hills we have to climb. . . . If you’re contributing to the present vitality of this great nation, you are helping to make the peace whole. For that I am grateful.” (*The New York Post*, 12/13/2000)

In Northern Ireland, Clinton delivers a speech to over 6,000 people in Belfast. Clinton states: “I believe in the peace you are building, I believe there can be no turning back, I believe you are committed to that.... I think it’s very important that people the world over see what you are doing and support you along the way....It is still for you to claim your moment.” (*Courier Mail*, 12/15/2000)

At the University of Warwick in Coventry, UK, Clinton highlights the potential ramifications of globalization for developed and developing countries. Speaking before a crowd of approximately one thousand, Clinton states, “Globalization need not benefit only the advanced nations. Indeed, in developing countries, too, it brings the promise but not the guarantee of a better future.” Clinton says developing countries should aim to improve human rights and environmental practices, and wealthier nations should strive to improve the healthcare, education, and standard of living of poor children. “We know very well today how children live and die in the poorest countries and how little it would take to improve their lives....While some of us walk on the cutting edge of the new global economy, still an amazing number of people live on the razor’s edge of survival.” (*The Boston Globe*, 12/15/2000)

2001 - 2004

Widmer serves as Special Assistant to Clinton, helping the former President conduct interviews as Clinton drafts his autobiography entitled *My Life*. (“Ted Widmer”)

2006

Widmer works as a blogger for the Clinton Global Initiative annual meeting. (*The Brown Daily Herald*, 11/09/2006)

TIMELINES

- Edward Widmer Timeline, prepared by Monica Gray, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 08/20/2007.
- Timeline of the Clinton Presidency, prepared by Robbie Robinson, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 05/30/2002.
- "The Clinton Presidency: Eight Years of Peace, Progress, and Prosperity," *U.S. National Archives and Records Administration*, <<http://clinton5.nara.gov/WH/Accomplishments/eightyears-02.html>> (06/12/2002).

SELECTED WRITINGS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY TED WIDMER

- Ted Widmer, "Epilogue," in *Young America: The Flowering of Democracy in New York City*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) pp.210-220.
- Ted Widmer, "The Democrats and the War," *The New York Times*, 08/15/2002.
- Ted Widmer, "So Help Me God," *The American Scholar*, Winter 2005.
- William J. Clinton, "Speech at Mason Temple," in *American Speeches: Abraham Lincoln to Bill Clinton*, Ted Widmer, ed. (New York, Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 2006.) pp. 763-772.
- William J. Clinton, "Speech at Central High School," in *American Speeches: Abraham Lincoln to Bill Clinton*, Ted Widmer, ed. (New York, Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 2006.) pp. 773-779
- Tom Putnam, Theodore Sorensen, Raymond Price, Chriss Winston, Ted Widmer, "Presidential Speechwriters (excerpted)," *Kennedy Library Forums*, C-SPAN, 02/19/2007.

SELECTED CLINTON SPEECHES: 1998-2000

NOTE: WIDMER, SERVING AS SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR FOR SPEECHWRITING, WAS PART OF THE OFFICIAL DELEGATION ACCOMPANYING THE PRESIDENT TO THE LOCATIONS WHERE THE FOLLOWING SPEECHES WERE MADE:

- Remarks by the President to the People of Ghana, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/23/1998.
- Remarks by the President to the Community of Kisowera School, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/24/1998.
- Remarks by the President to Genocide Survivors, Assistance Workers, and U.S. and Rwanda Government Officials, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/25/1998.
- Remarks by the President at Entebbe Summit for Peace and Prosperity, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/25/1998.
- Address by the President to the Parliament of South Africa, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/26/1998.
- Remarks by the President at Opening of the Ron Brown Center, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/28/1998.
- Remarks by the President at Church Service, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/29/1998.
- Remarks by the President at Reception in His Honor, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/29/1998.
- Remarks by the President to African Environmentalists and Officials from the U.S. and Botswana, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/31/1998.
- Remarks by the President to Senegalese Troops Trained for African Crisis Response Initiative, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 04/01/1998.
- Remarks by the President in Discussion with Human Rights Activists, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 04/02/1998.
- Remarks by the President at Goree Island, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 04/02/1998.
- Remarks by the President at First Day of School Festivities, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 09/01/1998.

- Remarks by the President to the Next Generation of Russian Leaders, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 09/01/1998.
- Remarks by the President in Meeting with Duma and Regional Leaders, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 09/02/1998.
- Remarks by the President to the Victims and Families of Victims of Bombing, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 09/03/1998.
- Remarks by the President to the Northern Ireland Assembly, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 09/03/1998.
- Remarks by the President at the Ground-Breaking for Springvale Educational Village, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 09/03/1998.
- Remarks by the President in Reception with Political, Business and Community Labor Leaders, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 09/04/1998.
- Remarks by the President to Business Leaders, and Officials and Employees of Gateway Computers, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 09/04/1998.
- Remarks by the President to the People of the City of Limerick, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 09/05/1998.
- Remarks by the President to the People of Nicaragua, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/08/1999.
- Remarks by the President to U.S. Troops and People of Honduras, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/09/1999.
- Remarks by the President in Roundtable Discussion on Hurricane Mitch Reconstruction Efforts, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/09/1999.
- Remarks by the President to Legislative Assembly, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/10/1999.
- Remarks by the President in Roundtable Discussion on Peace Efforts, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/10/1999.
- Remarks by the President in Opening Remarks, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/11/1999.
- Remarks by the President at Signing Ceremony and Summit Closing Statements, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 03/11/1999.

- Remarks by the President to the School Community, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 07/30/1999.
- Remarks by the President to the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/15/1999.
- Remarks by the President in Address to the Turkish Grand National Assembly, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/15/1999.
- Remarks by the President at State Dinner, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/15/1999.
- Remarks by the President to the Survivors and Relief Workers of the Earthquake, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/16/1999.
- Remarks by the President at Opening of OSCE Summit, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/18/1999.
- Remarks by the President at Signing Ceremony for the Baku-Ceyhan and Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline Protocol, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/18/1999.
- Remarks by the President Upon Arrival in Greece, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/19/1999.
- Remarks by the President at Dinner in Honor of the "Conference on Progressive Governance for the 21st Century," *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/20/1999.
- Remarks by the President at the Third Way Conference Session One: Equality and Opportunity (morning session), *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/21/1999.
- Remarks by the President at the Third Way Conference Session One: Equality and Opportunity (afternoon session), *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/21/1999.
- Remarks by the President at the Third Way Conference Session Two: Equality and Opportunity, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/21/1999.
- Closing Remarks by the President at the Conference on Progressive Governance for the XXI Century, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/21/1999.
- Remarks by the President to the Students, Organization Leaders, and Community Leaders of the Ferizaj (Urosevac) Area, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/23/1999.

- Remarks by the President to the Troops and Officers of U.S. Task Force Falcon, Including Troops of the 1st Infantry, "The Big Red One," *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/23/1999.
- Remarks by the President to the U.S. Troops Following Thanksgiving Week Meal, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 11/23/1999.
- Remarks by the President to Science Community, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 05/30/2000.
- Remarks by the President in an Exchange of Toasts, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 05/30/2000.
- Remarks by the President to Embassy Staff, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 06/01/2000.
- Remarks by the President Upon Being Presented the International Charlemagne Prize 2000, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 06/02/2000.
- Remarks by the President to Sponsors of Charlemagne Prize, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 06/02/2000.
- Remarks by the President to the Duma, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 06/05/2000.
- Remarks by the President at Signing Ceremony, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 06/05/2000.
- Remarks by the President to the People of Ukraine, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 06/05/2000.
- Remarks by the President in Address to Joint Assembly House of Representatives Chamber National Assembly Building, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 08/26/2000.
- Remarks by the President to Health Care Providers and the Community of the National Center for Women's Development, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 08/27/2000.
- Remarks by the President to Nigerian and American Business and Trade Community Leaders, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 08/27/2000.
- Remarks by the President in Address at Burundi Peace Talks, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 08/28/2000.

- Remarks by the President at Signing Ceremony, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 08/28/2000.
- Remarks by the President in Video Address to the People of Colombia, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 08/29/2000.
- Remarks by President Clinton, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Deputy First Minister Seamus Mallon, and First Minister David Trimble, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 12/13/2000.
- Remarks by the President to the Community of the University of Warwick, *Public Papers of the President: William Clinton, 1993-2001*, 12/14/2000.

CLINTON LEGACY

- Jacob Bernstein, "It Took a Village," *New York Magazine*, 06/14/2004.
- Marc Weingarten, "History-Makers Speak in These Pages," *Los Angeles Times*, 10/08/2006.
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EDWARD (TED) WIDMER SUGGESTED TOPICS

Prepared by Monica Gray

Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 08/15/2007

Relationship with Clinton

- When did you initially meet Bill Clinton? What were your first impressions of him? Describe the circumstances that led you to leave academia and to enter the political arena. Had you done any prior political work, for Clinton or others, before 1997?
- Tell us about your learning curve in this new environment. How did you learn (a) the President's voice as a speechmaker and (b) the nuances of this President's foreign policy objectives?

Director for Speechwriting for the National Security Council and Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

- Discuss your appointment as Director for Speechwriting for the National Security Council. Describe the process through which you were identified and ultimately hired.
- Did your role as Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs involve activities other than speechwriting? If so, what were these responsibilities, and which major national security issues occupied most of your time?
- Describe the relationship between the NSC speechwriting operation and the main presidential speechwriting office. Was there a firm division of labor? Was it common for the two offices to work on the same speech? Were there any special sensitivities or turf concerns between the two offices?
- How involved typically was the National Security Advisor in the drafting of presidential speeches? Discuss what you saw of the President's relationship with Sandy Berger.
- How involved was the State Department in general, and the Secretary of State in particular, in drafting President Clinton's foreign policy speeches. Discuss what you saw of Clinton's relationship with Madeleine Albright. Were there routinely other agencies or departments that had an important role in foreign policy addresses?
- Comment on the extent to which Clinton was involved in writing his own speeches. Characterize your typical interactions with him when preparing a speech. Did he typically treat foreign policy speeches any differently than domestic speeches?
- What kinds of stylistic concerns were most in mind when drafting a speech for President Clinton to deliver?
- Discuss your involvement in some of Clinton's key foreign policy speeches. Describe President Clinton's September 1998 speech in Armagh, Northern Ireland. In your opinion, why was this a particularly important moment in U.S. foreign policy? In what capacity did you contribute to the speech? Were there any speeches you wrote that you believed were especially effective—and conversely, any that you felt were particularly flawed? Why?
- Characterize your objectives as a speechwriter during your 1999 trip to Turkey. What was the Administration trying to accomplish? In your judgment, what impact did Clinton's visit have on US-Turkish relations?

- Describe your experience as a speechwriter and as an assistant to the President in Italy during the 1999 Third Way Conference. Comment on Clinton's relationships with Blair, Schroeder, Jospin, and Cardoso.
- Compare your March 1998 and August 2000 trips to Africa. Discuss your role and objectives on each mission.
- How did Capitol Hill figure into your thinking on foreign policy and the content of presidential speeches? Assess the disagreements between Congress and the President on war powers and U.S. peacekeeping in Bosnia, Haiti and Kosovo.
- To what extent were you attentive, as you were writing speeches, to how the media (print, television, and news) would process the speech? Were you at all involved in helping to stage the events where the President spoke?
- To what extent did scandal and the impeachment impair the President's ability to communicate to global audiences?

Senior Advisor to the President for Special Projects, and the Clinton Legacy

- How did you come to be appointed Senior Advisor for Special Projects? What were your main responsibilities in this position? Did this take you completely out of the speechmaking orbit?
- How did the administrative histories project originate? Explain how the project was executed.
- Discuss your role in assisting Clinton with writing his autobiography *My Life*. Where and how frequently did you meet with the former President, and what was your brief?
- Describe your responsibilities working with the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI). Where did you travel with Clinton? Discuss your objectives as a CGI blogger.
- Comment on why you selected Clinton's "Speech at Mason Temple" and his "Speech at Central High School" as the only two speeches from the 1990s to include in your book *American Speeches*.

The Clinton Presidency in Retrospect

- What do you think were Clinton's greatest assets as President? Gauge his strengths and weaknesses as a policymaker, and as a political orator.
- What is the legacy of President Clinton's foreign policy?
- Evaluate President Clinton as a world leader and communicator. Based on your experience, how did international diplomats and heads of state view Clinton? Were there any common misconceptions?
- What features of the Clinton presidency were misunderstood by the media? How should Clinton be viewed by future historians?