

Mr. Gambling. Exactly. Probably the most difficult thing, you've got to keep in touch with the folks. I want to thank you very much, Mr. President, for choosing us this morning to talk about politics on election day, 1994. Thank you very much.

The President. Thanks again. I want to urge all your listeners to go on and vote today. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 7:12 a.m. The President spoke by telephone from the Oval Office at the White House.

Interview With Paul W. Smith of WWDB Radio, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania November 8, 1994

Mr. Smith. What a pleasure, indeed, it is to welcome back to the program, in an exclusive Philadelphia interview, live from the White House, ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States.

Mr. President, good morning to you. Happy election day.

The President. Thank you, Paul W. It's nice to hear your voice again.

Midterm Elections

Mr. Smith. Well, it's nice to have you back. It indicates to me how important you feel the voters of Pennsylvania and New Jersey are and Delaware are in this election year, because you have been all over the place. I recall several weeks ago, the Washington press corps alleging that there weren't a lot of people who wanted the President to come out and campaign for them. But as Dee Dee Myers pointed out then, and as you certainly have seemed to prove over the last several days, you couldn't possibly get to all the places where people wanted you. You and Mrs. Clinton have been all over the country campaigning.

The President. Well, we have, and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore have also been out there a lot. Leon Panetta's been out there a lot, and our Cabinet has.

But we have been confronted with quite a challenge just in the generally negative tone of the atmosphere that has concerned me some about the turnout. You know, I had to take a few days to go to the Middle East on what was a truly historic mission for our country and for the cause of peace in the world. And when I was there and when I was coming back, I was struck by how strongly and how positively

the rest of the world looks at the United States, at our system, at the strength of our economic recovery, at the fact that we seem to be facing problems that we ignored for a long time. And they are often asking me questions—world leaders in other places—about how this negative feeling creeps over our people and why it has such a hold at election time.

So I wanted to do these election morning interviews more than anything else just to encourage our citizens to get out and vote, to make their voices heard, not to sit this election out simply because they feel negatively about perhaps some of the ads or some of the tone of the campaign. Because our country is facing our problems, we're moving into the future, and we need the American people to be engaged in this process. And we need all kinds of people to be engaged in the process, just ordinary mainstream Americans showing up to vote and to try to have their interests and their values advanced in this election.

Mr. Smith. Why do you think, Mr. President, this has appeared to be the sleaziest, dirtiest, worst campaign yet? And if, in fact, it works for some candidates, one wonders just how bad it will get the next time around.

The President. Well, of course, that's the whole point I'm trying to make. I'm afraid it's been that way because this is a place where the people rule, and a lot of the polling data indicates that sometimes these negative campaigns work, that when people get down on the political system and down on politicians, they're a little more prone to believe the worst as opposed to the best.

And actually, if you look at the history of this country, the rich and strong and long his-

tory, we have often had our difficulties in the political system. And we've had a scoundrel or two in the history of America, but most of our public officials have been honest and straightforward people. And most of the time the differences have been over what direction we should take. And when we get into voting about who is the worst, as opposed to what do these people believe and what are they going to do, I think that puts us at some risk of making bad decisions.

And that's what I've been trying to do traveling around the country since I've come back from the Middle East, is to say to the American people, you know, whatever you do, let's look at this in a forward-looking way. How are we going to go forward? How are we going to work together and move this country forward? We don't want to go back, and we don't want to be divided, and we don't want to think less of ourselves as a result of this election, because we have a very great country. And others who maybe sometimes see us more clearly than we even see ourselves know that for all of our problems, we're facing them, we're moving forward, and we have enormous potential. Our best days are still ahead of us. And every election is an obligation of those of us who are citizens to kind of keep this ball moving forward.

Mr. Smith. Mr. Clinton—Mr. President, you have extended, kind of in advance, an olive branch saying that you will work with everyone and that you can, your administration can work with everyone. How do you feel this election morning in terms of the chances that there will be more Republicans? Republicans have not held majorities in both Houses of Congress simultaneously since 1954. There is a very good chance you're going to have many more Republicans there on the Hill than we've had in a number of years. Do you sense this morning that that will be the case, or would you rather wait until the polls close?

The President. I think it depends entirely on the turnout, really. I think they have some things going for them: the fact that in every

election in the 20th century but one the party opposite the President has made gains in at least one House at midterm, and I think all elections but three they made gains in both Houses; the fact that we've had for most of the last 30 years a divided Government—some people are used to that—that is, the President in one party, the Congress of another.

I think there are some things working against that: the fact that we have been able to accomplish quite a bit that, in the atmosphere in which we were operating in, almost no one knew until about 3 weeks ago—we finally being able to get a little bit of information out about how much the President and the Congress accomplished working together. And I think we have to just keep working on that and keep going forward.

Mr. Smith. Mr. President, thank you for being with us. We do appreciate it again—

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Smith. —and it's quite an honor to have the President of the United States twice in one week.

The President. Well, it's great to hear your voice. And of course, you know I think the world of Senator Wofford; I hope he'll be re-elected today. And I hope that your listeners in these other States will go out and vote, and I hope their voices will be heard. And I hope they will do it in a good spirit, believing in our country, believing in our future. This is not the time for negativism. This is a time to be upbeat but aggressive in tackling our problems and seizing our opportunities.

And I thank you for talking to me today.

Mr. Smith. By the way, President Clinton, thank you for the kind words about President Reagan's revelation over the weekend. It was most appreciated around the country, I think.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 7:21 a.m. The President spoke by telephone from the Oval Office at the White House.