

they can for themselves there. We have to begin with the basic things that make it worth doing.

As the Vice President and I said in a book we put out in the election campaign in 1992, our economic strategy includes a commitment to work to provide decent, safe, affordable homes to all Americans and to do it with an alliance of the public and private sector.

I want to say this one more time, and I want to thank again all the people here from the private sector who have worked with Secretary Cisneros on this: Our home ownership strategy will not cost the taxpayers one extra cent. It will not require legislation. It will not add more Federal programs or grow Federal bureaucracy.

It's 100 specific actions that address the practical needs of people who are trying to build their own personal version of the American dream, to help moderate income families who pay high rents but haven't been able to save enough for a downpayment, to help lower income working families who are ready to assume the responsibilities of home ownership but held back by mortgage costs that are just out of reach, to help families who have historically been excluded from home ownership. Today, all across the country, I say to millions of young working couples who are just starting out: By the time your children are ready to start the first grade, we want you to be able to own your own home.

All of our country will reap enormous benefits if we achieve this goal. Home ownership encourages savings and investment. When a family buys a home, the ripple effect is enormous. It means new homeowner consumers. They need more durable goods, like washers and dryers, refrigerators and water heaters. And if more families could buy new homes or older homes, more hammers will be pounding, more saws will be buzzing. Homebuilders and home fixers will be

put to work. When we boost the number of homeowners in our country, we strengthen our economy, create jobs, build up the middle class, and build better citizens.

I thank Millard Fuller especially for the work that Habitat for Humanity has done in building better citizens. I remember the day we dedicated the very first Habitat house built in my home State, that went to a woman who went to church with me and worked for the State government and still her income was so low she was eligible to be considered there. And I was so proud of her because she and her children, for the first time, felt that all these incredible years of sacrifice and labor she had endured were about to be rewarded. And it made her a better citizen, and it made everybody that put a hammer to a nail a better citizen, and it made all of us who saw it unfold better citizens.

H.L. Mencken once wrote that "A home is not a mere transient shelter, its essence lies in its permanence, in its quality of representing in all its details the personalities of the people who live in it."

What we are doing today will allow more homes to be blessed by more families. I hope it will start all these young people on a path that will take them to great joys in their personal lives, and perhaps to other homes, but something they will always know that their country wanted them to have because they were entitled to it as a part of the American dream.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to new homeowners Jean Mikitz, who introduced the President, and her husband, Jim; and Millard Fuller, founder and president, Habitat for Humanity International.

Interview With Larry King

June 5, 1995

Vice President's Role

Mr. King. Good evening. We have checked all of our history books, and as best we can figure out, this is the first time ever a sitting President and Vice President have ever been

on a program, radio or television, together while in office.

We'll be entertaining your calls later. Also, later in the program we'll be giving you a number for Save the Children. I'm wearing a Save

the Children tie in conjunction with our 10th anniversary. We'll be associating Save the Children programs throughout the month, and we'll tell you later where you can order beautiful ties like this. The President and Vice President have them as well, but are not wearing them tonight. But they both have or are in possession of these ties.

We'll talk about lots of things, but the most obvious to me—if something, God forbid, happened to you, how long would it take to brief you?

The Vice President. Oh, that's not a hypothetical that I'm comfortable with, but there are procedures that are in place that we've discussed because it's our duty to the country and the Constitution.

Mr. King. Are you and—is he——

The President. I know what you're asking. The answer is, no time at all. I think it's clear that the Vice President is more closely involved with all the decisions of this administration than any of his predecessors. In the——

Mr. King. So you could take over——

The President. Absolutely. I think that we were very fortunate when Harry Truman became President—he'd just been in office a little while, and at that time Vice Presidents weren't as involved as they now are. But he turned out to be a great President. But we were lucky, because he wasn't in the loop on a lot of things. And then, of course, when President Johnson had to become President, he had been Senate majority leader and there was a little more of a—he had a more active role. But Presidents Carter, Reagan, and Bush, I think, all tended to give the Vice President a much larger role. And then, because of the relationship we have and because of my conviction about what the Constitution really requires me to do and because it's good for the American people, Vice President Gore is the most involved Vice President in the history of the country.

Mr. King. So you never feel, Mr. Vice President, out of the loop?

The Vice President. No, never. And it's been a great privilege, really.

Mr. King. Do you talk every day?

The Vice President. Every day, many, many times.

Mr. King. You're not—if you're in different parts of the world, you talk every day?

The Vice President. Just about. There are times when we don't, if he's on another con-

tinental than I am, but even then sometimes we do.

1996 Presidential Election

Mr. King. And are you two definitely running again as a ticket? I don't think we've officially——

The Vice President. He's not ready to make any announcements.

Mr. King. Oh, come on, make it. Everybody makes it here; make it. *[Laughter]*

The President. I haven't asked him yet, but if he's willing, that would be my intention.

Mr. King. Okay, your intention is to run again and ask him to serve again.

The President. Absolutely.

Mr. King. And would you serve again if asked?

The Vice President. Well, I enjoy this job a great deal, and I count it a privilege to have this learning experience and to be able to work for and with President Clinton. You shouldn't have any doubt about that. But we're waiting on any formal announcements.

Bosnia

Mr. King. I just wanted to know.

Anything you can tell us about the pilot?

The President. No, except that we're working on it very hard.

Mr. King. Is he signaling? Is there a report of signals out of Bosnia?

The President. Well, you know what the news reports are, but I can tell you that I have been keeping on top of this ever since the first report of the missing plane. And we're doing everything we can, but it's best that we say as little as possible.

Mr. King. Is this, Mr. Vice President, as some diplomat called it today, "a great failure of Western diplomacy," all Western diplomacy?

The Vice President. Well, clearly, this is a tragedy that has been unfolding for a long time, some would say for 500 years. But certainly, it was a full-blown tragedy before we ever got here. But I think that it's important to realize that NATO, the most successful alliance in history, never really did that great a job when it was outside of the NATO area, dealing with a conflict between two countries neither of whom was a part of NATO. And that's the situation here.

They have done a great deal. And I think a lot of people have not paid much attention

to the change that has come about since President Clinton's policy was put into place. Some of the numbers aren't very well known, but the change has been pretty significant.

The President. Let me just say this. First of all, I disagree with that.

Mr. King. You disagree with the Vice President?

The President. No, I agree with him, and I disagree with those who say—

Mr. King. Oh—it's failed.

The President. —that the whole thing has been a great failure. It has not been a success. But remember, how long has this war been going on? Since 1991, in essence. That's 4 years. It's tragic; it's terrible. But their enmities go back 500 years, some would say almost a thousand years.

Now, what are our interests and what are our objectives there? First of all, we don't want the war to spread beyond Bosnia. Secondly, we want to alleviate the human suffering and reduce the killing. And thirdly, we want to support a diplomatic process for peace.

Now, let me just follow up on what the Vice President said. The war hasn't spread. We've worked hard on that. We've worked with our NATO allies and with the U.N. in the longest humanitarian airlift in history and to keep the skies free of bombers to take the war out of the air, which is what our brave pilot was doing when he was shot down. We have worked with the U.N. peacekeepers on the ground to try to establish safe havens through the use, again, of only of our air power; we have no ground forces there.

In 1992, the year we had our interview in Orlando, about 130,000 people were killed in Bosnia. Last year, 1994, less than 3,000 people were killed there. That's still tragic, but I hardly think that constitutes a colossal failure, especially—now, let me just say one other thing. Look at—you're going to go to the Middle East on Thursday with your interviews—

Mr. King. We're going to talk to all of them.

The President. We look at the progress in the Middle East. We look at progress in Northern Ireland. We look at the joy we have in the elections in South Africa. All those conflicts went on for a lot more than 4 years. And I'm proud of the role the United States is playing in the peace process in all those places, but it became possible when people decided they wanted to make peace and they wanted to stop

killing each other there. That's the point I want to make.

So, I'm not happy with everything that's happened in Bosnia. I wish there were some clear-cut answer. I don't think we should have ground troops there in combat or in the peacekeeping force.

Mr. King. At all?

The President. No. I've said where I think—if they make a peace, they stop fighting, they want us to help police it like we have in the Middle East since the late seventies, that's something that we would consider doing, after consultation with Congress. If our people—if the U.N. has to pull out, they're our NATO allies and they need us, I'd be inclined to help them. If they get stranded and they're in desperate conditions, I'd be inclined to help them. I think that's something we should look at. But we shouldn't be involved on the ground there. We have achieved these other objectives.

And if you go from 130,000 dead down to under 3,000 dead and you've still got a talk going, you've got a chance of a diplomatic solution, what is the difference in that and Northern Ireland, the Middle East, and these other places? It takes time.

Mr. King. If it spreads, do we have to go? Like to Macedonia, would we have to go?

The President. We have to do—we have troops in Macedonia because we are determined not to have a Balkan war. That, after all, is how World War I got started. We don't want this thing to spread across the Balkans, and I think all Americans would understand that.

Mr. King. Do we have a moral obligation, Mr. Vice President, to these people? Moral, if not strategic?

The Vice President. I think the world clearly has an interest in doing what is reasonable and necessary to stop an ethnically based conquering by one country of another. And our NATO allies have shown tremendous courage and fortitude in putting their troops there on the ground. We've chosen not to do that. They are closer to it. It is on the Continent of Europe. We've provided some support to them, but our allies are the ones that are there on the ground. And I think that that's the correct choice for them to make.

The President. But Larry, first of all, we've spent a great deal of money there, running this humanitarian airlift, giving air support, trying to create free-fire zones, if you will, around Sara-

jevo and the other populated eastern enclaves, in doing all the things we've done to support the no-fly zone and to support the British, the French, the Dutch, the Canadians, and others there on the ground. All of us have done this at a significant investment. And they are at some risk, as you see when several hundred of them got captured. If you reduce the casualties from 130,000 to under 3,000 and you at least have the possibility of cease-fires and ongoing negotiations and you continue humanitarian aid, it seems to me that that is fulfilling a moral obligation.

Do we have the capacity to impose a settlement on people who want to continue fighting? We couldn't do that in Northern Ireland. We couldn't do that in the Middle East. And I would submit, if you look at the population and the geography and the history of Bosnia, we cannot do that there. So I believe we're doing the right thing.

[At this point, the network took a commercial break.]

Mr. King. There's a lot of bases to cover. One more—are you now optimistic on Bosnia? Are you sounding like things are going to turn better?

The President. What I think is that we have to continue to pursue a strategy of diplomacy and keeping people alive and minimizing the brutality and trying to make the peacekeeping mission work. If it fails, then we'll have to consider what our options are then.

Mr. King. But no troops.

The Vice President. Anyone who is worried about the U.S. sending ground troops there should not be. That's not going to happen.

Middle East Peace Process

Mr. King. We have the Middle East program coming Thursday night with Hussein and Rabin and Arafat. You've been talking to people involved. How is it going? We've got a chance for Syria to get involved with the peace treaty.

The President. I think we've got a chance to make it this year. And I think that Mr. Arafat is trying to implement his part of the accords. I think he's making progress. Prime Minister Rabin has shown great courage. King Hussein has always wanted these days to come about, and he's working hard to work through the things that have to be done. President Mubarak

in Egypt has been a great support. And I think President Asad wants peace. We're——

Mr. King. You do?

The President. Yes, I do. I am convinced he does. Now, there are a lot of difficult stones in the road, and we may not make it, but I think we've got a chance.

The Vice President. Well, let me just recall for you, Larry, that a lot has happened since this President came into office. The state of war between Israel and Jordan, after 46 years, was ended, right out here on the South Lawn of the White House, with President Clinton presiding over it. The long period of estrangement and no even—not even any talking between the PLO and Israel was ended with the famous handshake, again presided over by President Clinton. He went to the signing of the agreement in the Middle East.

The dialog with Syria has now reached the point where people who follow this very, very closely, as we do, believe that there is the kind of movement that can really inspire a great deal of hope. This is a fundamental change. Now you have, on a regular basis, Arafat sitting down with Israeli leaders and beginning to work through all of the problems there. And all of the leaders there give President Clinton the credit for the progress.

The President. I would say this: In light of what we've been through in Oklahoma City and with the World Trade Center, if we could succeed in bringing a comprehensive peace to the Middle East and then we could bring the benefits of that peace to all the people who live there, I believe that that would help us to defeat terrorism in all continents in the next century. I think it's a huge deal for all the people of the world.

Japan-U.S. Trade

Mr. King. Quickly, on the Tokyo thing, are we going to settle that before the date of imposition of tariffs?

The Vice President. Well, that's up to Japan.

Mr. King. Strictly up to Japan, no more meetings?

The President. Well, we'll be—we're prepared to meet and talk, I think, but look——

Mr. King. What's the date, June what—24th?

The President. Let me say—I have worked with four Japanese governments. We have succeeded in pushing through a new world trade agreement. We have gotten, I think, 14 specific

agreements with Japan, including agreements to import rice. But the real problem with the Japanese-American trade relationship, and with the Japanese trade relationship with many other countries, is autos and auto parts. It's 60 percent of our trade deficit with Japan. And we know we're competitive in price and quality. And we know there are indirect problems that are not covered by the specific letter of normal trade agreements. So we have to be firm here.

I have done everything I could for 2½ years to have a good, constructive, friendly relationship with Japan. We are allies, we are friends, but we must be firm on this.

The Vice President. I was watching television yesterday, and I saw an advertisement saying, "Free trade—these firm moves against Japan are a terrible mistake." And then at the end of the commercial, it said, "Paid for by Japanese Auto Association." And I would just say to them that if they, in any way, misjudge the strength and resolve of the President in pursuing this, they're making a serious mistake, because they're the ones that are acting contrary to what it would take to have more—

Mr. King. You're not going to give on this, is what you're saying.

The President. We want to open the market. We don't even—we just want to open the market. Let me say for the benefit of the Americans who are watching this, this is in Japan's interest as well. Japan has suffered from low growth. The Japanese people have apparently higher incomes than the American people, but their living standards are lower because they pay about 40 percent more for consumer products.

Mr. King. Are you saying their leaders are letting them down?

The President. I'm saying that their ingrained institutional resistance to change is not only hurting the American working people, it's hurting the Japanese people.

[The network took a commercial break.]

Closing of Pennsylvania Avenue

Mr. King. What you're looking at now is the front of the White House, which is becoming a mall or an esplanade. No cars anymore on Pennsylvania Avenue because of security threats. There are the barricades. You have to go in through the side; you can't go in through the front anymore. Tragedy?

The President. Well, I wish it hadn't been necessary. But the truth is that, so far, it's increasing public access to the White House, and it hasn't interrupted traffic too much. On the weekends now, the whole Pennsylvania Avenue is just flooded with people. They're riding bikes; they're skating; they're skateboarding; they're on rollerblades.

Mr. King. Is this going to be like an esplanade? It's going to be like—

The President. We want it to be a big public space. You know, in a time of less security consciousness back in the thirties, the back lawn of the White House, the large back lawn, used to be open every Sunday in the spring and summer for ordinary citizens to go and picnic and sort of be there in the atmosphere of it. Now we can do that in the front because of what's happened. I wish it hadn't been necessary, but we're going to make something good come of this.

The Vice President. There's a difference between access for people and access for cars and trucks. And actually, this space is more accessible to people now.

Antiterrorism Legislation

Mr. King. Where's your terrorism bill? Flying in the Senate, stopped in the House?

The Vice President. Well, the President's been working extremely hard on that, and I have to tell you—he won't say this the same way I do—I would personally like to say I'm very frustrated with what the House of Representatives is doing. The President's made it clear why this is necessary for our country, and it's not right for the House of Representatives to sit on this because some of the Members of Congress are scared that some of these antigovernment sentiments are so strong that they'll be expressed against them if they increase the ability of the Government to fight against lawbreakers.

The President. I'd like to say, though, that this is not just a—this is not necessarily a partisan deal. Senator Dole, so far as we speak tonight, has done what he's said he'd do. He asked me and the Democratic leadership to try to reduce the number of amendments offered by the Democrats. He said he'd try to reduce the number of amendments offered by Republicans. They did that today. They adopted a major amendment that I wanted to put taggants in illegal explosives, or explosives that could be held illegally, so we could trace them. They're

moving that bill. And it seems to me that we're moving in the right direction in the Senate.

I was quite disturbed at the people in the House saying, "Well, maybe we ought to go slow on this." Look, I had an antiterrorism bill in the Congress 2 months before Oklahoma for foreign terrorists. Then the FBI and others said, "We'd like some changes to deal with domestic terrorism," and we presented that. The bill is moving in the Senate. It must move in the House. We can't go slow on it. We can't.

Mr. King. What's stopping you in the House?

The President. Well, we don't know. Nothing has happened yet. We hope, if we can get this bill out of the Senate, that the House will then move rapidly.

Mr. King. What has Mr. Gingrich said about it?

The Vice President. Well, he said that they might have to go slow. And the terrorists aren't going slow.

Mr. King. So you're saying tonight to the House, get a move on?

The President. Look, this is a big deal, and this should not be partisan. And I know that some of these groups that hate the Government think that their civil liberties may be infringed here. The Congress has the right, indeed, the responsibility, to review the provisions of this act, but not to go slow. The people who do this terrorist work, they operate on their own timetable; they don't sit around and wait for Congress to enact laws.

We know that we can do a better job in stopping things from happening. Let me say, in spite of the horror of Oklahoma City and the World Trade Center, our people stopped another planned bombing in New York, stopped a plan to explode some airplanes flying out of the West Coast airports over the Pacific. We can do more of this. In Israel now, with all of their problems with terrorism, they head off the vast majority of terrorist threats. We can prevent this, but we're not used to dealing with it. We need more tools. That's what this legislation is for, and we can't delay.

Oklahoma City Bombing

Mr. King. Are we still investigating Oklahoma City heavily?

The Vice President. Oh, yes. The President put together—let me just expand on that briefly. The President, immediately following the explosion in Oklahoma City, without a moment's

delay, was on the telephone to the Attorney General, the FBI, and the law enforcement community. And from the first half-hour, you saw assembled the most impressive law enforcement team ever put together in the history of the United States of America. I was there last week, watching them comb through every piece of the rubble of that building, down to pieces this big, getting every scrap of evidence that they could possibly find. It is an incredibly impressive operation.

Mr. King. Do you believe it was just two people?

The President. I believe we should let the investigation unfold.

[*The network took a commercial break*]

Habeas Corpus Legislation

Mr. King. In this segment, concerning legislation, there's apparently a confusion over whether you're for or against an amendment regarding habeas corpus.

The President. Well, in addition to the antiterrorism legislation, we've been trying to pass, and I tried to pass last year and failed to do it, a bill which would reform the habeas corpus procedure, the criminal appeals procedure.

Mr. King. So?

The President. In death penalty cases, it normally takes 8 years to exhaust the appeals; it's ridiculous. And if you have multiple convictions, it could take even longer. So there is a strong sense in the Congress, I think among Members of both parties, that we need to get down to sort of one clear appeal, we need to cut the time delay on the appeals dramatically, and that it ought to be done in the context of this terrorism legislation so that it would apply to any prosecutions brought against anyone indicted in Oklahoma. And I think it ought to be done.

You know, we have some differences about exactly what the details are and what the best and fairest way to do—to apply to all criminal cases, but I think it definitely ought to be done. We have—for 15 years, I have been trying to get Congress to clarify this. And I have strongly believed it for a very long time, since I was an attorney general and a Governor and I had been on the receiving end of these interminable appeals.

Mr. King. Are there those in Congress who think you're against this?

The Vice President. There are some in both parties who, in good conscience, think it would cause problems for a criminal procedure.

Mr. King. Constitutionally.

The Vice President. Well, they're worried about it. But the President's for it. And if they want to put the right version of it on this bill, fine.

The President. There are some good and bad—we don't have time to get into all of the details of it. There are things that I like better in some versions than others.

Mr. King. But you're, in essence, for it?

The President. I'm not only for it, we need to do it. You can't justify this lengthy appeals process.

1993 Tragedy in Waco, Texas

Mr. King. Are we going to have the full Waco story come out?

The President. Yes, but I think we already have had it. I mean, after all, we had an independent panel review what the ATF people did there. We've already had 10 congressional hearings on Waco. And I think the American people should remember that. I'd just like to remind you of the facts. There was action taken based on mistakes made. There is new leadership at the ATF. The facts were made known of what they did and the FBI did and others did, and there were 10 congressional hearings last year.

If they want to have other hearings, fine. But let's not lose the forest for the trees here. All this renewed interest in Waco came up by people who were worried about the fact that there would be a renewed interest in exploring the kind of militant groups that the suspect in the Oklahoma City bombing was involved with. So if they want to look into Waco, fine, but let's not forget what the real problem is here. The real problem is what happened at Oklahoma City.

At Waco, whatever else the facts are, it's clear there was a valid warrant. The people in the cult shot first and killed innocent Federal law enforcement officials. When the FBI went after them, based on their best available intelligence at the time, they killed the children there—the people there, not the Federal officials—the people in the cult did. And when they finally had their place inspected, what did we find? We found illegal machine guns, illegal explosives, and the capacity to build another 100

high-caliber illegal machine guns. And Koresh shot his way into the leadership of the cult.

So there's a lot of historical revision going on here to take people's attention off Oklahoma City.

[*The network took a commercial break.*]

Violence in Entertainment

Mr. King. People often ask, what do you talk about during breaks? We were talking about movies. Now, normally that would be considered inconsequential, except movies are suddenly political.

Okay, what do you make of Bob Dole and the charges that—well, I'll tell you something he said yesterday. He said, "Mr. Clinton will not criticize the movies like I do because if he needs a million dollars, he has to go to Hollywood." And he said, "If he needs \$2 million, he has to go see Barbra Streisand, and she has to put on a concert." She'll be here tomorrow night, so I mentioned that. Your thoughts on Mr. Dole.

The President. Well, first of all, if I had any criticism it would be that the whole thing has been politicized, like in those comments you made.

The truth is, I was talking about violence and—in rap music and movies in 1992, in 1993. I went to Hollywood and met with a bunch of the people in production and challenged them to reduce it. I met with people—the members of—the representatives of television networks and challenged them. And I talked about it—if you remember, I got a big standing ovation in the State of the Union Address, talking about it.

Mr. King. So you agree with Senator Dole?

The President. So I think it's an absolutely legitimate point for discussion. Tipper Gore, years ago, long before there was any politics in it, was talking about how we needed to take—

Mr. King. Labeling records.

The President. Yes, and to take—and to just—so that people could know whether these things were consistent with what you'd want young children to see and hear.

I don't believe in censorship, and I don't believe in singling Hollywood out. What I believe we need to do is to say to ourselves, what has happened to our ability to have an American community that raises good citizens with good

values, who are—who grow up into good people? That these kids—how do we reduce the teen violence? How do we reduce—

Mr. King. They're saying that Hollywood contributes to it.

The President. Well, I think—and I think that's—I think excessive exposure to mind-numbing violence or crass abuse of people in sexual and other ways has a bad impact on young children, especially if they don't have the kind of structure and other leadership in their life that they need.

But what I would say is that we need to ask ourselves: What does the entertainment community need to do? What does the media need to do? What does the business community need to do? What does the religious community need to do? What do the politicians need to do? What's our contribution to all this? That is, my only quarrel with all this is I don't want to see it politicized. I agree with a lot of what Senator Dole said. I don't know about the specific movies; I hadn't seen most of the ones he mentioned. But I think that we need to do this in a spirit not of dividing each other but of asking everybody to come forward and be accountable.

Mr. King. Is the rap on Time-Warner fair?

The Vice President. Well, I think that they have put out a lot of material that they shouldn't have. And it's not true that this administration hasn't talked about it. In fact, there was a public back-and-forth when one of their properties had some inappropriate material on President Reagan's Alzheimer's disease, and we said, "Hey, wait a minute." And they pulled it back. And I give them credit for that. And there have been other examples.

And let me say this: My wife, Tipper, began working on this and talking about this 18 years ago. And a few years after that, she began to get criticized from all parts. Before they were in the White House, Bill and Hillary Clinton were among the few who stood up and said, "We support what Tipper Gore is saying about this." And it took some doing, but she succeeded in getting the voluntary system of labeling for records. But she's continued talking about it. And she and I have appreciated the fact that this is the first President to talk about this in the State of the Union Address, to go to Hollywood and make a speech about it, and to take on this phenomenon in a responsible way, not in a partisan way.

Mr. King. Are you also against violent movies that Mr. Dole didn't mention, like "True Lies," let's say, a Schwarzenegger movie that had a lot of violence?

The President. Well, let me say—I don't want to get into critiquing every movie. There have been about 3,000 studies of the impact of constant exposure to violence on children through television and through the movies. Almost all of them, not all but almost all of them, conclude that what is really bad is the aggregate impact of it, the total volume of it, plus the treatment of violence as something casual and crass.

Mr. King. Everyday—

The President. Like you and I were talking about "Braveheart." That's a violent movie, but it doesn't glorify violence. It's ugly, and it's awful.

Now, I feel that we ought to go after this in a responsible way. I was not upset when Senator Dole raised this issue. I just don't think any of us ought to be doing it as a way of sort of dividing the American people.

You know, we ought to get on this—a friend of mine said today, we need to get on the solution side of these problems. We need to challenge Hollywood. Most of these people, they're good people out there. They want to do the right thing. And we're not talking about censorship; we're talking about responsible, honest debate. We all have to say, what contribution are we making to creating an America that is too divided, that doesn't raise good children with strong values who are good, law-abiding citizens when they grow up?

Mr. King. We'll be back. We'll include some phone calls for the President and Vice President of the United States right after this.

[*The network took a commercial break.*]

Mr. King. Timeth flieth. We're moving along. Let's take a call. Jameson, Pennsylvania, for President Clinton and Vice President Gore. Hello.

Q. Hello. Good evening. Thank you, Larry, for the opportunity.

Mr. King. You're welcome.

Negative Criticism

Q. Good evening, President Clinton and Vice President Gore. This is indeed an honor. Like you, President Clinton, I saw President Kennedy when I was younger, and it has sparked my interest in studying the Presidency.

Mr. King. Ma'am, I wish you would get right to the question. I don't mean to interrupt, but we have long—

Q. My question is, I respect the Presidency of the United States, and I think it's an important job. How frustrating is it for you to try to get your message out to the people when it seems like the opposing party is criticizing you constantly?

Mr. King. What do you make of the daily hate? There is a lot of hate in America.

The President. There is, and I would say to her, I don't mind the daily criticism. What I don't like and don't agree with is the sort of atmosphere of negativism and cynicism. That is, I should be criticized by people who disagree with me; we should have an honest debate. That's really the way you make progress in this country. But we have gotten to be entirely too negative and cynical and divisive, and that's one of our country's big problems. We need to get out of being quite so partisan and quite so personal and quite so interested in the destruction of our opponents.

This country, with all of its problems, no other country would trade places with us as we get ready to go into this new century, because our productivity, the strength of our people, the wealth of our resources, the diversity of our population in a global economy—if we can just figure out a way to restore middle class dreams and middle class values and pull this country together, there's no stopping the United States.

So I say to the lady, it bothers me not to be criticized, but it bothers me that there is an atmosphere that is more negative than positive. America should be more positive than negative.

1996 Presidential Election

Mr. King. A couple of political things. Do you think Senator Dole will be your opponent?

The Vice President. I don't know. I don't know.

Mr. King. Do you think so?

The Vice President. It looks that way now, but it's impossible to tell. It's so far off.

The President. I don't know. One thing I've learned watching this for 30 years, is you can't tell now who will be there then.

Mr. King. Mr. Gingrich will be in New Hampshire all weekend; so will you. You'll be there for Dartmouth on Sunday. Do you think

he might enter the race? That's just a thought. You know, just three people talking.

The President. I don't know. You've got to ask him. I really don't know. I talk to him all the time, but not about this.

Mr. King. Would you regard it as a challenge if he did? Do you think he'll—

The President. Well, it would be interesting. Of course, he'd have to be nominated first. But it would be interesting.

Mr. King. Senator—Mr. Vice President? I'm so used to calling him—

The Vice President. I'm still in the—

Mr. King. I know, you're still in the Senate.

The Vice President. I'm still in the Senate. And you know, the experience of voting in the Senate's made me a more optimistic person, because I've noticed that every time I vote, we win. [Laughter]

Mr. King. Good line.

The Vice President. But to answer your question, I don't know. It sounds—

Mr. King. Would it be formidable?

The Vice President. You know, we're not going to rank any potential opponents for the President. Anybody who got the nomination would be, by definition, the nominee of the other party and formidable. But it sounds to me like he kind of wants to, but maybe I have it wrong, and I have no idea.

Mr. King. Mr. Perot has called a meeting in Dallas with his large group. He says every Republican candidate has agreed to go. Will you go?

The Vice President. I'm inclined not to go, because I have a lot of respect for the United We Stand group, and I hope that they will review my record in terms of what they said they wanted done in 1992, because I have done or advocated a vast majority of what they did. But I don't believe—I think the President's in a little different category. I don't think the President should start the politicking too soon. I've got a job; I'm supposed to be working for the American people. I'm trying to work with this new Republican Congress, and I want to diminish partisan politics and my personal politics for as long as I can.

Q. Therefore, you'll ask the Vice President not to go, either?

The President. We haven't even discussed it. I'm telling you what my instinct is.

The Vice President. I don't plan to go. I think that the party chair has already expressed his intention to go.

Mr. King. He will go?

The Vice President. Yes.

Surgeon General Nominee Henry Foster

Mr. King. Foster, is he going to go through?

The President. I think he will. I think we're very close to having the votes to break filibuster, and I think a filibuster would be wrong. He's a good man. He cleared the committee; he was treated fairly, in a bipartisan way. He had all those kids from Tennessee from those housing projects come up and say, "Here's a guy that told us to abstain from premature sex, to stay off drugs, to be good people." That's the message we need going out to America's children.

Mr. King. Is Senator Dole going to bring it to the floor?

The Vice President. I hope he will. Nobody in America is better qualified to lead a crusade against this epidemic of teen pregnancy.

Mr. King. And you think they'll override a Gramm filibuster if it comes to the floor?

The President. I don't see how a majority of the Senate, even 60 percent of them, could say this man's not entitled to a vote, up or down.

[*The network took a commercial break.*]

Balanced Budget

Mr. King. We're back. The Republican National Committee sent out a news release today, Haley Barbour talking about your appearance tonight on this program and saying, 3 years ago on this show you promised the American people you would offer a plan to balance the budget. Do you have such a plan?

The President. Well, as you know, I have said that I will work with the Republicans to balance the budget. And at the proper time, I will offer how I think the best way to do is.

But let's just point out, in 1994, the Republicans told the American people all I did was raise taxes. And they basically turned things upside down; they won the Congress. But what we did, in fact, was to use their 7-year number. We reduced the deficit by a trillion dollars 3 years in a row for the first time since Truman was President. They talked about how terrible it was, but it produced low interest rates, high growth, 6.3 million new jobs.

And I might say to the American people, the Republican plan does not repeal my plan, it builds on it. If they didn't take the deficit reduction we'd already achieved, they could never get to a balance in 7 years or any other figure.

Mr. King. So you say we're going to have something from you after—

The President. So I think—I'll be happy to work with them, but I want—I thought it was important, after they won the election on a set of specific promises, that they have a chance to go and say how they thought it should be done.

Now, you know what I think is wrong with their budget. I think that it cuts Medicare and other health programs to the elderly way too much. It cuts education too much. It uses those cuts to finance a tax cut that is entirely too large and tilted to upper income individuals who are doing very well in the present economy and who basically just want us to get the deficit down.

So, we need to do this, but there's a right way and a wrong way to do it. And at the proper time, I will say what I think the right way is.

Mr. King. And the proper time is imminent or not imminent?

The President. I will do it when I think the proper time is.

Mr. King. Dana Point, California, with Vice President Gore and President Clinton—hello.

Q. Hi, Larry. I enjoy your show. My name is Michelle Denise. Also, I'd like you to know I enjoy Jerry Spence.

Mr. King. Everybody does. He's an international hero, Jerry Spence.

Q. He is quite a character.

The President. He looks good in those jackets.

Mr. King. Doesn't he? Boy. This trial is going forever, right?

Okay.

Defense Base Closures

Q. This question is both for Mr. Clinton and Gore. Are we going to continue our military base closures in consideration that we might possibly be spreading ourselves too thin—

Mr. King. Any chance of that?

The Vice President. Well, the base closure procedure is locked into law. It's bipartisan in nature. It has caused a lot of difficulty. The President has directed his Cabinet to address the problems that have been created. There

June 5 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1995

have been some very imaginative plans to try to use some of these facilities for other purposes and bring back employment and new opportunities in the community. But this was put into place long before we got here, and according to the law, it's going to continue for a while.

The President. But let me answer the security concern the lady raised. Defense spending peaked in about 1987 and since then has been cut about 40 percent. We have suggested that we add back a few billion dollars so we can get our training and our readiness up and support a good quality of life so we can keep first-rate people in the military, because it's the people that make it go.

The answer to your question, ma'am, is that we actually have more base capacity than the number of our men and women in uniform would justify. So we have to bring down the bases a little more so that they're basically in line with the size of our forces. The size of our forces now will enable to meet our security needs and meet our strategic objectives. But we can't cut it a lot more. We should stay about where we are.

Mr. King. Barbra Streisand is here tomorrow night. And are you both fans of hers? Do you like her speaking out on politics, by the way?

The President. I think she's—just as—if we have a right to speak out on entertainment, I think she has the right to speak out on politics. [Laughter] I think that she should do it.

Mr. King. David Letterman is here on Friday.

The Vice President. Tell him I said hello.

Mr. King. I will. Do you plan to return to that show?

The Vice President. I hope to sometime.

Mr. King. Would you recommend the President even appear with David?

The Vice President. I'm going to let him make that decision. [Laughter]

The President. But you know, since we got this procurement reform passed, there are no more of those \$10 ashtrays and \$500 hammers. So he's got no gig anymore. [Laughter]

Mr. King. Thanks, guys. You don't want to do a Brando close, do you? [Laughter]

The Vice President. Just a handshake. [Laughter]

Mr. King. Just a handshake.

The President. We've enjoyed doing the show.

Mr. King. Oh, let me—here—President Clinton does Brando. Do it once.

The Vice President. You missed it.

The President. It's been great being on your show, Larry.

Mr. King. Thank you.

The President. You're a good man; you've got a real future in this business. [Laughter]

Mr. King. Thank you. Thank you.

The President. Good night.

Mr. King. Good night.

The Vice President. Good night.

NOTE: The interview began at 9 p.m. in the Library at the White House.

Remarks to the National Governors' Association Summit on Young Children in Baltimore, Maryland June 6, 1995

Thank you very much. To Governor Dean and Governor Leavitt and all of the Governors who are here, Governor Glendening and Mayor Schmoke and Congressman Cardin: I'm glad to be back in Baltimore. I'm going to have to register as a citizen and begin to pay taxes if I don't stay out of your State a little more, Governor.

I am delighted to be here in Baltimore because Baltimore was one of the six cities which won a highly contested race for the empowerment zones in our country. And I congratulate

Mayor Schmoke on that, and I look forward to his work, along with the Governor and others, in making Baltimore an even stronger and greater city as a result of that.

Governor Dean, I want to thank you for your leadership of the Governors' Association. I don't think I ever enjoyed any job more than being chairman of the Governors' Association, although it was not always easy to please all the Governors. I think it's still not always easy to please all of the Governors. [Laughter]