

Zedillo of Mexico; President Alberto Fujimori of Peru; and President Fidel Castro of Cuba. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Statement on the Interim Report of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses

May 1, 1997

I appreciate the ongoing, rigorous work of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, and I welcome their interim letter report.

The care and well-being of our Gulf war veterans is a national duty and a national priority. That is why I appointed the Committee in May 1995, extended its mandate in January 1997, and directed its attention in February 1997 to the recently released intelligence documents concerning possible chemical exposures.

I am determined that my administration will do everything necessary to uncover all the facts and act on any relevant information, to provide our Gulf war veterans with the quality medical care they need, and to make sure that in any future troop deployments, we draw on lessons learned in the Gulf war to better protect the health of our troops and their families.

This interim report, like those that preceded it, will help us meet that responsibility in an increasingly effective way. I have asked the Secretaries of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services, as well as the Acting Director of Central Intelligence, to study the re-

port and, 2 weeks from today, provide me their proposals for implementing the Committee's recommendations.

To further strengthen our search for the facts, Secretary Cohen and Acting DCI Tenet have asked former Senator Warren Rudman to review the results of their ongoing investigations related to Gulf war illnesses and to offer appropriate recommendations. Senator Rudman brings solid expertise and sound judgment to this important job. I am confident he will assist the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency in ensuring their investigations are thorough and will also enhance our ability to integrate Gulf war intelligence "lessons learned" into our future planning.

I am grateful for the PAC's dedication and persistence, and look forward to their continued, indispensable efforts to make sure no stone is left unturned on behalf of America's Gulf war veterans. We will not rest in our determination to find the answers our service men and women need and ensure that they receive the care and benefits they deserve.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

May 1, 1997

Thank you very much. Mr. Vice President, thank you for that overly generous introduction. I loved every word of it. *[Laughter]* That 5 minutes was the best 5 minutes I ever lost in my Presidency. He hasn't been the same person since.

I want to thank Tipper and Al and Hillary, all of them in their various ways for being unique parts of our rather unique team. I want to thank Tommy Lee Jones for coming here

tonight and for giving that fine speech and being loyal to his old friend Al Gore.

You know, I'm not as mobile as I normally am, and I've been in this big old awkward chair, and I heard Tommy Lee's voice sort of booming out, you know, and I couldn't decide whether I was the fugitive and I ought to be on the run, whether I was Batman and I should duck—I didn't know what I should do. *[Laughter]* You know, I really enjoyed watching Tommy Lee and Al's friendship; they have a lot in common.