

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Round of Golf in Waco, Texas

August 7, 2001

President's Vacation

Q. What are you doing?

The President. It's nice to be home, for starters. This is my home; this is where I intend to live after I'm the President. It's good to be back with the people who elected me the Governor of Texas. I'm working a lot of issues, national security matters. I've got some decisions to make—as you know, working on immigration policy, state visit with the President of Mexico.

But I'm getting a lot done, and it's good to be on my ranch. It's good to be home.

Stem Cell Research

Q. Any closer on stem cell research decision?

The President. I'll be making that decision when—I'll be making that announcement when I'm ready to make the announcement.

President's Vacation

Q. How do you deal with the heat here in this area? It's awfully hot.

The President. This is Texas. I know a lot of you wish you were in the East Coast, lounging on the beaches, sucking in the salt air, but when you're from Texas and love Texas, this is where you come home; this is my home. We built a house in the Crawford area; it'll be the house where I live in for the rest of my life. I like my own home, and I don't mind the heat—

Q. Are you taking any naps in the afternoon, sir?

The President. —as a matter of fact, I'm going to get Stretch [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News] to come and run with me.

Q. Any time you're ready.

The President. Want to go for a heat run?

Q. Sure. How about this afternoon?

The President. It may be a little too hot, Stretch.

Q. Are you taking any naps in the afternoon, sir?

The President. I'm working, enjoying myself, getting a lot done on the ranch, too. One of the things I find to be, you know, helpful,

is to get outdoors. Washington, DC, is a fine place, and I'm honored to be working in the Oval Office, staying in the compound there, but I'm the kind of person that needs to get outdoors. I like to be outdoors; I like to work outdoors. It keeps my mind whole; it keeps my spirits up. I think it's important for people to get outside and to work.

And I'm making a lot of improvements on the ranch, and I find that to be—I find that to be a good part of keeping me a balanced person.

I'm reading a lot. I just finished "In the Heart of the Sea," by Philbrick. It's a book about the whaler *Essex*. It's a really interesting book. Now I'm into the Adams book by McCullough.

Q. How do you like it?

The President. I like it.

Q. I heard it's a good read.

The President. It is a good read. It's an interesting book. I'm particularly paying attention to that part about John Quincy Adams. You might remember, Quincy and I have got something in common.

Q. How does the heat here compare to the heat of Washington, politically? [Laughter]

The President. Politically? Well, I'm amongst friends in Texas. I think the people of Texas know me; they know what I'm like; they know I can make decisions; they know I'm a person who stands on principles. I really don't worry about polls or focus groups; I do what I think is right. And so there's no political heat here. I'm amongst friends, and it doesn't matter whether they're Democrats or Republicans here in Texas. The people and I got along really well. In Washington, it's a lot more partisan. People up there just like to dig in and fight. You know, Bob Bullock and I showed that you don't have to fight to get things done. Bob Bullock was the old Democratic Lieutenant Governor.

And I think eventually, over time, if I stay persistent, that we'll erode that intransigence in Washington, DC—you know, where people say, "Let's try to score political points; let's don't try to come together and work for what's right." But we'll see. We made a lot of progress the first 6 months—a lot more than a lot of people thought we could do.

Yes, Stretch?

President's Round of Golf

Q. Walking or riding?

The President. Stretch, probably ride, since I want to save my legs for a good run.

Q. What's the rule on mulligans today?

The President. No mulligans—except on the first tee. [Laughter] That's just to loosen up. You see, otherwise—most people get to hit practice balls. But as you know, I'm walking out here; I'm fixing to go hit—tight back, older guy, I hit the speed limit on July 6th. [Laughter]

Q. Who are you golfing with?

The President. I'm golfing with my friend David Sibley. There he is right here, Senator Sibley, the man who helped write the patients' bill of rights in Texas and the man who went to testify in Washington to say those who claim that the Ganske-something-something bill was like the Texas bill were wrong. More like the Texas bill is the Norwood bill, as amended—which I will sign when we get it out of conference.

Right, Sibley?

State Senator David Sibley. That's it.

The President. Okay, got get lost. [Laughter]

[At this point, the President played a round of golf.]

The President. You know, word about the President is supposed to win hasn't gotten here yet. [Laughter]

Q. How did it go?

The President. We came in second place.

Q. In a two-man race?

The President. Very good. [Laughter]

State Senator Sibley. Actually, we split.

The President. We had a lot of fun.

Human Cloning

Q. Mr. President, what do you think of the Italian scientist that wants to clone a human being this fall?

The President. As you know, I supported the anticloning legislation in the Congress. And I'll be making a statement about my views on how life and science should interface when I'm ready.

Iraq

Q. Also today, apparently the Iraqis fired upon some allied planes in the no-fly zone,

and we bombed, apparently, some of the sites there. What do you have on that?

The President. I've been briefed on it. As you know, our military can make decisions as they see fit to protect our pilots. Unless, of course, it's close to Baghdad, in which case it requires my approval. The missions that took place were fully in accordance with established allied war plans.

As I said, Saddam Hussein is a menace. He's still a menace, and we need to keep him in check, and will.

Q. Are they ratcheting it up, though? We've had a lot of incidents lately.

The President. No—are they, the Iraqis? He's been a menace forever, and we will do—he needs to open his country up for inspection, so we can see whether or not he's developing weapons of mass destruction.

Situation in the Middle East

Q. Some of our allies in the Middle East, Egypt and Jordan, are increasingly calling for a stronger U.S. presence and role.

The President. Well, I told—I spoke to the King the other day, King of Jordan, and I told him that we're very much involved; our administration is in contact with the Israelis and the Palestinians on a regular basis. We will continue to do so. It is important for both sides to break the cycle of violence. And we have laid out a framework to get to Mitchell. And once into Mitchell, hopefully, sanity will prevail. But we haven't gotten into Mitchell yet, and we can't get into Mitchell until violence stops.

But our administration—I talked to Condi this morning, we're in touch with—constantly in touch, you know, our Ambassador went to see Prime Minister Sharon yesterday. And we'll be having—we'll continue with high-level contacts with both sides. I spoke to—I've written a letter to Prime Minister Mubarak today—President Mubarak, today, and—

Q. What did you tell him?

The President. Well, I told him we're still very much engaged in the process, obviously, that we take violence very serious in the Middle East. The Middle East is one of our top foreign policy—peace in the Middle East is a top foreign policy priority and that we need

to work together to convince both sides to break the cycle of violence.

See you all.

NOTE: The exchange began at 7:17 a.m. at Ridge-wood Country Club. In his remarks, the President referred to President Vicente Fox of Mexico; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; King Abdullah II of Jordan; Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; and authors Nathaniel Philbrick and David McCullough. The President also referred to the Report by the Sharm al-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee, which was chaired by former Senator George J. Mitchell. A reporter referred to Italian fertility doctor Severino Antinori. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks to Participants in Habitat for Humanity's "World Leaders Build" in Waco, Texas

August 8, 2001

Thank you, all. Please be seated, before you melt. *[Laughter]* Mel, thank you very much. Laura and I had the honor of welcoming Mel and Kitty to our little slice of heaven last night in Crawford, Texas. He's doing a fabulous job. I don't know if you know the story about Mel Martinez, but as a young boy, his parents put him on a boat from Cuba, hoping that he could find freedom—and did, and now is a Cabinet Secretary in the Cabinet of the 43d President, and he is doing a fabulous job on behalf of America. And Mel, it's a lot cooler here in Texas than it is in Tampa, Florida. *[Laughter]*

I'm honored to be here with Laura. She is—I know most of my Texas friends know this was going to be the case, but she is a great First Lady. I want to thank the Gowan family for your hospitality. I asked him about that New York Yankee hat. *[Laughter]* He said it was the only one he could find. *[Laughter]* Either that or he was showing off for the national press corps. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank, as well, the Evans family, Bubba and Destini and Gladys. I told Bubba, if he wanted some advice, it's always to listen to his mother, something I understand quite well. *[Laughter]* But Bubba and Destini promised Laura and me that they're going to go to college. They're going to use that

home as a place to study. You're now on record, Bubba. *[Laughter]*

Tom, it's good to see you again, sir. Thank you for coming down from Washington today. I had the honor of welcoming Jimmy Carter to the Oval Office the other day, and he asked me about the international home build, and I said I was going to participate—in God's country. *[Laughter]* He said, "I didn't realize you were going to be in Georgia." *[Laughter]* I said, "No, Texas." *[Laughter]* And so it's an honor to be participating today along with President Carter, who is in South Korea, and other world leaders all around the globe.

I want to thank my fellow Texans who are here, as well. I particularly want to thank David Ward, and I want to thank the Baylor University Habitat for Humanity crowd. It's one of the oldest in the country. I think it's the first Habitat for Humanity college building program, and I want to thank the Baylor students who are here today and those who have kept the tradition alive up to now.

I'm glad to welcome the Governor. It's good to see you, Gov, I'm glad you're here. I played golf with my State senator, David Sibley. You're supposed to play: President wins. *[Laughter]* I guess you know me too well. I know you better now. *[Laughter]* It's good to see you and Pam. It's good to see Kip and Dianne, thank you all for both coming over. I miss you. I miss the—they're both members of the State house. Sibley is in the Senate.

Dealing with the United States Congress is an interesting experience compared to dealing with our legislature. It seems like people there want to harden their positions pretty quickly because they're, a lot of times, more interested in politics than they are in good policy. I want to assure you all I'm working hard to change that attitude. I'm trying to erode the old bias, the old prejudice of putting politics ahead of what's right for America. I think we're making good progress. I do miss the days when Democrat and Republican could sit down together here in Texas and work things out.

I was telling David yesterday that we're making some pretty good progress on the Patients' Bill of Rights by focusing with people to find common ground. It's an experience