

Mar. 24 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1994

it goes too far there. So there are no real easy answers.

But I can say categorically that I have been briefed on a very wide range of options and that nobody in this administration has made any decision, and no one will make a decision except me, about how to fund it. That decision has not been made. We will come forward with that plan. We do think it offers the real promise of ending welfare as we know it, of moving people from welfare to work if we can also guarantee these welfare parents that when they

go to work their children will not lose the health care that they have on welfare, so they won't be punished for going to work. That's the key issue.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 54th news conference began at 7:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Gary E. Luck, USA, commander, U.S. forces, Korea, and Mangosuthu Buthelezi, South African Inkatha Freedom Party leader.

Statement on the Assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio

March 24, 1994

I am profoundly saddened to learn of the brutal assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio, the Presidential candidate of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Mexico. I deeply deplore this senseless act of violence and have conveyed my deepest sympathies to the Mexican people and to the family of Mr. Colosio, his wife, and two young children.

Mr. Colosio dedicated his life to public service and to the betterment of his nation. It is particularly tragic when an assassin's bullet slays

a man who still had so much to contribute to history. It is a great loss not only for Mexico but for all of North America.

I telephoned President Carlos Salinas de Gortari shortly after midnight last night to express my sorrow and that of the American people and to offer my condolences to the Colosio family. I told President Salinas that the United States stands ready to assist Mexico in the coming days in any way we can.

Exchange With Reporters

March 25, 1994

Air Collision at Pope Air Force Base

Q. Mr. President, why are you going to Fort Bragg?

The President. I'm going down there because it was a very, very serious accident. A lot of our service people lost their lives; many, many others were quite seriously injured. And I just want to go down there and visit the hospital and express my concerns to the people who are still hospitalized and to their families and all the people at Fort Bragg for the losses they suffered. I think it's an appropriate thing to do.

Whitewater

Q. How do you feel about last night, Mr. President? Do you think you put some of this Whitewater business behind you?

The President. I just tried to answer the questions, and I felt good about it. I did my best to answer the questions. I feel good about it.

Q. [*Inaudible*—Mr. President, how you could have forgotten about a \$20,000 loan and check to your mother to buy a—

The President. Well, I think what happened was—keep in mind, all this happened in the heat of the '92 campaign. And they just said, "Is there any way any of these checks from Madison could have come from some—been about something else?" I said, "I don't think

so.” And what happened was, when I read my mother’s autobiography, I said, “You know, that’s right, I did help her buy that place.” So then—and Hillary and I were talking, so we asked for the checks. And when I saw the check, then I realized that that’s where it had come from.

But when Jim McDougal said that, that he was sure that it didn’t have anything to do with Madison, that’s what got me to thinking about it. Then I saw it in the book. Then we asked for the check stub. That’s how we verified it. So it just happened that way.

You know, keep in mind, keep in mind, when I was first asked about this back in ’92, just off the top of my head, I said, “We lost money, but I don’t think it was a great deal.” I thought—I think I’m quoted in ’92 saying I thought we’d lost about \$25,000, just from mem-

ory. So apparently, we lost quite a bit more than that.

Q. Are you positive the tax returns that are being released today will clear the air on this matter?

The President. Well, they certainly ought to. Like I said, I always did what I think most Americans do, I gave all my records every year to my accountant. They were normally very simple returns. I didn’t have a lot of complicated things on them. And we’ve given them out, all the way back to ’77 now. So you guys have got them. You can do what you want to with them.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:30 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to the President’s departure for Pope Air Force Base, Fort Bragg, NC.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters at Fort Bragg, North Carolina March 25, 1994

Air Collision at Pope Air Force Base

The President. First of all, I’d like to thank General Shelton and General Steele and General Davis for welcoming me here and for giving me an opportunity not only to review the site of the crash but also to go into this hospital and to see not only a good number of the soldiers who were injured but also the people who have been up virtually nonstop for the last 2 days caring for them.

I found it deeply moving. In the first place, the morale of the people who have been burned and injured is high. Their pride in their work and in their country is very strong. And what everybody said about the quality of care they’ve gotten and the outpouring of effort that has been made to help them deal with their problem has been very moving. Person after person said, “You know, I just can’t wait to get back to my work. I’m ready to serve again.”

It was a deeply moving thing. I’m very grateful to them for their service and to all of those who have cared so well for them.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us what you talked about or what you said to some of those who you saw today?

Mr. President. A lot of times we just made small talk. I asked them where they were from, how long they had been in the Army, what happened. They talked about it a little bit.

I was especially moved—I met a man and his wife who were both in the incident, both in the service, both injured. The man was injured because he was putting the fire out on his wife. And a lot of these young people were injured because they, instead of taking themselves to safety, were trying to help others who were being burned.

It was a very—I wish everyone in America could have seen the faces, the eyes, the spirit of these people. They would realize how fortunate we are to be served by men and women like this who are both brave and selfless and with no concern other than just to get back to their lives and to their duty. I mean, it is very, very moving. I’m very glad I came. I’m glad I had the opportunity to see this and, again, profoundly grateful to the people in this fine hospital who are taking such good care of them.

Q. Is this one of the worst incidents you’ve seen?

Mr. President. It was a serious problem, but they’ve handled it magnificently, I think.