

to ending youth smoking. This issue is critical to our efforts to improve the health of our Nation. According to the Center for Disease Control, of the 2 million Americans who will die in 1995, over 400,000 of them will have conditions related to smoking.

Later today, I will announce my strategy for combating this problem based on one simple idea: We should do everything we possibly can

to keep tobacco out of the hands of our young people in the United States.

Now I'd like to call on Shana Bailey, who is a 12-year-old from Florida who's part of a successful program that teaches students how and why they should stay smoke-free.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:18 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

The President's News Conference August 10, 1995

Teenage Smoking

The President. Good afternoon. Today I am announcing broad executive action to protect the young people of the United States from the awful dangers of tobacco.

Over the years, we have learned more and more about the dangers of addictive substances to our young people. In the sixties and seventies we came to realize the threat drugs posed to young Americans. In the eighties we came to grips with the awful problem of drunk driving among young people. It is time to take a third step to free our teenagers from addiction and dependency.

Adults are capable of making their own decisions about whether to smoke. But we all know that children are especially susceptible to the deadly temptation of tobacco and its skillful marketing. Today, and every day this year, 3,000 young people will begin to smoke. One thousand of them ultimately will die of cancer, emphysema, heart disease, and other diseases caused by smoking. That's more than a million vulnerable young people a year being hooked on nicotine that ultimately could kill them.

Therefore, by executive authority, I will restrict sharply the advertising, promotion, distribution, and marketing of cigarettes to teenagers. I do this on the basis of the best available scientific evidence, the findings of the American Medical Association, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association, the Centers for Disease Control. Fourteen months of study by the Food and Drug Administration confirms what we all know: Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco are

harmful, highly addictive, and aggressively marketed to our young people. The evidence is overwhelming, and the threat is immediate.

Our children face a health crisis that is getting worse. One-third more 8th-graders and one-quarter more 10th-graders are smoking today than 4 years ago. One out of five high school seniors is a daily smoker. We need to act, and we must act now, before another generation of Americans is condemned to fight a difficult and grueling personal battle with an addiction that will cost millions of them their lives.

Adults make their own decisions about whether or not to smoke. Relatively few people start to smoke past their teens. Many adults have quit; many have tried and failed. But we all know that teenagers are especially susceptible to pressures, pressure to the manipulation of mass media advertising, the pressure of the seduction of skilled marketing campaigns aimed at exploiting their insecurities and uncertainties about life.

When Joe Camel tells young children that smoking is cool, when billboards tell teens that smoking will lead to true romance, when Virginia Slims tells adolescents that cigarettes may make them thin and glamorous, then our children need our wisdom, our guidance, and our experience. We are their parents, and it is up to us to protect them.

So today I am authorizing the Food and Drug Administration to initiate a broad series of steps all designed to stop sales and marketing of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco to children. As a result, the following steps will be taken. First, young people will have to prove their age with an I.D. card to buy cigarettes. Second, cigarette

vending machines which circumvent any ban on sales to kids will be prohibited. Third, schools and playgrounds will be free of tobacco advertising on billboards in their neighborhoods. Fourth, images such as Joe Camel will not appear on billboards or in ads in publications that reach substantial numbers of children and teens. Fifth, teens won't be targeted by any marketing gimmicks, ranging from single cigarette sales to T-shirts, gym bags, and sponsorship of sporting events. And finally, the tobacco industry must fund and implement an annual \$150 million campaign aimed at stopping teens from smoking through educational efforts.

Now, these are all commonsense steps. They don't ban smoking; they don't bar advertising. We do not, in other words, seek to address activities that seek to sell cigarettes only to adults. We are stepping in to protect those who need our help, our vulnerable young people. And the evidence of increasing smoking in the last few years is plain and compelling.

Now, nobody much likes Government regulation. And I would prefer it if we could have done this in some other way. The only other way I can think of is if Congress were to write these restrictions into law. They could do that. And if they do, this rule could become unnecessary. But it is wrong to believe that we can take a voluntary approach to this problem. And absent congressional action, and in the presence of a massive marketing and lobbying campaign by cigarette companies aimed at our children, clearly, I have no alternative but to do everything I can to bring this assault to a halt.

The issue has touched all of us in personal ways. We all know friends or family members whose lives were shortened because of their involvement with tobacco. The Vice President's sister, a heavy smoker who started as a teen, died of lung cancer. It is that kind of pain that I seek to spare other families and young children. Less smoking means less cancer, less illness, longer lives, a stronger America. Acting together we can make a difference. With this concerted plan targeted at those practices that especially prey upon our children, we can save lives, and we will.

To those who produce and market cigarettes, I say today, take responsibility for your actions. Sell your products only to adults. Draw the line on children. Show by your deeds as well as your words that you recognize that it is wrong

as well as illegal to hook one million children a year on tobacco.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Q. Mr. President, with your decision on tobacco you're taking on one of the biggest cash crops in a region where you've already got major political problems. Are you writing off the South for next year's elections? And isn't this a blow to other Democratic candidates in tobacco States?

The President. Well, first of all, the most important thing is that there is an epidemic among our children. You've got a third more 8th-graders, a quarter more 10th-graders smoking than there were 10 years ago. Whatever the political consequences, a thousand kids a day are beginning a habit which will probably shorten their lives. I mean, that is the issue. And I believe that is the issue everywhere.

I believe there are tobacco farmers in the States which grow tobacco, who have been involved in it a hundred years or more—their families—who don't want their kids to start smoking. We're not talking about whether they have a right to grow tobacco or reap the paltry 4½ cents, which is all they get out of a pack of cigarettes. We're talking about whether we are going to do what we know is the right thing to do to save the lives of America's children. And I think it is more important than any political consequence.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, the war in Bosnia is widening. How long is the world, particularly the Europeans who have been there in the past, how long are they going to stand—we all are going to stand by and watch this barbarism on both sides? And what are your new initiatives to end this suffering?

The President. Well, first of all, let me briefly review what our objectives are. Our objectives are to minimize suffering, to stop the war from spreading, to preserve the integrity of a Bosnian state. We have promoted the Muslim-Croat Federation. We have plainly succeeded in limiting the war. And except when the United Nations and NATO had not done what they said they would do, we have saved lives.

This is an important moment in Bosnia, and it could be a moment of real promise. Because of the military actions of the last few days, the

situation on the ground has changed. There is some uncertainty and instability. It could go either way. But I think it's a time when we should try to make a move to make peace.

Now, since the fall of Srebrenica and Zepa, we have tried to do two things: first of all, to strengthen the presence of the United Nations through the Rapid Reaction Force of the French, the British, and the Dutch, which we are supporting; and through getting a clearer chain of command and a stronger, broader use of authority for NATO to have air power where necessary where the protected areas are threatened.

The second thing we want to do is to see whether or not some diplomatic solution can be brought to bear that would be fair and decent and just and that would take advantage of this moment where people are reassessing their various positions. And that's what Mr. Lake is doing in Europe. We are consulting with all of our allies, and we're going to do the very best we can. I think we need to try to make a decent and good peace here because, ultimately, that's the answer to all the questions you ask.

Q. [Inaudible]—you have new ideas?

The President. Well, we're exploring some ideas with the Europeans. I will say again what I said from the first day I came here: I do not believe it is right to impose peace on people. I don't think in the end you get a lasting peace. So the United States does not seek to impose peace. But we're exploring some different ideas. We don't have a set map; we don't have a set position. We have some ideas that the new events may make possible, and we're discussing it with our allies.

Brit [Brit Hume, ABC News].

Teenage Smoking

Q. Mr. President, in view of the powerful evidence of the dangers of smoking which you cited, wouldn't it have been more logical to impose an outright ban instead of a regulatory partial step which has the effect of getting the Federal Government into the business of regulating the size of print in advertising?

The President. Well, first I don't know that the Federal Government will regulate the size of print; we regulate the warning labels. And of course, there is a proposal here on advertising to try to deal with restricting access to billboard advertising and others.

But I think it would be wrong to ban cigarettes outright because, number one, it's not illegal for adults to use them. Tens of millions of adults do use them, and I think it would be as ineffective as prohibition was. But I think to focus on our children is the right thing to do. Purchasing of cigarettes by young people, children, is supposed to be illegal in all 50 States, but they do it regularly. These fine young people here were with me this morning, and one of them talked about how he bought cigarette pack after cigarette pack after cigarette pack out of vending machines to try to demonstrate to his local legislators that the laws were a sham. These will not make the laws a sham. This will enable us to save young people's lives.

China

Q. Mr. President, has there been any progress in getting China to free human rights activist, Harry Wu? And related to that, will Mrs. Clinton be going to China in September to attend the U.N. Conference on Women?

The President. On the first question, we're obviously very concerned about Harry Wu and following his case very closely. And I think the situation is in a position where the less that is said about it right now, the better. But it's a very important issue to the United States, and I think to people throughout the world.

No decision has yet been made about whether the First Lady will go to China. But I think it's important for the American people to understand that this conference on women is a United Nations-sponsored conference that they decided to hold in China. It is a very important thing in its own right, and the United States will be represented there with a very strong delegation, whether she goes or not. And I think it's important that we be represented there.

Yes, Wolf [Wolf Blitzer, CNN].

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, the situation in Iraq seems to be somewhat fluid right now with the defection of two of Saddam Hussein's daughters, two of his sons-in-law, his oldest grandchild to Jordan. And King Hussein's granting political asylum to all of these people. First of all, can you assess what is happening in Baghdad right now? And have you offered additional assurances to Jordan that the United States will provide security if there is a threat from Iraq?

The President. Well, as soon as the defections occurred, King Hussein contacted us, and I called him back as quickly as I could on Tuesday evening and we had a long talk about it. I think what these defections demonstrate is just how difficult things are within Iraq now and how out of touch Saddam Hussein has become with reality, how difficult things are for his people. I also think this evidence supports the strong and firm position the United States has taken of not lifting the sanctions until Iraq fully complies with all the United Nations resolutions. I think that is—it's clear that we have done the right thing.

Now, with regard to your second question, King Hussein's decision, located where he is, to grant asylum to those individuals was clearly an act of real courage. And I have assured him and told him that we would stand behind Jordan. We owe it to the people who are our partners in peace in the Middle East to stand behind them, and we have already made it clear that if Iraq threatens its neighbors or violates United Nations resolutions, we would take appropriate action. I think we have to do so in this case.

Q. Any contingency steps being taken?

The President. Well, I think you saw when Kuwait was threatened a few months ago, we are quite well-organized, and we have thought through what our—various scenarios there and how we might move. But beyond that, I don't want to say. And I don't want to raise a red flag. I'm just saying we know that Saddam Hussein has been unpredictable in the past, we know this must be a very unsettling development, and it should be clear that the United States considers Jordan our ally and entitled to our protection if their security is threatened as a result of this incident.

Teenage Smoking

Q. Mr. President, given the fact that there's been a 20-year war against drugs, which are illegal for everybody, which has produced, at best, mixed results, and given the fact that anybody who has kids know that the more you prohibit something, the more attractive it often becomes, what makes you think that you think you can do any better in the war against cigarettes than we've done against drugs?

The President. Well, first of all, let me say that—let me take on your premise here. There have been sustained periods of years in our

country and in recent history when drug use has gone down in all categories of drugs, among all ages of people without regard to race or income. Unfortunately, today the picture is somewhat mixed because casual drug use among young people seems to be going up in areas where they feel a certain level of hopelessness. And we intend to reassert our efforts there.

But it's simply not true that cultural changes and legal bars together cannot work to reduce consumption. With regard to cigarettes, we have seen cultural changes leading to reduction in consumption. But what we see among young people is adults quitting and young people increasing their usage. If you make it clearly illegal, more inaccessible, you reduce the lure of advertising and then you have an affirmative campaign, a positive campaign, so that you don't just say no, you give young people information and make it the smart, the cool, the hip thing to do to take care of yourself and keep yourself healthy and alive. I believe there is every evidence from what has happened in drugs and in many other areas that we will see a dramatic decline in smoking among young people. I think we can do that.

And I think you see—there have been a lot of cultural changes to that effect in other areas. You see some States that have done it right have big increase in the use of seatbelts. Drunk driving goes down dramatically in some areas with the combination of the right sort of enforcement and the right sort of publicity. So I believe—I just don't accept your premise. I think we'll have a big dent in this problem.

Appropriations Legislation

Q. Mr. President, the House has cut \$20 billion in discretionary spending for next year. Will they have to return some of those cuts to avoid you vetoing some of their appropriations bills?

The President. Yes. [Laughter]

Whitewater Hearings

Q. Mr. President, on Whitewater, you've said in the past that as far as you know everything as far as major evidence that is going to come out is out. We now face the prospect though of hearings going into 1996. Do you view this as pure politics? Do you worry about the overall shadow it has cast, merely the appearance of wrongdoing over the White House?

The President. I don't have anything new to add to what I've already said about that. I will

reiterate, when I started this whole episode I said I would cooperate fully; I have cooperated fully. There is nothing else for me to do. I have to spend my energies and time being President, and that's what I'm doing my best to do.

Yes, Mara [Mara Liasson, National Public Radio].

Political Reform and Ross Perot

Q. Mr. President, what message do you want Senator Dodd and Mr. McLarty to take to Ross Perot when they go down there this weekend? And also, do you feel that Ross Perot's contribution to the issue of political reform is significant enough that you would consider appointing him to the bipartisan commission, should it get established?

The President. The answer to the second question—let me answer that first—the answer to the second question is, yes, I would consider doing that, but first, the Speaker has got to answer my letter or see John Gardner or Doris Kearns Goodwin or do something to respond to the handshake we made in New Hampshire. Of all the strange things that happen in Washington—and I know people think that all the rules are different here than they are for anybody anywhere else in America—but even here, when you shake hands with somebody in broad daylight and say you're going to do something, you ought to at least act like your going to do it. [Laughter] Where I come from, you know, if kids did that, their mamas wouldn't let them have dinner before—they got spanked, when I was growing up I mean, this is an amazing thing. So, yes, I would.

The second part of the question was what will their message be. Their message will be: Number one, that the things that Ross Perot and Bill Clinton advocated in '92 had a lot of overlap, and we have made significant progress in implementing 80 percent of the things that Ross Perot campaigned for in 1992; two, a lot of the things that we haven't done are because of obstruction in Congress, and I mention only two, the line-item veto and political reform; and third, our budget is more consistent with the budget priorities outlined by Ross Perot and his campaign in 1992, that is, balance the budget but increase investment in education, research, and development, technology, and defense conversion.

So, we've got a record message. We've got a present conflict message. We've got a message

to ask them to come help us to support meaningful political reform and the right kind of balanced budget.

Tobacco Industry

Q. Mr. President, you noted in your speech in Charlotte yesterday that children follow what we do more than what we say. And I wonder what you think the message is when, on the one hand, the Government cracks down on teen smoking, on the other hand, it spends perhaps \$25 million a year subsidizing the growth of tobacco, and when you yourself continue to smoke those big old cigars. [Laughter]

The President. Well first of all, as you know, I'm allergic to cigars, so I don't smoke many anymore. But I smoke a handful a year probably, and I probably shouldn't. And I try not to do it in any way that sets a bad example. But I plead guilty to that.

On the tobacco program, if it is self-financing—and I have always supported the tobacco program. It is essentially a self financing program. The question is, do you want this tobacco grown by family farmers, or do you want it grown by big corporations if it's a self-financing program? I would not favor a large taxpayer outlay for it. But a self-financing program, essentially which is what that is, has been designed to preserve the structure of family farms and the culture of the family farms rather than let the big tobacco companies grow it themselves and turn all those folks into hired hands. I have thought, since it was going to be grown one way or the other, the family farm structure was a better one. I don't think that sends a signal that we think young people ought to smoke cigarettes.

Drug Cartels

Q. [Inaudible]—the Colombian Government has captured some of the top leaders of both cartels, and there's been friction between your government and the Samper government when he came in. My first question is, do you think they are doing everything they can? And the second question is, how worried are you that as the Colombian cartel wanes in influence, Mexican cartels will pick up the breach?

The President. Well, first of all, I want to support the statements made by the DEA Director in my administration, Tom Cossidine. We have worked very hard with the Colombians and with others in South America, and you see the

results in the last several months. We have had more major drug dealers arrested than in any previous similar time in our history, I believe. And we're on the verge of breaking this Cali cartel. It's been great cooperation; we've worked hard. It's making a difference.

Secondly, as long as the raw crops can be grown and processed and distributed, we will have a constant battle, as long as there's demand in the United States, to keep any vacuum from being filled. And we are exploring today what the problems created by our successes might be, that is, if we continue to break down existing cartels, who will take up the slack and how can we prevent it.

Teenage Smoking

Q. Mr. President, last week you said that you did not want to advance a tobacco strategy that would get caught up in the courts and prevent any kind of action from taking place for years. Now you seem to have embarked on that strategy. Tobacco companies have already today filed suit against your proposals. Why did you determine a voluntary effort in concert with the tobacco companies would not work? And is there any hope for some sort of compromise, some sort of either compromise with the tobacco companies or congressional action before you implement these regulations?

The President. Well, first of all, I had hoped that the tobacco companies would agree to support these restrictions and to put them in law. And it's still not too late for that. The FDA—Dr. Kessler has announced today a rulemaking procedure on the assumption of jurisdiction and on the specifics that I just outlined. If the tobacco companies accept those and this Congress will write them into law, then you will not have a long regulatory proceeding. But you will have immediate, immediate, effects. That is, if they would rather have a law than Federal regulation, the FDA Director, Dr. Kessler, and I would rather have an immediate impact on teen smoking, not 2 years of litigation and then start the work. So it is not too late for that.

But I am against a voluntary plan. I'm against it for several reasons. First of all, there would be no way to enforce it. Secondly, the history of voluntary agreements with the tobacco industry is not good, to put it mildly. And thirdly, even if they tried to adhere to it, I don't believe they could legally do so.

Let me just give you one example. Suppose you were in the vending machine business and you sued the tobacco companies for deciding together that they were going to not let your vending machines go anywhere. Without a legal requirement there's a good chance that could be held in a court of law to be a restraint of trade. So I think even if they tried to do it, they couldn't do it.

So we have to have a mandatory system. But I would just as soon have an act of Congress. Dr. Kessler agrees because we've got an epidemic of teen smoking, and far better to start right now as soon as we can pass a law than wait until we wade through all this litigation.

Airline Safety

Q. Mr. President, there was a scary breakdown yesterday in the air traffic control system in the Western United States, and we've had similar incidents in past months and recent years. Can you tell the American people that the FAA is doing everything possible to preserve the safety of the flying public, or do you see that new measures need to be taken?

The President. I can tell you that I have asked that question repeatedly since I have been President, and I have worked very hard on making sure that we are moving to do everything we can constantly to make sure that the air traffic control system is as safe as possible.

We also, as you know, have ordered some new measures to be taken to promote airline security, which the Secretary of Transportation announced just in the last couple of days. And I do want to emphasize to the American people because I know there's been a lot of discussion about it, there was no specific incident that prompted me to make the decision to try to increase security around airports. But the overall conditions, it seemed to me, dictated that we do that.

And I think that this country has been very strong against terrorism through military action, imposing sanctions, stopping sanctions from being lifted, stopping terrorist incidents before they occur, arresting terrorists shortly after they commit acts. This is a part of our ongoing effort to protect the American people from that.

And parenthetically, I would like to say I certainly wish the Congress would pass the antiterrorism legislation which was promised to me on Memorial Day. That would also help us in this regard.

Teenage Drinking

Q. In going after teenage smoking, Mr. President, did you consider including alcohol abuse as part of that? I know you mentioned drunk driving in your opening remarks, but alcohol among young people is thought to be as much of a problem as smoking is.

The President. First of all, it is far less accessible. It's harder to get. What we have advocated there, and I hope the Congress will adopt, is a national zero tolerance for alcohol among young drivers. If we go to zero tolerance among young drivers, I think it will make a difference. Now, I noted last week—and I would like to give the State credit for it—one State adopted zero tolerance this last week. We are now up to 27 States that have done it on their own. But I think zero tolerance is the best thing to do.

Sarah [Sarah McClendon, McClendon News].

Opposition From Congress

Q. Mr. President, there's a move on Capitol Hill among some right-wing Senators—Faircloth of North Carolina—and also joined by—and D'Amato, of course, New York—and several left-wing Democrats, real liberal left-wing Democrats to try to get you out of office this month. They're going to try to do that by embarrassing you so that you will resign. Would you resign your office under any circumstances? [Laughter]

The President. Well, if you promise to run off with me, I might. [Laughter] But otherwise I can't think of any reason. [Laughter]

1996 Election

Q. Mr. President, continuing on the political mien, if we might. [Laughter] A year from now the Republican Presidential convention opens. Looking at the electoral vote now, it seems to be a lot of political experts say that you're in trouble in the South, in trouble in the West, it's really going to be an uphill battle for reelection. How do you assess your position at this time?

The President. Well, first of all, I don't think my position at this time amounts to anything because the world will turn around. At this time, when I started running for President—I hadn't even declared for President this time 4 years ago, and everybody said the incumbent President could not be defeated. So I don't think

anyone knows, and I think all this is idle speculation.

I will tell you this: I have done my best to do what I said I would do when I ran. This is the second anniversary of our economic plan. We passed our reconciliation bill on this day 2 years ago. Theirs is still not passed. And the people who are now in charge of the Congress said that it would be the end of the world; we would have a terrible recession; it would bankrupt the country; it would be awful. And 2 years later, we have 7 million jobs, 2½ million new homeowners, 1½ million new small businesses, a record, a record number of new self-made millionaires, a very high stock market, very low inflation.

Now, this is the first time in history we've had this kind of surge that hasn't also raised the incomes of ordinary people because of the new realities which we face. So now, economic policy must be seen as a two-step, not a one-step process. We've got to grow the economy and raise incomes. That's why I want to raise the minimum wage. That's why I want to give every unemployed worker or underemployed worker the right to 2 years of education at the local community college. That's why I'm trying to have a tax cut that's focused on childrearing and education, to raise incomes.

But I believe when the record of this administration is made, in every area, whether it's this or in fighting crime or protecting the environment or educating our people or trying to prepare the world for the end of the post-cold-war era and a new era of cooperation, I believe the American people will listen, and then they'll make their own judgments about it. But I don't think anybody can know what's going to happen a year and a half from now.

Teenage Smoking

Q. Mr. President, are you sure you wouldn't like to pledge today not to smoke cigars anymore to set an example? [Laughter]

The President. Well, you mean should I go from five or six down to zero a year? Maybe so. But I don't think that's the point. The point I want to make is, number one, cigars and pipes were not found by the FDA to be part of this. Did you know that?

Number two, the issue is, for me—I try to set a good example. I try never to do it when people see. I admitted that I did do it when Captain O'Grady was found because I was so

happy. It was a form of celebration. But I don't think you should let that become the issue. The issue is whether the children are smoking cigarettes in this country.

Nuclear Testing by France

Q. Mr. President, on the French nuclear testing, the French are now saying they will agree to a zero threshold for nuclear tests in the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Will the U.S. concur? Do you think the French should cancel their tests? And very importantly, has the U.S. agreed to share technology with the French so that they can develop their own computer simulations and not have to test?

The President. I applaud the French statement today. It will make it much easier for us to get a comprehensive test ban. I do not think they should resume testing, but they know that. That's a difference between us and them and most of the rest of the world and them. And we will have a statement about our own policy in the very near future, but I don't want to make it today.

Press Secretary Mike McCurry. Let's make this one the last question.

Teenage Smoking

Q. Mr. President, the steps that you outlined today are tailored very carefully to curb the sale of tobacco to young people. My question is, if they're implemented, will the FDA retain power that would allow them at a future date to ban or curb sale of tobacco to adults?

The President. Well, of course, that's what the tobacco companies are worried about, I guess. Our belief is that this is a pediatric disease. This is a problem for children, that when tobacco is lawful, it would be wrong for a Government agency to try to in any way restrict the access of adults to it if it is lawful. So the answer is, I don't know what the law would be because, in this case, I'm not the lawyer for the agency. I can't give you a lawful answer. I can tell you that the policy of this Government is that the focus should be on our children, their health and their welfare. That is the focus.

If there is a worry underlying the question you asked, there is an answer to that worry: Put it in the law. Let's have the tobacco companies come in. Let's talk to the Members of Congress from the tobacco-growing States. Let's pass it into law. Pass these restrictions. Put them into law. Do it now. Then we won't have all

these lawsuits, and we will begin immediately, right now, to protect the children of this country. That is the answer.

Yes, Deborah [Deborah Mathis, Gannett News Service].

Whitewater Hearings

Q. Mr. President, there has been a parade of you and your wife's friends, associates, aides, former aides on Capitol Hill lately in both the Senate and House Whitewater hearings. How does it make you feel to see so many of your old friends and associates being grilled, in effect? And have you been keeping track of the hearings, and if so, how?

The President. The answer to the second question is, not really. Occasionally I see a clip or something, but I don't watch television very much, except late at night for a few minutes before I to go bed. So I haven't had a chance to keep up with it. My impression is that they have all acquitted themselves quite well, and I've been proud of them. But I don't have anything to say on the underlying substance beyond what I've already said.

Teenage Smoking

Q. Mr. President, on the FDA rule again, a coalition of advertisers is filing suit today saying that for a legal product, your rule would go far beyond any precedent in restricting first amendment rights. Is there any precedent that you could cite that would be equivalent in its reach into the first amendment? And if not, are you not concerned about that aspect?

The President. First of all, nobody who's ever held this office loved the first amendment any more than I do. And no one has ever felt both edges of it any more than I have. I believe in the first amendment. That's what my speech about religious freedom was about the other day. I believe in it.

But I would remind you of just a few basic facts. It is illegal for children to smoke cigarettes. How then can it be legal for people to advertise to children to get them to smoke cigarettes? And does anybody seriously doubt that a lot of this advertisement is designed to reach children so we get new customers for the tobacco companies as the old customers disappear? It cannot be a violation of the freedom of speech in this country to say that you cannot advertise to entice people to do something which they cannot legally do. So I just don't

buy the first amendment argument, it's just not true.

And by the way, that is why—to go back to an earlier question—the FDA ran the risk of having a rather complex rule to make it clear that there should be some freedom left, some considerable freedom left to advertise to adults.

Yes, ma'am.

China

Q. Mr. President, your administration has said on many occasions that you're going to adhere to the one-China policy. However, the two sides of Taiwan's fate obviously have different views on what this one China is. And you are the one who made the decision to allow President Teng-hui to come to the United States, and China is very, very unhappy now. So I wonder, how are you going to balance between a democratic Taiwan willing to risk everything to seek international recognition and, on the other hand, the very, very important strategic interests between the United States and China?

The President. First of all, we're going to balance them by continuing to adhere to the one-China policy. It is the policy of the United States; it has been for years; it continues to be.

Secondly, we are going to do everything we can to make sure that our policy is clearly understood in China and in Taiwan. I made the decision personally to permit President Li from Taiwan to come into this country not as the head of state, not as the head of a government that we had recognized but because he wanted to come. I'm sure there were political aspects to this, but he asked whether he could come to his college reunion, whether he could give speeches, whether he could travel in our United States. He is a law-abiding person. We had no grounds on which to deny him.

In the American culture there is a constitutional right to travel and a constitutional right to speak. And as a man who has almost never missed any of his high school or college reunions, I just felt I ought to give him the same opportunity. It was not an abrogation of our one-China policy in any way. It was a recognition of something that's special in our culture about the rights we accord individuals who obey our laws and comport themselves appropriately.

Welfare Reform

Q. Mr. President, as you know, the welfare reform bill has been delayed in the Senate. I wonder how optimistic you are that welfare reform can pass this year and to what extent welfare reform has been wrapped up in Republican Presidential politics.

The President. Well, it plainly has been wrapped up to some extent in Republican Presidential politics, and that's bad because 85 percent of the American people want it. As I think Senator Dole acknowledged a day or so ago, I made a personal appeal to him to try to work with me to get a welfare reform bill out and to do it this year.

What do we want out of welfare reform? We want work. We want time limits. We want responsible parenting. Those are the three things we want. Can we get there from where we are? I think we can. I think that Senator Dole has moved somewhat away from the extreme right of his party. Senator Daschle, Senator Mikulski, and Senator Breaux have offered a bill which has united the Democrats in moving away from the conventional wisdom toward welfare reform. And what we need to do over this break is that folks need to get together and figure out how we can put these approaches together and come out with a bill which promotes work, which promotes time limits, which promotes responsible parenting. I cannot believe we can't reach an agreement here.

Meanwhile, I will keep trying to get more States involved. You know, I have 32 States now that I've given permission to get out from under the Federal rules to promote welfare reform. And I would remind you I have offered all 50 States within 30 days the right to require young teen mothers to stay at home and stay in school to get checks, to put time limits and work requirements on welfare reform, and to allow the States to convert the welfare benefits and the food stamp benefits into wage supplements to get private employers to hire people in the private sector. Every State in the country could do that within the next 30 days. They just call us and send a request; we do it.

So we'll keep working, but we need the legislation, especially because we have to have national standards for tough child support enforcement that we cannot implement without the law.

I think our time is—one more question. Yes, go ahead.

Legislative Priorities

Q. Before the tobacco regulations came up this news conference was billed as your chance to give a farewell message to Congress. If you could send them a postcard from Jackson next week—[laughter]—what would you list as your top three or four priorities?

The President. We need to pass a decent budget that balances the budget but doesn't do it on the backs of elderly people who don't have enough to live on by exploding their Medicare costs; it doesn't walk away from our commitment to education, the education of our young people from Head Start to more affordable college loans through national service; that doesn't undermine our common commitment to the environment. We can find common ground on this budget that brings the American people together and moves us forward.

The second thing I would say is, we need to pass welfare reform. We need to pass welfare reform—work, time limits, responsible parenting.

The third thing I would say is, let's get to work on the unfinished agenda here, pass the antiterrorism bill, the line-item veto, appoint the political reform commission. Let's get after it. Let's do the things that we all are for, we keep saying we're for. Let's deliver for the American people.

Let me say in closing that my family and I are leaving on Tuesday for Wyoming, and I want you to enjoy your vacation.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 101st news conference began at 1:32 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Interview With Tabitha Soren of MTV

August 11, 1995

Teenage Smoking

Ms. Soren. Mr. President, minors buy one billion packs of cigarettes a year. How are you going to make not smoking and quitting smoking cool and attractive to young people?

The President. Well, I think we have to do several things. I think, first of all, the Government's responsibility is to make sure that the young people understand that it's addictive and dangerous and can kill them and that about one-third of the young people who start smoking every day—about 1,000 people a day, young people, start smoking who will have their lives shortened because of it. The second thing I think you have to do is make it less accessible. Then the third thing we have to do is make it less attractive, that is, we need to change the advertising and limit the ability of advertising to be a lure.

We had a young teenager in here who was part of an antismoking group yesterday who said to me—I was so touched—she said, "We look at these TV ads," she said, "these girls smoking, they're always tall; they're always thin; they always have long hair; they're always pretty." She said, "It's just like when the boys who are young

see a movie star holding a gun." And it was shocking what she said.

And then what we want the tobacco companies to do is to spend some money on an affirmative strategy to put out positive messages—over MTV, for example—about how it's cool not to smoke instead of to smoke. So I think you make it less accessible, less attractive, and then put out a positive message. And of course, we need a lot of help. We need people like you to do programs like this, and every parent in this country needs to talk to their children—all the parents need to talk to their children about it, because we now have done 14 months careful research and we know how damaging this is, and we know that the tobacco companies know how damaging it is from their own files. We've got to do something about it.

Ms. Soren. Do you worry about making smoking more enticing by making it more forbidden to young people?

The President. I think that's always a concern; there could be some of that. But the staggering magnitude of the damage that it's doing is so great, I think if young people really understand how dangerous it really is and all the things that can happen to them and how it can affect