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WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

February 20, 1996.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine

February 21, 1996

1996 Election

Q. Pat Buchanan said today congressional Republicans shouldn't cut Medicare and veterans' benefits. Do you agree?

President Clinton. Good for him.

Q. What's your reaction to what happened last night? There seems to be a split in the Republican Party.

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I'm very gratified by what happened in the Democratic primary last night. I haven't seen the final numbers, but we may have made history there, even for an incumbent President without appreciable opposition, compared to anything that's happened in the last 50 years if the vote holds up. And we had a good turnout, too. And I think that's evidence that what the American people really want is someone who will take a positive approach to the future, bring us together, and come out with the continuing movement, continuing ideas that will bring us together and move us forward.

So I'm satisfied with the election, and I'm going to let the Republicans and the pundits deal with their business. You know, this country doesn't need another pundit, and I need to go on and be President.

Q. Are you surprised by the Republican outcome, Mr. President?

President Clinton. I had no—I didn't know what to expect. Since I didn't know what was going to happen, I couldn't be surprised.

Q. Do you regard Mr. Buchanan as too extreme to be a mainstream candidate?

President Clinton. I regard this whole process as one for the Republicans to work out. I'm going to be President and go out there and tell the people what I'm trying to do and what I would do if given a greater opportunity to do it. And I'm not going to get involved in their business or yours. That's your business and theirs.

Ukrainian Aircraft

Q. A question for Mr. Kuchma. Mr. Kuchma, are you commenting at all on the allegations that aircraft from state-owned factories in your country have gone to the Cali cartel for their use?

President Kuchma. First of all, it was owned not by the state but by a company. And I think that the aircraft not only of Ukraine but of all other countries are used on the same basis all over the world. They are used on the basis of leasing.

And I think that the Colombian side should take all the responsibility on that, and in fact, I have instructed so that to find all the reasons and all the deepest backgrounds of that issue, though I don't think there was any blame on our side.

I think that international mechanisms should be worked out so that we face less issues of this sort of misusage of aircraft and so on and so forth. So we are always asked this sort of question only after their usage, but we have to do everything possible to prevent this usage and so that to avoid this sort of asking. Though according to our information, our aircraft are not involved in this sort of affairs.

President Clinton. Thank you all. Have a nice day, you guys. You have a decent day outside. Why don't we have a national recess? [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.*]

President Kuchma. I would like to add one thing to that question, that our Secret Service has addressed yours so that you consider this issue together.

President Kuchma's Visit

President Clinton. Let me say to our friends in the Ukrainian press, it's a great honor for me to have President Kuchma here. The United States is strongly committed to a sovereign, independent, prosperous Ukraine.

I admire the difficult and courageous steps that President Kuchma and Ukraine have taken toward democracy and economic reform. I know this has been a difficult time, and I want to see the world community, including the United States, do everything possible to support Ukraine in its efforts to maintain democracy and to restore real prosperity and opportunity to the people.

President Kuchma. It's a pleasure to listen to such nice words addressed to Ukraine and its people. And I'd like to confirm the only thing that from the very beginning the United States have always been a guarantor for economic and political transformations in Ukraine, the guarantor for building and shaping all the civilized, democratic society in Ukraine. This is our priority assignment, and we are happy to be together with the United States in this respect.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:20 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on the Unveiling of the Domestic Violence Hotline and an Exchange With Reporters

February 21, 1996

The President. Thank you, Candice. Thank you, Secretary Shalala. Thank you, Senator Kennedy, Senator Leahy, Representative Conyers. I want to thank Bonnie Campbell for doing such a great job as the Director of the Violence Against Women Office at the Justice Department. And I thank the Attorney General and Associate Attorney General John Schmidt and the others at Justice who have supported this endeavor for the first time. I want to thank you, Ellen Fisher, and your entire team for your hard work and your leadership. We are counting on you.

I want to thank all the brave women in this audience who have survived the horrors and the fears of domestic violence and who have gone on to work, like Candice, as advocates. And I want to thank the men and the women who are here today, some in law enforcement, some in other walks of life, who are here because they believe in this effort and they want to support it.

I was just sitting here thinking how many of you had the same reaction to Candice that I did. She sort of stepped up here and started talking; it sounded like another ordinary speech—I've done thousands of these now in the last 22 years—and it was almost hypnotic, just a calm, even-voice narrative that seemed almost unbelievable except for those of you who have lived through it so often.

When I gave the State of the Union Address and asked the American people to look beyond the present battle over the budget to the real challenges facing our country, not just our Government but our country, I pointed out that our first and foremost challenge now and perhaps forever will be to have good, strong families and to give childhood back to all the children in this country. Most of us have known the joys of—some of the joys of family life. And anybody who's been in a family knows that none of them are perfect. But there's a world of difference between a family with its joys and its problems and a family terrorized by violence and abuse.

For all the economic problems facing poor children in America, I would rather them be poor in homes with loving parents than have their childhoods robbed by violence in their homes. So I say again to all of you, this is not a women's issue; this is an issue for families and for children and for men as well. And it is an American challenge that we have to face.

This issue has been swept under the rug for too long. We have tried to take it out into the