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A. Underwood, of Guam; Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan; and President Joseph Estrada of the Philippines.

Exchange With Reporters on Departure From Tokyo

November 20, 1998

Impeachment Inquiry

Q. Mr. President, we were told that you were briefed today on the Judiciary Committee hearings back in Washington. Can you tell us what was your impression about the hearings? What kind of guidance did you give your attorney David Kendall about his accusation that Kenneth Starr was guilty of prosecutorial misconduct? And what do you think about the subpoenas for Bruce Lindsey and Bennett?

The President. Well, first of all, I got only a cursory briefing. I didn't see any of the hearings, and I really can't comment on how they went. I only became aware recently, I think after I left, that Mr. Kendall was going to be able to ask some questions. So I don't know. My understanding is that he essentially asked questions consistent with the letter he had written both to Mr. Starr and the Attorney General several weeks ago. But beyond that, I don't know. I really haven't talked to anybody back in Washington. I just got a general, cursory review of that.

Q. You didn't say anything to him about prosecutorial misconduct?

The President. I believe that—I don't know this because I haven't seen it, and I haven't talked to anybody—my understanding generally was that the issues he raised were issues he had raised months ago—at least several weeks ago. He wrote a letter to Mr. Starr and wrote a letter to the Attorney General. But I don't know very much about it. I've been here working on these economic and security issues, so I really can't say.

Q. And the subpoenas of Bennett and Lindsey?

The President. I'm not concerned about it, but I think Mr. Lindsey's subpoena was covered by previous decisions, but my understanding is that a subpoena for Mr. Bennett is without any precedent. That is, as far as I know, there has never been a case where a person's lawyer was asked to come and testify, but you will have to talk to them because I really—I haven't been there. I haven't been involved in it. I don't know what they're saying, and we'll just have to see what happens.

I've got work to do here on the American economy and on these security issues, so that's all being handled by people back in Washington.

NOTE: The exchange began at 6:05 p.m. at Haneda Airport prior to the President's departure for Seoul, South Korea. In his remarks, the President referred to his personal attorneys David Kendall and Robert Bennett; and Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

November 14

In the afternoon, the President met with his national security team to discuss the situation in Iraq.

The White House announced that the President hopes to complete the Japan, South Korea, and Guam portions of the Asia trip, but that Vice President Al Gore will represent the United States at the APEC summit.

November 17

The President announced his intention to nominate Gary S. Guzy to be General Counsel at the Environmental Protection Agency.

The President announced the following winners of the 1998 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award: Boeing Airlift and Tanker Programs, Long Beach, CA; Solar Turbines, Inc., San Diego, CA; and Texas Nameplate Co., Inc., Dallas, TX.