

President's Security

Mr. Gambling. Well, that's good. The security question—the events of the last couple of weeks—I understand, and I'm not looking for specifics here, but just generalities—I understand your routine has changed a little bit.

The President. Well, we've asked the Secret Service to take a look at all the procedures and everything, as they periodically do. Every year, I think for quite a long while now, Secret Service has increased its ability to protect the President, and I think they are continuing to do it. I have a lot of confidence in them, and the trick is to permit them to do that without having the President completely cut off from the public at large, because this is a great, free society, and one of the problems the President always has is trying to avoid losing touch.

Mr. Gambling. Exactly. Probably the most difficult thing, you've got to keep in touch with the folks. I want to thank you very much, Mr. President, for choosing us this morning to talk about politics on election day 1994.

Thank you very much.

The President. Thanks again. I want to urge all your listeners to go on and vote today.

Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 7:12 a.m. The President spoke by telephone from the Oval Office at the White House.

**Interview With Paul W. Smith of
WWDB Radio, Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania**

November 8, 1994

Mr. Smith. What a pleasure, indeed, it is to welcome back to the program, in an exclusive Philadelphia interview, live from the White House, ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States.

Mr. President, good morning to you. Happy election day.

The President. Thank you, Paul W. It's nice to hear your voice again.

Midterm Elections

Mr. Smith. Well, it's nice to have you back. It indicates to me how important you

feel the voters of Pennsylvania and New Jersey are and Delaware are in this election year, because you have been all over the place. I recall several weeks ago, the Washington press corps alleging that there weren't a lot of people who wanted the President to come out and campaign for them. But as Dee Dee Myers pointed out then, and as you certainly have seemed to prove over the last several days, you couldn't possibly get to all the places where people wanted you. You and Mrs. Clinton have been all over the country campaigning.

The President. Well, we have, and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore have also been out there a lot. Leon Panetta's been out there a lot, and our Cabinet has.

But we have been confronted with quite a challenge just in the generally negative tone of the atmosphere that has concerned me some about the turnout. You know, I had to take a few days to go to the Middle East on what was a truly historic mission for our country and for the cause of peace in the world. And when I was there and when I was coming back, I was struck by how strongly and how positively the rest of the world looks at the United States, at our system, at the strength of our economic recovery, at the fact that we seem to be facing problems that we ignored for a long time. And they are often asking me questions—world leaders in other places—about how this negative feeling creeps over our people and why it has such a hold at election time.

So I wanted to do these election morning interviews more than anything else just to encourage our citizens to get out and vote, to make their voices heard, not to sit this election out simply because they feel negatively about perhaps some of the ads or some of the tone of the campaign. Because our country is facing our problems, we're moving into the future, and we need the American people to be engaged in this process. And we need all kinds of people to be engaged in the process, just ordinary mainstream Americans showing up to vote and to try to have their interests and their values advanced in this election.

Mr. Smith. Why do you think, Mr. President, this has appeared to be the sleaziest, dirtiest, worst campaign yet? And if, in fact,

it works for some candidates, one wonders just how bad it will get the next time around.

The President. Well, of course, that's the whole point I'm trying to make. I'm afraid it's been that way because this is a place where the people rule, and a lot of the polling data indicates that sometimes these negative campaigns work, that when people get down on the political system and down on politicians, they're a little more prone to believe the worst as opposed to the best.

And actually, if you look at the history of this country, the rich and strong and long history, we have often had our difficulties in the political system. And we've had a scoundrel or two in the history of America, but most of our public officials have been honest and straightforward people. And most of the time the differences have been over what direction we should take. And when we get into voting about who is the worst, as opposed to what do these people believe and what are they going to do, I think that puts us at some risk of making bad decisions.

And that's what I've been trying to do traveling around the country since I've come back from the Middle East, is to say to the American people, you know, whatever you do, let's look at this in a forward-looking way. How are we going to go forward? How are we going to work together and move this country forward? We don't want to go back, and we don't want to be divided, and we don't want to think less of ourselves as a result of this election, because we have a very great country. And others who maybe sometimes see us more clearly than we even see ourselves know that for all of our problems, we're facing them, we're moving forward, and we have enormous potential. Our best days are still ahead of us. And every election is an obligation of those of us who are citizens to kind of keep this ball moving forward.

Mr. Smith. Mr. Clinton—Mr. President, you have extended, kind of in advance, an olive branch saying that you will work with everyone and that you can, your administration can work with everyone. How do you feel this election morning in terms of the chances that there will be more Republicans? Republicans have not held majorities in both Houses of Congress simultaneously since 1954. There is a very good chance you're

going to have many more Republicans there on the Hill than we've had in a number of years. Do you sense this morning that that will be the case, or would you rather wait until the polls close?

The President. I think it depends entirely on the turnout, really. I think they have some things going for them: the fact that in every election in the 20th century but one the party opposite the President has made gains in at least one House at midterm, and I think all elections but three they made gains in both Houses; the fact that we've had for most of the last 30 years a divided Government—some people are used to that—that is, the President in one party, the Congress of another.

I think there are some things working against that: the fact that we have been able to accomplish quite a bit, that in the atmosphere in which we were operating in, almost no one knew until about 3 weeks ago—we finally being able to get a little bit of information out about how much the President and the Congress accomplished working together. And I think we have to just keep working on that and keep going forward.

Mr. Smith. Mr. President, thank you for being with us. We do appreciate it again—

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Smith.—and it's quite an honor to have the President of the United States twice in one week.

The President. Well, it's great to hear your voice. And of course, you know I think the world of Senator Wofford; I hope he'll be reelected today. And I hope that your listeners in these other States will go out and vote, and I hope their voices will be heard. And I hope they will do it in a good spirit, believing in our country, believing in our future. This is not the time for negativism. This is a time to be upbeat but aggressive in tackling our problems and seizing our opportunities.

And I thank you for talking to me today.

Mr. Smith. By the way, President Clinton, thank you for the kind words about President Reagan's revelation over the weekend. It was most appreciated around the country, I think.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 7:21 a.m. The President spoke by telephone from the Oval Office at the White House.

Interview With Joe Templeton of ABC Radio

November 8, 1994

Midterm Elections

Mr. Templeton. Good morning, Mr. President. After 8 days on the campaign trail, how do you see this midterm election shaping up?

The President. Well, Joe, I don't know. You know, I must say, there are a lot of these races that are very, very tight. And the thing I want to say to the American people today is that it's important for us not to go to the polls in a negative frame of mind. There's been a little too much negativism, some places a lot too much, in this election.

This is a very great country. I just got back from the Middle East peace signing. I am, again, captured by the idea that others know what a great country we have, that we have the capacity to seize our opportunities and to face our problems. We're trying to do that here; we just need to keep going forward. And we need to get out there, all of us, and vote today but to do it with a belief in our country, a belief in our future, a belief in our possibilities to make life better.

Mr. Templeton. Now, if Republicans win the House and Senate, and many pollsters are saying that's a very good possibility, what does this do to your prestige in the rest of the term?

The President. Well, I don't know. That'll be up to the American people to decide. But for most of the last 40 years, we've had divided Government. We've had the Congress in one hand and the Presidency in the other. The American people have kind of gotten used to that. So I don't know that it will make a great deal of difference in that sense.

I hope that the Democrats who have taken courageous decisions to bring the deficit down and to get the economy going again and to try to improve education and make the streets safer, who have taken the tough decisions, will be rewarded for their courage and not punished for it. Because you know, we always say we want people to be brave,

to ignore the polls of the moment, and to take the tough decisions that will get us into the future. I think it's important when those folks come up for election that we reward them for that and not punish them for it because of the barrage of negativism that seems to characterize so many of our campaigns.

So again, I would just urge all the people who are listening to us to vote but also to do it in a positive frame of mind. Our country is moving forward economically, we are addressing the crime problem, we're addressing some of these terrible social problems that we've ignored for too long, and we're taking up issues that have to be taken up. They don't have simple and easy answers, and I think it's important that we don't give in to simplistic and essentially negative messages about them. We are a great country; we can do what we have to do, and we ought to try to do it together across party lines.

Mr. Templeton. Now, you have been out there stumping for the Democrats for 8 days or so. Do you feel you've really made any headway?

The President. Well, you know, you never know. When I was a Governor, I was never sure that the President did any help or damage to anybody in my home State. And I never thought, really, people would listen to me in terms of telling them for whom to vote.

What I tried to do was to clarify the issues. I tried to put the record of our administration that the candidates I campaigned for supported; I tried to clarify the stakes and say from my point of view what our position toward the future was, what their position was. I did the best I could to do that.

I think people are capable of making up their minds on their own about candidates. Every race is different; every State is different. But I hope I was able, at least, to focus the attention of the public in a more positive way on the choices before us.

Mr. Templeton. Well, now they're talking about 70 million voters or so turning out today. I wonder if you voted?

The President. Oh, yes, I did. I voted early. I voted absentee back home in Arkansas.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President, for being with us this morning.