

Discussions With Vietnamese Leaders

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—*being very diplomatic in handling the question of human rights, religious, and other democratic freedoms in Vietnam. But Hanoi's sensitivity to this question is all too obvious. Did you make any headway in your talk with Secretary General Le Kha Phieu or Prime Minister Phan Van Khai on this front. Or, do you think the U.S. could work with Vietnam on this matter in a more open fashion?

The President. I had very open conversations with all of them, with the Prime Minister, with the secretary general, and the President. And what I believe is that once they realize that we're not trying to tell Vietnam how to run every aspect of their lives and that we feel that we're going to be in a friendly relation, we have to be honest about our disagreements, and we have to say what we think human rights and religious rights and individual freedom have meant to our country.

I think we will be in a dialog there, and I think that, plus the process of economic and social change which is going on in Vietnam will lead the country in a positive direction. That's what I believe. I think it will be very important for my successor to continue that dialog. I don't think we can drop human rights or religious freedom from our concerns anywhere in the world.

Q. Can we ask you just one last quick question

The President. Sure.

Musicians in Vietnam

Q. Did you have a chance to play your saxophone while you were there?

The President. No. [*Laughter*] But I love the music. I did—however, I heard a Vietnamese saxophone player at the entertainment after the state dinner, and he was really, really good. All the musicians were great. I was very impressed by the musical performances that were done after the state dinner.

Q. You wouldn't allow us maybe just—
Press Secretary Siewert. No, I think we have to wrap-up. Sorry.

The President. We're in Alaska, and we have to get back on the plane to go home. I'm sorry. Thank you.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President

The President. Goodbye.

NOTE: The interview began at 6:20 p.m. and was taped for later broadcast. The President spoke via telephone from Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. In his remarks, he referred to Le Kha Phieu, secretary general, Central Committee, Vietnamese Communist Party; and Prime Minister Phan Van Khai and President Tran Duc Luong of Vietnam. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 20. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Statement on the Death of Charles F.C. Ruff

November 20, 2000

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Charles F.C. Ruff, who served as my White House Counsel from 1997 to 1999. All of us at the White House admired Chuck for the power of his advocacy, the wisdom of his judgment, and the strength of his leadership. We loved him for his generous spirit and his keen wit, which he used to find humor in even the most challenging circumstances.

Chuck had an extraordinary and distinguished career in private practice with Covington & Burling, and in public service as Special Prosecutor, Acting Deputy Attorney General, and United States Attorney and Corporation Counsel for the District of Columbia. We will miss his counsel and friendship deeply.

Hillary and I extend our condolences to his wife Sue, his daughters Carin and Christy, and his mother Margaret.

Statement on the Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2020 Management Reform Plan

November 20, 2000

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2020 Management Reform Plan has changed the way that HUD does business for good. That's the verdict from a report issued today by the Public Strategies Group, a leader of the "reinventing Government" movement. The confirmed success of Secretary Cuomo's management reforms is