

the White House in good shape and do some additional work that needed to be done there, but it's different when you're doing it in your own home.

Q. Have you thought any more about a schedule for how often you will both be here?

Q. Mrs. Clinton and also Mr. President, the mayor, as you may have heard a couple of days ago, said that both of you, the Clintons, he said, have been egregious violators of soft money, both in how it's collected and how it's distributed. Your reaction, both of you?

The First Lady. We're going to talk about our house this morning, which we are very happy about being in and being New Yorkers. And we'll leave that to another time.

President's Future Plans

Q. Mr. President, are you going to—we haven't heard from you. [*Laughter*]

The President. No. [*Laughter*] No, I keep reading all these things. I've not given very much thought to this. I'm going to work very hard on finishing my library and center. And I'm going to devote all my attention to being President. I've got a big agenda this year. We're going back now, and I have to go back to Shepherdstown this afternoon. But I've had no discussions with anybody about that kind of move. And I was amazed to see that in the paper. No one's even suggested that.

Gays in the Military

Q. Mr. President, last night the Vice President in the debates said that he'll ask military commanders about their feelings on gays serving in the military before appointing people to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Is this litmus test the way it should work?

The President. Well, I think the real problem is—let me go back to what happened, because, as you know, my view was—and I will restate my view. The Uniform Code of Military Justice prohibits homosexual contacts. So my view was, if someone was willing to take the pledge to observe the Uniform Code of Military Justice, they shouldn't have to lie about being gay and being in the military. Then, let me remind you what happened. The Congress voted, by a veto-proof majority, against that position. So that's how we got to "don't ask, don't tell."

My focus has been on trying to make the policy work the way the military commanders said it would work back in 1993, which it has

not been doing. No one disputes that. To Secretary Cohen's credit, back in August we announced some new guidelines, which have now been implemented, for training and for implementation, which I think will significantly improve the present situation over the next few months.

Now the Vice President and Senator Bradley say they want to go back to the position that I advocated in '92 and '93. In order to do that, the Congress will have to change the law, I believe. I don't think that the military and the President have the authority to do it. Now, you could go back and look at the constitutional arguments and do some research, but I think a lot of this debate—I think a lot of people have actually forgotten that Congress put into the law the present policy.

And so what I'm going to do is spend the next year trying to make sure that we do what was intended and what I announced would be done, after extensive consultation with our commanders back in 1993. I believe that the next President, if he wants to change the policy, will have to get the Congress to change the law.

Q. A quick followup on that. Wouldn't litmus tests like that have disqualified somebody like Colin Powell from serving as Joint Chiefs?

The President. I think that I'm going to leave the appointment process to the next President. I'm not going to get involved in this election right now. I think that there have been, we know, going back all the way to the First World War, we have clear evidence that there have been gays in the military who have served with great distinction. I think it's quite interesting that most of the Vietnam veterans, combat veterans in the United States Congress, including Senators Robb and Senator Kerry, just to mention two, have felt that—both Senator Kerry and Kerrey and Senator Robb have felt that the policy ought to be changed and supported my original position.

So I would like to find some way for people to be honest, to obey the law, and to serve with distinction in the military. So I think that is where our focus ought to be, and the next President will have to figure out how to do that. But I think there will have to be a change in the law.

Q. Mr. President, the polls show that your wife is trailing right now. Do you have any advice for her?

The First Lady. Thank you so much.