William J. Clinton
Presidential History Project

Briefing Materials

Al From

April 27, 2006

Prepared by Jeff Chidester, Research Director
March 2006
1965  From receives his B.A. in Journalism from Northwestern University. (Time, 12/14/1992)

1966  From earns his Master’s degree in Journalism from Northwestern University. (Time, 12/14/1992)


1971-1979  From serves as Staff Director for the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations. (“Al From,” Democratic Leadership Council, http://www.dlc.org)


1982  The House Democratic Caucus’s Committee on Party Effectiveness (CPE), a group formed by Long and his congressional allies to rejuvenate the Democratic Party after the 1980 election, publishes Rebuilding the Road to Opportunity, a book of policy papers. The book advocates a rejection of the post-1968 New Politics liberalism and a return to New Deal liberalism: “We renew our commitment to the fundamental principles of the Democratic Party—to equal opportunity, to economic growth and full employment, and to a strong national defense.” From works closely with Long and other members of the CPE in preparing the book. (Baer, p. 43)

1983

July  From and Long establish the National House Democratic Caucus (NHDC) in an effort to further modify the philosophy of the Democratic Party. The NHDC is a spin-off of the CPE, but independent of Congress, enabling the membership of private citizens and the use of private funds. (Baer, p. 45)

1985  Shortly after Ronald Reagan’s landslide victory over Senator Walter Mondale (D-MN) in the 1984 presidential election, a group of centrist Democrats begins discussions on reforming the Democratic Party. After failing to elect a centrist to the Democratic National Committee (DNC) chairmanship, the group determines it
**From: 1985-1990**

will have to create an extra-party organization. From becomes the architect of the group’s formation. In a memorandum entitled “Saving the Democratic Party,” sent to a group of centrist (or New Democratic) elected officials, donors, and other interested persons, From says, “The National Democratic Party is in grave jeopardy of losing its majority status.” On February 28th, the formation of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) is announced at a small Capitol Hill press conference. From is named Executive Director of the organization. (Baer, pp. 64-66; The Washington Post, 11/06/1986)

1987

January From tells Governor Charles Robb (D-VA) that the DLC leadership should make a trip to Arkansas “to get Bill Clinton more active” in DLC politics. (Baer, p. 163)

1988

November Shortly after George H.W. Bush defeats Governor Michael Dukakis (D-MA) in the presidential election, From says the Democratic Party’s base “is not big enough anymore for Democrats to win,” and argues that the Party needs “to develop ideas that rally a broader coalition.” (The Boston Globe, 11/11/1988)

1989

April From travels to Little Rock, Arkansas to persuade Clinton to serve as the next DLC Chairman. From promises Clinton that his chairmanship will serve as an “invisible primary” for a future presidential run. “If you take the DLC chairmanship, we will give you a national platform, and I think you will be President of the United States. And you will do a lot of good for us because it will make us a national organization,” From tells Clinton. (Baer, pp. 8, 163)

June The DLC creates its own think tank, the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI), located in Washington, DC. (The Washington Post, 06/30/1989)

1990

March The DLC holds its annual convention in New Orleans from the 22nd to the 25th. Clinton is named DLC Chairman during the conference. The DLC releases its manifesto, the “New Orleans Declaration,” which advocates ideas such as school choice, national service, and progressive taxes. More importantly, according to From, the Declaration represents a set of ideas, not just a list of policy recommendations. Says From, “For 20 years, the Republicans have talked values, beliefs and principles, and we’ve talked programs. In New Orleans, we talked values, beliefs and principles.” Also at the convention, Rev. Jesse Jackson, considered by many in the DLC to be too liberal, delivers a speech and declares that he and the organization “now stand on common ground” on many issues.
From and Clinton are reportedly among a group of DLC leaders who disagree with Jackson’s assertion. (*The Baton Rouge Morning Advocate*, 03/16/1990; *The New York Times*, 03/25/1990; *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 04/14/1990)

1991

April

The DLC denies speaking invitations to Jesse Jackson and Senator George McGovern (D-SD) for their May 5 convention in Cleveland. From says, “We are trying to change the party, and Jackson and McGovern represent the ideological approach to government we are trying to change.” From’s remarks spark resentment from Jackson and his allies. Clinton downplays From’s remarks and, in a letter to Jackson, urges him to attend the convention in a non-speaking role. (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 04/14/1991; *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 04/19/1991)

May

Clinton is quoted as saying that he would like people to think of the DLC “when they think of the Democratic National Committee.” DNC Chairman Ron Brown responds with a shot at Clinton, saying it is too bad he can’t run for president since he has already told the people of Arkansas he will not run. Clinton contacts Brown and contends he was misquoted about the DNC, then praises Brown for moving the party “in the right direction.” (*The Boston Globe*, 05/06/1991)

The DLC holds its annual convention, the largest gathering of Democrats since the 1988 national party convention, in Cleveland from the 5th to the 7th. From says the goal is “to make the beliefs, ideas and government approach of the new politics the dominant political thinking in America.” The group unveils its “New Choice” resolution, endorsing historically Republican policies such as federal budget cuts, tenant ownership of public housing, and “fast-track” trade authority. In the keynote address, Clinton calls for greater choice in public education and required work for welfare recipients, and says the Democratic Party must construct a vision that “goes beyond the stale orthodoxies of left and right.” Jesse Jackson, invited but not offered a speaking role, travels to Cleveland and delivers a series of speeches to coincide with the DLC convention. (*The Boston Globe*, 05/07/1991; *The New York Times*, 05/07/1991)

June

At a meeting of DLC officials in Boston, From says it is crucial to find the right messenger to deliver the “new middle” philosophy in the next presidential election. He says there is a “good possibility” that Clinton, the DLC’s first choice, will run in 1992. (*The Boston Globe*, 06/27/1991)

August

Clinton announces he will resign as DLC Chairman to form an exploratory committee for a possible presidential run in 1992. From says if Clinton decides to run, “he will continue to articulate the DLC’s message” and “a number of people in the DLC’s rank and file would be inclined to support” his candidacy. (*The Washington Times*, 08/16/1991)
From: 1991-1992

September
Clinton meets with a group of his closest friends and political advisors, including From, behind closed doors to discuss whether or not he should seek the 1992 Democratic presidential nomination. (The Associated Press Political Service, 09/14/1991)

A group of Democratic Party strategists holds their last national meeting before the 1992 nominating convention. Many in the group see a fierce ideological battle ahead between the liberal wing of the party and the moderate wing, represented by the DLC. From says, “It’s an ideological fight as well as a fight between the old guard liberals and the reformers who want to change the party.” (The Washington Times, 09/20/1991)

1992

January
From visits New Mexico to speak at a forum on the upcoming presidential campaign. During his speech, From calls the DLC a “crusade to revitalize the Democratic Party,” and argues that its message is neither traditional liberalism nor conservatism, but rather “an ideology that appeals to real people.” (The Associated Press Political Service, 01/12/1992)

April
Clinton touts his national service proposal, where students would have the option of receiving a college loan in exchange for public service, in a speech to a group of business students. From calls the proposal “the cornerstone idea in redefining the Democratic Party. It goes to the theme that you don’t get nothing for nothing.” (USA Today, 04/24/1992)

May
The DLC holds its annual conference in New Orleans. Following Clinton’s address, some DLC members privately worry that he has been drifting to the left as the presidential campaign progresses. From denies a shift in Clinton’s message, saying instead that the media has chosen to focus on questions of military service and marital infidelity, not his centrist policy proposals. (The Boston Globe, 05/03/1992)

A group of top Democratic Party officials gathers to begin crafting the official 1992 party platform. The DLC has created a draft of its own proposed platform which calls for restrained federal spending, a free trade pact with Mexico, welfare reform, parental choice of public schools, and opposition to hiring quotas. From says the draft recognizes that the party is, “ready to renegotiate the social contract for the first time since FDR,” and “ready to respond to a new political era with progressive ideas grounded in mainstream values and promoted by practical approaches to governing.” (Houston Chronicle, 05/17/1992)

Complaints begin to surface among moderate Democrats about the number of aides from the Party’s liberal establishment serving on Clinton’s campaign staff. From dismisses the notion that the Clinton campaign is being run by liberals, but does warn he will be disappointed if Clinton does not stick to the “mainstream views” he held as DLC Chairman. (The Washington Times, 05/21/1992)
From contends that the only way for Clinton to salvage his campaign is to establish himself as an outsider and a proponent of change, even if this means challenging his own party in Congress. He says Clinton “has to show that he is the candidate of real reform. People do not want to go back to the old Democratic ways. If he establishes himself as the reform candidate, [third party candidate] Ross Perot will fold.” *(The Washington Times, 05/24/1992)*

**June**

A small group of party members begins writing the official 1992 Democratic Party platform. From, who is serving as Clinton’s representative on the drafting subcommittee, says, “There’s a sense the party has to change.” *(The New York Times, 06/13/1992)*

The Democratic Party’s 186-member platform committee adopts a statement of principles for their 1992 manifesto. The document, which stresses the values of “faith, family and hard work,” and criticizes “entrenched bureaucracies,” marks a shift to the right on many issues. From heralds the platform as representing “a fundamental change in the direction of the party.” *(The Washington Post, 06/28/1992)*

**July**

As Clinton narrows his list of possible vice-presidential nominees, From cautions against using the selection to broaden the ideological appeal of the ticket. “He ought not use the vice presidency to try to span the party ideologically because it would only make it more confusing about what direction he wants the party to go,” From says. Two weeks later, Clinton selects fellow DLC member Senator Al Gore (D-TN) as his running-mate. From says the Clinton-Gore ticket represents a “new generation who is going to lead the party in a different direction.” *(Portland Oregonian, 07/02/1992; The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 07/16/1992)*

**October**

In response to President Bush’s questioning of Clinton’s patriotism, From says Bush is acting in desperation and displaying traces of “Hooverism and McCarthyism in one fell swoop.” From maintains that the economy will remain the key issue for the campaign and one which will spell defeat for Bush. *(The Associated Press Political Service, 10/09/1992)*

From says if Clinton wins the presidency, his biggest challenge will be to “reassert presidential leadership” in a party accustomed to congressional leadership for the past 25 years. From also expresses hopes that the PPI will play the role of intellectual policy center similar to that played by the Heritage Foundation early in the Reagan presidency. *(Sunday Telegram—Worcester, MA, 10/11/1992)*

Speaking in Orange County, California on the presidential election, From rejects Bush’s attempts to characterize Clinton as a liberal candidate. He says, “Bush wants to make Bill Clinton into Michael Dukakis, Walter Mondale, and George McGovern. It just doesn’t work.” *(The Orange County Register, 10/19/1992)*
**From: 1992**

**November**

Clinton defeats President George H.W. Bush to become the 42nd President of the United States. Reacting to Clinton’s electoral victory, which includes eight states that voted Republican in every presidential race since 1968, From says, “We’re in the process of shaping a new Democratic majority.” *(The Associated Press Political Service, 11/04/1992)*

The media speculates that From is at the top of the list of potential candidates to take over as DNC Chairman. *(The Boston Herald, 11/05/1992)*

From says Clinton has a critical early choice to make about the direction of his presidency: “He can either continue along the path he followed to win and build a mainstream coalition. Or he can try to put together the old coalition, try to assemble the pre-Reagan status quo, which is what the liberals want but is doomed to fail.” From also urges Clinton to “reassert presidential leadership” as the leader of a Democratic Party accustomed to ruling from the legislative branch. *(The Wall Street Journal, 11/06/1992; Houston Chronicle, 11/08/1992)*

Some of the key officials in Clinton’s transition team are announced. Among the leaders of the policy clusters are From for domestic policy, Robert Reich for economic policy, Judith Feder for health policy, and Samuel Berger for national security policy. *(The Washington Post, 11/13/1992)*

From says Clinton is considering a meeting with incoming House freshman to cultivate support for his reform agenda and his national service plan. From notes that many of these new legislators ran as candidates of reform and, thus, will serve as “a key group” for the new Administration. *(The Associated Press, 11/30/1992)*

**December**

On the 4th, From travels to Boston to review the City Year program, a Boston-area service program seen by many as the model for the Administration’s national service proposal. From is joined by Senators Sam Nunn (D-GA) and Harris Wofford (D-PA), Representative Dave McCurdy (D-OK), University of Maryland Professor Bill Galston, and other advisors to Clinton on the proposal. *(The Washington Post, 12/13/1992)*

The DLC holds an event titled “Celebrate the New Democrats” to commemorate Clinton’s election victory. Clinton and Vice President-elect Gore each speak at the event. *(Buffalo News, 12/08/1992)*


Clinton speaks to the DLC on the 3rd. He says he was proud to run as a New Democrat and will be proud to govern as one. He also boasts that he has
From: 1992-1993

appointed seven former DLC members to his Cabinet, and several other former DLC officials to his White House staff. (“Remarks to the Democratic Leadership Council,” Public Papers of the Presidents: William J. Clinton, 12/03/1993, pp. 2094-2095)

1993

January
Clinton appoints Carol Rasco Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, and head of the Domestic Policy Council. Bruce Reed and William Galston are each named Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy. It is reported that From lobbied for Reed, a former DLC official, to get the top post. (The Washington Times, 01/15/1993)

February
In an interview with The Washington Times, From expresses disappointment that there are not more DLC members to fill the hundreds of sub-Cabinet posts in the new Administration. While many Cabinet spots have gone to DLC members, he admits that the typically liberal Democratic Party establishment is better equipped to fill the executive branch: “There are more of them than there are of us.” (The Washington Times, 02/07/1993)

May
From and Will Marshall evaluate the Clinton Administration’s first 100 days in office in the DLC magazine, The New Democrat. The piece delivers a veiled criticism of Clinton, saying DLC values “were not always front and center” in the first 100 days. The authors say Clinton must focus on economic growth, individual rights, entrepreneurial government, and an ethic of responsibility if he is to succeed. (The Washington Times, 05/24/1993)

June
Clinton withdraws the nomination of Lani Guinier as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights after concluding that her writings on civil rights issues are in opposition to many of his positions. In an op-ed for The New York Times, From says Clinton had to pull the nomination to preserve his commitment to equal opportunity, not equal results, and he calls the decision “principled, courageous and correct.” (The New York Times, 06/05/1993, 06/09/1993)

July
The DLC releases a study criticizing the Clinton Administration for failing to earn the support of Perot voters. These voters, labeled in the study as the “radical middle,” are concerned primarily with job creation, fiscal discipline, and traditional middle-class values. From says that for Clinton to gain their support, he must speak to these values and “press vigorously for initiatives such as national service and welfare reform that dramatize his commitment to a new ethic of responsibility.” (Richmond Times-Dispatch, 07/08/1993)

October
In a meeting with business leaders, From says the debate over the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is largely about politics, not economics. He tells the group that opponents of the treaty want to ignore the move toward a world economy, but that it is inevitable the U.S. will join that world economy. (The Seattle Times, 10/28/1993)
1994

**February**
From expresses frustration that funds have not been allocated in the 1995 budget for welfare reform. “[Budget Director] Leon Panetta should understand that he wouldn’t have his job, and Bill Clinton wouldn’t have gotten elected, if it wasn’t for welfare reform,” says From. (Financial World, 02/15/1994)

**June**
At a DLC regional conference in Austin, Texas, From says, “It just doesn’t make sense” that Clinton’s approval ratings have stabilized between 45 and 50 percent despite his long list of accomplishments thus far in his presidency. He admits that the scandals surrounding the Administration have “clearly taken a real toll,” but holds that “the fundamentals are good.” (Austin American-Statesman, 06/28/1994)

**July**
Weighing in on the debate over the future of U.S.-Chinese trade relations, From says, “China is critically important to the U.S. as it is a growing economic power which will become the largest in the world in the next 20 years.” (South China Morning Post, 07/30/1994)

**August**
From sends Clinton a six-page memo with suggestions on how to revitalize his presidency amidst sagging poll numbers. From says Clinton cannot “refight the fights of the ‘80s” alongside other members of his party, but must instead articulate a new agenda for the 1990s, beyond the traditional Left and Right arguments. (The Wall Street Journal, 08/24/1994)

**November**
The Republican Party wins a major victory in the midterm congressional elections, gaining a net of 54 seats in the House and eight seats in the Senate, and taking control of both houses of Congress for the first time since 1954. From says the Administration should see the loss as a wake-up call, and maintains that Clinton can still win reelection by a majority if he takes control of the center. (Reuters News, 11/02/1994)

**December**
The DLC releases a ten-point plan to counter the Republican Party’s “Contract with America.” From says the plan differs from both the Republican proposal and the policies of the Clinton Administration, and offers a program to earn the support of the “vital center” in America. The DLC proposal advocates cutting the federal deficit, increasing U.S. military strength, moving power from Washington, DC, and reforming welfare, housing, and health care programs. (The Washington Post, 12/06/1994)

On the 6th, DLC Chairman Dave McCurdy attacks Clinton during a speech at a DLC gala, saying, “While Bill Clinton has the mind of a New Democrat, he retains the heart of an old Democrat.” Following the speech, an angry Clinton calls a meeting in the White House with DLC leaders, including McCurdy, From, and Senators John Breaux (D-LA), Joseph Lieberman (D-CT), Charles Robb, and Sam Nunn. During the reportedly tense meeting, McCurdy calls on Clinton to make drastic changes to the White House staff. Later in the evening, Clinton
From: 1994-1997

addresses the conference, challenging those in the audience “to join me in the arena, not in the peanut gallery.” (Baer. p. 242; NPR: Morning Edition, 12/07/1994)

1995

January

On the 8th, former PPI fellow and coauthor of Reinventing Government David Osborne writes an article in The Washington Post entitled “Can This President Be Saved?” where he says Clinton will win reelection only if he returns to DLC principles. After reading the article, Clinton calls From to the White House for a three-hour meeting. During the meeting, From echoes Osborne’s sentiments and urges Clinton to return to the New Democratic themes. (Baer, p. 234)

Clinton delivers the State of the Union address on the 24th. On the day of the speech, Clinton calls From and asks him to rewrite a major portion of the speech to inject some of the “New Covenant” rhetoric from the 1992 campaign. (Baer, p. 237)

November

In a speech to the DLC, Clinton reaffirms his commitment to an agenda centered on middle-class values and the three pillars of New Democrat thinking—opportunity, responsibility, and community. He says these are the reasons “why you and I joined the Democratic Leadership Council. We knew that to keep America strong, the old ways of governing would have to be abandoned.” (“Remarks to the Democratic Leadership Council,” Public Papers of the Presidents: William J. Clinton, 11/13/1995, pp. 1743-1744)

1996

November


December

Clinton delivers his first major speech after reelection at a DLC luncheon. He promises that his second term will be spent forging a “coalition of the center” and focusing on centrist policies such as a balanced budget, greater access to education, job creation, and campaign finance reform. (The New York Times, 12/12/1996)

1997

August

At the annual convention of the National Conference of State Legislatures, From announces the findings of a recent poll conducted by Mark Penn which indicates strong support within the Democratic Party for Clinton’s emphasis on family
values and a balanced budget. From declares the “old-style, big government, tax-and-spend liberalism” to be dead, and asserts that “this is not your father’s Democratic Party anymore.” (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 08/10/1997)

**October**

In a speech to the DLC on the 27th, Clinton says, “The success of the last five years owes much to the ideas and the work of the DLC and its grass-roots leaders.” (“Remarks to the Democratic Leadership Council,” Public Papers of the Presidents: William J. Clinton, 10/27/1997, pp. 1433)

**November**

On the 2nd, Hillary Clinton leads a U.S. delegation to Great Britain to meet with newly-elected Prime Minister Tony Blair and some of his top officials. From is one of just nine officials to accompany the First Lady on the trip. (Sidney Blumenthal, The Clinton Wars, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003, p. 307)

**December**

*Time* magazine reports that Clinton is worried Vice President Gore will be forced to run from the left in his expected battle against Representative Richard Gephardt (D-MO) for the 2000 Democratic presidential nomination. From admits there will be “a lot of pressure on the Vice President to move left to cut off Gephardt,” but affirms that, based on Clinton’s electoral success running as a centrist candidate, “Al Gore will run as a New Democrat.” (*The Associated Press*, 12/07/1997)

**1998**

**January**

On the 14th, following the evening strategy meeting in the White House residence, Clinton holds a private meeting with From, Communications Director Sidney Blumenthal, Speechwriting Director Michael Waldman, and pollster Mark Penn. Clinton tells the group, “Our mission has been to save government from its own excesses so it can again be a progressive force,” and asks those in the room to make sure his upcoming State of the Union address expresses that idea. (Blumenthal, p. 317)

**March**

From disputes the notion that Clinton’s personal scandals have adversely affected the DLC agenda. He says, “I have not heard anyone say Clinton’s problems are a result of his ideas or his policies.” (*Denver Post*, 03/29/1998)

**June**

### December
In a speech to the DLC, From credits the group with redefining the center of American politics, and in the process, redefining the Democratic Party. He says the DLC’s “mission is to insure that the New Democratic politics that has dominated our party for the last six years continues to be the defining politics for the Democratic Party and for our country after President Clinton leaves office in 2001.” Clinton also speaks at the event, saying, “When we met in Cleveland in 1991, no one there dreamed that we could have accomplished, either politically or substantively, for our country what has happened in the intervening years. No one but Al From. . . And you can be proud of that. This is the work worthy of a lifetime. I’m proud that I was fortunate enough to meet Al and Will Marshall and all the DLC people.” (“Remarks at a Democratic Leadership Council Dinner,” *Public Papers of the Presidents: William J. Clinton*, 12/02/1998, p. 2118)

### 1999

#### April
On the 25th, the DLC hosts a roundtable entitled “The Third Way: Progressive Governance for the 21st Century.” Participants include From, Hillary Clinton, Tony Blair, and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder. (*The Hotline*, 04/23/1999)

#### July
On the 14th, Clinton speaks at a DLC National Conversation and says the group has “revitalized our party and revitalized our country.” He also declares that the Third Way “has become the wave of the future.” (“Remarks at a Democratic Leadership Council National Conversation in Baltimore, Maryland,” *Public Papers of the Presidents: William J. Clinton*, 07/14/1999, p. 1205)

#### October
In an address to a DLC gala on the 13th, Clinton thanks the group for its role in taking New Democratic ideas and implementing them into law. He says, “It would not have been possible if I had not been part of the DLC.” (“Remarks at a Democratic Leadership Council Gala,” *Public Papers of the Presidents: William J. Clinton*, 10/13/1999, p. 1770)

#### November
Clinton announces his intent to appoint From as a member of the U.S. Naval Academy Board of Visitors on the 17th. (*M2 Presswire*, 11/19/1999)

### 2000

#### January
During a speech to the DLC on the 12th, Clinton points to the record of his Administration as proof that the New Democratic message has been successful: “I think we can safely say the argument is over, for one simple reason: It has been put to rest by the record. We have been fortunate enough to implement virtually all the ideas that were advocated in the 1992 campaign and most of those advanced in the ’96 campaign.”
April  Clinton praises From’s dedication to the New Democratic cause in a speech to the DLC Conference in San Jose, California. He says, “I don’t know if Al From will ever get the credit he deserves for the political revolution which has been wrought in America over the last decade.”

May  Clinton speaks to the DLC at the Franklin Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, New York on the New Democratic agenda for the 21st Century. He says the DLC has “the responsibility to put forth a declaration which will guide our party and should guide our nation for the next ten years.”

2001  The DLC releases a post-election report concluding that Gore lost to Governor George W. Bush (R-TX) because he abandoned a centrist platform in favor of an outdated populist strategy. “Given the fundamentals, the good economy, the fact that crime and welfare were down, the Vice President should have won by a comfortable margin. The reason he didn’t had to do with the strategies he chose.”
**Governor Clinton and the DLC**

- How did you first meet Bill Clinton? What were your earliest impressions of him?
- Why did you decide to get Clinton more active in DLC politics? Discuss your trip to Little Rock in April 1989 to persuade Clinton to take the DLC chairmanship. Did you have any discussions about a future presidential run?
- Discuss the creation of the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI). Comment on Clinton’s interactions with the PPI during his membership in the DLC. To what extent did the PPI shape Clinton’s political philosophy?
- Which issues did Clinton focus on while Chairman? How did Clinton’s tenure influence the DLC agenda?
- How did Clinton respond to the tension between the DLC and the liberal wing of the Democratic Party? Between the DLC and the Democratic National Committee?
- Comment on Clinton’s development as a political figure after assuming a position of national leadership. Discuss the growth of his political network during his time at the DLC.

**1992 Campaign and Transition**

- What role did you play in the 1992 campaign? Did the Clinton campaign work closely with you and other DLC members in crafting the “New Democrat” message?
- Discuss your involvement in the drafting of the 1992 party platform. Comment on divisions within the Democratic Party between moderates and liberals in constructing the platform.
- Evaluate the DLC’s impact on the Clinton campaign. Was there concern among centrist Democrats that liberals held too many key posts on the campaign staff?
- Discuss your appointment as head of domestic policy for the transition. On which policies did you focus most closely? Assess your role in the formulation of Clinton’s first term domestic agenda.
- Describe your relationship with Clinton during the transition. How often did you interact with him and on what issues? Did he consciously work to inject New Democratic ideas into the new Administration?
- Comment on the release of PPI’s policy blueprint, *Mandate for Change*. How involved were you in its development? How did Clinton and top transition officials respond to its release?
- What role did you play in the appointments process? Was the DLC satisfied with the ideological makeup of the White House and Cabinet? Comment on the challenges you faced in staffing the executive branch with DLC personnel. In which areas did you feel you were most and least effective in having moderates deployed?
- Discuss your decision to return to the DLC after the transition. Were you offered a position in the Administration? Did you have any conversations with Clinton or top White House officials about the expected relationship between the Administration and the DLC?
**DLC Politics during the Clinton Administration**

- Describe your relationship with the White House during the Clinton presidency. Did you have any official roles? How often would you interact with Clinton? On what issues?
- Assess the influence of the DLC during the first two years of the Clinton Administration. Did you feel the centrist agenda had been abandoned by Clinton during this period?
- How did you interpret the results of the 1994 midterm elections? Did they change your relationship with the White House? Did you interact more often with Clinton? With top White House aides?
- What role, if any, did you play in the 1996 campaign? Discuss the DLC’s efforts in passing New Democrat policies during the second term.
- Which members of Clinton’s Cabinet and White House staff were most receptive to the DLC agenda? Who provided the strongest opposition? Were efforts made to get more DLC members appointed to the executive branch as the Clinton presidency progressed?
- Describe your work with the Administration in promoting the Third Way movement.
- Discuss the Administration’s efforts in passing key New Democrat initiatives (national service plan, welfare reform, free trade, etc). What role did you play in the construction of the Administration’s proposals? What role did the DLC play in policy formulation?

**The Clinton Presidency in Retrospect**

- Evaluate the progress of the DLC agenda during the Clinton Administration. On which issues were you most successful? Which issues were ignored during the Clinton presidency?
- Discuss Clinton’s legacy for the Democratic Party.
- How did Clinton affect the New Democrat agenda? Did his personal scandals damage the standing of New Democrat politics?
- What features of the Clinton presidency, and your role in it, were overlooked or misunderstood by the press?
TIMELINES

• Al From News Timeline, prepared by Jeff Chidester, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 02/29/2006.

• Timeline of the Clinton Presidency, prepared by Robbie Robinson, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 05/30/2002.

SELECTED WRITINGS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY AL FROM


• Al From, “Hey, Mom -- What’s a New Democrat?” The Washington Post, 06/06/1993.


• Al From, “Reinventing Government; President Clinton Must Head for Radical Departure,” The Gazette (Montreal, Quebec), 09/09/1993.


• Al From, “Clinton’s Not ‘Republican-Lite’,” USA Today, 08/26/1996.

• Al From, “Put Volunteers above Petty Politics,” Newsday, 05/05/1997.


• Al From, “Why the President Must Stay,” The New Democrat, 01/01/1999.


• Al From, “National vs. Special Interests,” The New Democrat, 05/01/2000.

• Al From, “Farewell, Mr. President,” DLC: Editorial, 01/19/2001.
GOVERNOR CLINTON AND THE DLC

- “Clinton Says He’ll Chair Democratic Group,” *The Baton Rouge Morning Advocate*, 03/16/1990.
1992 Campaign and Transition


**DLC Politics during the Clinton Administration**


- Jill Lawrence, “Clinton Back in Step with ‘New Democrats’,” *USA Today*, 08/26/1996.
