William J. Clinton
Presidential History Project

Briefing Materials

Michael Espy
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ALPHONSO MICHAEL (MIKE) ESPY TIMELINE

Prepared by Nitu Bagchi
Miller Center, University of Virginia, 03/15/2005


1978  Espy receives his law degree from the University of Santa Clara. (Levy, p. 127)


1986  Espy defeats incumbent William Webb Franklin (R-MS) to become the first African-American member of Congress from Mississippi. (The New York Times, 11/05/1986)

1988  June  Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton testifies on behalf of a bill to create a Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission to focus on improving education and child care in the region. Espy sponsors the bill in the House of Representatives. (The Washington Post, 06/29/1988)


December  The Phillips County, Arkansas chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People votes to boycott the activities of the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission until more African-Americans and women are appointed to it. The ten-member Commission includes one African-American. The legislation establishing the Commission authorizes President Reagan to appoint two commission members and each of the seven states’ governors to appoint one. Gov. Clinton, Gov. Ray Mabus (D-MS), and Gov. Buddy Roemer (D-LA) appoint themselves, saying it shows their commitment to the Commission’s vision. Clinton says that he favors appointing an African-American as the panel’s Executive Director. Espy indicates that though he thought there would be a couple of African-Americans appointed to the panel, he is not in favor of boycotting it. (The New York Times, 12/24/1988)
1990

August
Espy gets $10 million in minority technical and educational assistance written into the 1990 Farm Bill. Espy thinks this will make the “U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and specifically Farmers Home, more sensitive to minority farmers,” and will provide educational and technical assistance to them from community organizations and colleges. (The Washington Post, 08/26/1990)

December
As the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) Chairman, Clinton launches a new chapter of the DLC in Mississippi. Espy is a key member of the Mississippi chapter. (The Washington Post, 12/12/1990)

1991

Clinton visits New Hampshire to host the state’s first DLC forum. Espy is among the speakers at the forum. (The Christian Science Monitor, 08/07/1991)

1992

January
Espy announces he will endorse Clinton for the Democratic presidential primary. It is reported that Espy will serve as Co-Chairman of the Clinton campaign in Mississippi. (The Washington Post, 01/10/1992; The New York Times, 01/22/1992)

April
At a fundraiser in Arkansas, Clinton defends himself against character accusations. He says he agrees with the advice given to him by Espy: “It’s not what they call you; it’s what you answer to.” Clinton says he is answerable to the American people. (The New York Times, 04/20/1992)

June
Espy says that at this point in the campaign, Clinton should “run up the middle, as he started out doing in New Hampshire.” Espy concludes Clinton should not take the Democratic Party base for granted, but neither should he change his message to accommodate them. This statement is made before Clinton’s visit to Washington, D.C. for a weekend of meetings to resolve questions about his relationship to the party establishment and key interest groups. (The Washington Post, 06/12/1992)

Espy supports Clinton’s criticism of Rev. Jesse Jackson for inviting the rap singer, Sister Souljah, to the Rainbow Coalition Convention. “She is an influential entertainer and she does have the listening ear of hundreds of thousands of black youths, and any attempt to encourage actions that would threaten the lives of anyone is something we ought to condemn,” says Espy. He thinks that Clinton’s criticisms of Jackson will not hurt him with African-American voters. (The Washington Post, 06/16/1992)

August
Espy helps to draw up a plan which will maximize African-American voter turnout. The plan calls for a major push to mount voter-registration drives in black churches, high schools and colleges throughout the South. The cost of the plan is
estimated at $6 million. It is reported that Clinton rejects the plan due to cost.  
(USA Today, 08/31/1992)

September

Espy chairs the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s 22nd Annual Legislative Weekend. Clinton speaks at a dinner for the Foundation, promising that his presidency will be one of “full participation, full commitment.” Clinton’s speech is seen as reaching out to the African-American leadership.  
(The Washington Post, 09/27/1992)

November

Commenting on Clinton’s policies on race, Espy says Clinton will combine increased spending on social programs with better administration of existing programs. According to Espy the message will be: “We’ll extend opportunity, but there’s got to be some responsibility as well; and we believe in equal opportunity, but not equal outcome; and we’ll provide the resources and you have to do the rest.”  

December

It is reported that Espy will be appointed Secretary of Agriculture.  
(USA Today, 12/03/1992)

It is reported that environmentalist groups oppose Espy’s expected nomination as Secretary of Agriculture due to Espy’s “poor voting record” on environmental issues.  
(The Washington Post, 12/12/1992)

The Journal of Commerce reports that Espy is interested in the job of U.S. Trade Representative. Espy’s Spokeswoman, Mary Dixon, says the report is untrue.  

Clinton nominates Espy as Secretary of Agriculture.  
(Chicago Sun-Times, 12/24/1992)

1993

January

During his confirmation hearings, Espy indicates he will present plans to help Russia catch up on delinquent farm credit payments. Espy also says he will “aggressively seek out new international markets” and make the bureaucracy at the USDA more “farmer friendly.”  
(Journal of Commerce, 01/14/1993; USA Today, 01/15/1993)

Espy imposes a Department-wide job freeze. He announces he will cut the Department’s large Washington bureaucracy before he approves a proposed reduction in field offices.  
(The Washington Post, 02/01/1993)

There are numerous illnesses and two deaths caused by food poisoning in Washington state. The deaths are caused by a rare strain of E. coli bacteria, and one death and all of the illnesses are traced to meat served at Jack-in-the-Box restaurants. Espy visits the region and says the government has a “moral
responsibility” to the victims but there will be no immediate changes in the way meat and poultry are inspected “until all research is in.” (*The Washington Post*, 01/30/1993)

**February**

Espy says the meat at the Jack-in-the-Box restaurants was inspected properly according to current guidelines of the USDA. However, he adds that the current guidelines need to be changed because they may be inadequate to detect contamination such as the bacteria in fast-food. (*The Washington Post*, 02/03/1993)

Espy announces a 33-point plan to make meat inspections safer, including the appointment of 500 more meat inspectors, better record-keeping by slaughterhouses and random bacterial testing of aging and injured cattle and dairy cows. Espy also asks Congress to spend more money to speed development of a 24-hour test for dangerous strains of bacteria. Espy says he is promoting the idea of putting cooking and safe handling instructions on the labels of all raw meat and poultry products for food-service establishments and supermarkets. (*The Seattle Times*, 02/05/1993; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 02/06/1993)

Espy holds his first news conference since taking office. He announces that Clinton has authorized the hiring of 160 additional meat and poultry inspectors at a cost of $4 million per year. Espy also announces the consolidation of the agency’s public affairs operations. Espy says he will start with the restructuring of the Washington, D.C. office. (*The Washington Post*, 02/12/1993)

Espy calls for an anti-poverty policy that goes beyond traditional welfare and subsistence programs to promote independence and initiative among poor people. Speaking at a conference held by The Empowerment Network, Espy says, “We spend billions of dollars to help poor people subsist, but unless they can accumulate assets, the poor will always be poor.” (*The Washington Post*, 02/17/1993)

Clinton’s economic package proposes some curbs on farm subsidies and eliminates the subsidies for honey bee farmers. It also proposes higher fees from meat and poultry processors. Espy says, “Americans believe that wealthy farmers were the beneficiaries of lopsided benefits under the Reagan and Bush administrations. I’m sure they want to know that wealthy farmers will pay their share.” (*USA Today*, 02/18/1993)

Espy appeals to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA & Related Agencies for $1.4 billion in immediate funding for rural development and nutrition programs. Espy says the program would create “real, tangible, honest, immediate jobs.” (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 02/24/1993)

Espy says the Clinton Administration is considering separating Russia’s debt from the debt of other former Soviet republics to try to resolve the impasse over export
credits. Speaking to reporters, Espy says he has made some recommendations along these lines to the Administration. (*Journal of Commerce*, 02/24/1993)

Espy tells a high-level delegation of Russian officials that the Clinton Administration will not help finance any new Russian grain purchases until Moscow agrees to resolve its mounting debts on government-backed loans. (*The Washington Post*, 02/27/1993)

**March**

Addressing the Rice Millers’ Association, Espy says that the Clinton Administration will fight to open Japan and Korea’s closed rice markets through bilateral negotiations or through the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT). (*Journal of Commerce*, 03/01/1993)

The Russian delegation leaves Washington without an agreement on ending Russia’s grain credit problems, leaving U.S.-Russian grain trade stalled. Espy says he is dedicated to finding a solution but there is no specific timetable to do so. (*Financial Times*-London, 03/04/1993)

The USDA, which is responsible for the school lunch program, reports that school lunches have too much fat, not enough carbohydrates and more than half of the maximum recommended daily sodium intake. In a statement, Espy says, “We know that school lunches do a good job of delivering vitamins, minerals and protein. But we also know that we must move aggressively to reduce the fat and sodium in school lunches. The challenge we face is to achieve these reductions and not lose our customers. A nutritous meal is only effective when a child consumes it.” (*The New York Times*, 03/17/1993)

The Administration announces a new plan for meat inspections. Inspectors in slaughterhouses will use the most modern biological tools to search for bacterial contamination in meat instead of relying solely on visual inspection of the meat. (*The New York Times*, 03/17/1993)

**May**

Espy travels to Brussels to meet with Mr. Rene Steichen, European Community (EC) Farm Commissioner, and Sir Leon Brittan, EC Trade Commissioner. Espy tells the two that the U.S. wants better market access for its agricultural exports to the EC – a question which has remained “unresolved.” (*Financial Times*-London, 05/05/1993)

The USDA announces that the number of people receiving food stamps is reaching a record high. In March, 27.38 million people were enrolled in the food stamp program, an increase of 474,000 people from February and the fifth straight month of rising enrollments. Espy says these numbers are proof that “America continues to struggle to recover” from its former economic crisis. (*The Washington Post*, 05/29/1993)
June  Espy and Russian Federation Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Zavaryukha sign a $700 million agriculture assistance package under which Russia promises to alleviate port congestion and speed the flow of U.S. grain. U.S. grain is given to Russia under the USDA’s Food for Progress program. (Journal of Commerce, 06/07/1993)

As part of departmental streamlining efforts, Espy suspends employee awards within the USDA. Espy says 42 separate bonus programs cost the USDA $35 million last year and have exposed it to “ridicule.” (The Washington Post, 06/10/1993)

July  Clinton tours the Midwest with Espy after heavy rains flood much of the region. Clinton announces farmers will be given aid as soon as possible and that he will ask Congress to appropriate $1 billion for their aid. (The Washington Post, 07/04/1993)

Clinton names Espy as the official in charge of long-term relief operations in the Midwest. Espy says federal officials are struggling to provide flood relief because the heavy rains have yet to let up, and also because the crest of the floodwaters in the Mississippi River continues to move south, spreading new devastation in its wake. (The Boston Globe, 07/18/1993)

August  The USDA announces that the labels on packages of all raw and partly cooked meat and poultry products will be required to carry instructions for safe handling to minimize chances of bacterial illness. Espy states, “Our goal is to improve public awareness about the necessity of safe food handling.” Espy adds that the USDA is not relinquishing its responsibility to inspect meat. (The Washington Post, 08/12/1993)

September  Espy says he is set to reorganize the USDA with the goal of transforming the Department from “being the object of ridicule to an object of praise.” Espy suggests merging the 43 agencies into 30. (USA Today, 09/16/1993)

October  Senator David L. Boren (D-OK) says he will delay the Administration’s plans to abolish 1,300 USDA field offices until officials disclose which 800 headquarters jobs they plan to eliminate in Washington, D.C. Boren urges Espy to make deeper cuts in Washington before he initiates the closing of field offices. (The Washington Post, 10/07/1993)

Espy meets with Japanese Agriculture Minister Eijiro Hata, who promises that Japan will relax its ban on commercial rice imports and accept some rice from the United States as an emergency measure. Tokyo bans all commercial imports of rice on grounds of national food security, but Espy asks Japan to replace its import ban with tariffs. (Plain Dealer-Cleveland, 10/12/1993)
A federal court stops the USDA from requiring safe-handling instructions on raw meat and poultry products. U.S. District Judge James Nowlin says the Department didn’t follow proper public notice and comment procedures under the Administrative Procedure Act. The decision states that the USDA “has not demonstrated any reason that would justify a departure from the normal rulemaking procedures” of the Administrative Procedures Act. Espy is “extremely disappointed in the decision.” *(The Washington Post, 10/15/1993)*

Espy, the highest-level Clinton Administration official yet to visit China, says that Washington wants to put relations with Beijing “on a sounder footing,” but that such improvement cannot be possible without progress in human rights, arms proliferation and trade issues. Most of Espy’s talks involve removing Chinese barriers to American agricultural goods. Espy’s visit is seen as groundwork for a meeting between Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Clinton in Seattle in November. *(The Washington Post, 10/21/1993)*

Espy says the USDA will issue new regulations requiring safe handling labels for raw meat and poultry rather than appeal the court ruling. The new regulations include mandatory labels on ground meat along with safe handling information accompanying all other uncooked meat. *(Chicago Sun-Times, 10/30/1993)*

*December*

Espy says the U.S. and the EC, in their talks held under GATT, have “found a way to insure that our farmers will benefit from significant new market access opportunities in Europe in commodities like grain, meat, dairy products and other crops.” It is reported that a farm accord between the U.S. and the EC will follow shortly. *(The New York Times, 12/02/1993)*

Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa announces that Japan will end its ban on rice imports to fulfill its obligations under GATT. This is a reversal of a 30-year-old Japanese agriculture policy. The new rules on rice imports -- worked out in negotiations with Espy -- call for Japan to import an increasing share of its rice over a six-year period. *(The Washington Post, 12/14/1993)*

The forthcoming GATT agreement will reduce the role of subsidies in agriculture for participating nations. The GATT agreement mandates a 21 percent reduction in the volume of subsidies for farm exports over six years, and a 36 percent cut in subsidy funds. Espy says that the government cannot afford the subsidy payments anymore. *(The Washington Post, 12/15/1993)*

*1994*

*January*

Espy says USDA scientists have developed a gene-mapping process designed to breed more disease-resistant types of cattle and swine. Mapping the genes will provide the basis for developing information and technology so that the livestock industry can produce animals that are genetically resistant to certain diseases. *(The Washington Post, 01/11/1994)*
February  Aides to Espy say that he will lift an 11-month moratorium on farm foreclosures. The move is supported by several senators calling for more rigorous collection of billions of dollars in overdue loan payments. Espy says his proposed reorganization of the Agriculture Department will give the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) a fresh start by subsuming it within a new agency. A separate committee will handle loans that are now delinquent, enabling the FmHA “to return to its original mission of providing temporary financing to small farmers.” (The Washington Post, 02/04/1994)

April  Espy announces that the Clinton Administration is taking the first steps to restrict imports of Canadian wheat and barley into the United States, beginning July 1. The Administration contends that Canada has been unfairly subsidizing its wheat, depriving American farmers of earnings and driving up the cost to the U.S. government of its farm supports. Under the new GATT rules, Canada has 90 days to renegotiate a mutually satisfactory tariff agreement. (The New York Times, 04/22/1994)

May  Ambassador to Canada James J. Blanchard says he disagrees with Espy’s representations to South American leaders that Canada was engaged in “predatory pricing” of its wheat in Brazil. “I don’t think [Espy] had the authority from the President” to criticize Canadian trading practices, says Blanchard. (The Washington Post, 05/26/1994)

June  The FBI is investigating whether Espy illegally accepted free travel, tickets to sporting events and other gifts from Tyson Foods Inc., the country’s largest poultry processor. (The New York Times, 06/08/1994)

August  The U.S. and Canadian governments agree to a one-year pact over wheat trade and set new temporary tariffs on some of Canada’s wheat exports to the U.S. (Financial Times-London, 08/03/1994)

Attorney General Janet Reno asks for the appointment of an independent counsel to investigate charges that Espy received gifts from Tyson Foods. In a statement, Evan Barr, one of Espy’s attorneys, says all of Espy’s “official and personal travel and entertainment expenses have been properly accounted for and reimbursed. Secretary Espy has never misused his office in any way at all.” (USA Today, 08/10/1994)

The White House says political employees may no longer accept gifts or trips from companies they regulate even if they later pay the companies back. Counsel to the President Lloyd N. Cutler says the new White House policy is necessary because ethics rules that became effective in February 1993 do not expressly forbid federal officials from taking gifts from government-regulated firms as long as they repay the fair market value of what they receive. The White House also says that it will ask the independent Office of Government Ethics (OGE) to
review Espy’s actions. Cutler says the White House is hoping for a quick
determination. *(The Washington Post, 08/12/1994)*

*September*

Los Angeles attorney Donald C. Smaltz is appointed as Independent Counsel to
investigate Espy. The federal court grants Smaltz authority to probe whether Espy
has “committed a violation of any federal law ... relating in any way to the
acceptance of gifts by him from organizations or individuals with business
pending before the Department of Agriculture.” *(The Washington Post,
09/10/1994)*

Espy unveils the Pathogen Reduction Act, a proposal that will require meat and
poultry industries to use a scientific test to determine whether invisible, harmful
bacteria are present on meat. Espy says that even if Congress does not act on the
bill before it adjourns, the USDA plans to issue regulations requiring the
industries to use a high-tech test the Department unveiled in August. *(Pittsburgh
Post-Gazette, 09/15/1994)*

Espy reimburses the USDA for lease payments made by the Department on a Jeep
Cherokee which he keeps in Jackson, Mississippi and uses for both public and
personal reasons. Espy’s lawyer, Reid Weingarten, says that the reimbursement is
not legally necessary but Espy “really does want to close down any possible
appearance problem.” Espy also pays an Atlanta museum for four Super Bowl
tickets and the American Crop Protection Association for a one-night stay at the
Greenbrier resort. Espy’s lawyers say that he is writing checks to cover every
expense that can be challenged, even if he incurred the expense while on

White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers says that the President “thinks
(Espy’s) served ably and well.” She refuses to answer questions about whether
Espy is about to resign. Weingarten says he “has not offered his resignation.”
*(USA Today, 09/22/1994)*

The House approves a major reorganization of the USDA and gives Espy broad
authority to streamline the Department and cut waste. With time running short
before Congress is scheduled to adjourn, House and Senate negotiators hope to
skip a formal conference and reconcile differences, including which agency in the
Department should run conservation programs and how much autonomy should
be given to state universities that do agricultural research. In addition, the House
version establishes six undersecretary positions, compared to nine in the Senate

*October*

Espy resigns as Secretary of Agriculture. He says he is “distracted” by the
investigation and unable to give his job the attention it deserves. His resignation
goes into effect on December 31st. A statement issued by Clinton says, “Although
Secretary Espy has said he has done nothing wrong, I am troubled by the
appearance of some of these incidents and believe his decision to leave is
appropriate.” The statement also praises Espy’s service. *(The Washington Post, 10/04/1994; USA Today, 10/04/1994)*

The White House issues an ethics report on Espy by Counsel to the President Abner Mikva. The report offers no judgment of Espy’s conduct and offers no recommendations for remedial or disciplinary action against him. A White House official says that no further action is needed since Espy has already resigned. *(The New York Times, 10/11/1994)*

The White House receives a subpoena from Independent Counsel Donald Smaltz for documents collected during its internal investigation on Espy. The White House says it will comply with the subpoena. *(The New York Times, 10/19/1994)*

**November**

Espy says that the Clinton Administration will fight to prevent farm subsidies from being cut further when “an increasingly urban Congress” debates the 1995 farm bill. Espy says farm-subsidy programs already have contributed more to deficit reduction than almost any other area of the federal budget, declining in cost by almost 50 percent since 1986. *(Omaha World Herald, 11/03/1994)*

Smaltz says that he has expanded the scope of his probe in light of new allegations that arose after his appointment. He says he estimates that it will take a year to complete the investigations instead of six months as previously stated. *(Houston Chronicle, 11/23/1994)*

**December**

Espy announces the closings of more than 1,000 agency field offices, concluding a three-year effort to reorganize the USDA. *(The Washington Post, 12/07/1994)*

President Clinton announces the appointment of outgoing Representative Daniel Glickman (D-KS) as the new Secretary of Agriculture. He praises Espy, who is also present on the occasion, for the “superb job” he has done as Agriculture Secretary. *(The Washington Post, 12/29/1994)*

**1995**

**January**

Speaking at a meeting of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, Espy says that his departure as Secretary of Agriculture had more to do with his upsetting Washington bureaucrats than it did with ethics problems. “I stepped on some toes, and when that happens, the response is not passive.” He says he is most proud of the USDA’s response to midwestern floods in 1993, the opening of Japanese rice markets, increased funding for minority farm programs, improved child nutrition programs, the closure of thousands of unneeded U.S. farm offices, and improvements in minority hiring and contract business with the USDA. *(The Tampa Tribune, 01/21/1995)*
1996

*May*

A seventeen-count criminal indictment is brought against Crop Growers Corp. and its two top executives for making illegal corporate campaign contributions in 1993 to Espy’s brother, Henry Espy, when he ran for Congress. The criminal indictment charges the company with concealing the contributions in order to gain access to Espy. Henry Espy is later cleared on all charges. (*The Washington Post*, 05/31/1996)

1997

*August*

A federal grand jury charges Espy with 39 counts of illegally soliciting and accepting gifts from large food producers and trying to cover up his actions. The grand jury charges that Espy “solicited, received and accepted” more than $35,000 in gifts, trips, sports tickets and other favors from large agribusinesses that dealt with the USDA. Espy is also charged with witness tampering and lying to investigators about his receipt of gifts. (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 08/27/1997)

1998

*November*

U.S. District Judge Ricardo Urbina dismisses part of the corruption case against Espy, ruling that prosecutors have failed to show criminal conduct in his acceptance of Super Bowl tickets, a Waterford crystal bowl and a scholarship for his girlfriend. He keeps 30 counts intact, covering roughly $33,000 in other gifts that prosecutors say Espy illegally received. (*The Washington Post*, 11/25/1998)

*December*

After the Independent Counsel spends $17 million is spent on his investigation, Espy is acquitted of all 30 charges against him. Espy says of Smaltz, “You have to stand up to him. You have to let him know you’re not going to back down, and sooner or later it’s going to be okay.” The White House issues a statement from President Clinton saying, “I am heartened that he has, as he said, emerged from this ordeal stronger. I hope that as he moves forward he will continue his notable record of service to the country.” (*The Washington Post*, 12/03/1998)
**Mike Espy Suggested Topics**

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**Origins of Relationship with Clinton**
- When did you first meet Bill Clinton? What were your early impressions of him?
- Discuss your interactions with Clinton during your tenure in the House of Representatives, including the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission.
- Discuss your work with Clinton in the Democratic Leadership Council.
- Discuss how your relationship with Clinton developed before you joined the Administration in 1993.
- Discuss your role in the 1992 presidential campaign. What were your responsibilities as Co-Chairman of the Clinton campaign in Mississippi? How often did you see Clinton during the campaign? What were your impressions of Clinton as a candidate?
- Discuss your role developing a plan to boost African-American turnout in the 1992 Election.

**Secretary of Agriculture**
- Discuss your appointment as Secretary of Agriculture. Did you have any discussions with President Clinton about his vision for agriculture policy before taking office?
- Characterize your role and responsibilities as Secretary of Agriculture. What types of issues occupied most of your time? What were the most pressing issues facing the USDA upon your arrival?
- Did you meet with the President on a regular basis? How involved was the President in formulating agriculture policy? How frequently did you propose policy ideas to the President?
- Characterize your working relationships with other members of the Cabinet. Describe Cabinet meetings during the Clinton Administration. How effective was the Cabinet as a policy-making institution?
- Describe your relationships with key members of the White House Staff. With whom did you work most closely and on what issues?
- Which were the key Administration agencies and departments which you worked with during your tenure?
- With whom in the Congress did you work most closely? Describe any challenges you experienced in promoting agriculture legislation on Capitol Hill. How did your previous service in the House of Representatives affect your ability to interact with Congress?
- How did the Independent Counsel investigation into your activities affect your ability to do your job? Discuss your dealings with the White House in determining how the Administration would respond to subpoenas. How did these events affect your relationship with the White House?
- What role, if any, did you play as a liaison for the Administration to the African-American community?
- Discuss your working relationships with organized interest groups. Which interest groups were your main allies and adversaries?
- Describe your relationship with Clinton and the White House after your resignation and after his term ended.
**Major Policies and Issues at the USDA**

- Discuss the process through which major agriculture policies were formulated, proposed, and implemented in the Clinton Administration.
- What were some of the important issues connected with the reorganization of the USDA? Discuss your interactions with members of Congress, congressional committees, executive departments and agencies, and interest groups on this issue.
- Discuss the major domestic issues you dealt with during your tenure (meat inspection policies, Midwest flooding, administration of food stamps, the Forest Service, etc.)
- Comment on your role in the negotiations for GATT and NAFTA.
- Discuss your interactions with foreign governments (Russia, Canada, China, etc.) over agriculture policy. With whom in the Administration did you work when dealing with international policy issues?

**The Clinton Presidency in Retrospect**

- What do you consider your greatest accomplishments as Secretary of Agriculture? What were the most challenging aspects of your job?
- What were Clinton’s greatest assets as President? Assess his strengths and weaknesses as a domestic policymaker, a legislative leader, and a leader of public opinion. Which of his attributes served him best in the presidency?
- What features of the Clinton presidency and your roles in it were overlooked or misunderstood by the press?
- What will be the Clinton Administration’s lasting legacy on agriculture policy?
- How should the Clinton presidency be viewed in history? What episodes or events are especially instructive or revealing for the historian trying to assess this presidency?
SELECTED WRITINGS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY MIKE ESPY


• “Testimony of Mike Espy, Secretary, Dept. of Agriculture to Senate Agriculture Committee on Department of Agriculture Reorganization,” *Federal Document Clearing House Congressional Testimony*, 10/06/1993.


CONGRESSMAN ESPY AND GOVERNOR CLINTON


SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

Joining the Administration


Secretary of Agriculture
• Sharon Schmickle, “In First Visit to Midwest, Espy Speaks Directly to Farm Groups’ Worries,” Star Tribune (Minneapolis), 02/26/1993.


Restructuring the USDA


• Paul Hoversten, “Agriculture Department Targeted for a Clinton Diet,” *USA Today*, 09/16/1993.


Other Important Issues


