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Subject: PRESS GAGGLE BY ARI FLEISCHER ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Blountville, Tennessee)

For Immediate Release

November 2, 2002

PRESS GAGGLE
BY
ARI FLEISCHER

Aboard Air Force One
En route Blountville,

Tennessee

9:10 A.M. EST

MR. FLEISCHER: Good morning. One day, four stops. The first one is in the Tri-Cities Aviation Hangar, located in the Tri-Cities Regional Airport, where the President will support the campaigns of Congressman Van Hilleary for Governor, Lamar Alexander for Senate, Janice Bowling for the 4th congressional district, the Tennessee Republican ticket.

Later, the President will travel to Atlanta, Georgia, on behalf of Congressman Saxby Chambliss for Senate, former State Senator Sonny Perdue for governor, State Senator Phil Gingrey for the 11th congressional district, and the Georgia Republican ticket.

Round two of Georgia -- which is round three of the day -- will later be in Savannah, where he will support the same ticket, except this time he will support Max Burns for the 12th congressional district and Calder Clay, for the 3rd congressional ticket -- district.

Finally, we go to Florida this evening, where the President will support his brother's reelection campaign, Ginny Brown-Waite's congressional campaign and the Florida Republican ticket.

Q Can you spell --

MR. FLEISCHER: G-i-n-n-y, B-r-o-w-n, W-a-i-t-e, and that's Florida's 5th congressional district.

I am all yours.

Q Ari, does the President still have confidence in Harvey Pitt?

MR. FLEISCHER: No changes from what you were told yesterday. Everything yesterday remains as valid today.

Q Why aren't you actually saying it?

MR. FLEISCHER: The President continues to have confidence in Harvey Pitt.

Q Have they spoken, do you know?

MR. FLEISCHER: They have not.

Q Do you know why --

MR. FLEISCHER: The President does not talk to everybody in his government every day.

Q Does the President think that what we do know -- Scott it made it clear yesterday that the White House wants to see all the facts on Pitt and Webster. Does the President think what we do know about Pitt -- that he didn't tell the White House about Webster, didn't tell the rest of the SEC everything he knew about Webster -- does he think that hurts Republican candidates right before the election?

MR. FLEISCHER: The inspector general of the SEC is looking into all these matters, and that's the appropriate place for everything to be looked at.

Q Is there nothing for the White House to be dissatisfied with here, in terms of Pitt's disclosure?

MR. FLEISCHER: The inspector general is looking into it and that's where it will stand.

Q You have no independent knowledge of any of these facts? You have to wait for the inspector general? You don't know what the White House knew?

MR. FLEISCHER: The inspector general is the appropriate place for all the information to be gathered and looked at --

Q One of the papers this morning, Ari, reported that Andy Card was most displeased with not having been given a heads-up about Mr. Webster's issues at U.S. Technologies. Is that true, was he upset about that, before making the call to Webster?

MR. FLEISCHER: I haven't spoken to Andy about that this morning, so I'm not in a position to evaluate that.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. FLEISCHER: I would just say Andy also thinks that the inspector general is the appropriate person to look into this.

Q How close are we to a resolution on Iraq?

MR. FLEISCHER: The U.N. does not work over the weekends, and so there are going to be some phone calls made at various levels --

Q By the President?

MR. FLEISCHER: No, not by the President. But I do not anticipate any action by the United Nations over the weekend.

Q Do you think early next week there could be a compromise?

MR. FLEISCHER: Scott, I'd hazard a guess at the date. The talks are continuing to move along; a productive week at the United Nations, and in the discussions around the world. I would hazard to make a hard guess as to the timing.

Q We've been given to understand there would be new U.S. draft that took account of some of the back-and-forth, the French-Russians, early next week. Is that the case?



MR. FLEISCHER: We'll see what ultimately they decide to finalize. I think the talks are continuing and, obviously, whatever is the best summary of how these talks have moved will be represented in the final draft that is put to a vote.

Q Is what Colin Powell said the other day still active, that we're looking to have a vote by the end of next week?

MR. FLEISCHER: I think he indicated -- I don't think he was that precise in his language. He indicated it could be this coming week, could be the week after, is I think how the Secretary put it.

Q He said he doubted it would go to the following week.

MR. FLEISCHER: Yes, I think he left the door open. Again, it's impossible to guess. And this will come together when it comes together. As I said, it was a productive week, and I think everybody has seen that. I just don't want to guess a date.

Q Can the President live with the possibility that it would slide beyond November the 12th?

MR. FLEISCHER: Again, I'm just not going to get into the hard date guessing business. The President would like to see this wrapped up though

Q Ari, is the White House disappointed that members of the President's own party now are coming out and expressing dissatisfaction with Pitt?

MR. FLEISCHER: No, I really have nothing further to add, other than that the inspector general is going to take a look.

Q No comment, though, on senators from the -- Republican senators speaking out on this?

MR. FLEISCHER: No, we'll -- the inspector general is taking a look at everything.

Q Ari, the Democrats are rolling out their biggest guns, in a sense, in Florida this weekend. You've got former President Clinton in Miami tonight, campaigning again tomorrow, and I believe you've got former Vice President Gore there tomorrow and Monday. Does the President feel that his brother's race is looking very endangered and that this poses much of a threat to him?

MR. FLEISCHER: Well, make no mistake, the Democratic National Committee and its leadership have said publicly, on the record, that Florida is their number one priority, winning the governorship in Florida is their single most important campaign in the country, as expressed by the chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

So it's not surprising they're going to roll out every gun they can to win in Florida. The President believes that Governor Bush has done an outstanding job, particularly in the area of education. Education is a vital issue in Florida, and it's important for people to be knowledgeable about education in Florida if they're going to run for office.

So it will be a busy political weekend across the country, Florida included.

Q Just to follow up, does the presence of Clinton and Gore raise the stakes, though? And if I could just add to that, too. Gore is going around saying in his stump speech, don't let anyone tell you your vote doesn't count, tell them to talk to me. Does all that really raise the stakes in the Florida race?

MR. FLEISCHER: Well, I think the stakes are high in many places, including Florida. This is not the only place that former President Clinton has campaigned. This is not the only place that former Vice President Gore has campaigned. All votes count, everywhere, in every state. And the President hopes that everybody will exercise their right to vote, regardless of party. And people in the military have a right to vote. And he hopes that everybody's right to vote will be honored.

Q I know you don't talk about White House polls or party polls, but do you know whether your polls show roughly what public polls show here, six to eight points for the governor?

MR. FLEISCHER: Yes, I don't discuss private polling.

Q Ari, can you tell us where the President is actually going to vote? Is it in the town of Crawford? Is it in a fire station or a community center?

MR. DICKENS: Crawford Fire House.

MR. FLEISCHER: It will be the Crawford Fire House. And by the way, please address your questions to Scott,

with hair. Scott, with hair.

Q The fact that he's getting shaggy?

MR. FLEISCHER: No, I just --

Q -- gaggle a couple of days ago, which Scott made -- made clear it was on the record as it was asked him. It was the pre-Halloween thing, and then I guess somebody asked Scott what his costume was, and he said he was going as Ari Fleischer. And Sandra said, yes, with hair. So now it's in two gaggles on the record, with her name attached to it. Thank you, Sandra. (Laughter.)

MR. FLEISCHER: I think it's very important for the sun to shine in, for disclosure.

Q Oh, that's a comment on the SEC. (Laughter.)

Q If you don't want to talk about internal polls, can you talk at least about how the White House -- how the President feels about the prospects for his brother in Florida? Is he feeling confident, is he nervous at all? What's his feeling about this race?

MR. FLEISCHER: Well, you know, the President is not in the predictions business. Obviously he wants and he hopes that his brother will win. Those judgments will be made by the voters in Florida on Tuesday night. The President is here to support Governor Bush, his brother, because he thinks he's done an excellent job in the state of Florida, he knows him well. He knows him well, and he thinks his reelection would be very important to the people of Florida, particularly again in the area of education.

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9:20 P.M. EST