



Presidential Oral History Program

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William J. Clinton Presidential History Project

Briefing Materials

Jamie Gorelick

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JAMIE S. GORELICK TIMELINE

*Prepared by Stacie Pettyjohn and Darby A. Morrisroe,
Miller Center, University of Virginia, 3/10/2002*

- 1979** Gorelick serves as a member of the Secretary's Transition Team, for the Department of Energy.
- 1979-1980** Gorelick is the Assistant to the Secretary and Counselor to the Deputy Secretary of Energy.
- Gorelick is a member of the Task Force on Evaluation of Audit, Investigative and Inspection Components for the Department of Defense.
- 1980-1993** Gorelick works as an associate and partner at Miller, Cassidy, Larroca & Lewin in Washington, D.C.
- 1988** Gorelick advises Michael Dukakis's presidential campaign on criminal justice issues. (*The New York Times*, 2/1/1994)
- 1992-93** Gorelick serves as President of the District of Columbia Bar.
- 1993**
- January* Gorelick vacations with good friend, Zoë E. Baird, and the Clintons on Hilton Head. Reports circulate that Gorelick is a candidate for multiple high-ranking appointments, including White House counsel, general counsel at the Department of Defense, and deputy or associate attorney general. (*The Washington Post*, 1/4/1993)
- Gorelick participates in the team of attorneys advising Baird throughout her Senate confirmation hearing. On the 23rd, Zoë Baird withdraws from consideration for the Attorney General post as a rising public outcry denounces her hiring of illegal immigrants. Clinton continues to prefer a female nominee for Attorney General, and Gorelick's name is mentioned as a possible candidate. (*The New York Times*, 1/23/1993)
- On the 29th, Clinton announces a six-month policy barring the military from asking recruits about their sexual orientation. This announcement incites controversy as many criticize Clinton for not following through on his campaign promise to lift the unconditional ban on homosexuals in the military. Many military officials strongly oppose the plan. (*Financial Times*, 1/30/1993)

- February* Four federal agents are killed as the FBI siege of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas begins on the 28th. (*The Economist*, 4/24/1993)
- March* The Clinton Administration selects Gorelick to be General Counsel to the Department of Defense. (*The Washington Post*, 3/5/1993)
- Gorelick is a part of a team advising Janet Reno through her Senate confirmation hearing. Reno's hearing proceeds with little opposition and the Senate confirms her appointment as Attorney General on the 12th. (*The Washington Post*, 3/10/1993; *The New York Times*, 3/12/1993)
- April* On Reno's orders, the FBI ends the siege in Waco by attacking the compound with teargas on the 19th, resulting in an explosion that kills eighty-seven people. (*The Economist*, 4/24/1993)
- On the 28th, Congress approves Gorelick's nomination to be General Counsel to the Department of Defense. (*The Washington Post*, 4/28/1993)
- July* Clinton fails to lift the ban on gays in the military but announces a compromise policy of "don't ask, don't tell." Defense Secretary Les Aspin and Gorelick formulate the new military policy that ends the practice of asking recruits their sexual orientation and halts investigations into a service member's sexual orientation unless there is evidence of misconduct. (*The Washington Post*, 9/24/1993)
- September* The Pentagon announces that it will actively encourage consolidation in the defense industry to help it adapt to the post-Cold War setting. Part of the government's intervention involves the creation of a Defense Department task force on antitrust matters in the defense industry. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 9/1/1993)
- Aspin announces the results of his "bottom-up" review of the Department of Defense. The changes that Aspin recommends closely resemble President Bush's plan for the Department of Defense with the armed forces decreasing personnel by 1.4 million by 1999, but retaining the ability to fight simultaneous limited wars. Aspin's plan shifts the focus of the Pentagon to fighting regional conflicts and nontraditional missions such as peacekeeping and humanitarian aid. (*1993 Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, pp. 452; *The Christian Science Monitor*, 9/3/1993)
- October* On the 3rd, eighteen American soldiers are killed in a firefight during a peacekeeping mission in Somalia. (*1993 Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, pp. 486)
- As a result of the Tailhook scandal, an incident in which naval pilots assaulted 83 women at a 1991 naval aviators' convention, Navy Secretary

John H. Dalton calls for the removal of Admiral Kelso. Defense Secretary Les Aspin objects and refuses to dismiss Kelso. (*The New York Times*, 10/5/1993)

Haiti turns away the *USS Harlan County*, a ship carrying American and Canadian engineers to aid the transition to the government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide. (*1993 Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, pp. 500)

On the 15th, Clinton sends American warships to enforce the U.N. economic sanctions on Haiti in an attempt to compel the military leaders to relinquish control of the government. Clinton's actions instigate a debate over the importance of Haiti to the U.S. (*1993 Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, pp. 500)

November Gorelick counsels the President's nominee for the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Peacekeeping and Democracy, Morton H. Halperin, at his Senate hearing on the 19th. Republicans strongly criticize Halperin for his opposition to the Vietnam War and accuse him of leaking sensitive information, including the Pentagon papers. It is suggested that by blocking Halperin's nomination and keeping the position from being filled Republicans intend to stymie U.S. peacekeeping efforts. (*1993 Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, pp. 476-477; *Los Angeles Times*, 11/5/1993)

December On the 16th, under pressure from the Administration and the public, on the 16th Aspin announces that he will resign. Critics attack Aspin for disorganization and a lack of direction in his defense policy, the policy on homosexuals in military, and the failure to grant troops in Somalia requested heavy armaments. Reports circulate that there is "strong evidence that he was pushed" to leave his post. (*Los Angeles Times*, 12/16/1993)

Only one day after Aspin's resignation, Clinton nominates retired Admiral and former the head of the National Security Agency, and Deputy Director of the CIA Bobby Ray Inman as his successor. Inman's naval service spans over thirty years. (*Los Angeles Times*, 12/17/1993)

To clarify the military's policy on homosexuals, Aspin and Gorelick hold a Department of Defense briefing, outlining the military's new rules and providing example scenarios. Under this policy, a serviceperson can only be asked about his sexual orientation if there is credible information. Gorelick proclaims that "credible information is not a rumor, it is not suspicion; it's not opinion. It's facts." However, the military policy is filled with ambiguities, leaving the decision to investigate largely up to the commander. (The Washington Post, 12/23/1993; Defense Department Briefing, 12/22/1993)

1994

January

On the 10th, Halperin removes himself from consideration for the position of the assistant secretary of Defense for Democracy and Peacekeeping. (*Los Angeles Times*, 1/10/1994)

The Justice and Defense Departments charge Alliant Techsystems Inc. and Aerojet General Corp. with violating antitrust laws. The atypical charge is raised against the defense contractors for monopolizing the production and sale of cluster bombs. Gorelick asserts, "We will enforce antitrust laws where appropriate, and that we, the Department of Defense and the Department of Justice, will work together in that regard." On the 19th, Alliant Techsystems and Aerojet agree to a \$12 million fine for violating antitrust laws. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 1/20/1994; *Joint Briefing By the Department of Defense and the Department of Justice*, 1/19/1994, *The Washington Post*, 1/19/1994)

On the 20th, Inman abruptly withdraws his nomination for the Secretary of Defense following of attacks by newspaper columnists. (*Los Angeles Times*, 1/20/1994)

Reno appoints Robert Fiske as independent counsel to investigate the Whitewater affair. (*The Financial Times*, 1/21/1994)

Clinton nominates Deputy Defense Secretary William Perry to be Secretary of Defense on the 24th. (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 1/24/1994)

On the 28th, Deputy Attorney General Philip B. Heymann suddenly resigns from his post, claiming that he and Reno lack "chemistry." Gorelick, Ronald K. Noble, Assistant Treasury Secretary for Enforcement, and Charles F.C. Ruff, a former official of the Justice Department, lead the list of possible successors. Ruff has the most experience in the Department, but some speculate that Reno favors Gorelick because of the bond they developed during Reno's confirmation hearing. (*The Washington Post*, 1/29/1994)

February Gorelick is widely reported to be leading candidate for the Deputy Attorney General post. (*The New York Times*, 2/2/1994; *The Wall Street Journal* 2/3/1994)

Reno names Jo Ann Harris to serve as Acting Deputy Attorney General. Philip Heymann's resignation takes effect on the 11th. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 2/11/1994)

After a naval judge's finding that Admiral Kelso had lied about his involvement in Tailhook, Gorelick, Defense Secretary William J. Perry, and Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology John M. Deutch meet to discuss how the Administration will deal with the situation. Following a series of talks, Admiral Kelso announces on the 15th that he will retire early. (*The New York Times*, 2/16/1994)

On the 23rd, Clinton nominates Gorelick for the vacant Deputy Attorney General position. Clinton states, "I applaud Attorney General Reno's choice of Jamie Gorelick to be the next Deputy Attorney General for the Department of Justice. She has ably served my Administration with great distinction as General Counsel of the Department of Defense, and I am confident Jamie will continue to bring her sharp legal mind, penetrating analysis, and tremendous management capabilities to her newest assignment. I look forward to working closely with Attorney General Reno and Jamie Gorelick in fighting for passage of a tough, smart crime bill and to give the American people a Justice Department that is innovative in its approaches and solutions for crime reduction and law enforcement." (*The Wall Street Journal*, 2/23/1994; *1994 Public Papers of the President: William J. Clinton, 1994, Volume I*, p. 311)

March Martin Marietta Corporation enters into an agreement to buy Grumman Corporation for \$1.9 billion. There is some speculation in the press that Gorelick's nomination, and eventual confirmation, will lead to a more "benign" view of the anti-trust implications of these and other defense industry consolidations. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 3/8/1994)

The Senate Judiciary Committee holds Gorelick's confirmation hearings on the 16th. Gorelick is confirmed by a voice vote of the full Senate on the 22nd. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 3/23/1994)

As a result of an investigation into billing improprieties, Associate Attorney General Webster Hubbell announces his resignation on the 14th. (*The New York Times*, 4/8/1994)

May Clinton creates a board to force the CIA and FBI to cooperate in cases of foreign espionage. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 5/4/1994)

On the 13th, Clinton nominates Stephen Breyer as the replacement to Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun.

July In a letter to the editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, Gorelick responds to a number of the newspaper's editorials that suggest she has inappropriately used her position at Justice to aide former clients Clark Clifford and Robert Altman in the Department's BCCI investigation. "At the beginning of my tenure at the Justice Department, I recused myself from the entire BCCI matter, which is being handled by others within the Department," writes Gorelick. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 7/15/1994)

August On the 9th, Kenneth Starr is appointed Whitewater independent counsel, replacing Robert Fiske.

At the annual meeting of the American Bar Association, Gorelick holds a number of public and private meetings with ABA groups. Gorelick seeks to persuade the members to support a new federal rule that allows prosecutors investigating corporate misconduct to question corporate employees without going through the companies' lawyers. "We have tried to import a rule consistent with the law-enforcement mission," she says. Without such an option, says Gorelick, "no investigation would ever take place." (*The Wall Street Journal*, 8/12/1994)

September Reno assigns a special prosecutor to investigate allegations that Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy violated laws by accepting gifts from a poultry company. (*U.S. News and World Report*, 9/22/1994)

Reno announces that the U.S. is ending a twenty-eight year practice of allowing all Cuban refugees into the country. (*The Economist*, 9/27/1994)*October*

Agricultural Secretary Mike Espy agrees to resign at the end of the year. (*The New York Times*, 10/9/1994)

On the 13th, Clinton signs the Anti-Crime Bill granting \$30.2 billion over six years to prevent crime, mainly by increasing the number of police officers and by banning nineteen assault weapons. (*1994 Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, pp. 273.)

As a part of the crackdown on crime, Gorelick surveys the U.S. border with Mexico, proclaiming that the government will reduce illegal immigration and "secure the entire Southwest border." (*Los Angeles Times*, 10/14/1994)

1995

January Gorelick announces that the Department of Justice will hire, over the next year, more than 1,200 new border patrol agents and INS inspectors. "With the resource allocations that we are announcing here today, we will complete our plan to take control of the entire Southwest border," says Gorelick. "We are doing something that has never done before, which is to try to secure a border that has never been secure." (*The Washington Post*, 1/7/1995)

April Gorelick issues a letter of censure to Acting Deputy FBI Director Larry Potts and criticizes the FBI, Marshals Service and U.S. attorney's office for the 1992 actions at Ruby Ridge. She says that no FBI officers should be fired as a result of the incident. (*The Washington Post*, 4/6/1995)

On the 19th, a bomb explodes outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, killing 168 people. In the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, Clinton seeks to expand the government's ability to fight terrorism with new legislation. (*The Washington Post*, 4/27/1995)

On the 26th, the White House unveils its plan to reduce domestic terrorism. The package, which calls for the hiring of 1,000 new federal agents and prosecutors and the creation of an interagency domestic counterterrorism office, will cost \$1.5 billion over five years. Gorelick says these two measures are the "two most significant things we can do to address the kind of tragic event that we had in Oklahoma City, and to prevent similar occurrences in the future." (*The Wall Street Journal*, 4/27/1995)

June Reno, Gorelick and Solicitor General Drew Days meet, deciding that the Department of Justice will stay out of a Colorado ballot initiative that denies anti-discrimination protection to homosexuals. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 6/8/1995)

July The Senate begins hearings on the Whitewater matter.

1996

February Solicitor General Days announces that he will resign in the upcoming months and return to teaching law at Yale University. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 2/16/1996)

March Gorelick supervises the grand jury proceedings and the criminal investigation of Archer-Daniels-Midland Co. for fixing prices. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 3/27/1996)

- April* Gorelick meets with federal prosecutors from numerous states to discuss the case against the alleged Unabomber, Theodore Kaczynski. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 4/9/1996)
- May* In an attempt to protect the Olympics from domestic and international terrorist attacks, Gorelick helps formulate security measures for the summer games in Atlanta. (*The Washington Post*, 5/23/1996)
- June* Reno authorizes Starr to investigate Filegate, the scandal accusing the White House of collecting and misusing FBI files on Republicans. (*The Weekly Standard*, 7/8/96-7/15/96)
- A report reveals that the Justice Department had authorized a record number of national security wiretaps on American soil. Gorelick defends the measures as necessary efforts to combat terrorism, and asserts that “the choice between civil liberties and a safe democracy is a false choice . . . we need not, and will not, trade off the guarantees of the Bill of Rights in order to uphold our duty to ensure domestic tranquility.” (*The Washington Post*, 6/23/1996)
- July* Clinton creates a commission to advise the government and vital private sectors on how to protect their computer systems from hackers. Gorelick declares that the project has the “same level of urgency” as the Manhattan Project. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 7/17/1996)
- On the 17th, TWA Flight 800 crashes off Long Island killing two hundred and thirty people. Gorelick participates in the investigation into the crash. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 7/29/1996; *The Washington Post*, 7/19/1996)
- On the 27th, a pipe bomb explodes in Olympic Park at the Atlanta Olympic Games killing one and wounding eleven. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 7/29/1996)
- August* In response to the growing number of terrorist attacks, Clinton announces that five hundred FBI agents are to be reassigned to the Bureau’s counterterrorism force. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 9/4/1996)
- November* As Clinton reorganizes his cabinet for his second term, Gorelick is mentioned as a candidate for CIA Director and also as a long shot for Defense Secretary. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 11/11/1996)
- Ignoring Republican demands, Reno refuses to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate the Democratic Party’s fundraising on the 29th. (*Newsweek*, 12/9/1996)

1997

- January* On the 15th, Deputy Attorney General Gorelick announces her resignation. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 1/15/1997)
- March* Clinton nominates Eric Holder to succeed Gorelick as Deputy Attorney General. (*The New York Times*, 3/13/1997)
- April* Gorelick ends her tenure as Deputy Attorney General on the 3rd.

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**Deputy Attorney General
Politics and Policymaking in the DOJ**

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JAMIE S. GORELICK SUGGESTED TOPICS

PREPARED BY STACIE PETTYJOHN AND DARBY A. MORRISROE, MILLER CENTER OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Joining the Administration

- Discuss the origins of your relationship with Bill Clinton.
- Were you involved in the 1992 campaign or transition activities?
- Describe the circumstances surrounding your entry into the administration.
- Discuss your experiences as an advisor in the Senate confirmation hearings of Zoë Baird and Janet Reno.

General Counsel to the Department of Defense

- Describe your role and responsibilities as general counsel.
- What issues and investigations occupied most of your time as general counsel (defense industry consolidation, Tailhook, homosexuals in the military, Halperin nomination, etc.)?
- Discuss your relationship with Les Aspin and how his departure affected the Department.
- With which members of the White House staff did you work most closely? Did you have occasion to work directly with the President?
- Discuss your relationships with other legal policymakers in the administration.

Politics and Policymaking at the Department of Justice

- How did you come to be nominated as Deputy Attorney General? Discuss the confirmation process.
- What was your understanding of the role and responsibilities you would assume as Deputy Attorney General? Characterize the circumstances facing the Department of Justice upon your arrival.
- Discuss your relationship with Attorney General Janet Reno and other Justice Department officials.
- What were the major issues and investigations that occupied your time as Deputy Attorney General (crime bill, domestic terrorism, counterterrorism bill, immigration, Whitewater, etc.)?
- Did you have a role in the reauthorization of the independent counsel statute? Discuss the appointments of Whitewater and other independent counsels.

Deputy Attorney General's Relationships with Other Governmental Actors.

- Describe the role and level of involvement of the Justice Department in congressional relations for the White House. In what issues was the Department of Justice's legislative affairs office most involved?
- How involved was the president in setting the Justice Department's agenda? Discuss your relationships with key administration officials and staff (chief of staff, White House counsel, Mrs. Clinton, cabinet members, etc.). With which members of the White House staff did you work most closely? How effectively was the Department of Justice able to maintain a "wall of separation" with the White House on matters relating to DOJ investigations?
- Discuss the frequency and nature of your interactions with counsels for other departments.

Judicial Selection

- What political concerns and philosophies guided President Clinton's judicial appointments?
- Did you have a role in selecting and screening the nominees? Division of judicial selection responsibilities with the White House Counsel.
- What were the administration's objectives in nominating Justices Ginsburg and Breyer to the Supreme Court? Discuss the administration's impact on the federal courts.

The Clinton Presidency in Retrospect

- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Clinton administration?
- What features of the presidency were missed or misunderstood by the press?
- How should the Clinton presidency be viewed in history?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of Janet Reno's service as Attorney General?