

# THE WHITE HOUSE BULLETIN

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MEMORANDUM FOR .  
THE FLANAGAN GROUP, INC.  
SUBJECT: TODAY'S BRIEFING  
DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 6, 1995

## IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND AROUND TOWN:

- o **Clinton to create advisory committee to study Gulf War syndrome; blasts GOP for cutting veterans' health services.** During a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars today, President Clinton announced his decision to create a presidential advisory committee designed to study the reported illnesses affecting those who served in the Persian Gulf War. The committee will be comprised of scientists, doctors and veterans and will make recommendations on how to find the causes of the syndrome and improve the medical care for Gulf War veterans. The Administration will spend \$13 million on new research to examine possible causes of the veterans' illnesses. The variety of symptoms reported by the veterans has mystified researchers, with many in the medical community holding the belief there is no such creature as the Gulf War syndrome. Recently, Hillary Rodham Clinton has been meeting with Gulf War veterans to listen to their claims, but it is considered unlikely Mrs. Clinton will head the new committee. Clinton's move was supported by Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, who said today: "This, as you know, has been very important to me for a long period of time. We have fought and fought to get to the point we're at today to put the kind of priority required for Persian Gulf veterans that we did for Agent Orange veterans. I'm very concerned that up until at least recently, the VA, the Defense Department has not given the Persian Gulf problems the kind of priority that they need. So, the President's announcement today that he is going to step up the level of activity and the commitment is great news for Persian Gulf veterans." Added Daschle: "It's great news for a couple of reasons. One, we're going to accelerate the research. We're going to step up the kind of financial commitment made in terms of finding what may be causing some of these difficulties. And it's great news for veterans who have been afflicted for so long, giving them proper treatment, giving them the kind of care and consideration that they need, especially with regard to their medical problems. Is something we've needed to do for a long time. ... It's nice to see a president address an issue that may not have broad-based interest or support in the country but certainly is very needed."

Clinton also took aim at GOP efforts to reduce Federal spending on veterans health services during his speech today, saying: "I believe these cuts are unwise and unnecessary. They would harm the veterans who need their nation's help the most." Clinton said the House Appropriations Committee last week voted to eliminate more than \$200 million for veterans health, including money for six outpatient clinics and new hospital equipment. The cutback also would kill a program that provides temporary housing and job training for homeless veterans. Urging the VFW to help him fight the cuts, Clinton said: "Caring for veterans is not a national option or a partisan program. It is a national tradition and a national duty." Clinton also said he wants to increase spending for the Department of Veterans Affairs by \$1.3 billion over five years, most of it for health care.

Clinton also used the speech to again attack those he sees as being isolationists, saying: "Today I want to talk a little about the tradition of America's leadership because that tradition is under siege. If the new isolationists in our nation have their way, America would abandon policies backed by Republicans and Democrats that have guided us for half a century, policies that won the Cold War and that won us unparalleled prosperity here at home. I know that at this time we have to spend more attention and more energy and more investment on the problems we have at home, and goodness knows that's what I have been working to do for the last two years. But there are those who would back away from any of our commitments abroad; they would back away from institutions like the United Nations, which promotes stability around the world; they would have us give up our support for peacekeeping and for fragile democracies, support which enables others to share the burden with us and which undermines the risks that we have to bear and makes us safer. They would cut deeply into our support for emerging market democracies. Even some would put our efforts to make peace in the Middle East on the chopping block. Now, no one knows better than the veterans the grave dangers of simply withdrawing from the world. The last time isolationism held sway during the years after World War I, Europe and Asia slid into catastrophe and we had to fight a Second World War because we walked away from the world at the end of the First World War."