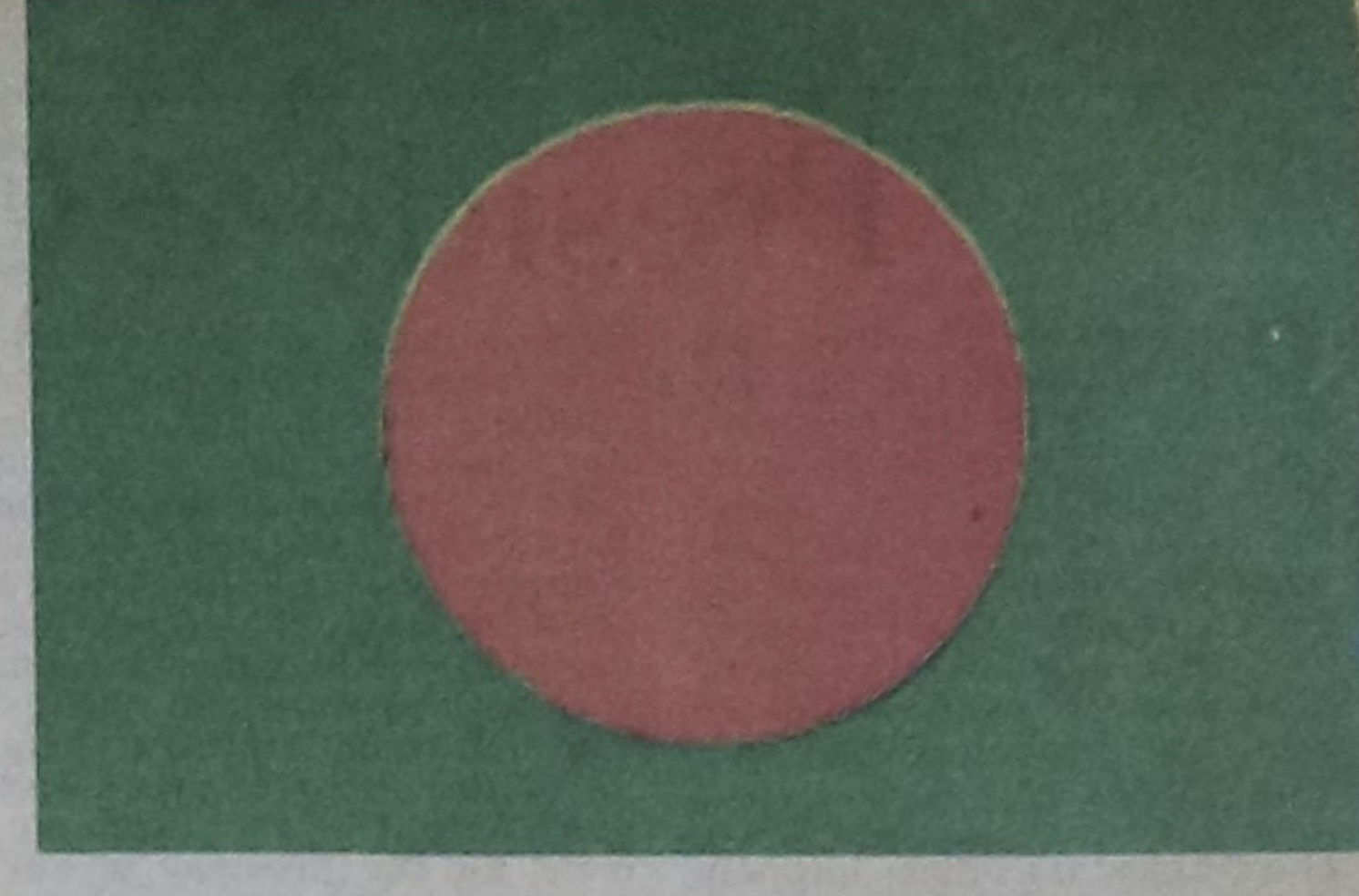


WELCOME CLINTON



The Forty-second US President

WILLIAM Clinton promised a brighter tomorrow and focused on the national economy.

He, at 46 the youngest man elected President since John F. Kennedy, came to the White House pledging to end the era of drift and deadlock and begin a new season of American renewal. In an address before Congress on the 29th day of his Presidency, he outlined a bold strategy to lift the economy through increased public and private investment while cutting \$500 billion from the Federal deficit.

The next day he began promoting his "new direction" to the people through television appearances and rallies, thus bypassing entrenched special interests in Washington. The tactic was a reprise of his successful campaign, using modern communications to brush aside Democratic challengers and best a Republican incumbent.

President Clinton was born William Jefferson Blythe IV on August 19, 1946, in Hope, Arkansas, three months after his father died in a traffic accident. When he was four years old, his mother wed Roger Clinton of Hot Springs, Arkansas. In high school young William took the family name.

He excelled as a student and as a saxophone player. Frequently during his political career he has delighted listeners with an impromptu session on the sax. As a delegate to Boys Nation while in high school, he met President Kennedy in the White House Rose Garden. The encounter inspired him to enter a life of public service.

Clinton attended Georgetown University and in 1968 received a bachelor's degree in foreign service. A Rhodes Scholar, he studied at Oxford University for two years. He received a law degree from Yale University in 1973, then returned to Arkansas to teach law at the University of Arkansas and to prepare to enter politics.

He was defeated in his campaign for Congress in Arkansas Third District in 1974. The next year he married Hillary Rodham, a Wellesley College

graduate. He had met her while they both were studying law at Yale. Their marriage formed a strong personal and political partnership of talented equals that would give added dimension to the Clinton Presidency. It also expanded the Clintons' household; in 1980, their daughter, Chelsea, was born.

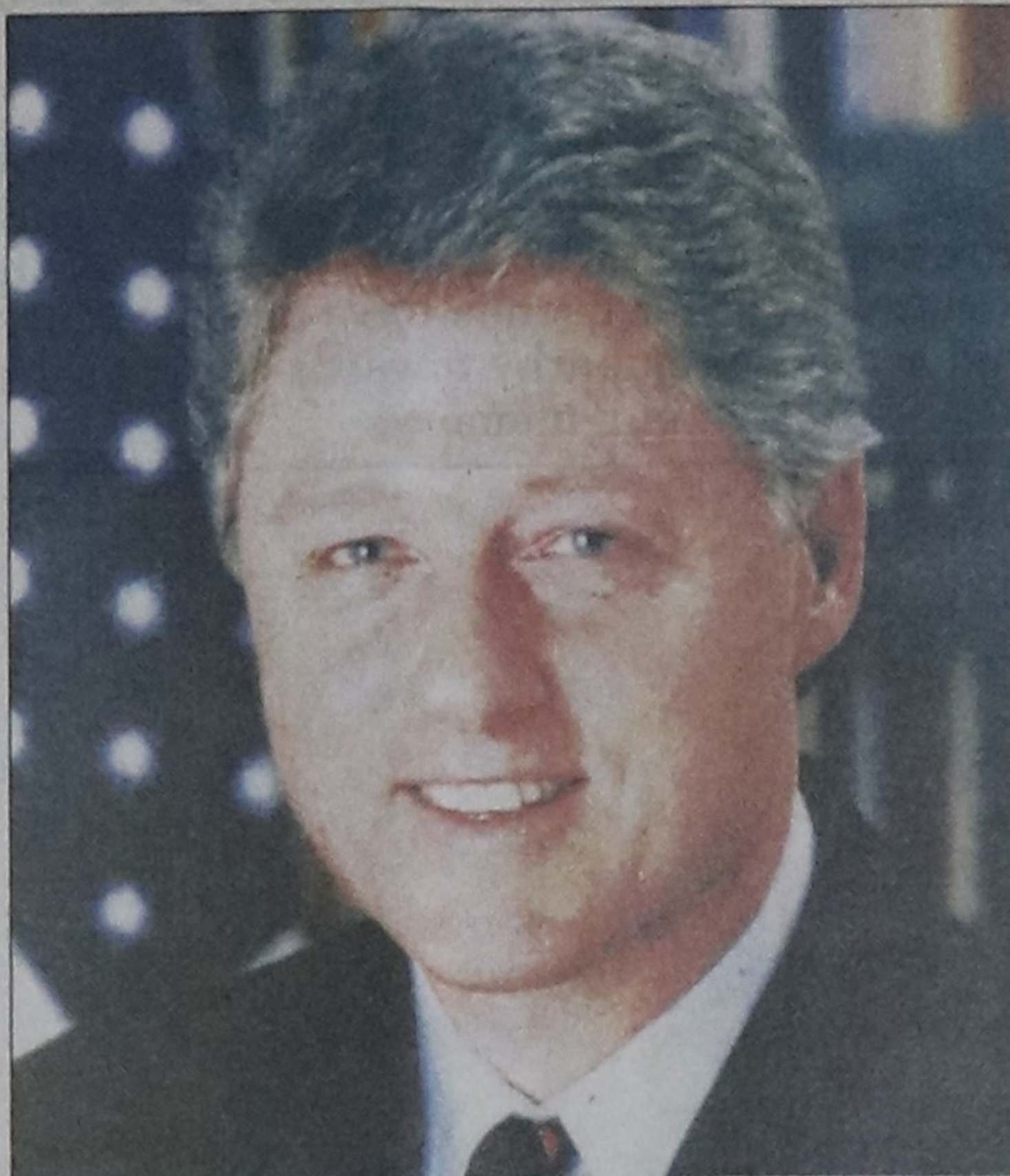
Clinton was elected Arkansas attorney general in 1976, then went on to win the governorship in 1978. He lost in his try for a second term, but he regained the office four years later and served as governor until 1992. That year Clinton defeated George Bush and third-party candidate Ross Perot for the Presidency.

Clinton and his running mate, Tennessee's Senator Albert Gore, Jr., then 44, represented a new generation in American political leadership. For the first time in 12 years both the White House and Congress were held by the same party.

In domestic affairs, Clinton signed into law measures to revitalize the economy and renew the American community. To boost living standards and create jobs, he won Congressional approval of a massive deficit reduction plan, a barrier-breaking trade agreement with Mexico, aid to Russia, and tax cuts for small business and the working poor. He also signed the Brady Bill, which required a waiting period for gun purchases.

Other initiatives included the national service law to put Americans to work restoring their communities; the Family and Medical Leave Act to protect the jobs of parents who must care for sick children; reform of public education with the adoption of his GOALS 2000 bill; a new national health care plan and welfare reform; and a get-tough program against crime and violence.

The recovering US economy and a tour of Europe ending in a Moscow summit buoyed Clinton's leadership at the end of his first year. In his 1994 State of the Union Address he declared that the Nation "is growing stronger, but it must be stronger still."



The Daily Star SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT ON THE VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO BANGLADESH, March 20, 2000

US-Bangladesh Economic Links

by Wahiduddin Mahmud

If freer trade can be made mutually beneficial for both the rich and the poor countries, it is up to domestic policy-makers to see that those benefits are fairly distributed within the countries. Why should then the low-wage exports from poor countries be blamed for creating inequality and job loss in the rich countries? We hope that President Clinton's visit would help him to get a fresh perspective on these issues so that he can be a more ardent champion of advocating the elimination of poverty worldwide.

THE people of Bangladesh feel overwhelmed and have high expectations regarding President Clinton's visit. However, the significance of the visit lies more in its symbolic value as a goodwill gesture than in any immediate gains of a concrete nature. The visit will obviously draw a lot of international media attention. In this era of information, it is very important how you package yourself in front of the global community. Although still remaining one of the poorest countries in the world, Bangladesh has come a long way from being the 'basket case' (Henry Kissinger's unfortunate characterization of Bangladesh of the early 1970s). We should project a positive image by highlighting our many achievements, such as in food production, ready-made garment export, population control, child immunization, micro-credit, and so on.

The visit perhaps signifies that the US interest in

Bangladesh has been elevated, at least to an extent, from mainly humanitarian concerns to commercial and strategic ones. The volume of investments by US companies in the energy sector has rapidly risen in the recent years and there are good prospects for the continuation of these trends. However, the issue of on-going negotiations regarding specific investment proposals need not be linked to the Clinton visit; these proposals must be judged on their own merits, keeping in view the interest of the country. Nobody would expect us to do otherwise.

The Bangladesh authorities are likely to seek debt-relief of US \$ 700 million owed to the US under PL480 food aid programme. If granted, such debt relief may be conditional to using the funds for environmental protection as stipulated under the relevant US legal provisions. In this context, it needs to be pointed out that Bangladesh is excluded from the international debt-relief initiative which is aimed at helping the so-called Highly Indebted Poor Countries. Compared to these countries, Bangladesh does not have as large a debt overhang, but this is partly because Bangladesh never defaulted on debt repayment or sought any debt rescheduling. In other words, the country is penalized for its good record of living up to its debt obligations.

From the point of view of Bangladesh, the most important aspect of the bilateral economic relationship is the access of ready-made garment export to the US market, currently amounting to US\$ 1.7 billion annually. The garment industry in Bangladesh provides employment to well over a million workers — mostly women from poor families — and is the predominant source of the country's export earnings. There is a great concern about the effect of the removal of US import quotas after 2004, given the stiff competition Bangladesh is likely to face from other exporting countries including China.

Bangladesh authorities are likely to seek preferential or tariff-free access in the US market for the garment export from Bangladesh subsequent to the abolition of the present quota system. A more plausible case may perhaps be made by seeking this facility for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) as a whole. Bangladesh, being by far the largest of the LDCs, has always played a leading role in upholding the interest of these countries. The Uruguay Round has offered relatively little in the way of the market access for the exports of the LDCs, since tariffs remain high on their export goods with the greatest potential.

Another alternative approach to US-Bangladesh trade links could be what I have proposed recently through newspaper columns, namely, to set up a bilateral free-trade arrangement between the two countries (which would mean removing all protective tariffs, but not consumption taxes like VAT). In the past, the US administration did consider having such a trade agreement with particular developing countries such as Egypt, but it did not materialize at the end. I think that it is worth floating such an idea to examine its implications and to see how the US responds. Instead of seeking the favour of unilateral access for our exports in the US market, we are uniquely positioned to invite the world's mightiest economy to enter into a trade arrangement with us on absolutely equal terms.

For the US, offering such a facility to Bangladesh — the most important among the LDCs — could be of great symbolic value in raising her international goodwill and image. It would demonstrate that the US is genuinely committed to the cause of free trade and that of helping the poorest countries. Such an arrangement could serve as a model of how North-South co-operation can be of mutual benefit without involving any act of charity or assistance on the part of the richer countries.

Bangladesh, of course, stands to gain enormously. She can secure and expand her US market for ready-made garment export, especially beyond 2004. The possibility of exporting a range of other items, such as leather goods and horticultural products, will also open up. At present, Bangladesh's exports to the US are several times higher than her imports from that country — nearly 2 billion US dollars of exports compared to imports worth only 300 million dollars during fiscal 1999. We already have duty-free import of grains from the US. Manufactured imports from the US will, of course, increase if made duty-free. But, there is no danger of the domestic market being swamped by such imports, since these will be higher-priced compared to our present imports, say, from China and India. Most of all, Bangladesh will gain from higher foreign investment. Foreign investors, including those from the US, will be interested to take advantage of lower labour costs in Bangladesh to produce for the US market.

On the other hand, given Bangladesh's limited export capability, there should not be any apprehension on the part of the US that exports from Bangladesh would displace employment opportunities in the US. Such apprehensions were raised regarding Mexican exports to the US under the NAFTA, which later proved to be overly exaggerated. Of course, there will need to be safeguards such as for excluding re-exports from third countries and for special exemptions for particularly vulnerable sectors.

Bangladesh has also a responsibility to project the views of the poorest countries regarding the issue of so-called 'labour standards'. President Clinton raised this issue in Seattle, much to the detriment of the outcome of that ill-fated WTO conference. Nobody disputes the need for improving labour standards in the poor developing countries. But the ground-level realities must also be taken into consideration, so as to ensure that the enforcement of such standards benefits, and not hurts, the very people whose welfare is at stake. As a humanitarian issue, improvements of labour standards must be part of a broader agenda for social development and poverty alleviation. Fortunately, one does not come across in Bangladesh some of the worst forms of breaches of labour standards, such as bonded labour or the employment of child labour in hazardous environment. While child labour is still quite common in Bangladesh, remarkable progress has been achieved in recent years in increasing the school attendance rates of children, both male and female.

I would not go here into the many issues regarding the fairness of the international economic system. It is a reasonable guess that to a Martian observer of our planet's economy, the most striking puzzle would be why a worker in Bangladesh

makes a tiny fraction of the wage of a worker in the US doing a similar manual job. A possible answer to this query is to tell the Martian that he is being naive and that he should go back to where he came from. But alternative answers could express concerns not only about lack of free flows of unskilled labour across countries (while those of capital and high-skilled manpower are encouraged), but also about the trade barriers that use low-wage labour in the poorest countries. If freer trade can be made mutually beneficial for both the rich and the poor countries, it is up to domestic policy-makers to see that those benefits are fairly distributed within the countries. Why should then the low-wage exports from poor countries be blamed for creating inequality and job loss in the rich countries? We hope that President Clinton's visit would help him to get a fresh perspective on these issues so that he can be a more ardent champion of advocating the elimination of poverty worldwide.

The author is the President, Bangladesh Economic Association.

It All Began in a Place Called Hope

BILL Clinton was born William Jefferson Blythe III on August 19, 1946, in the small town of Hope, Arkansas. He was named after his father, William Jefferson Blythe II, who had been killed in a car accident just three months before his son was born. Needing to find a way to support herself and her new child, Bill Clinton's mother, Virginia Cassidy Blythe, moved to New Orleans, Louisiana, to study nursing. Bill Clinton stayed with his mother's parents in Hope. There he was surrounded by many relatives who gave him love and support and who played a significant role in his upbringing.

Bill Clinton's grandparents, Eldridge and Edith Cassidy, taught him strong values and beliefs. They owned a small grocery store just outside of Hope, and despite the segregation laws of the time, they allowed people of all races to purchase goods on credit. They taught their young grandson that everyone is created equal and that people should not be treated differently because of the colour of their skin. This was a lesson Bill Clinton never forgot.

His mother returned from New Orleans with her nursing degree in 1950, when her son was four years old. Later that same year, she married an automobile salesman named Roger Clinton. When Bill Clinton was seven years old, the family moved to Hot Springs, Arkansas. Known for its natural mineral hot springs, its scenic beauty, and its racetrack, Hot Springs was bigger than Hope and offered better employment opportunities. Roger received a higher paying job as a service manager for his brother's car dealership and Virginia was able to find a better job as a nurse anesthetist. In 1956, Bill Clinton's half-brother, Roger Clinton, Jr., was born. When his brother was old enough to enter school, young Bill had his last name legally changed from Blythe to Clinton.

In 1960, John F. Kennedy was elected President. Two years later, when Bill Clinton was a senior in high school, he was selected to go to Washington, DC, to be a part of Boys Nation, a special youth leadership conference. The young men of Boys Nation and the young women of Girls Nation were invited to the

White House to meet President Kennedy. Bill Clinton was one of the first in line to shake President Kennedy's hand in the Rose Garden. That event was one of the most memorable, important experiences of his youth. After that, he knew he wanted to make a difference in the lives of the people of America by becoming President.

That same year, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his historic "I Have a Dream" speech at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Bill Clinton watched the speech on television and was so deeply moved by Dr. King's words that he memorized them. He admired Dr. King's gift for communicating a clear vision and his ability to pull people together to work toward a common goal. Dr. King became one of Bill Clinton's heroes.

Inspired by the success of these leaders, young Bill thrived on the hard work that his academic and extracurricular activities required. As an active member of his church, he raised money and organized charity events. Most important, he learned about working with people and being a good citizen. In his spare time, he enjoyed reading. Some of his favorite books were *The Silver Chalice*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Robe*, and *Black Beauty*.

Playing the saxophone was his favourite pastime. He loved music, practiced every day, and played in jazz ensembles. Each summer, he attended a band camp in the Ozark Mountains. His hard work paid off when he became a top saxophone player at his school and won first chair in the state band's saxophone section.

Bill Clinton recognized that although college would be expensive, it would give him the education he needed to accomplish his goals. His hard work in school, combined with his musical ability, earned him many academic and music scholarships. With the help of those scholarships and loans from the government, he was able to attend Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. He chose Georgetown because it had an excellent foreign service programme; he was also excited about going to school in the nation's capital.

While earning his Bachelor of Science degree in International Affairs he worked as an

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Madeleine Albright, US Secretary of State

John C. Holzman, US Ambassador to Bangladesh

Air Force One

THE president has at his disposal a small fleet of Air Force jets, and whichever one he is aboard becomes Air Force One. The official Air Force One that the president uses most often is one of two Boeing 747-200Bs, jets that in 1989 superseded the aging Boeing 707 as the president's official airplane.

The new Air Force One carries seventy passengers and a crew of twenty-three. Within, the president has an office and a private bedroom where he can withdraw to shower or nap. The jet also has a conference room, a guest area, several work stations equipped with computers, space for reporters, medical facilities, and a kitchen. Amenities include a stereo system, televisions, movie screens, and playing cards embossed with the presidential seal and the words "Aboard Air Force One."

Air Force One was designed to be both luxurious and secure. It even was built with special protection against electromagnetic pulses from a nuclear explosion. The plane has an elaborate communications system that allows the president to make contact with people all

over the globe. Somewhere aboard Air Force One is a compartment for the "black box" that contains the secret codes for the president in case of a military crisis.

When presidents first became airborne, the Army Air Corps, the predecessor of the US Air Force, took it rightful place as air chauffeur to the commander in chief. The Air Force has continued to be in charge of selecting and piloting presidential planes. The first official presidential plane, used by Franklin Roosevelt for one trip in 1945, was a US Air Corps Douglas C-54 Skymaster cargo plane. President Harry Truman flew often in this plane, which was nicknamed *Sacred Cow* by reporters. In 1947, the official presidential plane was upgraded to a Douglas Aircraft DC-6 passenger liner. Named the *Independence* after Truman's hometown in Missouri, the plane was equipped with weather radar, long-range flight capability, and a tele-type system that allowed the president to stay in touch with Washington even when he was 3,000 miles away.

President Dwight Eisenhower's first official plane was a

Lockheed Constellation 749 named *Columbine II* after his personal military craft during World War II and the state flower of his wife's home state, Colorado. Because of rapidly advancing aviation technology, the plane was replaced in 1954 by *Columbine III*, a Lockheed 1049C Super-Constellation. On a whirlwind, eighteen-day tour of eleven countries in 1959, Eisenhower chose not to use *Columbine III* and became the first president to travel by jet.

The distinction of becoming the first president to travel regularly by jet went to John F. Kennedy. Assigned a propeller-driven Douglas Viscount VC-118A by the Air Force, Kennedy preferred the new, and much faster, Boeing 707, which he received in 1962. Previous presidential aircraft had been military in appearance, but famed industrial designer Raymond Loewy, along with Jacqueline Kennedy, created an elegant blue and white exterior motif that is still in use today. That plane, along with a newer 707 added in the early 1970s, remained the president's official aircraft until the 747s arrived in 1989.

WELCOMES
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