

file Davos
World Economic
Forum

Davos: Alpine Lookout on the World's Economy

By ELIZABETH OLSON

GENEVA, Jan. 18 — Starting next week, the World Economic Forum will gather a small army of international business and political leaders, including President Clinton, for an annual five days of private meetings.

But the forum's lofty goal of giving meaning to the contentious word "globalization" is under threat from protesters who would like to duplicate the disruptions of the recent trade talks in Seattle.

Participants in the forum will travel to Davos, a secluded Alpine ski town in eastern Switzerland not far from the Austrian border, which is known more for exclusivity than for public outreach. The resort, once a sanitarium for wealthy tuberculosis patients, may seem like an unlikely setting for confrontation over globalization and world trade.

Its remoteness and frigid winter climate will make it hard for protesters to gather in force. Still, some seem determined to draw attention to their views. Protesters were recently prevented from entering the Geneva headquarters, but they distributed leaflets declaring their intention to demonstrate on Jan. 29, the day President Clinton will be at Davos.

The president is expected to speak about globalization to political leaders and more than 1,000 business executives. If the activists get their way, they will be demonstrating against "an economic policy which reinforces the injustices between the north and the south, the rich and the poor, and worsens the situation of women," a campaigner said.

The Swiss faced demonstrations over trade in May 1998, when protesters clashed with the police, closing the section of central Geneva

where the World Trade Organization and the United Nations European headquarters are situated. The police sealed off the area, a practice that officials in the canton of Grisons, where Davos is situated, would like to copy. But a Swiss court fined Davos officials for banning demonstrations during last year's forum.

The meeting is the first major international trade gathering scheduled since the World Trade Organization's Seattle conference ended in failure at the beginning of December. Some people said that the informality and intimacy of the Davos sessions — which the World Trade Organization's chief, Mike Moore, and his des-

The secret word this year is 'globalization.' It brims with subtexts.

ignated successor, Supachai Panitchpakdi of Thailand, are to attend — would present a good opportunity to restart the process on trade talks and globalization.

But the economic forum's managing director, Claude Smadja, sought to dampen expectations. "Trade does not have a very significant place on the agenda," he said, "because with the present situation and also particularly with the forthcoming U.S. elections, I don't feel we can make a very strong contribution" now.

About 1,000 companies pay an annual membership fee around \$15,000 to attend forum events. In addition, corporate executives will pay \$22,500 to attend, where they will sit in on

panels and hear speeches by experts of one kind or another. Among prominent executives expected this year are William H. Gates of Microsoft and Stephen M. Case of America Online.

The World Economic Forum's 30th annual meeting — called "New Beginnings: Making a Difference" — is to focus on the future of globalization, including methods for making the process more inclusive. Other areas for discussion, Mr. Smadja said, will include advances in information technology and biotechnology, the role of the United States and its application of power, and methods for sustaining the economic boom in industrial nations.

Guests will include such heads of state and government as Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain, President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, President Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia, and President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland. Standing in for the acting Russian leader, Vladimir V. Putin, will be Finance Minister Mikhail M. Kasyanov.

Also confirmed are the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Barak, and the head of the Palestinian Authority, Yasir Arafat.

Economic specialists who will attend include Secretary of the Treasury Lawrence H. Summers; Finance Minister Hans Eichel of Germany; the Bank of France's governor, Jean-Claude Trichet; and a Japanese vice finance minister, Yoshimasa Hayashi. Also coming from Washington will be Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright; the United States trade representative, Charlene Barshefsky; the national security adviser, Samuel R. Berger; Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley; Energy Secretary Bill Richardson; and President Clinton's economic policy adviser, Gene Sperling.

A President's Best Friend Is His Dog, Followed by Longtime Aides to Talk To

By DAVID E. SANGER
and MARC LACEY

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18 — When Bill Clinton attends a social event at the White House these days, more often than not it is a farewell party, as the familiar faces in the West Wing leap for jobs in the private sector while the leaping is still good.

After-hours, the president dials up aides gone by. The conversations can stretch into the early hours of the morning, the recipients of his calls say, wandering from assessments of a presidential campaign he is not part of to accounts of his peacemaker duties in the Middle East to musings about how a retiree in his 50's might usefully fill his days after Jan. 20, 2001.

"When you hear that lonely voice," says one old friend of the president, "you know it's time to sit up and turn on the light, because this is going to take a while."

As Mr. Clinton heads into the eighth and final year of his presidency, he is a blur of motion — but he is also very alone.

His only child is away at college. His wife has moved out to start a

Wistful and wondering what to do after he leaves the White House.

career of her own. His vice president is on the road seeking to become his successor. Left behind, at least, is Buddy the labrador, who now spends all night with the president when Hillary Rodham Clinton is away — modern-day testimony to Harry S. Truman's observation a half-century ago that the only true friend in Washington is a dog.

Sure, Mr. Clinton still has the coterie of ushers, attendants, aides and agents hovering around him during the workday. But he is an empty-nester now, with fewer longtime friends within daily reach than at any time in his presidency.

Some old hands, like Samuel R. Berger, the president's national security adviser, and Bruce Lindsey, the deputy White House counsel, are still a daily presence.

That change creates a different atmosphere. Mr. Clinton "used to look out the window on a nice day and say, 'Erskine, let's play golf,'" one senior adviser said of the president's close relationship to Erskine B. Bowles, his former chief of staff. "There's fewer people around he can do that with."

Now when Mr. Clinton is out to dinner, it often runs late, very late, which is no surprise given the empty

rooms awaiting him in the White House residence.

In Shepherdstown, W. Va., on Jan. 9 night, Mr. Clinton's dinner with Israel's prime minister, Ehud Barak, and Syria's foreign minister, Farouk al-Shara, went on so long that one American diplomat feared the participants would doze off. The president's helicopter took off for the return trip to the White House a little before 1 a.m.

Mr. Clinton concedes that his wife's absence feeds his late-night tendencies to stay up reading and gabbing. "Hillary's a good anchor for me," he said. "When I work too late she always makes sure I get the requisite amount of sleep."

Mr. Clinton sounds philosophical about his new in-between existence.

In an interview aboard his helicopter while touring the Grand Canyon recently, he said his wife's decision to move out and set up house in Chappaqua, N.Y., where he spent three nights in the last two weeks, would help them with the difficult transition from the presidency to everyday life.

"Psychologically, it gives us a year to make the adjustment to moving out," he said. "It's kind of good for us that we're making a gradual transition." But he added quickly, "We're still getting into it."

More specifically, a Clinton family friend said of the Chappaqua house, "It's Hillary's place. He doesn't have a lot of emotion invested in it."

In public, the president talks enthusiastically about the Chappaqua house, in a wealthy suburban neighborhood far from the hustle he is used to in Washington.

But friends still have a hard time imagining him kicking around the place — or using that gleaming lawn tractor that David Letterman gave Mrs. Clinton on his late-night television program recently.

The other day, addressing reporters outside the Chappaqua house, Mr. Clinton talked about what he would do when he got "home" to Washington — a sign that no one is quite sure where home is these days.

"I think he needs the breather," said Representative Charles B. Rangel, the Manhattan Democrat who first urged Mrs. Clinton to run for the Senate. "He needs a little space. He has a legacy to decide. He has work to do. He's in a position where the first lady and the vice president may need to distance themselves from him. He's stuck with himself."

Mr. Clinton says he has had little time recently to dwell on his new lot in life, with preparations for the 2001 budget and the State of the Union Message occupying him and the delicate Middle East peace talks requiring constant attention.

John D. Podesta, the president's chief of staff, said Mr. Clinton was not walking around the White House like Hamlet, brooding, conflicted, depressed.

"I don't think he's counting backwards," Mr. Podesta said. "He's looking at each day and seeing if he can accomplish something. He'll probably get to Jan. 20, 2001, and say,

'What three things can I get done today before I get in the car and go up to the Capitol.'"

Mr. Clinton talks a great deal about how little time he has left, and how that both weighs on him and spurs him into motion. The first seven years have flown by, he said, and

twelve months is not a lot of time.

"This year will pass in a flash," he remarked recently.

Mr. Clinton rarely gives a speech these days without mentioning the looming end of his presidency. He follows his recitation of rosy economic statistics with a plea that much

work will remain when he is gone.

"The question is, what are we going to do now?" he asked on Jan. 12 during an event in Washington sponsored by the Democratic Leadership Council. "What will you do as citizens, when I am no longer here, and I'm just a citizen like you?"

It is a question that almost seems to haunt Mr. Clinton, who will be the youngest ex-president since Theodore Roosevelt. But he sometimes suggests that he is not feeling young.

On his trip to the Grand Canyon, he complained about his failing eyesight while noting that he could not read the letters on some picket signs along his motorcade route. A little while later, he put his hand to his ear and said he could not hear a question from a reporter because his hearing was going, too. At the start of his second term, he was fitted with small hearing aids in both ears.

At one recent fund-raiser, an old friend was introducing him and joked that Mr. Clinton had aged appreciably in the last seven years. "I keep a photograph in my office of me taken with the president, early on in his first term, in the Oval Office," said Debbie Branson, a Dallas lawyer who knows Mr. Clinton from Arkansas. "Every time I look at that picture I notice how young you looked."

Mr. Clinton was laughing but surely agreeing when Ms. Branson added, "The presidency causes a lot of wear and tear."

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Melanne Verveer

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COMMITTED TO
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Preliminary Programme

as of 1 January 1999

Responsible Globality: Managing the Impact of Globalization

Co-Chairmen

Nobuyuki Idei, Jean-Marie Messier, Lewis E. Platt, Peter D. Sutherland

Meeting Rapporteurs

Howard Davies, John F. Kerry

This Preliminary Programme is prepared for the personal information and use of Annual Meeting participants.

1999 Annual Meeting
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