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Clinton won't dodge questions about his sex life
Paul Bedard
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Clinton won't dodge questions about his sex life when he testifies to the Monica Lewinsky grand jury Monday, the White House said yesterday.

But his spokesman complained that the president's privacy has been violated.

"He plans to testify completely and truthfully," said deputy press secretary Joe Lockhart.

Asked whether Mr. Clinton will "answer every question" put to him by independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr and his deputies, Mr. Lockhart said, "Yes."

He said the president would not invoke his rights under the Fourth and Fifth Amendments to the Constitution, which protect citizens against unreasonable searches or self-incrimination.

"The president told you he'll answer truthfully and completely. I think that answers that question."

Speculation had blossomed that Mr. Clinton would refuse to answer questions about his sex life when he testifies from the White House via closed-circuit. He can expect to get questions about whether he engaged in oral and telephone sex with Miss Lewinsky and then discussed with her ways to avoid admitting it.

Mr. Lockhart said that the president would repeat his denial that he had sexual relations with the 25-year-old former White House intern and also that he never asked her to lie.

The spokesman dampened speculation that the president would address the nation after giving his testimony. "I think his main priority right now is to go in and testify completely and

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uthfully."

Mr. Lockhart said the White House hopes the contents of his testimony aren't leaked. "If the rule of law is followed and the president decides not to discuss his testimony, then there shouldn't be any leaks."

Several Democrats have called on the president to reveal his testimony in a public address, but his advisers have pressed the president not to do that.

The topic has dominated many White House meetings on the subject, but there has been no decision on a post-testimony address to the nation or short statement by the president to the press.

One aide joked that the president could quell the controversy and end his nonstop fund-raising campaign planned for the fall by "putting his testimony on pay per view. How about \$39.95?"

Mr. Clinton returned home early yesterday from a two-day campaign fund-raising trip and began preparing for his testimony, slated to last from shortly after 9 a.m. Monday to late afternoon. He is expected to leave Monday night for a two-week vacation in Martha's Vineyard, an island off the Massachusetts coast.

While the White House refused to detail his preparations or preview his testimony, his spokesman expanded on the first lady's attacks on Mr. Starr by claiming the prosecutor is digging too deeply into the first family's privacy.

"One of the negatives is a loss of privacy and privacy within your family," said Mr. Lockhart. "I would find it hard to believe, having watched the last few months, that he wouldn't believe that there were new inroads to that privacy."

The president and first lady have often complained about their loss of privacy, and have expressed concerns about intrusions by reporters and especially photographers who have taken pictures of the two in private vacation moments.

But Mr. Lockhart said that those concerns won't prompt the president to duck sensitive questions about his private life if asked by Mr. Starr and his team.

The White House endorsed Hillary Rodham Clinton's remarkable charge that Mr. Starr harbors a bias against Arkansas. Mr. Lockhart said the president thinks Mr. Starr dislikes the Clintons and that the investigation is driven by an anti-Clinton bias.

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'It's impossible for me . . . to separate the two. I am sure that there are some people who feel like they are treated unfairly because of their connection, or their friendship or their relationship, with the president. I am sure that there are others who feel that it's their connection to - whether the fact that they live in Little Rock or they're from Arkansas."

The first lady on Monday complained to the Arkansas Democrat Gazette of Little Rock that Mr. Starr's inquiry is driven by a "prejudice against our state . . . they wouldn't do this if we were from some other state."

Mr. Lockhart agreed, saying: "There have been a number of people who have little or no dealing with some of the matters that the independent counsel has looked at who've had their lives turned upside down and have run up legal bills. So I think there is a sentiment among some people back in Arkansas that they've been treated unfairly."

Mr. Starr, whose Whitewater investigation was set off by accusations by Arkansans, including the Clintons' former business partner, offered no comment yesterday.

Considerable time between today and Monday have been set aside for . Clinton to huddle with his lawyers and Harry Thomason, a Hollywood TV producer, in preparation for his testimony.

Mrs. Clinton also plans to provide advice. "She has some involvement," said the spokesman.

But Mr. Lockhart said only the president's lawyers - David Kendall, Nicole Seligman and Mickey Kantor - and his wife know what the president plans to say in his testimony.

"There is no loop," explained Lisa Caputo, Mrs. Clinton's former spokeswoman.

The White House is working to complete arrangements for the testimony. Previously taped Clinton depositions have taken place in the Map Room, the ground-floor room in the residence used by President Roosevelt for war councils during World War II.

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