

# Interviewing History

## Conversations with America's Leaders

Featuring

The Honorable  
Sam Nunn

April 10, 2007

Associate staff members John Burgeson, *research assistant, International Security Program*, [Eric Ham](#), *deputy director, Congressional Affairs*, [Monica Kohli](#), *research assistant, Abshire-Inamori Leadership Academy*, and [Elizabeth Sullivan](#), *program coordinator, Africa*, interviewed former Senator [Sam Nunn](#), who serves as *chairman of the CSIS Board of Trustees*, for AILA's fourth in the series, [Interviewing History: Conversations with America's Leaders](#).



**Monica Kohli, John Burgeson, Liz Sullivan, Eric Ham**



**Senator Nunn on stage**

The conversation focused on the 1994 U.S. mission to Haiti and President Clinton's decision to send Jimmy Carter, Colin Powell, and Nunn to negotiate with the military junta that had seized control of the small country. Clinton had already announced the unpopular decision to use force to remove the junta, but the statesmen were sent on a last-ditch diplomatic mission to negotiate the peaceful entry of U.S. troops.



**Burgeson, Ham at a pre-dinner meeting with Nunn**



**Interview team presenting a briefing on Haiti**

Over one hundred people attended the dinner as the team of interviewers presented the historical backdrop of the mission and conversed with the Senator about issues not covered in the history books. In a fascinating off-the-record exchange, Nunn recounted his conversations with Clinton, Carter, and Powell, and the tense moments negotiating with the junta. The importance of their personal interactions on the ground was underscored.