

AND THAT IS WHAT THE VICE PRESIDENT'S EXPERIENCE CAN HELP THE PRESIDENT LEARN.

THE MORE THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY WAS DRAWN INTO THE LIFE AND COURSE OF OTHER NATIONS, THE LESS TIME THERE WAS TO DEVOTE HIS CALENDAR AND PRESENCE TO EACH REGION -- AND THAT IS WHERE THE VICE PRESIDENT'S UNPARALLELED ABILITY TO BE DEPUTIZED FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS CAN EXTEND HIS REACH.

ADVICE TO BUSH

I BEGAN THIS LECTURE BY DESCRIBING THE MEETINGS I HAD WITH THEN GOVERNOR CARTER AND WITH FORMER VICE PRESIDENTS AND THEIR STAFFS. AND I QUOTED THE MEMO I WROTE OUTLINING THE ROLES I BELIEVED THE VICE PRESIDENT COULD PLAY IN ASSISTING THE PRESIDENT. IN A SENSE, THAT ATTEMPT TO ANIMATE A MORIBUND OFFICE CAME FULL CIRCLE THE DAY THIS PAST FALL WHEN I WAS VISITED ~~IN MY WEST WING OFFICE~~ BY VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT ~~GEORGE~~ BUSH.

I SAID TO HIM THEN THAT I THOUGHT THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THE RELATIONSHIP PRESIDENT CARTER AND I HAD BUILT WHICH WAS MORE THAN PERSONAL. THOUGH IN THE END EVERYTHING DEPENDED ON THAT INITIAL RELATIONSHIP OF CONFIDENCE AND TRUST, I BELIEVE THERE WERE SOME INSTITUTIONAL LESSONS TO BE LEARNED ABOUT WHAT WE HAD DONE -- AND I OFFERED SOME OF THOSE LESSONS TO VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT BUSH

IN THE FORM OF ADVICE. A FEW WEEKS INTO THE NEW ADMINIS-
TRATION, I BELIEVE MR. BUSH AND PRESIDENT REAGAN ARE SHOWING
EVERY SIGN OF UNDERSTANDING THE POTENTIAL OF THE OFFICE.

I commend them for it. + ~~to take the~~

THE ADVICE I GAVE TO MR. BUSH IS THE ADVICE I WOULD GIVE
ANY FUTURE VICE PRESIDENT. FIRST, ADVISE A PRESIDENT CON-
FIDENTIALLY. THE ONLY REASONS TO STATE PUBLICLY WHAT YOU
HAVE TOLD THE PRESIDENT ARE TO TAKE CREDIT FOR A SUCCESS, OR
TO ESCAPE BLAME FOR A FAILURE. AND EITHER WAY THERE IS NO
QUICKER WAY TO UNDERMINE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESIDENT
AND LOSE YOUR EFFECTIVENESS IN THE GOVERNMENT. - Pres

most likely -

SECOND, DO NOT WEAR A PRESIDENT DOWN. HE SHOULD BE
BRIGHT ENOUGH TO CATCH YOUR MEANING THE FIRST TIME. GIVE
YOUR ADVICE ONCE AND GIVE IT WELL. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE
HEARD, NOT OBEYED. - A Pres. Will decide

Recess, most end.

THIRD, AS A SPOKESMAN FOR THE ADMINISTRATION, STAY ON
THE FACTS. A PRESIDENT SHOULD NOT WANT, AND THE PUBLIC DOES
NOT RESPECT, A VICE PRESIDENT WHO DOES NOTHING BUT DELIVER
FULSOME PRAISE OF A PRESIDENT. HE SHOULD WANT, AND PEOPLE DO
RESPECT, SOUND, FACTUAL, REASONED ARGUMENTS IN HIS BEHALF.
THIS OFFICE IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH NOT TO BE DEMEANED BY ITS
OCCUPANT DELIVERING OBSEQUIOUS FLATTERY.

AT ANOTHER POINT, IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT I BECOME CHIEF OF THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF. IF I HAD TAKEN ON THAT RESPONSIBILITY, IT WOULD HAVE CONSUMED VAST AMOUNTS OF MY TIME WITH STAFF WORK. IT WOULD HAVE ~~DISTR~~ACTED ME FROM MUCH MORE IMPORTANT WORK. A VICE PRESIDENT SHOULD BE PREPARED TO TAKE ON MANY ASSIGNMENTS, AND HE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO TURN SOME DOWN.

SIXTH, A VICE PRESIDENT SHOULD REMEMBER THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL COMPATIBILITY. YOU MUST BE ABLE TO GET ALONG WITH THE PRESIDENT. YOUR RELATIONSHIP IS INTENSELY PERSONAL. IT IS FOUNDED ON PROFESSIONAL RESPECT, BUT IT MUST PROCEED ON PERSONAL RESPECT. IN MY CASE, PRESIDENT CARTER TREATED ME BETTER PERHAPS THAN ANY PRESIDENT HAS TREATED HIS VICE PRESIDENT IN HISTORY. AND I WILL NEVER FORGET THAT.

AND THE REST OF US--THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WHO ELECT THE VICE PRESIDENT--SHOULD REMEMBER THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN A PRESIDENT AND HIS VICE PRESIDENT. THERE IS NO MAGIC MIX OF QUALITIES A VICE PRESIDENT SHOULD HAVE, BUT HE WILL STRENGTHEN THE PRESIDENT IF HE HAS COMPLEMENTARY EXPERIENCE AND ABILITIES. IF HIS POLITICAL EXPERIENCE, HIS BACKGROUND IN EITHER EXECUTIVE OR LEGISLATIVE GOVERNMENT, HIS ATTACHMENTS TO CONSTITUENCIES, HIS KNOWLEDGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS--IF IN EACH VITAL FIELD OF EXPERIENCE HE COMPLEMENTS THE PRESIDENT'S EXPERIENCE, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL HAVE A STRONGER, MORE CAPABLE TEAM IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

FINALLY, A VICE PRESIDENT SHOULD BE READY TO ASSUME THE PRESIDENCY. WE ALL KNOW THE STORY OF HARRY TRUMAN SUCCEEDING TO THE PRESIDENCY ON ROOSEVELT'S DEATH WITH NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE MANHATTAN PROJECT, WHICH FOR A LONG TIME HAD BEEN AT WORK BUILDING THE ATOMIC BOMB. PRESIDENT CARTER DID NOT WANT ME TO NEED THREE OR FOUR MONTHS OF ON-THE-JOB TRAINING IN THE PRESIDENCY, IF THE NEED SHOULD HAVE ARISEN. AS CARTER OFTEN SAID, HE WANTED ME TO BE READY THE SAME MOMENT THE NATION WOULD NEED ME TO BE READY.

TRADITION

POLITICAL SCIENTISTS WHO HAVE STUDIED THE VICE PRESIDENCY HAVE SUGGESTED A NUMBER OF WAYS TO CHANGE IT.

SOME HAVE PROPOSED THAT A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE BE REQUIRED TO NAME HIS RUNNING MATE EVEN BEFORE HE ENTERS THE FIRST PRIMARY. OTHERS--TAKING THE OPPOSITE TACK--HAVE PROPOSED THAT THE CHOICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT BE AN ENTIRELY OPEN ONE LEFT TO THE NOMINATING CONVENTION.

IT'S BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE VICE PRESIDENT BE GIVEN ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY-- FROM RUNNING THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF; TO MANAGING THE BUDGET OFFICE; TO ADMINISTERING A CABINET AGENCY; ALL THE WAY TO SHARING THE DUTIES OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN A KIND OF CO-PRESIDENCY.

OTHERS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENCY BE ELIMINATED ENTIRELY.

I DON'T WANT TO DWELL ON THE SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS; LET ME JUST MAKE TWO POINTS ABOUT ALL OF THEM.

FIRST, I BELIEVE THAT ANY CHANGE IN THE VICE PRESIDENCY WHICH WOULD WEAKEN, DIMINISH, DILUTE OR DIVIDE THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENCY WOULD BE A GRAVE MISTAKE. TO SAY THAT THE INCREASED PROBLEMS A PRESIDENT FACES REQUIRES A NEW DIVISION OF LABOR IN THE WHITE HOUSE IS TO GET IT EXACTLY THE WRONG WAY AROUND. THE MORE A PRESIDENT MUST DO, THE STRONGER HIS OFFICE MUST BE. AND THE PURPOSE OF A VICE PRESIDENT IS TO ADD TO HIS STRENGTH, NOT TO SAP IT. †

*— 60-70's weakened Presidency
Too much*

SECOND, I DON'T BELIEVE THAT STATUTORY OR CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES ARE THE APPROPRIATE WAY TO KEEP THE INSTITUTION OF THE VICE PRESIDENCY FROM RETURNING TO ITS CENTURIES OF HIBERNATION.

INSTEAD, I THINK IT'S THE FORCE OF EVOLUTION -- THE RESILIENT, ADAPTIVE ENERGY OF OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM -- THAT IS A MORE APPROPRIATE ENGINE OF CHANGE.

THERE IS MUCH IN OUR MODERN GOVERNMENT NOT PART OF OUR ORIGINAL CONSTITUTION. THE POLITICAL PARTIES; THE PRIMARY PROCESS; THE POWER OF JUDICIAL DETERMINATION; EVEN THE PRESIDENTIAL NEWS CONFERENCE: ALL THESE HAVE EVOLVED ALONG WITH THE NATION.

AND SO HAS THE ENORMOUS RANGE OF RESPONSIBILITIES THAT FALL ON A PRESIDENT'S SHOULDERS. IN OUR CENTURY, AS THE PRESIDENT'S POWERS HAVE GROWN, SO HAS HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROSPERITY OF OUR ECONOMY, THE STATURE OF OUR COUNTRY OVERSEAS, THE HEALTH OF DEMOCRACY ABROAD, PEACE IN THE WORLD. IN RECENT YEARS, THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT HAS FOUND HIMSELF THE FOCUS OF OUR RISING EXPECTATIONS AND THE TARGET OF OUR MOUNTING DEMANDS.

JOHN STEINBECK PUT IT THIS WAY:

"WE GIVE THE PRESIDENT MORE WORK THAN A MAN CAN DO, MORE RESPONSIBILITY THAN A MAN SHOULD TAKE, MORE PRESSURE THAN A MAN CAN BEAR. WE ABUSE HIM OFTEN AND RARELY PRAISE HIM. WE WEAR HIM OUT, USE HIM UP, EAT HIM UP. AND WITH ALL THIS, AMERICANS HAVE A LOVE FOR THE PRESIDENT THAT GOES BEYOND LOYALTY OR PARTY OR NATIONALITY; HE IS OURS, WE EXERCISE THE RIGHT TO DESTROY HIM."

JUST AS THE DEMANDS ON A PRESIDENT HAVE RISEN, SO -- PRESIDENT CARTER AND I THOUGHT -- COULD THE OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT BE USED TO HELP HIM MEET THEM. AND IN REMAKING THE VICE PRESIDENT'S ROLE, WE ESTABLISHED A NEW TRADITION,

THERE IS NOTHING STATUTORY OR CONSTITUTIONAL TO PREVENT A FUTURE PRESIDENT FROM UNDOING THE CHANGES WE MADE -- BUT THERE IS EVERYTHING IN THIS NEW TRADITION, AND THE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR IT, TO MAKE HIM THINK TWICE. -

*I hope
Believe we have broken significant
new ground ground that has served our
Nation well.*

YOU MAY BE WONDERING, NOW THAT I'VE SKETCHED FOR YOU THE NEW GROUND WE BROKE, THE DUTIES I PERFORMED, AND THE WAYS WE STRENGTHENED THE PRESIDENCY -- WHY, IF WE DID EVERYTHING RIGHT, DID WE LOSE THE ELECTION? I HAVE THE ANSWER, BUT UNFORTUNATELY, WE'RE OUT OF TIME.

~~HHH~~

~~upfront~~

INSTEAD, IN CLOSING, LET ME SAY AGAIN HOW MUCH I OWE TO THIS STATE OF MINNESOTA. WHATEVER I ACHIEVED IN PUBLIC LIFE STEMS FROM THE VALUES I LEARNED HERE, AND THE SUPPORT YOU GAVE ME. I HOPE THAT THROUGH TWENTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE I HAVE EARNED THE TRUST YOU PUT IN ME. BUT I BELIEVE I HAVE AN OUTSTANDING DEBT TO THE MARVELOUS SCHOOLS OF THIS STATE. FOR WITHOUT THE CARING AND GIFTED MINNESOTA EDUCATION

Thank you very much

WASHINGTON, D.C., Feb. 23--Following are the highlights of the schedule for Walter F. Mondale's February 24-27 trip to Minnesota. Times given below are subject to change and are provided for press guidance only, not for publication.

For further information, call Ann Stock or Mike Hill at 202/395-7300.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1981

12:45 p.m. EST DEPART Washington, D.C. for Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota.

2:10 p.m. CST ARRIVE Minneapolis-St. Paul/International Airport. Immediate departure for Sheraton Ritz Hotel.

2:30 p.m. ARRIVE private time.

5:30 p.m. DEPART hotel for Home of President and Mrs. John Davis, Macalester College.

5:45 p.m. ARRIVE private dinner at Davis home. Closed.

7:30 p.m. DEPART Davis home for Macalester College.

8:00 p.m. ARRIVE Macalester College Convocation. Gymnasium. Open coverage from press area.

ADDRESS BY FORMER VICE PRESIDENT WALTER F. MONDALE.

9:15 p.m. DEPART Macalester for hotel.
(APPROX.)

RON. Sheraton-Ritz Hotel, 315 Nicollet Mall. 612/336-5711.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1981

8:00 a.m. CST DEPART hotel for Macalester College.

8:20 a.m. ARRIVE private breakfast with faculty. Closed.

9:30 a.m. ARRIVE Post-Lecture Question & Answer session with students. *Do you know where the Q+A. will be held?*

10:35 a.m. ARRIVE private *time*—

NOTE: The remainder of the schedule will be available in Minnesota on Wednesday morning, February 25.

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

February 6, 1981

MEMO FOR: MAXINE ISAACS

FROM: MIKE BERMAN 

Please see the attached letter from
Columbia Features, Inc. Have you
found out anything about them?

Mike

COLUMBIA FEATURES, INC.

*36 West 44th Street
New York, N. Y. 10109*

JOSEPH M. BOYCHUK, PRESIDENT

(212) 840-1812

December 10, 1980

Hon. Walter Frederick Mondale
Vice President of the United States
3421 Lowell Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Mr. Vice President:

Following on the heels of the Republican-cum-conservative victory in November American media has perhaps over-reacted by seeking out additional conservative spokesmen to tell the American public what is going on. This trend, we believe, will intensify in the future as the word "mandate" receives further circulation.

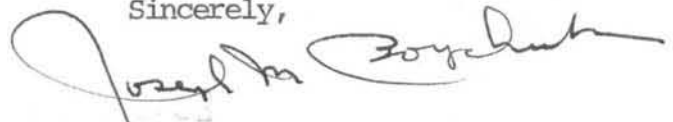
Liberal spokesmen will not, of course, be shut off, but we feel that the weight of numbers will prevail in favor of conservative voices, if for no other reason than that they will be thought to be able to "understand" and "interpret" the news and trends at the national level.

We believe that there is both a need and a market among the nation's daily newspapers for a column that will reflect the insights and views of the loyal opposition and we believe that you would be the ideal spokesman for such a position during the next few years. Your point of view is much needed at this time and will, we feel, be highly respected by the nation's readers.

What we are proposing is that you consider syndicating a weekly column with Columbia Features for sale and distribution to the nation's daily newspapers. We are one of the oldest independent newspaper feature syndicates in the country and feel that a column by you would be mutually beneficial as well as being a much needed voice in the country at this time.

We would very much appreciate the opportunity of further discussing this proposal with you at your convenience. May we please hear from you?

Sincerely,



Joseph M. Boychuk
President

① Vietnam War - backing of unpop. govt - and kept govt. alive. Money couldn't defeat.
a. - Human Rts - no 1 killed 4 yrs.

② Foreign aid fund. - what criteria applied?
humanitarian vs. us business
accountable - make it accountable

③ Iran.
strike that...

④ Hostage ... tensions bet. + in US.
Press handled crisis
Exert pressure... no

⑤ Press fair to President Carter?

⑥ Draft - opposed to draft in peacetime.

⑦ T.V. - election a media event. Poll closings!
coverage of substance
debates

⑧ activism of religious groups

⑨ Interest abroad with human interest. - Biafrica
agnoade - cash + carry

⑩ 1976 - Turkey - why policy failed.
Cyprus

Macalester
College
February 25, 1981

Sudo Interview

① Negotiation with Soviets.
nationalistic movements in 3rd world.
arms control - SALT.
Zimbabwe - big powers stay out

③ E/W dimension - basic needs.

④ World Hunger - hidden holocaust. -
Food for Peace - develop potential

Money to do that + not increase defense.

⑤ Why debate about national interest. or strength
How can I participate? write, pol. religious leader
teach. Better newspapers + journals - be better
informed.

⑥ Risk American lives? Most extreme

WASHINGTON, D.C., Feb. 23--Following are the highlights of the schedule for Walter F. Mondale's February 24-25 trip to Minnesota. Times given below are subject to change and are provided for press guidance only, not for publication.

For further information, call Ann Stock or Mike Hill at 202/395-7300.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1981

12:45 p.m. EST DEPART Washington, D.C. for Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota.

2:10 p.m. CST ARRIVE Minneapolis-St. Paul/International Airport. Immediate departure for Sheraton Ritz Hotel.

2:30 p.m. ARRIVE private time.

5:30 p.m. DEPART hotel for Home of President and Mrs. John Davis, Macalester College.

5:45 p.m. ARRIVE private dinner at Davis home. Closed.

7:30 p.m. DEPART Davis home for Macalester College.

8:00 p.m. ARRIVE Macalester College Convocation. Gymnasium. Open coverage from press area.

ADDRESS BY FORMER VICE PRESIDENT WALTER F. MONDALE.

9:15 p.m. DEPART Macalester for hotel.
(APPROX.)

RON. Sheraton-Ritz Hotel, 315 Nicollet Mall. 612/336-5711.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1981

8:00 a.m. CST DEPART hotel for Macalester College.

8:20 a.m. ARRIVE private breakfast with faculty. Closed.

9:30 a.m. ARRIVE Post-Lecture Question & Answer session with students. Weyerhaeuser Chapel Sanctuary. Open coverage from press area.

10:35 a.m. ARRIVE private time.

11:25 a.m. DEPART Macalester College for Control Data Corporation Normandale Plant.

11:55 a.m. ARRIVE Normandale Plant for private meetings.

1:50 p.m. DEPART Plant for Control Data Corporate Headquarters.

2:05 p.m. ARRIVE Headquarters for private meetings.

4:15 p.m. DEPART Headquarters for airport.

5:00 p.m. DEPART Minneapolis for Washington, D.C.

8:05 p.m. EST ARRIVE Washington, D.C.

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WASHINGTON, D.C., February 16--Following are the highlights of the schedule for Walter F. Mondale's February 17-18 trip to Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. Times given below are subject to change and are provided for press guidance only, not for publication.

For further information, call Maxine Isaacs or Ann Stock at 202/395-7300.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1981

8:10 a.m. EST DEPART Washington, D.C. for Minneapolis, Minnesota.

10:29 a.m. CST ARRIVE Minneapolis/St. Paul, International Airport. Immediate departure for University of Minnesota.

10:55 a.m. ARRIVE private time. Northrop Auditorium, University of Minnesota.

12:15 p.m. ARRIVE Northrop Auditorium. REMARKS. Open coverage from press area. Mult.

Address by former-Vice President Walter F. Mondale.

1:15 p.m. (APPROX.) ARRIVE private time.

1:45 p.m. ARRIVE Post-Lecture Question & Answer Session with Students. Murphy Hall. Open coverage.

2:45 p.m. DEPART Murphy Hall for hotel.

RON. Sheraton-Ritz, 315 Nicollet Mall. 612/336-5711.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1981

10:00 a.m. ARRIVE private meeting with St. Paul Dispatch/Pioneer Press Editorial Board. Closed.

11:05 a.m. DEPART Editorial Board for airport.

12:10 p.m. DEPART Minneapolis/St. Paul for Washington, D.C.

3:12 p.m. ARRIVE Washington, D.C.

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MINNEAPOLIS, Feb. 17--Following is the edited text of a lecture by former Vice President Walter F. Mondale on The Institution of the Vice Presidency delivered under the auspices of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. The lecture was delivered in Northrop Auditorium on The University of Minnesota campus here.

President McGrath; Ambassador Cleveland; Dean Stein; trustees; faculty; alumni; President Davis of Macalester College; Monsignor Murphy, President of the College of St. Thomas; students and friends.

I am honored to speak to you today. I am honored especially to be back at the University of Minnesota which has meant so much to me in my life.

I am honored to have a chance to address the student bodies of Macalester and St. Thomas as well. The focus of my first lecture is the American Vice Presidency, and I want to share with you some of the experiences that I have had these past four years as the Vice President of our magnificent nation.

Any discussion of the Vice Presidency must begin by answering the one question which I know is on all of your minds: How many Vice Presidents have there been? Let me settle that once and for all.

There have been thirty-nine Presidents -- actually thirty-eight individuals, with Grover Cleveland counted twice, since his two terms were not consecutive. Of those Presidents thirty-five had Vice Presidents -- because four of these men succeeded to the Presidency, were not subsequently elected in their own right, and never had Vice Presidents. Since eight of the thirty-five had two Vice Presidents, and since one had three Vice Presidents, there have actually been forty-five Presidential/Vice Presidential teams. However, only forty-two individuals have held the office of Vice President, but two of the forty-two each served under two different Presidents.

I am glad to have had this chance to clear it up.

I said a moment ago how much I appreciate what this institution, what the public and private colleges, have meant to me all my life. I'll never forget attending Macalester and then the University, and all the help and support and opportunity that this meant to me throughout my life.

We are blessed as Minnesotans -- young Minnesotans, particularly, are blessed. I do not believe there is a state in the nation that accords its young people more opportunity to achieve and fulfill their lives than the State of Minnesota. And I am proud to be back here to repay some of the debt that I owe to Minnesota -- under the auspices of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, which bears the name of a man who was one of the most remarkably gifted and compassionate public servants in the history of democracy.

I want to talk about the institution of the Vice Presidency and, in that context, some of the developments over these past four years. I do believe that we have broken new institutional ground. I do believe that the example that we have set is one which has benefited this nation, and is one which I hope will now be followed by all future Presidents and Vice Presidents. And today I would like to talk about how we shaped that approach, some of the experiences that we have had, and why I believe a Vice President can, in a very important way, serve a President and his nation.

It all began in June of 1976, when I began to think about what my answer would be if Governor Carter asked me to be his running-mate. I read his book, I analyzed the statements he had made and I talked, as I always did, with Hubert Humphrey. I approached my conversation with some apprehension because I had thought that his four years as Vice President had been so difficult and heart-breaking that he would clearly advise me not to respond affirmatively.

His answer surprised me. If it were given to me today it would not surprise me.

(More)

He said something like this: "Fritz, those four years as Vice President were the most exciting of my life. I learned more about our country and our government and the world than I could in any other way. I think I'm a better man because of it. If you have a chance, take it."

Shortly thereafter, I received an invitation for Joan and me to travel to Plains, Georgia, a town which Carter felt was small but which is substantially larger than Ceylon, Minnesota, where I was born. I went to Plains with a great many mixed feelings. I had been in the Senate for twelve years, and I loved it. I had no intention of substituting a position where I could participate in all the significant issues of our day for an office that was purely ceremonial and hollow. And I was anxious to find out from Governor Carter how he viewed the Vice Presidency and what role I would be permitted to play if we ran together and won.

I was very pleased by what he said. He said he had read many of the histories of past Vice Presidencies, and he was shocked by the way this office had been underemployed and wasted in the past. He was shocked by how ill-prepared those Vice Presidents had been who, on a moment's notice, had suddenly become President. He thought the President's constitutional authority was so formidable that the Vice President could be no threat to the power of the President. He told me he wanted to have a Vice President who would have a substantive role in both foreign and domestic affairs and who would be prepared immediately to assume the Presidency should that be necessary.

That sounded just right to me, but I was reminded over the next several weeks that the choice would not be mine to make. It was Carter's. And finally, on the last day of our Democratic Convention, at 8:30 in the morning, Governor Carter called and asked me if I wanted to be his running mate. I thought the whole matter over again -- for about four seconds -- and said yes.

Throughout the campaign that followed, we didn't have time to discuss the institution of the Vice Presidency because of the demands of the campaign. But after the election I immediately went to work to see if somehow we could shape an approach for my Vice Presidency that would avoid the problems that so beleaguered this office for nearly 200 years.

Once again, I went back to Hubert Humphrey. I spent a good deal of time with Rockefeller. I read all the literature that I could find. I met with the staffs of former Vice Presidents clear back to the age of Harry Truman, and finally I had a constitutional history of the office prepared.

In December 1976, I sent to President-elect Carter a memorandum defining the role I thought I could best play. It contained the elements of what I thought would be a role both significant and helpful to the President. I reread this memo several times in preparation for today's lecture, and I would like briefly to define the various elements of my proposal.

First of all, I proposed that my basic assignment would be as a general adviser to the President. Beyond this, I proposed that my work include trouble-shooting on the broad range of domestic issues, work on foreign and domestic issues, work on congressional relations and, finally, the political activities that were to be expected of me.

I indicated my desire to devote special time and attention to the State of Minnesota, and I also indicated Joan's desire to play a strong part in the Administration's support for the arts and humanities.

We had a long discussion, and President-elect Carter agreed completely with the memo. In addition, he told me he wanted my office to be down the hall from the Oval Office in the West Wing of the White House -- the first time in American history that this would happen. That did not seem too significant to me at the time; but, as a matter of fact, it was one of the most important steps that we took. President Carter was determined to have a successful Presidency. And I was determined to avoid a meaningless Vice Presidency.

And from that common purpose we built a solid relationship in the months and years to come. And that relationship held up under the unbelievable, searing pressure of that place because we entered our offices understanding, perhaps for the first time in the history of our offices, that each of us could do a better job if we maintained the trust of the other. For four years, that trust endured.

Of all that we agreed to, perhaps my most important role was serving as a general adviser to the President.

An adviser must be ready to advise. He must have a capable staff preparing him to do so. The President and I directed our staffs to work as a team and, in fact, they did. An adviser must have a grasp of the background and details of all crucial issues, and for four years, I had access to all the papers, classified and otherwise, that the President saw.

That might sound like a little matter, but you cannot possibly imagine the tremendous volume of paper that flows into and from the President's personal office. You cannot possibly imagine, unless you have been part of it, the tremendous flow of secret classified information on defense, on the political situation in other nations, on assessments and appraisals made by our intelligence communities. I think I was the first Vice President in American history who was privy to those materials, including the most highly classified of all documents, the Morning Presidential Daily Brief.

An adviser must also participate in those meetings which prepare recommendations for the President. And I was a member of every established and ad hoc group that prepared recommendations for the President.

An adviser must have access to the President. He must be able to give his advice directly, and I had that access. As a matter of fact, when we first began, the President said, "You're invited to every meeting that I've scheduled," and I could pick and choose, and did throughout those four years, those meetings I chose to attend.

We had an institution called the weekly luncheon where, once a week, we would have a private luncheon to discuss any matters either of us wished to bring up. What we said was confidential and will remain so, but what I was trying to achieve was not.

It is sometimes said that the Presidency is a lonely job. In one sense, that's true. But in terms of pressure, in terms of paper that comes into his office, in terms of the number of people who come in to see him -- it is the least lonely job imaginable. What the President needs is not more information, although that is helpful; he needs a few people who can honestly appraise and evaluate his performance. He needs people he can sit down and discuss problems with, confidentially, and get the help in deciding what he finally should do. He needs to hear voices that speak from a national perspective. He has no limit to the number of people who want to talk to him, but that does not assure him of the confidentiality he needs to speak freely.

He also has no limits to the number of people who censor themselves within his earshot, even though what a President needs is blunt and direct and often critical advice. There is a phenomenon I will never understand: I have had friends of mine come into my office in the White House and say, "I'm going to go in and see the President for a few minutes and I'm going to tell him bluntly the mistakes he's making, and he's going to get it raw from me." I said, "That's wonderful, let's go in, he needs your advice." And we would get into the Oval Office and my friend would say, "Hello, Mr. President. How is Rosalyn and how is Amy? You're doing a wonderful job." Hawks would become doves, conservatives would become liberals. I did not recognize half my friends when they got in there.

The best thing one can do for a President is to let him know exactly what you think, speak to him as directly and candidly as possible. And I found that a Vice President is uniquely suited to meeting those needs. When a Vice President advises the President, he does not have to speak for any department goal or constituency or cause. He can be a source of independent judgment. He does not need to censor himself. He can speak frankly, and he can sit down and discuss a matter with the President privately. And that is what we did throughout these last four years on virtually every important matter.

Although I did not agree with every decision the President made, not once in four years was I surprised by what the Administration did, for I took part in every one of his major decisions.

I also helped determine the President's agenda.

That too may seem like a small matter, but there are dreadful limits to a President's time, to the budget, to the Congress' ability to deal with an overcrowded calendar, to the number of foreign governments and interest groups he can deal with personally. There is a limit to any President's ability to sort through these demands, a limit to the government's and the bureaucracy's ability to focus on them, and a limit to the public's ability to wade through them.

Major ideas take time to gather momentum in a democracy. One of the first things one learns in the White House is both how impressive and strong the Presidency is on the one hand and yet how incredibly weak it is if the American people do not accept and support and understand what it is the President wishes to do. And the only way a President can lead is with a set of priorities that are coherent and understandable and consistent and which the institutions and the American people can follow. Without that, inertia always wins. Our system is built to check and to balance and to slow down and deter. Thus the agenda and priority-setting are essential, and I helped work with the President toward that goal.

Throughout our term, I worked with the Congress to achieve our Administration's legislative goals. And in the process, I learned the meaning of the separation of powers, that concept I learned about at the law school. When I was a Senator, I used to look down Pennsylvania Avenue and say, "How is it that all the power is found in the White House?" And then I went to the White House and I looked down Pennsylvania Avenue toward the Capitol and said, "How is it that all of the power is in the Congress?"

Power is separated between co-equal branches of the government, and good relations between the Executive and Legislative branches are absolutely crucial to effective governmental policy. The President's need for legislative assistance is, I believe, much greater now than it has been for several years, for two reasons -- and it has changed a great deal since I went to the Senate.

First, the power is more widely dispersed today in the Congress than it used to be. Individual members are much more independent from central congressional leadership than in the past, and thus they tend to be more responsive to a local constituent's request than to a general national direction.

Secondly, without any doubt, the President's influence in Congress has declined. I hope that this can be the topic of another discussion, but for some fifteen years now, Presidential leadership has been ravaged by public reaction to Vietnam, by the appalling information that came out in the scandal we call Watergate, by the abuses of intelligence agencies some years ago. And the reaction has been not just to try to correct those problems, but in many ways to impede and undermine the authority of a President that this nation needs to deal effectively with our problems at home and abroad. Today, in the trail of those events, a President's powers are always open to question.

In the last four years the measures we tried to pass were not simple. They involved some of the most complex and controversial issues in American history -- a comprehensive energy program for the first time ever; the resolution of a natural gas pricing and distribution dilemma that had plagued our country for thirty years; the most complex and important arms control agreement ever submitted to the Senate, to name only a few.

One of the classic examples was the Panama Canal Treaties, a very complex measure. When we proposed the Panama Canal Treaties, the first poll that came out said that only eight percent of the American people supported us. Our opponents raised questions about security and foreign policy, and the benefits of the Panama Canal Treaties were intangible -- measured mostly in terms of the grief that we avoided -- and yet they were absolutely crucial.

As a matter of fact, some four or five Presidents of both political parties for fifteen years had tried and failed to pass Panama Canal Treaty legislation. In the end, we succeeded by a narrow vote in the House and by a single vote in the Senate, and I involved myself every step of the way -- meeting with members of the Congress, helping to coordinate the work of our legislative staff, mapping our strategies with the leaders, and presiding over the Senate during crucial moments of our deliberations.

There is one unique aspect of the institution of the Vice Presidency that is often overlooked: He is the only officer of the federal government who breaches the separation of powers, being a member of both the legislative and the executive branches of government.

I knew the Senate. I knew its rules and its methods, its moods and most of its members and was able to help adopt and ratify those treaties.

With the President's encouragement, I also acted as one of his principal spokesmen here and abroad. A President's public education responsibility may be the most important responsibility he has and, when properly conducted, the most significant power a President possesses. Teddy Roosevelt called it occupying "the bully pulpit." The public education role goes to the very heart of a President's capacity to lead and to gain the trust and support that he must have. And any President needs all the help he can get.

I worked to extend the President's reach to the public. I estimated that I traveled nearly 600,000 miles during the four years of my Vice Presidency. I visited nearly every state; met with editorial boards; had interviews -- everything I could do to support our policies.

I would talk often on specific issues like the SALT II accord, that we had to pull down because of the invasion of Afghanistan. I would go on the road for a week, sometimes longer, talking to foreign policy groups and others to argue the case for something that was essential.

Secondly, a President needs political support and, over the last four years, I campaigned for members of the Congress and Senate and others all over this nation. In 1980, I campaigned in the greatest number of primaries and caucuses our party has ever held. If you can believe it, I even ended up in a town that not even Hubert Humphrey had ever been in.

I talked with civic and political leaders around the nation and thousands and thousands of Americans. I hope this too will be the topic of another discussion some time: Most Americans think that campaigns are a time when a politician tells the American people what he thinks and intends to do. But the only campaigns that are worth anything are those in which the politician listens carefully and tries to learn and respond to the needs of the people of this country. And it was through the process of building political support for the President that I was able to gain information, suggestions, advice and insight which I would bring to the President whenever I returned from those trips.

Of all the areas in which I served, one of the most important to me was in the field of intelligence, national security and foreign policy. The President agreed that, in addition to my domestic role, I would be helpful in these areas. I headed several diplomatic missions abroad, starting two days after the Inaugural when I visited the heads of government of the United Kingdom; Belgium, including the NATO and Common Market headquarters in Brussels; Germany; France; Italy; Iceland and Japan. I conducted a wide range of diplomatic missions to 26 countries including Israel; Egypt; Thailand; the Philippines; Indonesia; Australia; New Zealand; Venezuela; Brazil; Panama; Mexico; Canada; Norway; Sweden; Finland; Denmark; the Netherlands; Senegal; Niger; Nigeria; Cape Verde; Yugoslavia; Spain; Portugal; Austria; the People's Republic of China; as well as a visit to speak to the U.N. Conference on Indochinese Refugees in Geneva, and an address to the Conference on Disarmament at the U.N. General Assembly in New York. I received literally hundreds of foreign leaders from all over the world in my office in the White House.

I worked closely with the President's security and foreign policy officials throughout the government. I was a member of a small group which met weekly, the so-called Friday morning Foreign Policy Breakfast, which became a little-noted but extremely important regular meeting with the President at which most of the crucial foreign policy decisions were made.

In addition, I spent hundreds of hours over the last four years in informal meetings, phone conversations and the rest, with the range of officers who make and implement foreign policy. These experiences were very, very helpful to me in permitting me to serve the President, for several reasons.

First, I was privy to all the information bearing on the decisions that had to be made. Secondly, because of the public perception of the role the President permitted me to play, I was able to bring about decisions within our own government bearing upon relations with other nations. You might say, "Well, what is so impressive about getting your own government to decide anything?" If any of you joins government, you will find that the toughest job is to pull different agencies together, to get differing points of view resolved, to get decisions made, to move on. It often is the most difficult of all tasks, particularly when the issues are tough.

Let me give you one example. In the summer of 1979, you will recall, the world viewed one of the most tragic human situations that has been seen in recent history. Thousands and thousands of Indochinese were expelled cruelly and barbarically out to sea in unsafe, overcrowded boats, with inadequate food. We estimated at one time that nearly one-half of them lost their lives before they could reach their destinations.

These refugees were subjected to piracy, which I thought was a thing of the past. They were literally overwhelming some nations -- Thailand, Malaysia -- and moving into the Philippines, down through Indonesia, all the way into Australia and even to New Zealand. It was an absolutely tragic, overwhelming crisis for the civilized world.

We had, coming up, a U.N. Conference on Refugees in Geneva. It was not at all clear that the conference was going to do anything but talk. The Vietnamese had built up a backfire against the success of the conference, and the hope for a successful conference depended on our own government's doing certain things that could enhance our leadership and, because of that, permit us to lead at that conference.

The President asked me to go to Geneva to represent our nation. In the process of planning for that meeting, I discovered there were several crucial decisions that we had to make in terms of funding, in terms of constructing facilities, in terms of coordinating our program with other countries, and, in my opinion, in terms of taking the Seventh Fleet and actually ordering it to go out and pick up these people from the ocean before they drowned.

We were able to get our government to make those decisions. We went to Geneva and, because of those decisions, were able to get the international community to move effectively, quickly, to put unbearable pressure on the Vietnamese to stop them. And now, as you know, there has been a dramatic change and cessation of that problem.

There have been many, many other examples. When I visited China on behalf of the President a year and a half ago, we had normalized relations but it was basically a non-relationship because we had not taken those specific steps in economics and trade and security and so on which would characterize mature relationships between the United States and other major powers.

We were able to make those decisions before we went to China. And I think it's not bragging to say that, as a result of that mission, the United States and the People's Republic of China was enormously enhanced, and we're on a fine and solid basis today.

The same is true of a mission that we took to Nigeria, where we had several outstanding, unresolved, long-delayed issues between our two nations that aggravated relations between the United States and that great country, the richest and most powerful black nation on earth. We were able to resolve those differences. And we entered into a range of agreements that are fundamental in nature.

I hope to point out these things because I hope that future Vice Presidents will be assigned this essential role. There are so many things that deserve and expect high-level, policy-sensitive attention of a personal nature.

A President simply does not have the time to do as much of that as the situation warrants and, if he tried, he could do nothing else. This is one role where a Vice President could be of enormous help.

The appendix is part of the body which once served a useful function but atrophied because, over time, the need for it disappeared. What I have been trying to stress this afternoon is that the Vice Presidency is virtually the mirror image, the opposite and converse of the appendix. Evolution, the growth and ferment of American political institutions, has transformed the Vice Presidency from a vestigial role to a viable and vital one.

For generations the Vice Presidency's unique qualities have all been dormant. But changes in the Presidency have meant that those qualities for the first time are being invigorated.

Over the years, the more intimidating the President's powers became, the less likely he grew to hear frank talk, and that is what the confidentiality of the Vice President's unique relationship can provide. The more the nation demanded a President personally to do, the less time he had to sort through and order those priorities -- and that is what the Vice President's special freedom from line responsibility can help him accomplish.

The more bureaucratic and street-wise the President's own Executive branch became, the less able he was to coax decisions from it. And that is what the Vice President's inherent distance from intra-mural allegiance can help him attempt.

The more complex the Congress became, the less sure the President grew that his legislative program would be acted on -- and that is where the Vice President's constitutional double-identity can be mobilized.

The more dense and intricate the issues facing Americans became, the less easy it was for the President alone to educate and lead the nation -- and that is where the Vice President's electoral mandate from all the people can be put to use.

The more complex and diverse our political life became, the less possible it was for the President to sense the texture that mayors and governors feel and listen to the music that members of Congress hear in their districts -- and that is what a Vice President's experience can help the President learn.

The more the American Presidency was drawn into the life and course of other nations, the less time there was to devote his calendar and presence to each region -- and that is where the Vice President's unparalleled ability to be deputized for foreign missions can extend his reach.

I began this lecture talking about my advice to President Carter. In a sense, the whole matter came full circle. This fall, when I met with Vice President-elect Bush and told him what I thought he should do as Vice President, I said to him then that I thought there was something in the relationship between President Carter and I that was more than personal. Though in the end everything depended on that initial relationship confidence and trust, I believe there were some institutional lessons to be learned about what we had done -- and I offered some of those lessons to Vice President-elect Bush in the form of advice. A few weeks into the new Administration, I believe Mr. Bush and President Reagan are showing every sign of understanding the potential of the Vice President's office, and I commend them both.

The advice I gave to Mr. Bush is what I would give to any future Vice Presidents.

One. Advise the President confidentially. The only reason to state publicly what you have told the President is to take credit for his success and try to escape blame for failure. Either way there is no quicker way to undermine your relationship with the President and lose your effectiveness. A President should not and will not tolerate it.

Secondly, don't wear a President down. He should be bright enough to catch your meaning the first time. Give your advice once and give it well. You have a right to be heard, not obeyed. A President must decide when the debates must end, this nation must move on, and you must be a part of that decision-making process.

Third, as a spokesman for the Administration, stay on the facts. A President does not want and the public does not respect a Vice President who does nothing but deliver fulsome praise of a President. He should want and the people respect sound, factual, reasoned arguments on his behalf. This office that I have held is important enough not to be demeaned by its occupant delivering obsequious flattery.

Fourth, understand your role as a spokesman. It's important, but always understand that you probably can't support every idea that comes out of an Administration. A wise President who values his Vice President will not make the mistake of forcing the Vice President to speak for something with which he fundamentally disagrees.

Fifth, avoid line authority assignments. If such an assignment is important, it will then cut across the responsibilities of one or two Cabinet officers or others and embroil you in a bureaucratic fight that would be disastrous. If it is meaningless or trivial, it will undermine your reputation and squander your time as most Vice Presidents have found. I can give several examples of duties that were offered that I turned down. One day the President announced that I was in charge of Africa. I declined. There were sighs of relief all through Africa and it wouldn't work, in my opinion, because, first of all, the personnel, the skills, the experience required to handle that were clearly beyond anything a Vice President could or would want to assemble. In addition, the skills in the State Department and elsewhere are superb and there is absolutely no reason why a Vice President could not work cooperatively with the existing agencies where he can be helpful in achieving these results -- and that's what we did. Another time it was suggested that I was going to be Chief of Staff of the White House. I turned it down on the spot. If I had taken on that assignment, it would have consumed vast amounts of my time with staff work and distracted me from important work.

Sixth, the Vice President should remember the importance of personal compatibility. He should try to complement the President's skills and, finally and in a real sense the most important of all roles, be ready to assume the Presidency. We all know the story of President Truman succeeding to the Presidency on Roosevelt's death with no knowledge of the Manhattan Project which, for a long time, had been underway. President Carter did not want me to need three or four months of on-the-job training in the Presidency if the need arose. As he said so often, he wanted me to be ready the same moment the nation would need me to be ready.

(More)

Political scientists have studied the Vice Presidency and have suggested a number of ways of changing it. Some propose that a Presidential candidate be required to name his running-mate before he enters the first primary. Others say he should leave substantial time open at the convention to let the delegates themselves independently nominate the Vice President. It has been suggested that the Vice President be given statutory or additional constitutional authority -- from running the White House Budget Office; to administering a Cabinet agency; and even this last year's suggestion of some kind of co-Presidency. Others have suggested that the office be eliminated entirely. I don't want to dwell on these specific suggestions, but let me make just two points in closing.

First, I believe that any change in the Presidency which would weaken, diminish, dilute or divide the Presidency is a grave mistake. To say that the increased problems the President faces require a new division of labor in the White House, in my opinion, gets it the wrong way around. The more a President must do, the stronger his office must be. There can be no doubt of who is boss and who is running the executive branch of the government. And the purpose of a Vice President is to add to his strength, not to sap it.

Secondly, I don't believe statutory or constitutional changes are the appropriate way to keep the institution of the Vice Presidency from returning to its centuries of hibernation. Instead, I think it's the force of evolution, the marvelous, resilient, adaptive energy of our free political system that is the more appropriate engine of change.

There is much in our modern government that is not part of our original Constitution. The political parties, the primary process, judicial determination, even the Presidential news conference -- all of these have evolved along with the nation.

And so have the enormous range of responsibilities that fall on a President's shoulders. In our century, as the President's powers have grown, so has his responsibility for the prosperity of our economy, the stature of our country overseas, the health of democracy abroad, and peace in the world. In recent years, the American President found himself the focus of rising expectations, the target of mounting demands. John Steinbeck put it this way:

We give the President more work than a man can do, more responsibility than a man should take, more pressure than a man can bear. We abuse him often and rarely praise him. We wear him out, use him up, eat him up. And with all this, Americans have a love for the President that goes beyond loyalty or party or nationality; he is ours, we exercise the right to destroy him.

Just as the demands on a President have risen, so -- President Carter and I thought -- could the office of Vice President be used to help him meet them. And in remaking the Vice President's role, we established a new tradition. I hope and I believe that we have broken new and significant institutional ground that has served and will serve our nation well.

Now, you may be wondering, now that I have sketched all the ground that has been broken, the duties that I have performed and the success that we have achieved, how is it then that we lost the election?

I have the answer but I am out of time.

Thank you.

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February 18, 1981

MINNEAPOLIS, Feb. 18--Following is the edited text of a lecture by former Vice President Walter F. Mondale on The Institution of the Vice Presidency delivered under the auspices of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. The lecture was delivered in Northrop Auditorium on The University of Minnesota campus here.

President McGrath; Ambassador Cleveland; Dean Stein; trustees; faculty; alumni; President Davis of Macalester College; Monsignor Murphy, President of the College of St. Thomas; students and friends.

I am honored to speak to you today. I am honored especially to be back at the University of Minnesota which has meant so much to me in my life.

I am honored to have a chance to address the student bodies of Macalester and St. Thomas as well. The focus of my first lecture is the American Vice Presidency, and I want to share with you some of the experiences that I have had these past four years as the Vice President of our magnificent nation.

Any discussion of the Vice Presidency must begin by answering the one question which I know is on all of your minds: How many Vice Presidents have there been? Let me settle that once and for all.

There have been thirty-nine Presidents -- actually thirty-eight individuals, with Grover Cleveland counted twice, since his two terms were not consecutive. Of those Presidents thirty-five had Vice Presidents -- because four of these men succeeded to the Presidency, were not subsequently elected in their own right, and never had Vice Presidents. Since eight of the thirty-five had two Vice Presidents, and since one had three Vice Presidents, there have actually been forty-five Presidential/Vice Presidential teams. However, only forty-two individuals have held the office of Vice President, but two of the forty-two each served under two different Presidents.

I am glad to have had this chance to clear it up.

I said a moment ago how much I appreciate what this institution, what the public and private colleges, have meant to me all my life. I'll never forget attending Macalester and then the University, and all the help and support and opportunity that this meant to me throughout my life.

We are blessed as Minnesotans -- young Minnesotans, particularly, are blessed. I do not believe there is a state in the nation that accords its young people more opportunity to achieve and fulfill their lives than the State of Minnesota. And I am proud to be back here to repay some of the debt that I owe to Minnesota -- under the auspices of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, which bears the name of a man who was one of the most remarkably gifted and compassionate public servants in the history of democracy.

I want to talk about the institution of the Vice Presidency and, in that context, some of the developments over these past four years. I do believe that we have broken new institutional ground. I do believe that the example that we have set is one which has benefited this nation, and is one which I hope will now be followed by all future Presidents and Vice Presidents. And today I would like to talk about how we shaped that approach, some of the experiences that we have had, and why I believe a Vice President can, in a very important way, serve a President and his nation.

It all began in June of 1976, when I began to think about what my answer would be if Governor Carter asked me to be his running-mate. I read his book, I analyzed the statements he had made and I talked, as I always did, with Hubert Humphrey. I approached my conversation with some apprehension because I had thought that his four years as Vice President had been so difficult and heart-breaking that he would clearly advise me not to respond affirmatively.

His answer surprised me. If it were given to me today it would not surprise me.

(More)

He said something like this: "Fritz, those four years as Vice President were the most exciting of my life. I learned more about our country and our government and the world than I could in any other way. I think I'm a better man because of it. If you have a chance, take it."

Shortly thereafter, I received an invitation for Joan and me to travel to Plains, Georgia, a town which Carter felt was small but which is substantially larger than Ceylon, Minnesota, where I was born. I went to Plains with a great many mixed feelings. I had been in the Senate for twelve years, and I loved it. I had no intention of substituting a position where I could participate in all the significant issues of our day for an office that was purely ceremonial and hollow. And I was anxious to find out from Governor Carter how he viewed the Vice Presidency and what role I would be permitted to play if we ran together and won.

I was very pleased by what he said. He said he had read many of the histories of past Vice Presidencies, and he was shocked by the way this office had been underemployed and wasted in the past. He was shocked by how ill-prepared those Vice Presidents had been who, on a moment's notice, had suddenly become President. He thought the President's constitutional authority was so formidable that the Vice President could be no threat to the power of the President. He told me he wanted to have a Vice President who would have a substantive role in both foreign and domestic affairs and who would be prepared immediately to assume the Presidency should that be necessary.

That sounded just right to me, but I was reminded over the next several weeks that the choice would not be mine to make. It was Carter's. And finally, on the last day of our Democratic Convention, at 8:30 in the morning, Governor Carter called and asked me if I wanted to be his running mate. I thought the whole matter over again -- for about four seconds -- and said yes.

Throughout the campaign that followed, we didn't have time to discuss the institution of the Vice Presidency because of the demands of the campaign. But after the election I immediately went to work to see if somehow we could shape an approach for my Vice Presidency that would avoid the problems that so beleaguered this office for nearly 200 years.

Once again, I went back to Hubert Humphrey. I spent a good deal of time with Rockefeller. I read all the literature that I could find. I met with the staffs of former Vice Presidents clear back to the age of Harry Truman, and finally I had a constitutional history of the office prepared.

In December 1976, I sent to President-elect Carter a memorandum defining the role I thought I could best play. It contained the elements of what I thought would be a role both significant and helpful to the President. I reread this memo several times in preparation for today's lecture, and I would like briefly to define the various elements of my proposal.

First of all, I proposed that my basic assignment would be as a general adviser to the President. Beyond this, I proposed that my work include trouble-shooting on the broad range of domestic issues, work on foreign and domestic issues, work on congressional relations and, finally, the political activities that were to be expected of me.

I indicated my desire to devote special time and attention to the State of Minnesota, and I also indicated Joan's desire to play a strong part in the Administration's support for the arts and humanities.

We had a long discussion, and President-elect Carter agreed completely with the memo. In addition, he told me he wanted my office to be down the hall from the Oval Office in the West Wing of the White House -- the first time in American history that this would happen. That did not seem too significant to me at the time; but, as a matter of fact, it was one of the most important steps that we took. President Carter was determined to have a successful Presidency. And I was determined to avoid a meaningless Vice Presidency.

And from that common purpose we built a solid relationship in the months and years to come. And that relationship held up under the unbelievable, searing pressure of that place because we entered our offices understanding, perhaps for the first time in the history of our offices, that each of us could do a better job if we maintained the trust of the other. For four years, that trust endured.

Of all that we agreed to, perhaps my most important role was serving as a general adviser to the President.

An adviser must be ready to advise. He must have a capable staff preparing him to do so. The President and I directed our staffs to work as a team and, in fact, they did. An adviser must have a grasp of the background and details of all crucial issues, and for four years, I had access to all the papers, classified and otherwise, that the President saw.

That might sound like a little matter, but you cannot possibly imagine the tremendous volume of paper that flows into and from the President's personal office. You cannot possibly imagine, unless you have been part of it, the tremendous flow of secret classified information on defense, on the political situation in other nations, on assessments and appraisals made by our intelligence communities. I think I was the first Vice President in American history who was privy to those materials, including the most highly classified of all documents, the Morning Presidential Daily Brief.

An adviser must also participate in those meetings which prepare recommendations for the President. And I was a member of every established and ad hoc group that prepared recommendations for the President.

An adviser must have access to the President. He must be able to give his advice directly, and I had that access. As a matter of fact, when we first began, the President said, "You're invited to every meeting that I've scheduled," and I could pick and choose, and did throughout those four years, those meetings I chose to attend.

We had an institution called the weekly luncheon where, once a week, we would have a private luncheon to discuss any matters either of us wished to bring up. What we said was confidential and will remain so, but what I was trying to achieve was not.

It is sometimes said that the Presidency is a lonely job. In one sense, that's true. But in terms of pressure, in terms of paper that comes into his office, in terms of the number of people who come in to see him -- it is the least lonely job imaginable. What the President needs is not more information, although that is helpful; he needs a few people who can honestly appraise and evaluate his performance. He needs people he can sit down and discuss problems with, confidentially, and get the help in deciding what he finally should do. He needs to hear voices that speak from a national perspective. He has no limit to the number of people who want to talk to him, but that does not assure him of the confidentiality he needs to speak freely.

He also has no limits to the number of people who censor themselves within his earshot, even though what a President needs is blunt and direct and often critical advice. There is a phenomenon I will never understand: I have had friends of mine come into my office in the White House and say, "I'm going to go in and see the President for a few minutes and I'm going to tell him bluntly the mistakes he's making, and he's going to get it raw from me." I said, "That's wonderful, let's go in, he needs your advice." And we would get into the Oval Office and my friend would say, "Hello, Mr. President. How is Rosalyn and how is Amy? You're doing a wonderful job." Hawks would become doves, conservatives would become liberals. I did not recognize half my friends when they got in there.

The best thing one can do for a President is to let him know exactly what you think, speak to him as directly and candidly as possible. And I found that a Vice President is uniquely suited to meeting those needs. When a Vice President advises the President, he does not have to speak for any department goal or constituency or cause. He can be a source of independent judgment. He does not need to censor himself. He can speak frankly, and he can sit down and discuss a matter with the President privately. And that is what we did throughout these last four years on virtually every important matter.

Although I did not agree with every decision the President made, not once in four years was I surprised by what the Administration did, for I took part in every one of his major decisions.

I also helped determine the President's agenda.

That too may seem like a small matter, but there are dreadful limits to a President's time, to the budget, to the Congress' ability to deal with an overcrowded calendar, to the number of foreign governments and interest groups he can deal with personally. There is a limit to any President's ability to sort through these demands, a limit to the government's and the bureaucracy's ability to focus on them, and a limit to the public's ability to wade through them.



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