

THE NATURE AND INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

28 August 1959

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COLONEL REID: General Houseman, Admiral Patrick, Gentlemen: Today we have the fourth in a series of lectures on the Government to give you the background necessary for the following unit in the course. Yesterday's lecture traced the authority and the functions of the legislative branch of the Government, both in theory and in practice. Today our speaker will cover the political parties which provide the legislators for our Government.

The nature of these parties and their influence or lack of influence on national security and our international or foreign policies are important to us in determining where we are and where we are going relative to our present posture and the world political situation.

As Director of the Elections Research Center of the Governmental Affairs Institute, our speaker is certainly exceptionally qualified in the field of our subject today. This is his first lecture here at the Industrial College, although he has been a guest instructor for the past few years; and he has lectured at the National War College, the three service war colleges, and the Armed Forces Staff College.

I might add as an aside that we are all familiar with the story of the officer who criticized the mess in which he was eating. We have a parallel in the auditorium here today. Last year, at the conclusion of the Government Section of the Foundations Unit, one of the instructors oh, you might say, criticized a little bit the fact that we had no lecturer on the political parties in the United States. Well, you know the answer. It's my privilege and pleasure to introduce to the Class of 1960 last year's critic, today's speaker, Mr. Richard Scammon.

MR. SCAMMON: General Houseman, Gentlemen: I'd like, if I may, to make a couple of caveats in speaking to you this morning on this subject of politics and political parties and the political problems that you gentlemen are now and will be concerned with in your particular work.

First of all, I, and indeed other speakers you may hear here, will undoubtedly repeat ourselves about some parts of this general

question of politics, the Congress, political parties, political decisions, and the like. The fact that we repeat ourselves simply means that we are approaching in various ways the same problem from different lines of thought. Indeed, not only may we repeat ourselves, but we may do just the opposite and we may contradict each other. But, this doesn't necessarily mean we don't know what we're talking about. Again it may mean that we simply are approaching this same topic from various viewpoints.

I would ask, too, my own group, Colonel Reid's Group 3, to bear with me if some of this sounds suspiciously like what we have been discussing in our discussion sessions these past two days, because a great deal of it is exactly the same material. I trust they will stay awake and be with us until we close up this morning.

Now, when we talk about political parties and their effect and influence, good, bad, or indifferent, on our national politics, I think it's important for us first to take the old, conservative line of definitionism; and I'd like, if I may, to define the party, as we see it here in this country, in perhaps four or five different ways.

I'd like to define the party first simply as a label, simply as a name--Republican, Democratic. The label, of course, is the thing that sticks in our mind first. The label is the thing we read in the newspapers. The label is the word that is bandied about. The label is the thing that divides people in the House and in the Senate down the middle corridor of those two bodies.

One British colleague of mine once said: "You have in your Congress, 500 men and women, some Senators, some Congressmen." "Actually," he said, "you have 500 people down there on Capitol Hill some of whom are labeled Democrats, but all of whom are really independent because none of them are real party people in the sense in which we in England would use that term. None of them are people who are really under party discipline. None of them are people who really respond to the party whip. They are all independent, running like mad from being whipped from the people back home."

I suppose in a sense there's a certain amount of truth in that--that "party," at least as we use it in this country, has none of the monolithic kind of significance that it has in many other parts of the world.

Moreover, if we look at these labels, we find that they hide a great many differences. We can't say that the Republicans do this or that the Democrats do that. We can't say that the Republicans favor that or that the Democrats favor this, because we will find, for example, in the United States Senate men like Senator Eastman or Senator Byrd, who wear the Democratic label, and you will find men like Senator Humphrey and Senator Douglas and Senator Proxmire, who also wear the Democratic label but who have far less in common with Eastman and Byrd than they might with some Republican Senators, like Javits, for example, of New York. And this is not limited to the Democrats. You will find, for example, among the Republican Governors a man like Wesley Powell, of New Hampshire, who is a former assistant of Senator Bridges and a very conservative, right-wing Republican. And on the other hand you'll find a man like the newly elected Governor of Hawaii, Bob Quinn, whom the Republicans hailed and claimed as their newly elected leader until someone reminded them that he was elected with AFL-CIO endorsement and in which case most of the Hosannas died quickly down into the background.

The fact is that the party as a label in this country means a great many things to a great many people, and to each person it really means what he himself thinks it means rather than any agreed definition. Today we've only got two of these labels--Republican and Democratic. In the past we've had a great many--Whits, Know-Nothings, Federalists, Barn Burners, Hunkers, Loco Focos--and a hundred others. But in the last hundred years, since the period just before the Civil War, we've been pretty well limited to Republicans and Democrats as label-carriers. A few other minor parties from time to time--the Progressives, Prohibitionists, and so on--but we are still today, after these hundred years, basically Republican or Democratic.

Now, if these labels can be used as one basis of definition for these political parties, what are the images that people hold of these two parties? If indeed the label means to each person only what he thinks it means, what does he, the average citizen, think that it does mean? What picture does he have in his mind as to what is a Republican or what is a Democrat?

Here I suppose we have to go back more or less to the pollsters, the samplers, who in these past 25 years have been delving into our individual minds to find out what we think about all sorts of things, from after shave lotion up to the question of war and peace. And these pollsters tell us that basically the image of the American toward the

Republican Party is an image of big business; and that the image of the voter toward the Democratic Party is an image of the poor man, the ordinary man. Now, whether this image is correct or not is not important. What is important is that, basically speaking, and with a lot of footnotes and prologues and epilogues, this is what the average voter sees in the two political parties.

That is so much so that the Republicans have now a committee, operating under Mr. Percy in Chicago, to devise some way in which this image, this picture of their party, can be made a broader one, can be made a more popular one; just as for many years the Democrats were faced with the problem that in the minds of many voters they were associated with the outbreak of the two World Wars and with Korea; and that in the minds of many voters the Democratic Party had a war image.

But perhaps more important than this question of image, which is a highly subjective thing, is the question of who gets elected as a Republican or a Democrat, and what kind of people vote for the men and women who do get elected with these particular labels. If the labels are very general ones, which conceal a great variety of things, from ketchup to vodka and everything in between, then really who are the people that make this choice, and what kind of people are actually elected by them?

If you will, then, this is a definition of party, not by label and not by image, but, rather, by people. And in an American democratic system, which is essentially personal and popular, this is perhaps the most useful. Among those who get elected, for example--the people who sit in Congress, the Governors, the Senators, members of county boards, aldermen, and all sorts of people who carry on the ordinary business of government--who are the Democrats and who are the Republicans?

Well, by and large of course they're lawyers. As you know, this is the prime source of political talent in the United States. But by and large, among the Democrats they are, first of all, southerners. Due to the historical accident of post-Civil War reconstruction, our South represents still almost a one-party situation; and despite the gains that have been made recently by Republicans, the fact is that in most parts of the South, Democrats and only Democrats hold public office. In the North the Democrats also by and large represent trade unions, they represent the majority of Roman Catholics, Jews, city people, Negroes, workers. I would think it also fair to say that they represent most of

the so-called intelligentsia, the intellectuals, if you can apply that word to any group in a classless society like ours.

On the other hand, the Republicans by and large, again with many footnotes, exceptions, epilogues, and prologues, represent the business community, northerners, the smaller cities, the rural areas, Protestants, and in general those who are better off in the community which they represent.

I emphasize again, however, that when you apply these two labels, you have to do it with all sorts of exceptions. And the recent Presidential elections are a prime example, because the Republican candidate, President Eisenhower, came from a poor background, came from no particular social status in his own home community; whereas the Democratic candidate was a man of considerable wealth and considerable private income--the exact reverse of what you normally would have expected from this formula.

But perhaps more important in this definition of party by people, more important than the people who get elected, are the people who vote for the people who get elected. For example, could you and I get into a car and drive through a city like Baltimore and establish who the Republicans and Democrats are? By and large we could. With one or two exceptions, we could drive through almost any city in America and determine in advance, just by driving down the streets, who's going to vote Republican and who's going to vote Democratic. We couldn't do it exactly, which is, of course, why you hold the election in the first place; but we could do it to a considerable extent.

And we would do it this way: Those who tend to vote Democratic in the modern mid-century are, first of all again, the southerners. They are also again people who live in the cities. They are again Jews, Roman Catholics, Negroes, at least in the North, workers, the foreign-born, younger people, and the poorer elements of society generally. Somebody once said that if you could find a poor foreign-born trade unionist who was a Catholic and lived in a big city, the chances are four to one that he would vote Democratic. Whether that exact proportion holds or not I don't know; but it certainly is generally true.

Among Catholics, for example, the percentage voting Democratic is roughly two to one. Among Negroes in the North it's about four or five to one. Among workers it's about two or three to one, because

with the exception of the leadership of the Carpenters' Union and the leadership of the Teamsters' Union, almost all trade union leaders and most workers are Democrats.

Contrariwise, among the Republicans you would look for almost no support in the South. You would look for Republican voters to come more from the smaller towns and from the countryside than from the big cities. You would look for them to come from the better residential districts and the more wealthy elements of the community. You would look for them to be stronger among the Protestants.

Now, again you would look for this with many footnotes and with many exceptions. You would find, for example, that the strongest Republican areas in America are not in the wealthy suburbs of New York, but are in the mountains of eastern Tennessee, because in this area, within the old Confederacy, nobody owned slaves, and since they didn't own slaves, they weren't going to fight the planters' war and promptly voted Republican and have voted Republican for the last century. So that if you want to find the area which is strongest for Mr. Eisenhower today, you don't look for it in Nassau County. You look to Tennessee.

I think it's important for us too, as we try to line up these Democrats and these Republicans and the people who vote either way, to remember that basically in America we are dealing not with a two-party system, but with a three-party system. The Democratic Party of the South is not the Democratic Party of the North, and both sides of the Democratic Party would tell you this in no uncertain terms. Basically, the Democratic Party in the South is a universal party, in the sense that it represents the whole South, at least the whole white South. The Democratic Party in the South has very little competition from the Republicans. Primary elections are the ones that count, not the final election in November. By and large it is a conservative, almost Republican-oriented type of political organism. On the other hand, the Democratic Party in the North tends to be much more liberal, much more oriented toward these various groups that I have listed here, and therefore more inclined to defend and extol their viewpoint.

So that really in the Congress and in general in our national affairs, we are dealing not with a two-party system, as we like to maintain, but with a three-party system with two labels. Whether this means that we are dealing with two one-and-a-half-party systems, or with three two-thirds-party systems, or whether you can get a sixth in or not, I don't know. But at least we are dealing with two labels and three parties, applicable in any kind of rank order that you choose to put them.

Now, I think we must define "party" in modern American politics not only as we have, in terms of a label, in terms of an image, and in terms of people, but also in terms of doctrine, also in terms of program. It's very popular to say that the American parties have no basic differences between one another; that the American parties really don't represent anything; that we really have a one-party system all over the country. And, like many general statements of this sort, there's a certain measure of truth in this.

It is certainly true, for example, that on the basic fundamentals of our politics and our economy there are no major differences between the Republicans and the Democrats. Both of our political parties, for example, accept capitalism as the kind of economic organization that we ought to have; and in that they differ, say, from Britain, where a Labor or Socialist Party contests with a Conservative or Capitalist Party. They are different from Germany, where a Christian Democratic Party and a Social Democratic Party have differing viewpoints about the basic character of the economic system under which the business of the State has to be carried out. Both Republicans and Democrats agree that capitalism is going to be our economic future.

Moreover, both of our political parties agree on the separation of church and state. In fact, they agree on it so much that for most of us the introduction of religion as a political issue is something a little distasteful. It's something that we don't understand, that we rather reject. But this is not true in many other parts of the world. The very fact that in Western Europe, where many of you gentlemen will have served, you can have Christian Democratic political parties in Germany and in Italy, and the fact that there is a definite conjoining of religion and politics means that there is a different kind of political atmosphere than we have here in America. Not only on the economy but also on the separation of church and state, upon the nonreligious character of our politics, the Democratic and Republican Parties are agreed.

Finally, the parties are agreed too on the maintenance of a military force and upon the maintenance of a determined foreign policy. I use those words simply to demonstrate that we do not have in this country a pacific political party, the purpose of which, for example, is to engage in unilateral nuclear disarmament, or the purpose of which is to reduce the Armed Forces to the status of patrol groups, parties which do exist in other countries.

So that on these three major points--the economy, religion, and national defense--there is general fundamental agreement. That doesn't mean that there aren't a whole series of disputes between the parties on details, but it is true that on the basic, major issues there is agreement.

The actual differences, I think, that we can point out, and the meaningfulness of labels in our politics, come not from these basic issues, it comes not from political party platforms that are drafted every four years to be as absolutely general as they can and to encompass everybody; but the character of real differences between these three parties comes from the day-to-day political struggle in Congress. It comes on such questions as civil rights. It comes on such questions as housing. It comes on such questions as who gets what in terms of the national pie in taxation; the depreciation allowance, for example, on oil; who gets what on Federal aid, who gets what in aid to education. These pragmatic, practical, day-to-day issues are the things on which really you can see the differences between these three political parties, operating under two labels, in our modern American politics.

And even here they don't operate universally. On a question, for example, like the confirmation of Secretary of Commerce Strauss, there was a pretty general lineup of Republicans on one side and Democrats on the other. But there were one or two on each side that split off.

On a question like the Landrum-Griffin Labor Bill, there was a pretty general lineup of southern Democrats and Republicans on one side and northern Democrats on the other; but, again, there was a split-off on both sides.

This is true because we do not apply in this country a tight rein by party leaders over individual Members of Congress. But the very fact that we don't apply that tight rein means that these lineups of groups become perhaps even more significant in actually delineating the character of our political system.

And although we may say from time to time that there are no basic fundamental differences between the parties and be correct in that observation, there are many practical, everyday, pragmatic differences in the way in which the average northern Democrat, the average southern Democrat, and the average Republican approaches the problems of policy as they may face him.

Finally, the parties themselves may be approached also in terms of definition on question of organization. We've looked at them in terms of the label, in terms of the image, in terms of people, and in terms of doctrine. We may approach this question also in terms of organization, but less usefully and I think with less value.

Basically, American political parties are not highly organized, disciplined mass organizations as they are in many European countries. The national organizations really are loose federations of 50 State political parties, which gather together every four years for the minimum task of nominating a candidate for the President and a candidate for the Vice President. This is their only real purpose. Between elections they will maintain headquarters here in Washington, they will issue statements, they will hold meetings, they will pontificate on this or that; but basically their power and their authority are limited to this one brief encounter, if you will, with power once every four years.

If you really look for political organization in America, and look for effective political organization, you must look to the States and local areas. And there you have as much variation as you could possibly wish. In some States, there's almost no political organization. There's almost a complete anarchy. Popular people are put up, run for office, get nominated in the primaries, get elected in November, with almost no organization behind them except an ad hoc group that they set up themselves.

On the other hand, in a city like Chicago, in a city like Philadelphia, you have tightly knit, well-organized political machines, based upon people who hold paid positions from the county or the city or the State-- organizations which extend over long numbers of years, organizations which continue the seeking of public office as a 24-hour-a-day job 365 days in the year.

These local machines, these local organizations, are nowhere near as important now as they were 50 years ago. They have been declining rapidly in the United States. Some still exist. Some are good. Quite a few are bad. Most are sort of in between. The question of morality in their organization is not important to them. The question of getting elected is. And if you can relate morality to getting elected you will have a good organization. If you can't, you won't.

There is also, of course, a measure of organization which may be applied as a definition to the parties in Congress--the area which most

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affects you gentlemen in terms of the policies that are made with respect to the Armed Forces. But that is relatively unimportant. The caucus, the party leaders, the whip have far more importance in the newspapers than they do in fact. A man like Lyndon Johnson, for example, has as much real power in the Senate as he has personal persuasive power. He does not have any great organizational authority with which he can whip recalcitrant members in line. He is basically what he is because he is a manipulator and a broker of the first water in terms of bringing divergent viewpoints together and getting them accepted by a majority of the Senate.

There are areas, of course, inside the House and inside the Senate where, if you want to get ahead, you play ball with your fellow members. You go along and you get ahead. But the kind of pressures that are really brought upon Congressmen, and the kind of fears that these Congressmen have, and the kind of action programs they react to are much less a matter of the party whip, they are much less a matter of the party leadership as such than they are the folks back home. And if one really wants to see the pattern of what makes a Congressman tick, of what makes his policy and his politics effective, you have to go back to the folks back home because more Members of Congress are concerned with servicing their constituents, taking care of their constituents in a hundred ways, than they are in following any party line. And if a party line, as laid down by the party leadership, or by the President if the party happens to control the White House, if that party line goes contrary to what the Member thinks the people back home want, he is most likely to follow the people and not the President or the party leadership.

In our outline of this material for this morning, we have mentioned pressure groups and interest groups as a part of this general political picture. It is here that they really maximize their effectiveness, because pressure groups and interest groups, other than the political parties, are primarily effective in mobilizing this kind of opinion back home. It is perfectly true that the average pressure group keeps on a lot of educational work, as they call it, or propaganda, as someone else might call it, throughout the year in terms of their own interest. But, basically, they are important insofar as they can leapfrog over the political party and mobilize interest, letter writing, telegrams, and so forth from constituents to individual Congressmen.

Now, I know that Dr. Hilsman and one or two others may have spoken on this subject of the interest group. I'd like to treat it,

however, for a moment again this morning, because it is so important in the kind of politics with which you gentlemen are concerned.

An interest group actually, in its impact on Congress, can consist of almost anybody. I remember, for example, about 10 years ago, when my cousin and I were interested in getting a small piece of land in the District of Columbia named a memorial park in honor of a former governor of our State of Minnesota. I asked him if he would get the bill introduced. He got the bill introduced, both of us testified for it before a congressional committee, and the bill was passed. And there is now an Olson Memorial Park up at Q Street and Connecticut Avenue. So we were a two-man pressure group. You can have a two-man pressure group or you can have a two-million-man pressure group.

Almost anybody who is trying to get anything out of Congress or from Congress in the way of legislation or whatever it may be is in effect a pressure or interest group. It may be a farm group, a labor group, a business group, a veterans group, teachers, saloonkeepers, slot machine operators, anybody. Anybody who has something they want to get or something to sell becomes in effect an interest group.

Sometimes these interest groups are united. Quite frequently they are not. We think, for example, of the Chamber of Commerce or the National Association of Manufacturers as representing a pretty well-unified business viewpoint; yet if you were to take the representatives of, say, the Air Transport Association, the railroads, and the trucking companies, I am sure you would find in terms of their pressures that they quite frequently were working against one another, because their interests were different.

In the case of the St. Lawrence Seaway, for example, the business communities of the Middle West were all in favor of it, because they thought it would bring them cheap goods from Europe. Those of the Atlantic seaboard were all opposed to it, because they were sure it would cut down the trade of their own ports. The coal miners were against the St. Lawrence Seaway because they thought it would reduce the demand for coal for trains to carry goods from the eastern seaboard into the Middle West.

Among the farm groups, the Farmers Union and the Farmers Bureau have far more out of interest with each other than they do in interest with each other. You will normally find the Farm Bureau lined up with manufacturing groups and the Farmers Union lined up with labor groups, though they are both farmer interest groups in their basic appeal.

Now, most of these interest groups are economic, in the sense that they want something for their membership, that they want something for themselves. But there are many others as well. Perhaps the best-known interest group in this century in American politics was the Anti-Saloon League, which had no representation on an economic side, and yet represented perhaps the most effective and most powerful lobby in the last generation of American politics. I don't even know that it exists any more, but in the twenties, in the period before the repeal of prohibition, it was certainly a massively important group.

Let's take another example, a specific kind of lobby which operates on military questions. For 20 years every public opinion poll I have seen has indicated that the American people would favor permanent compulsory military training by a vote of 75 or 80 percent. And yet every time such a bill has been put into Congress, it has failed. We do have the draft, of course, but no long-range system of permanent compulsory military training. The reason is that pacifist and church groups have been able to mobilize enough effective opinion in their own community to represent to the Congress an opposition viewpoint; and even though Congressmen may say: "Well, I know this is favored by most people," it isn't favored strongly by the majority and it is opposed militantly by the minority. Hence, it does not get enacted into law. And the average Congressman, of course, will excuse this by saying: "Well, we've got a pragmatic solution to this. We'll keep the church people happy by not voting compulsory military training on a long-range plan, and we'll keep the rest happy by voting it on a year-to-year basis." So that everybody eats his cake and has it too.

There are groups also active in the larger areas of foreign and defense policy though not as many. Except for tariff operations, which obviously have an interest of an economic nature, you will find that most of the groups that are active in the field of foreign affairs and in the field of defense policy are nationality groups, veterans groups, special interest groups of one kind or another, but not primarily economic ones. Groups, for example, to aid foreign aid may have a certain economic base, and groups to aid world trade are certainly going to be favored by those who have an interest in expanding imports and exports, just as those who oppose foreign aid and oppose further imports and exports may be expected to have an interest in developing a domestic industry.

But by and large, in the foreign and defense policy field, the pressure groups and even the parties themselves are less likely to follow specific lines of individual economic interest. This doesn't mean that

you won't get a lot of pressure in the individual Congressman's office. You'll get it from all sorts of groups. Two, for example, that come immediately to mind are the group known as the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, which opposes nuclear rearmament; and the Committee of a Million Against the Admission of Red China into the United Nations. These are two ad hoc interest groups, pressure groups, that are interested in seeing a particular policy line developed.

But by and large, though these pressure groups leapfrog the political party, and though they are active in a number of ways, and though some of them are perhaps active corruptly, you will find very little of the kind of thing which was epitomized by a member of the Pennsylvania State Legislature who got up to say: "Well, gentlemen, if the Pennsylvania Railroad has no more business for us to do, I move that we adjourn." This kind of business you will still find from time to time, but nowhere near as much of it as you did 50 years ago.

That is because the average interest or pressure group, working either independently of the parties or within the parties depending on how its interest lies, operates through the mobilization of opinion back home to influence the individual Congressman. On the Landrum-Griffin Bill, for example, the labor bill, a great deal of pressure was brought by business communities not in terms of the NAM of the Chamber of Commerce going down and buttonholing Congressmen, though some of them did that, but primarily by a letter-writing campaign from the home folks to tell wavering Congressmen: "Now, we want you to vote for this." This campaign was carried out quite effectively, and it was effective in mobilizing a good deal of letter-writing support back home for this kind of program, because most pressure groups feel that their real power over Congressmen develops in mobilizing this kind of sentiment at the grass roots, just as the real power of the political party lies in exactly the same area--in the precincts, and in the wards, and in the townships--not in the cocktail circuit or the wide discussions of politics that you may get here in Washington.

This is because the greatest fear, I think, that any political leader has is not of the party. Basically, under our primary system of nominations, the greatest fear that any political leader can have is that the folks back home will turn against him, and that some powerful local group will begin to feel that he isn't doing his job; that he isn't representing their interest; and therefore will look around for another candidate--some young lawyer who wants to step into his shoes, some local personality whom they may feel they can support.

This is why it seems to me that questions like bipartisanship in foreign policy and defense policy or unipartisanship or tripartisanship or whatever you want to call it are not as important as they may sound to the editorial writers or to the columnists in the newspapers. We really don't have a partisan approach to foreign policy. We really don't have a partisan approach to defense policy. You will find isolationists and internationalists and you will find proforeign aid and anti-foreign aid on both sides of the aisle in the Congress. You will find Republican Senators and Democratic Senators who are on both sides of all these questions. You will find military unifiers and military disunifiers with both party labels.

Actually, the defense policy questions and the foreign policy questions, which operate in Congress, are ones which are nonpartisan in character and are most usually treated in a nonparty way. Many of the problems which specifically affect the Armed Forces are problems not of policy at all but problems of servicing the home constituents. And I am sure that every one of you who is here this morning has had experience with the letter from Mamma or the letter from the local pastor for the problem situation that is created, as, for example, in one regiment in which I served in the last war when there was even a pregnancy officer, who dealt with the particular problems that were involved with these 19-year-olds who rushed off to go into the Army but waited just long enough to create a local problem before they left.

This kind of thing tends to be really a much greater part of the day-to-day congressional work affecting the Armed Forces than these broad questions of policy, foreign or domestic, with which you might think Congressmen are normally concerned. The average Congressman, insofar as he has a relationship with the military, normally has that relationship on a personal basis with an individual problem involving people. Maybe it involves something a little more, like perhaps the closing of an Armed Forces station; but it is basically not a broad question of policy, because both foreign policy and defense policy are so complex today, are so involved today, that the average Congressman, who may take a very strong view on a question of labor, on a question of farm legislation, tends to have a commendable humility when it comes to many of these questions; and he is in most instances willing to listen to the other man and somewhat doubtful about his own absolute, God-given superiority as far as making decisions is concerned.

It isn't to the question of partisanship that I would really look for problems in Congress in the making of foreign and defense policy. It

is, rather, simply to education and knowledge. And the more that the Congressman can learn, the more that he can know, the more he can bring the American genius for practicality and pragmatism to this particular problem that he has to face in foreign and defense policy, the better off we will all be, because by and large the Congressmen do not see these problems as party problems. The party lines we have to deal with in America are, happily, not ideological or philosophical lines. They are lines of practicality and of the day-to-day problem that has to be met and has to be dealt with. In this sense we are very fortunate and in the sense that the people who set your course of action legislatively are people who do see it this way, you too are fortunate.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL REID: Gentlemen, Mr. Scammon is ready for your questions.

QUESTION: I am speaking of the pressure groups, Mr. Scammon. You expressed the importance of letter writing. Now, assuming the Congressman is a reasonable man, as we like to think we are, this business of the importance of letter writing seems to escape me. In other words, the Congressman can see on TV where everyone is told to write his Congressman. So the next day he gets a lot of mail. Why would he attach so much importance to this mail as you have indicated he would?

MR. SCAMMON: Let me put it this way: There is mail and mail. All mail is equal and some mail is a little more equal than others.

In a situation like this the mail he really attaches importance to is the mail that he thinks really represents the viewpoints of the people who write it. Obviously, if he gets 128 telegrams, of exactly the same text, from more or less the same place, he throws these away. He knows they are simply a bought operation. If he also gets a few letters in response to a TV appeal, he will probably throw those away too.

But suppose there is no particular TV appeal and he gets letters from every county in his district, scrawled out in pencil, some type-written, obviously this is something that has some meaning to these people. And anything that motivates people to write a letter and put a four-cent stamp on it and send it off is something that he ought to take seriously. And I would think that if a Congressman got, say 100 pieces of mail on a given issue, on which perhaps he himself had no strong views, this might very well motivate his response.

Now, if he has a strong personal view and he gets these letters, it doesn't make any difference. For example, there were some 200 members of the House who voted against the labor bill, against the Landrum-Griffin Bill. I am sure each one of these men got a lot of letters, and I'm sure they wrote back pleasant and polite replies saying: "Thank you so much for your letter. I'm very happy to have your views on this subject, and I'm sure our opinions are not too far apart." He wouldn't go ahead and add: ". . . but, stupid, I'm not going to vote your way." He would be nice about it, because he wants those votes. The general approach, I think, is that the mail gives him an opportunity to evaluate what the people back home want.

Now, it's necessarily an inadequate evaluation, but it's better than nothing. So that if people will write, and write their views, in fairly good numbers, and he feels that these are genuine views, this has a definite effect on his viewpoint.

QUESTION: Mr. Scammon, do you think that the people of this nation have become educated enough to vote for and elect a Catholic candidate if they feel that the Catholic candidate would make the best President from all points of view?

MR. SCAMMON: There are two levels of prejudice against Catholic candidates for the Presidency. One level of prejudice is what I would call the theologic one, in other words, the feeling that the Catholic, if he is a good Catholic, owes at least a part of his allegiance to the Vatican rather than to the United States. This is what I would call the intellectual prejudice. Then there is what you might call the backwoods prejudice, which is just the sort of local anti-Catholic feeling that worked so much against Al Smith.

Now, question: Is the situation today of a sort that a Catholic candidate for the Presidency could be elected? I think it probably is. That doesn't mean that he will be elected, because on the first level of prejudice and on the second too, and perhaps even on the issue, you might find that people would prefer the Republican. And I certainly would not like to feel that anybody was doing like Mayor Daley of Chicago did back in 1956. When Mayor Daley was chairman of the Illinois delegation at the Democratic convention, and the caucus of the delegation was trying to decide whether to support Kennedy or Kefauver for the Vice Presidency in 1956, Daley opened the meeting by leaning over the podium and saying: "Now, I wouldn't want to think that anybody would be anti-Catholic from Illinois," the implication being, "You'd better vote for Kennedy or you're not going to get your job back as city sealer."

I would say, yes; I think a Catholic candidate could be nominated to the Presidency. Yes; he could be elected. He certainly could be nominated and elected as Vice President. There could be no question at all about this, that is, presuming that the rest of the issues, the nonreligious issues, work in his behalf.

I would think a lot of people will vote for or against Mr. Kennedy, if he is a candidate, not on the basis of his religion at all, but because he's a Republican or Democrat or because they like him or don't like him, because he is a bright young man, for or against. I would say the number who will vote on religious issues will be relatively small and considerably less than it was a generation ago.

QUESTION: With respect to your observation, sir, on what makes a Congressman tick and you said that he had to look to the voters back home, you suggest that there is a considerable preoccupation, at least in the minds of the Members of the House of Representatives about cultivating these people back home in order that they can be reelected in two years. In other words, what I'm getting at is, it seems to me that the national interest is lost with respect to their continuing on their jobs, keeping the people back home satisfied, and also the minute they get in Washington starting to get the machine going so they can be reelected. Would you care to comment on the potential increase in efficiency in the House of Representatives if they were to remain in office four years instead of two?

MR. SCAMMON: I think we've got to define an issue here. You say "the national interest," which might be increased if they were elected for four years. This depends on what you regard as the national interest.

Now, you can say that there is a national interest separate from the individual district interests. Or you can say that the national interest consists of 435 district interests. In other words, the premise, which is that if the Congressman were elected for two more years, he would be more efficient in representing the national interest, I wouldn't think was necessarily correct. He might just loaf for two more years. Or, conversely, he might work just as hard in order to get reelected after four years, like the Senators do after six, as he would if he were going to be reelected in two years.

Now, it is certainly true that, just thinking back to the individuals I know who have been in this situation, the average Senator does not

go back home to campaign as heavily, say, perhaps in the last 18 months or two years before his term expires as does the average Congressman. Those friends of mine who are in the Congress now, if they live in the eastern half of the country, will normally go back at least once a month, and sometimes will go back every weekend, in order just to keep the home fires burning and make sure that nobody is there with an axe ready to get them when they come back after a long absence.

On the other hand, in terms of our representative American institutions, this may be a good thing, because the closer the Congressman is to the people, probably the better representative he makes. If he is isolated and alone, out here in Washington, alone in the sense of being surrounded by other than the people he actually represents, it may be that he becomes in effect less efficient at the job he's really there to do, which is to represent the people.

This is a nice question, and I would think myself that if he were elected for four years, it wouldn't make a substantial difference. The airlines might lose a little money, because he wouldn't go back home as often, but that would be about all.

QUESTION: This question has to do with people changing party lines. How much significance does the national party support of a Congressman for reelection have to do with keeping him in line? Does Proxmire take advice from Johnson where Johnson has a big standing in the party?

MR. SCAMMON: Well, I would think it has very little to do with his reelection. I'm sure that if Paul Butler went down into Mississippi and supported any of the incumbent Members of Congress from Mississippi, they would all be defeated, not reelected.

This really depends on local situations. The fact that Proxmire, for example, attacked Lyndon Johnson probably helped him in Wisconsin. It wouldn't help him in Texas, but he isn't running from Texas.

The real problem here, I think becomes this: The national party organization is a very loose, very, very Federal kind of group. It does provide a certain amount of money support for candidates. The candidates for the Senate, for example, I think it's fair to say, may normally expect a few thousand dollars from the national organization. But in terms of most Senate campaigns, the money usually isn't very much. He usually raises a lot more if he's in a tough fight. He can get it from

other people sometimes if he attacks the national organization, such as the southerners might do.

So that I would say that the support that the national party organization gives to a candidate does not necessarily help him, and might hurt him, and, in any event, doesn't have a great deal to do with what the result is going to be. Basically, the result depends on his own effort and the state of his local organization.

Now, if his State organization is against him, or if his State organization is in trouble, then you may have a much more meaningful kind of difficulty. But for the national organization it doesn't make much difference one way or the other. Or one might add a footnote here--except possibly in terms of the way in which the national party organization creates an image of the party, which I don't think is exactly what you meant. You were speaking more in terms of specific help and specific hurt to individual Senators. I don't think it makes much difference.

QUESTION: 'Back in 1953, when this Administration came into office, they brought into the Department of Commerce an Assistant Secretary for Administration by the name of Jim Worthy. Mr. Worthy was a top management official of the Sears, Roebuck Company and he stayed about two years. Prior to that time he had served in a number of other important posts in Government under the previous administration and he felt himself a bit of an expert. So when he left, he wrote an article. The article was directed toward the problem in the first two years of administration of the new Republican Party taking over the administration of government, which was being run by a group of civil servants appointed under the previous party. One of the conclusions that he came to, by rationalization, in this article was that the lifeblood of the two-party system was the patronage which is afforded to the party when it comes into power; and he makes quite a point of this. Do you agree with Mr. Worthy that the lifeblood of the two-party system is patronage? If not, what is the magic elixir which keeps the two-party system vital?

MR. SCAMMON: I would say that patronage has something to do with this, but it's not a major factor. The reason I say that is that the patronage system, as far as it's applied to the Federal Government, has been decreased 90 percent in our lifetime, and it hasn't decreased the efficiency of the two-party system 90 percent. In fact it's just about what it was.

I would think that the evidence, then, is that a two-party system, or any kind of a party system, can exist on other levels than those of pure patronage.

Incidentally, this same viewpoint is much stressed by the big city machine organizations. They say they've got to have patronage in a city like Philadelphia or they can't keep the machine going. Well, this just isn't true. You keep the organization going on other bases. For example, in California, in Minnesota, you keep the machine going on the dedication of individuals either who are interested in what they think the party stands for or interested in advancing themselves. It just depends on why people get into politics, why people are active in public affairs. Some are active because they want to run for office. Some are active because they want to get a job, or keep a job if they've already got it. Some are active because they believe in certain principles which they think their party, or at least their part of the party, stands for.

I would think that patronage as a motivating force is not essential. I am sure it helps to keep the organization together. Whether it creates thereby a good atmosphere of political life is entirely another question; and I would think the atmosphere of political life, for example, in California is confused and chaotic but relatively honest. I wouldn't think that it was any the worse as compared with the politics of Cook County, for example, by reason of having relatively little patronage. I think that patronage aids superficially in maintaining a party organization, but quite frankly, I have watched patronage work. Many years ago, I was a patronage appointee myself and lasted 48 hours after the other party won the election. What actually happens is that the man that gets appointed is sour because he didn't get a better job, and the nine men who didn't get appointed are sour because they didn't get any job. Many times you'll find that patronage causes more trouble than it is worth.

Take a man like Governor Stassen, of Minnesota, for example. He put in a system of State civil service when he was elected Governor in 1938. I personally am convinced that Governor Stassen didn't really care very much about patronage or civil service one way or the other, but it was good politics to be for civil service and it saved a lot of headaches. And I would think that as you look at this overall, the patronage argument is most important to those who hold patronage jobs, which is understandable. By and large, in terms of those who neither hold patronage jobs nor are involved ideologically, I would think myself that patronage, while it can help superficially, is not a requirement of maintaining party organization, because we have done away with patronage to

a very large extent in the Federal Government, and it has not reduced the efficiency of the party organization.

QUESTION: You indicated a while ago that a possible candidate for the Presidency, who may not be put in as the actual candidate for the Presidency, might be accepted for the Vice Presidency.

MR. SCAMMON: If you mean Mr. Kennedy, let's put the name in.

QUESTION: Well, I want to be more general than that. We have seen in the past where the importance of the character of the Vice President for being a President has been somewhat overlooked in this country and they have put a Vice President in because he might be able to carry a particular segment of the country that the President couldn't. In our generation we have seen one Vice President go into the Presidency, and we very nearly saw it happen again recently. I think there is an awareness of the fact that the Vice President might succeed to the Presidency because the job of President has become so strenuous that a President might not live through it. Don't you think that in view of this, the chances of a Vice President being picked in the fashion of the past is sort of going out of the picture a little bit?

MR. SCAMMON: No. I think that the Vice President will continue to be picked, as he has been in the past, primarily to balance the ticket. And by balancing the ticket I mean either balance it geographically or balance it religiously or balance it from the point of view of ideology.

In other words, if Mr. Rockefeller is nominated by the Republicans, I'm sure they will not pick a Vice Presidential candidate from the East. If Mr. Nixon is nominated, I'm sure they will not pick a Vice Presidential candidate from California. If you got a man like Lyndon Johnson nominated on the Democratic side, I'm sure he'd pick somebody like Hubert Humphrey as his Vice Presidential candidate in order to get the other extreme in political viewpoints represented. If you had a Catholic for either spot, I'm sure you would not have a Catholic for the other one.

I would think myself that the Vice Presidency will continue to be basically a prize for the loser and a device to give as balanced a ticket as possible, to make an appeal to as many people as possible. This doesn't mean that the Vice President is necessarily a "Throttlebottom," although in the past it has sometimes come to that. It's just that the political forces which dictate the choice of the Vice Presidential candidate are not really concerned with what sort of a President he would

make, but what sort of a candidate he would make and what contribution he might make to the ticket in November.

QUESTION: I've heard a lot of comment to the effect that, "They'd better watch who they put in as Vice President, because I'm not going to vote for just anybody."

MR. SCAMMON: Well, this may be true, but I haven't heard any of this from the politicians, because they feel that in the long run, while a voter may make this statement, the same voter is more likely to be persuaded to vote for the ticket if that voter feels that at least one part of the ticket has something that he really likes than if both parts of the ticket are men neither one of whom he likes.

I would think myself that you will find lots of political scientists and journalists saying this is what they ought to do; but in fact I think what you're going to find is that, as has been the case in the past, the effort is to find something for everybody in the platform and in the candidates. This is part of the effort to be a universal favorite and to get upwards of 35 million people on your side; and when you're looking for 35 million votes, you're going to use every trick you've got in the trade.

This doesn't mean necessarily that the Vice President is a poor candidate. He may be a very good one. It doesn't even mean that he would be a poor President. Actually we've had a situation in which no Vice President has ever been nominated to the Presidency and been elected unless he had previously come to it, as Mr. Truman did or Theodore Roosevelt did, by the death of the incumbent. So the Vice Presidency has not normally been a stepping stone to the Presidency except through the will of God. As a matter of fact, it's been just the opposite. Perhaps this is a reason--because of the character of the candidates picked; but I'm afraid that it will continue to be that way.

QUESTION: Sir, in regard to the influence of pressure groups on Congressmen, Senators in particular have a very expensive campaign to run every six years if they want to be reelected. Do you think the fact that they have to go to pressure groups to solicit campaign funds from various sources is a dangerous influence? I know that some control has been put over it in recent years, but do you think that as it exists today, it is still a dangerous thing--that these candidates can become captives of certain organizations?

MR. SCAMMON: Let's put it this way: It is potentially a danger. I don't think actually it is as dangerous as you might think, because what happens is that it isn't a question of the pressure group going out and buying a candidate. It's rather, a question that a candidate says: "Well, now, look. My views agree with yours. You had better help me if you want to get a voice in Congress." It isn't a question of purchasing some merchandise. It's just that your interests happen to go along in the same way.

For example, I am sure that when Senator Goldwater was running for reelection last year in Arizona, and was reelected, there was a lot of business money that went to support Mr. Goldwater. Businessmen didn't go to Goldwater and say: "Now you just toe the line on these things and we'll support you." It was just that they felt Goldwater represented their position and therefore they gave him money to run his campaign to get reelected. In this case, I am sure that Senator Goldwater would have been insulted if they even made such a suggestion. It was not this at all. It was just that their interests ran together.

Labor unions will contribute, for example, to the election campaigns of perhaps a dozen Senators. But I don't think they'll do this in the sense of trying to buy the Senators. In the first place, it would be too expensive; and in the second place, they couldn't trust him to stay bought once he got paid for. What you really do is, you simply find the people who agree with you and support them.

This is generally true of all your really effective interest groups, because if you do it in any other way, you are likely to buy a pig in a poke and end up with nothing. If you, for example, represent an interest and you've got a quarter of a million dollars that you want to spend in an election, you find your friends. You find the people who agree with you. Hopefully, you find those who have a pretty good chance of winning, because there's no sense in backing a sterling character who is running as a Republican in South Carolina. You will find somebody on your side who is in a close district and you give him \$5,000 or \$10,000 and you don't put any strings on this. You just say: "Joe, we want to help. We hope you'll win. Good luck. If you need any more, let me know." This means that Joe, when he gets elected, is not paying off a favor to you. It's just that you've seen to it that the kind of accent that you want happens to be in Congress.

I think this is one of them. I wouldn't rule out the other. I wouldn't rule out the other at all. There have been proposals, for example, that the Federal Government ought to finance campaigns by compensating candidates for at least a certain part of the expenses--serious candidates--say those who polled over 10 or 15 percent of the votes. I think there's a lot to be said for that. I think this would be very useful, because it would remove even the suspicion of the kind of thing that you were questioning.

QUESTION: Of course it saves the taxpayer a lot of money and other considerations because a lot of companies who have interest or individuals who have interest will back both sides.

MR. SCAMMON: Some, but not many. You get a few like this where they have regulatory problems. Saloonkeepers, for example, or should we perhaps say these days, tavernkeepers, will historically give to both sides. But most of these people will do it on a local level. They are not really concerned with Congress. They're concerned with the licensing board or the health inspector. At the local level, you will find a good deal more of this; but when you get to Congress, it's just too big. You can't really affect it.

COLONEL REID: Mr. Scammon, speaking for the faculty and the student body, it has certainly been a pleasure to have you here. I am sure the discussion could continue on except for the fact that we do have a number of discussion groups which are shortly due to meet. Again, we appreciate your taking your time out and coming down here.

MR. SCAMMON: Thank you very much.