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THE NATURE AND INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Mr. Richard M. Scammon

NOTICE

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Reviewed by: Colonel Tom W. Sills, USA

Date: 20 September 1960

INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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26 August 1960

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Reporter: R. W. Bennett

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26 August 1960

DR. SANDERS: General Mundy, Admiral Patrick, Gentlemen: In 1796 General Washington, in his farewell address as President, cautioned the country against the baneful effect of parties and political partisanship. Yet in 1960 the United States is experiencing a unique situation as General Washington would have regarded it. Two political parties, just about monopolizing political power in the United States, are trying to corral enough votes to rule this country. The question is, What has happened in 164 years? In other words, how do political parties influence government? How do they influence national security?

As students at ICAF, this problem will become very apparent to you in your further deliberations throughout the course. As citizens of the United States, both you and I have a very real drive to understand these things, because we are voters and we are going to select the leaders of the United States from the two major parties.

Our guest speaker today is very well qualified to speak on the problems of political parties and what they mean to the United States. As Director of Elections Research of the Governmental Affairs Institute he does his day's work analyzing the problems of practical politics. He was an observer at the elections held in the Soviet Union in 1958 and in Israel in 1959, which gives him a very good background for comparative politics. This is our lecturer's second speech here at the ICAF, and he has also been an instructor in our Foundations Unit upon several occasions.

It is my very great pleasure to present Mr. Richard M. Scammon.

MR. SCAMMON: General Mundy, Gentlemen: This morning, if I may, before we begin our discussion of politics and political parties, the nature and influence of the political processes in this country, I would, if I might, make one caveat. You will hear in this series of lectures a number of people speaking to you who may tend to repeat, who may tend to overlap a bit, in the materials they are covering. Those of us who are going to be lecturing or who have lectured or will be lecturing have somewhat similar backgrounds and we are talking about subjects which themselves tend in many ways to repeat each other. During this repetition it may be that there will be conflicting ideas given you. There will be no school solution to many of the political and administrative and governmental problems with which the various speakers are dealing. But I hope you will bear with us. It doesn't mean necessarily that we're all incompetent. It may also mean that there are more than one viewpoint to be given here, and that what we are doing is presenting you with alternatives, that you in turn can consider, that you in turn can work with during your year here at the Industrial College.

Now, when we talk about political parties and their influence in America, good, bad, or indifferent, I'd like, if I might, to start with a fairly conservative method of trying to define for you what we mean by political parties, and to define for you what we mean by the political influences we are going to be discussing this morning.

First of all, a party can be defined, I suppose, most easily simply

as a label. Many of you would regard yourselves as Republicans or Democrats. The average citizen, if you stop him on the street and ask him what he is, would say: "Well, I'm a Republican," "I'm a Democrat," "I'm an Independent," "I'm nothing"--whatever it might be. He would simply think of himself as part of a label, a quick, easy, shorthand designation for his political viewpoint. That's one way in which you can define political parties.

Actually, of course, this label doesn't mean a great deal. A British colleague of mine once said: "You Americans have some 500 people in your Congress, and some of them are labeled Republicans and some of them are labeled Democrats, but actually you have about 500 independents who simply use these particular devices as vehicles for identification at election. But it doesn't mean a great deal when you say that a man is only a Republican or only a Democrat. You've got to do a good deal more. You've got to label him a good deal more."

In the Democratic Party, for example, wearing this Democratic label, you can find men like Senator Eastland or Senator Byrd. You can also find people like Sophie Williams and Senator Humphrey, whose political views, the two on the one side and the two on the other, are generally further apart than those of most Republicans and most Democrats as presumed oppositionists.

And this doesn't apply only to the Democrats. A man like Senator Goldwater, a man like Governor Rockefeller, stand upon the same platform only with great and anatomical difficulty. Basically the gulf that separates Rockefeller from Goldwater is a much wider gulf than that which separates,

say, Rockefeller from Kennedy, perhaps even Nixon from Kennedy, because within the two political parties, these two great, massive labels, there is not a single type of wine. As a matter of fact, you've got the same kind of cocktail that you may have mixed up one night when the party was over and you threw all the dregs of the various drinks together. Label it Republican or label it Democratic, and you've got just about the normal mix that you get in an American political party.

Now, if these labels cannot be used as more than a superficial kind of identification, if they can be used only in the sense of identifying formally the kind of political party that people belong to or say that they belong to, how can we get meaning to these phrases? How can we identify Republican or Democratic? How can we identify the individual in terms of what people think the political parties mean? Because in politics, as in so many things, what really is important is not the fact, but, rather, what people think is the fact.

And in this instance I think we do have a body of evidence that we can go to. We can go to what the pollsters tell us, the George Gallups and the Lou Harrisons and the others. We can go to the actual election results, and we can see what the people have said these things mean to them.

I think that first and foremost in trying to identify what the parties actually mean, what the labels on the bottles actually signify, we have to stress that here in America we really have a three-party system, not a two-party system. We have a Republican Party, with different viewpoints within it; and we have a Northern Democratic Party, with different view-

points within it; and we have a Southern Democratic Party, with different viewpoints within it.

Now, basically in the Congress, and basically in the public at large, there are at least these three major political groupings. A Presidential campaign is oftentimes the measure of the ability of the Democrats to bring the two Democratic labels together against the Republicans.

By and large, as people look at these three political parties, they themselves, the ordinary voters, tend to label the Republican Party as a conservative party with a business image. He tends to label the Democratic Party as a party more concerned with the little man, more concerned with the ordinary person, less concerned with business. Now, as I say, I'm not concerned this morning with whether this is correct or incorrect, but only in reporting to you how the individual looks upon the two political parties.

Broadly speaking, the voters, insofar as we can ask them this question, feel that the Democrats normally are better qualified from their point of view to handle domestic problems; the Republicans are better qualified to handle international problems. They feel that we're likely to get into war if the Democrats win, and into a depression if the Republicans win. If you look at this from the positive side, they're more inclined to feel that the Democrats will bring us prosperity and the Republicans will bring us difficulties of a different kind.

I would think, as I look at this, and as I try to reflect for you the views that the average voter has represented in these polling samples, in

these interview samples, that one gets a very broad kind of picture indeed. This is not a specific picture. This is not an ideological or a doctrinal picture. It is a very broad image that people have.

Moreover, as we know from our own experience, this image is so broad that it doesn't prevent a great many people from leaving the party that they say they belong to, or say they sympathize with, to vote for candidates in other parties. The history of American politics for the past few years has indicated this, in the presence in the White House of the Republicans, President Eisenhower, and in the control of the Congress for these last six by the Democrats. Many voters are perturbed because of this rather dim image that they have to vote for one party for one office and another party for another.

Now, another way to approach this problem of definition, another way to approach this problem indeed of identification, is to say, Who is it that gets elected? One of the easiest ways to identify the characteristics of any organization, whether it's a business or a church or a political party, is to say, Who is it that exercises power in this particular group? And for the Republicans and the Democrats, to take Congress as an example, who is it that gets elected?

Well, by and large, if you were to go down the list of Members of the Congress, the Senators and the Congressmen together, you would find that on the Democratic side first and foremost the Democrats are Southerners, because in the South the great majority, almost all of the Congressmen and Senators, are wearers of the Democratic label, whatever that may

mean in their particular case.

You would also find that a majority of the members coming from the big cities are Democrats. You would find that almost all Jewish Members of Congress are Democrats. The great majority of Roman Catholic Members of Congress are Democrats. All four Negro Members of Congress are Democrats.

On the Republican side you would find that most of the Members from farming areas, except in the large-scale farming areas of the Mid West, are Republicans. Most of the Members who come from constituencies and districts which are essentially small town in character are Republicans. I am speaking now, of course, of the area outside the South. You would find that most of the Members who oome from suburban districts, and who come from what we would call the better residential areas in the individual cities that we are dealing with, these too are Republicans. And I suppose in many ways the actual picture of the membership of the Congress is a reflection of the image that the average voter tells us he sees in the political parties.

There are many footnotes, of course, to this very broad definition of who the Members of Congress are, and how their identification can in turn identify the characteristics of a political party for us. There are many ways in which the actual number of exceptions may exceed the total number of cases. There are many ways in which you have to put an explanation behind individual instances that you come up with in this kind of identification. But, broadly speaking, this is about the way that it goes.

This applies too, I think, when one tries to identify the nature of political parties in terms of the various groups of people who support these parties. If you and I, for example, were to drive out in any northern city, we could tell, without any reference to the election returns, which wards and precincts were going to vote Democratic and which wards and precincts were going to vote Republican. We could tell basically in terms of the economic composition of the areas in which we were driving. If you go into the area of the better homes, if you go into the area of the "nice place to live," you tend to find more Republicans. If you go into the slums, you tend to find more Democrats.

Someone has once said that the ideal Democratic voter would be a second-generation Polish Jewish textile worker, living on the lower East Side of New York; in contradistinction to the typical Republican, who would be an elderly, retired hardware dealer, who owns six farms, and lives in Ottumwa, Iowa.

Now, it doesn't mean that all of the one or all of the other are Democrats or Republicans. If this were the case, almost all the great men of wealth who are Democrats would have to move over. People like Harriman, Kennedy, and Stevenson--many of them are of considerable wealth, to say the least; and they would have to shift over to the party with the big business image and leave the party of the people.

Nor does it explain why in the last two, now three, Presidential election campaigns, the Republican candidates have been in both instances--Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Nixon--men of limited financial means who came

from poor families; and the Democratic candidates have been men of substantial means, who came from very wealthy families.

But these are the anomalies of politics. These are the exceptions that, I hope, prove the rule, or may prove the exceptions. In any event, the pattern itself, at least for the voter, I think is a fairly clear one.

The Democrats you find basically in the South, basically amongst among minority groups, basically in the big cities. You find that trade unions and the workers generally support Democratic Party candidates. In contradistinction, in the Republican Party you find basic areas of strength in the farmers, with Protestants as opposed to Catholics, with non-Jewish people, with wealthy people, with people who identify their interest and their future with the business community.

This doesn't necessarily stay always the same. Negro voters, for example, today are perhaps three to one, even in some cases four to one, Democratic. A generation ago almost all Negro voters in America were Republican. But as a result, very largely of the New Deal, they shifted over en masse into the Democratic Party.

It is also true that Roman Catholic voters, who a generation ago, in the days of Al Smith, tended to be almost entirely Democratic, have now shifted over in considerable numbers to the Republican Party--in such large numbers, indeed, that one of the major campaign arguments for nominating Senator Kennedy amongst the Democratic professional politicians was that a certain number of these Roman Catholic voters, who had turned Republicans, could in fact be brought back into the Democratic fold by the nomination of

a Catholic for President.

Now, in dealing with the voters, and in dealing with how they act, we're dealing with the way people behave in the mass as individuals. From the point of view of the work of this scholastic year, and from the point of view of the work of the Industrial College, this perhaps has more meaning and more sense if we introduce the problem of politics to you, not so much as a matter of popular participation as we do a matter of congressional action, because I think that most of you who are here this morning have had an experience, exhiliarating or otherwise, with Congress, with congressional committees, with testifying, with preparing testimony, with unpreparing testimony, whatever it may be, in which you have had a personal experience, again good, bad, or indifferent, with Congress or with congressional personnel.

So that when we consider parties, and when we consider politics, for the work of this course, and for your own work, I would suppose one should concern himself as much with Congress as he does with the general life of politics outside Washington.

In the Congress, of course, there is still a different way to identify parties and to define it for you; and that is as the majority or minority of the moment--in this case, Democratic majority in both the Senate and the House, and Republican minority. But I think it's important for us to remember, in discussing politics and political action from the point of view of the Congress, to always be careful in putting the role of the party, the party label particularly, in proper perspective.

When we talk, for example, about a majority whip or a minority leader or a majority leader and a minority whip, what we're really talking about is not the disciplined kind of party organization which is common in Europe and other parts of the world. We're not talking about a party organization and a group of party leaders who quite literally crack the whip and marshal their forces into a congressional debate, counting every vote as it comes down and making sure that every party supporter is there and counted on the right side. We're dealing, as my British colleague put it, really with 500 independents, some of whom are labeled Republican and some of whom are labeled Democratic.

The reason a man like Lyndon Johnson has such stature in the Senate is not because he bears the title of Senate Majority Leader, but because he is one of the most adroit and competent brokers in the field of politics in American life today. He has the title; it is true; but actually he has the title, and indeed he has the authority that he does have, because of his own personal properties to bring divergent viewpoints together, to find compromises, to locate areas of agreement, to develop from conflict some kind of agreement and consensus. He does not have this authority, he does not have this power, simply because he's been labeled Majority Leader, and because he can get out a bull whip and line the people up to vote the way he wants. On the contrary, if he tried this, he'd be out of office in a week.

The whole process of congressional politics is very largely the politics of persuasion rather than the politics of party discipline. In fact, it's so much this that it's very difficult to explain to our visitors from overseas

the essential meaning of American politics in Congress. They are always looking, these visitors, for some evidence of the way in which the party controls the individual members. I'm always asked, for example: "Does the party have an undated resignation that it can automatically put into the hopper if it doesn't like what some Congressman does?" Or "How does the party discipline this man?" Or "How do they insure that the party program is carried out?" If you're honest, of course, you tell them that the party program isn't carried out and very likely it won't be. But you usually don't say this, because this just confuses them even more, and reduces them almost to the level of confusion of the average American about politics in the Government.

Now, this is not to imply that there is no difference between the Republican and Democratic Members in Congress, any more than it is to say that there is no difference between Republicans and Democrats in our general political life. There are differences, and a great many. Some of these differences will come up during the contemporary campaign. Some of them, indeed, have come up already in the current session of Congress. But I think, whether we're speaking of Congress, or whether we're speaking of politics in general, it is important for us to remember that the differences in American politics between our party labels, and between individuals, who themselves are labeled, or label themselves, as liberal or conservative or progressive--whatever it may be--that these differences tend to be differences of degree, differences on a yardstick, rather than philosophical or ideological or doctrinal conflicts.

For example, in the Congress and in general, with all of our people, I think it is fair to say that there is a basic assumption in our politics that the capitalist system of economic organization is the best, and it is one we will follow in this country. As a matter of fact, this is so much of an assumption that no one mentions it. Yet in most countries of the world this is not an assumption of the total political system. In most countries of the world--Europe, Africa, Asia--one of the major political parties contesting for office is a party which denies the capitalist system and seeks to substitute for it some sort of socialist or communist enterprise.

Now, the very fact that we do not have this tremendously divisive kind of ideological difference in this country tends in turn to make of our political parties, and of our politics, a kind of a bland medicine rather than a sharp, bitter-tasting one.

The fact, too, that we do not in this country have a political party founded on the basis of religion tends also to contribute to this unifying character of American political life. In many countries of Western Europe, and in countries of the Far East, there are religious parties based either on Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Moslem faiths. These parties are organized with the purpose of defending the interests of the church and of the particular religious opinion. This is not the case in America. We may have questions regarding religion for individual candidates, as I presume we will have this fall. We may have problems involving religious beliefs in such matters as birth control legislation, transportation of parochial school children in public transportation to their schools, and so on. But these are

individual issues. They are individual problems, individual points of argument. They are not the basis of separate political parties.

And, finally, there's the whole question of foreign policy and national defense. Here in America, though the political parties may argue a great deal about whether our foreign policy is correct, whether our national defense is adequate, there is no political party which believes we should have no national defense, that we should completely abandon the concept of armed resistance to encroachment on our interest. There are in many other countries of the world just such political parties. And the fact that amongst our people, and in Congress, on these three major fundamental issues, there is agreement, at least in principle, on the matter of the nature of our economic system, the relationship of Church and State, and the need for a strong foreign and defense policy--the fact that there is agreement on these three major issues really means that in a variety of ways our politics becomes the politics of moderate disagreement rather than fundamental clash of ideological differences.

And this is why I speak of our politics in Congress and outside in the field of elections as a politics really of degree, a politics of moving the pointer to, say, a little bit this way or a little bit that way, not oscillating it violently from left to right.

I think, for example, that, with due respect to both Mr. Nixon and Mr. Kennedy, it is fair to say that if either gentleman is elected--and I certainly presume that one of them will be in November--the actual variance of their policy from contemporary policies will not be greater than a measure-

ment of 10 on a scale of 100. In this case at least I would guess that the needle will go this way or this way and not go that way, because both gentlemen seem to want to move it a little bit further toward the more liberal side. But it will not move very far.

This doesn't mean that our politics becomes necessarily sort of sexless; that it becomes sort of a neuter and unimportant passive debate. On the contrary, it can become very violent indeed, because, as was once said on the difference between male and female in the French Chamber of Deputies, "Vive le difference," the difference may not be very much, but it's a lot if you're on the receiving end.

In the matter, for example, today in Congress of medical care for the aged, in the matter of a minimum wage law, there are real differences of opinion between Republicans and Democrats. They are not basic philosophical divisions, but they are divisions of degree. And I should imagine that if you were making a dollar an hour, to make a dollar and a quarter an hour might seem to you to be considerably more important than philosophical questions involving the theocracy or the end results of the foreign policy in the year 2000. At least so it has seemed in most of the work that has been done in our time.

You willfind in this coming campaign, as between Nixon and Kennedy, just as you will find if you go over the voting records in the House and in the Senate, that there are a number of issues on which our three-party system shows specific and concrete lines of division. Such matters as I have mentioned, of the minimum wage legislation, medical care for the aged,

such things as public housing, such things as farm legislation and farm control--all of these are issues in which you will find the majority of northern Democrats, the majority of Republicans, and the majority of southern Democrats formed into fairly definable viewpoints. You may agree or you may disagree, but they are definable. Just as we can, I think, point out differences that exist today between Mr. Nixon's viewpoint and Mr. Kennedy's viewpoint on problems both foreign and domestic.

But, I repeat, we must remember that, despite this difference, and despite the nature of the argument, sometimes quite bitter, that develops both in and out of Congress, the philosophical overtones which are so prevalent in politics elsewhere in the world, are notably absent here in the United States. And I would say that not only notably, but actually happily absent here in the United States.

Now, finally, in defining for you this morning politics and political parties, looking at it now not from the point of view of differences, not from the point of view of labels, not from the point of view of who gets elected and who votes for the parties, but in terms of organization, we deal in America with a peculiarly disorganized, almost unorganized, kind of political life. As I have suggested, we do not have the massive, well-organized political parties of Europe, with a national headquarters in the capital, and with perhaps a million card-holding members, with a dues system, a party press, a youth organization, a women's organization, and all of that. Our politics tends actually to be a relatively casual thing except for a few professionals.

I am sure that all of you will have noted here in Washington and elsewhere the temporary character of most political headquarters in this country. You don't have a Parteihous, as the Germans do. You don't have a national party headquarters, oftentimes with a printing press in the basement and a supply of broom staves on the first floor to be used in case anybody runs in on you. Instead, you usually sweep out an empty candy store, put up a few signs, do the best you can for a couple of weeks, and then quit and go home, and leave somebody else to sweep it out.

If you go down here, for example, in downtown Washington, you will notice that the Kennedy people have a big youth activities office. This office was occupied until recently by the Symington people, who have no more use for it now; and before that, if I recall correctly, was a vacant rooming house; and after the election presumably will become a vacant rooming house again unless, of course, it is torn down to make way for another Government building.

As one looks at the general picture of American political organization, with the exception of a few places like Chicago and Philadelphia, which still enjoy, if you want to use that word, the benefits of the old-style political machine, with the exception of a few places like this, our politics really in an organizational sense are almost anarchic. Nobody really belongs to a political party. Nobody really has a sense of discipline in a political party. It's a sort of general grab bag, in which a candidate will announce his candidacy and hope that somebody will come along with him and that he can raise a little money, and in which the whole problem of party organization,

party discipline, party finance, party program becomes relatively unimportant in the dominant theme of personalism, which so often is the key word to almost any American political struggle.

In American politics, due to this lack of organization, we have had in the past, and I think it's fair to say, probably will have in the future too, a very real emphasis upon this matter of the personality and individuality of the candidate. Again, the very fact that Mr. Eisenhower can be President while the Democrats control the Congress is a case in point. The fact that the so-called lobby groups, pressure groups, can be as active as they are in this country is another case in point, because where you have the politics of ideology, say, a socialist party and a capitalist party fighting with each other, in such a politics the role of the pressure group becomes less important. But here in America, where the politics is more individual, independent, personal, the pressure group often is the way in which decisions are suggested to the Congress, and sometimes the way in which they are reached by the Congress. The pressure groups themselves, lobbyists, whatever you want to call them, are active here, of course, in Washington, and they are active everywhere; and in many way they actually substitute for the functionsof political parties, as those functions are known in other countries.

I would not want to leave you with a concept of the lobbyist or the pressure group as an evil sort of thing. Like most other human institutions, some can be evil, some can be good, and most probably have a touch of both about them. Lobby and pressure groups, as they are active here and as they are active in State legislatures, are generally concerned with trying

to bring to the individual member of a Congress the viewpoint of a special group. This may be a trade union, it may be a manufacturers' organization, it may be a conservationist group, it may be a prohibitionist group, it may be almost anybody.

I remember a case some years ago in which I was a pressure group. I and my cousin were a two-man pressure group. We wanted to get a little piece of land out here at Connecticut and Q designated as a memorial park for a governor of our home State of Minnesota whom we had both known well and for whom we had a great respect. So I got him to ask a friend of his to introduce the bill, and he did; and we went down to testify, and it got passed; and so now we have an Olson Memorial Park out here at Connecticut and Q. We haven't raised any money yet to put up a plaque, but sometime we'll do that. Meanwhile the park is there, and we were in effect a two-man pressure group. We were perhaps more effective than the big pressure groups, but then we weren't asking for very much. And when you into the really hard pressure group activities, you get into an extremely expert politically oriented type of work.

For example, the kind of question that constantly comes up in the Congress, is dealing with transportation, legislation affecting the railroads, the truckers, and the airline people. You can imagine that this kind of legislation gets extremely complex. It involves regulations of a very large part of the American transport industry. And the pressure groups and lobbyists naturally have a great deal of interest in what goes on. And in the American political system the lobbyist and pressure group elements

oftentimes supplant the political parties in this kind of detailed political work.

Naturally, many of them are working against each other. I think one of the biggest myths of American politics is that big business has a lobby in Washington, which is united against the people, and that, on the other hand, labor has a lobby in Washington, which is united against big business. Both of these are completely mythical. Actually, if you take a question like the St. Lawrence Seaway, you will find that big business tended to be split right down the middle as to which side they were on in this question, because of the actual interests involved. The coal people in West Virginia, for example, were very much interested in seeing no seaway, because, of course, their theory was that if you got the seaway, you had less rail traffic; and if you had less rail traffic, there was less use for coal. Though why anybody still thinks that coal is useful for pulling trains I don't know, because I haven't seen any in recent years; and I should think the oil people would have been more interested than the coal people. But there they were.

You can identify many of this kind of difference within the business community, just as you can in the trade union group. The viewpoint, for example, of the AFL-CIO and of the Teamsters Union on many issues tends to be just about as far apart as those of Eastland and Humphrey. And you can find that within the labor elements themselves many times they tend to hate each other more than they hate the capitalist enemy, simply because they know each other and they know what kind of people they are; so they dislike each other more. You know the old story that you could fight the

Civil War with a good deal more enthusiasm than you could the Spanish-American War because you knew each other.

Now, these so-called pressure groups, these so-called lobby groups, are really a core at heart of our politics. They are active at almost every level of political life. They represent the citizen in many ways in a more effective sense than do the political parties. I'm sure, for example, that the average high school teacher in the average State feels that his teacher organization, or her teacher organization, at the State capital is actually doing more for them, and is representing them in a political way, far more than either of the political parties. I'm sure that the farmer, who belongs to perhaps the grange or the Farm Bureau or the Farmers Union, feels that his farm organization is more interested in him and more concerned with his political problems than are either of the political parties. I would have said this was true of the veterans, but there are so many veterans now, many of whom are not in veterans' organizations, that this probably no longer is as true as it was in the middle twenties, when veterans' organizations actually were in a considerably more influential position even than they are now, because, paradoxically, they represented a smaller number of people, but it was a more exclusive group, that didn't have as many members and therefore it could exert a little more influence even than it can now.

I mention these pressure groups and these lobbies because in any discussion of political parties, in any discussion of American politics, they do represent a prime source, a prime focus, of power; and in any kind of political discussion it is, of course, power that we are concerned with.

But in the final analysis, for Congress, the real power still rests with the people back home. Again and again, as one spends years in watching the Congress work, and in watching how politics works here in America, you are impressed with the fact that the people in this country really have a tremendous influence over what goes on in the United States. You talk to the average Congressman, for example, and you ask him: "Now, what is your main problem back home? Is the party going to cause you trouble? Is the Farmers Union going to get after you? Are the business men against you?" and he will say: "No. This is no real problem. I've got some trouble because the people don't like what I've done about so-and-so." Or "people are asking me to do such-and-such."

In the final analysis, for almost every Member of Congress, the real basic judgment, aside from his own personal view, on any public issue will be what he estimates the people back home want. This doesn't mean that he's always going to do this, because many a Congressman has strong convictions; and if he feels strongly about an issue, and someone writes him a letter and gives him a different view, he will write back in many cases and say: "Well, I'm glad to have your views. I'm happy that you took time to write me. Perhaps we aren't too far apart." What he really means, of course, is: "Look. You're wrong. I'm right. I'm going to vote the way I want to and go home." But he, obviously, isn't going to say this, because this man is a voter, and his wife is a voter; and if he shows the letter around, as most people do when they get one, it may make some enemies. But it doesn't change his mind. But only on this kind of an issue, only on an issue

in which the Congressman has strong views, will you find this to be the case.

And on most issues most Congressmen don't have strong views. Of the thousands of bills that come before Congress each year, it would be a very issue-oriented man who could have strong views on more than a few. On many questions the Congressman says: "Well, maybe that's a good idea. I'm not sure. Tell me more about it." Then if he gets a hundred letters coming in, he's very likely to move over and start favoring this legislation.

One of the prime cases in the present Congress is the Forand Bill and the way in which tremendous popular support was built up for that bill by mail from the home folks.

Now, to use the phrase of oil wells, all mail is equal, but some mail is a little more equal than others. If you get a hundred letters, written in exactly the same language, and signed with the same purple ink, from the same address in your home town, you're notgoing to pay much attention to them. If you get a dozen telegrams in exactly the same language, sent from the same telegraphic office, on the same time, but signed by twelve different Joe Smiths, you aren't going to pay much attention to this. What you are going to watch carefully in the American political system are the scribbled letters, perhaps written in pencil, which somebody has taken the time and trouble to sit down and write and put a four-cent stamp on and mail to you, because these really represent the views of people who are of concern. They aren't the kind of people who usually write to Congressmen. By and large most Congressmen will pay a lot more attention to a letter that does not come on a letterhead than one that does come on a letterhead,

because if it comes on a letterhead, it comes from people who are used to writing letters. If it comes from a person who hasn't got a letterhead, he's an ordinary citizen who doesn't write very much, and when he does write in public, he feels pretty strongly about it.

But the Congressman will watch this mail, and he will watch it carefully. He will try, insofar as he can, to make his views coincide with the views of the people back home.

Now, if there isn't much opinion on one side or the other, he'll probably go along with that opinion. If he has strong views of his own, he probably will not go along with it. He may very well, as a matter of fact, go opposite to even what his own people want if he has strong views on it himself.

But in the final analysis I think the thing that one is impressed with, again and again in American politics, both in Congress and in politics generally, is the fact that the people, the ordinary voter, has such immense influence upon the course of action of everyday politics--much more, I think, than the average voter either believes or thinks. What he feels, what he is willing to express, is very likely to be the determining factor on almost any issue before Congress except those in which there is a strong personal motivation on the part of the Congressman. And since, as I was telling my own discussion group I think on Monday, the judgment of the average voter is really the basis of any democracy, and since it really in a sense is the basis of even military action--and I use as an example the way in the Army in which in rifle exercises, if you want to know the dis-

tance to the target, you take the estimate of each man in the squad and divide it by the number of men in the squad, which I never believed when I was a private soldier in the Army was worth much until it worked out, and usually it turned out to be better than mine. This essentially is the value of the individual's judgment, the individual's viewpoint, the individual's politics. It seems to me that this is the real contribution in the many, many years since Washington's farewell address that the American citizen has made to politics, not only in this country, but all over the world--the reaffirmation of the value of the judgment of the individual.

Thank you very much.

DR. SANDERS: Gentlemen, Mr. Scammon is ready for your questions.

QUESTION: Mr. Scammon, from time to time we hear suggestions that political parties, in these political campaigns, should be financed from public funds. What do you think of this idea, and what do you think the general effect of such a proposal would be if it were adopted?

MR. SCAMMON: I think basically that it's probably a good idea, provided you put controls on it to make sure that people (a) don't steal the money, and (b) you don't get a lot of fly-by-nights coming in to get some personal advertising by running for office under the financial sponsorship of the Government.

A couple of proposals have been made which would do both things. In the first place, they never give the candidate money; they just pay his certified bills that he gets. Secondly, they provide that he will receive a certain amount of money in terms of how many votes he gets. If you're

going to give him a dime a vote and he gets ten thousand votes, he'll get a thousand dollars.

They also usually have what the insurance companies would call a 50 percent deductible clause. In other words, you only get half of your expenses, because they do want to discourage the person who simply runs in order to get his name on the ballot, and he gets some free advertising locally.

Under these safeguards I think it would probably be a good idea. Though I would add to that that I have yet to find a serious candidate, with any kind of general support, who is not able to run a campaign. You hear a great deal in American politics about So-and-so won because he had all the money, or So-and-so was elected or nominated because he had so much more money than his opponent. Well, by and large this is just nonsense. I know of too many cases in which the man with just a little money got elected and the man with a lot of money got beaten.

When people cite a case like Kennedy's, for example, in this last nomination campaign, they forget that Rockfeller didn't make it; and I'm that Mr. Kennedy is not hurting, but Mr. Rockefeller is not hurting more than Mr. Kennedy is not hurting.

By and large, the people who talk most about money are the candidates who lose; and they can't afford to admit that maybe they lost because the other man was better. They obviously lost because the other man had more money and could buy more TV and radio time and so on.

So I think myself that again and again in political campaigns I have

seen that you need some money; I mean, you have to have enough to get on radio and television and print up some stickers and so on; but you need far less than most of the people who want you to buy their services as a campaign assistant think you need; and you can get by with a good deal less than most people think.

QUESTION: Mr. Scammon, I thought I saw a slight discrepancy, and I'd like a little explanation on it. You were saying that if you looked at the Democrats, you'd find that most of them were Southerners, living in large cities, Jews, Negroes, and Catholics; and if you looked at the Republicans, you would find them in small towns and suburbs. Then later on you said that the Catholics were Republicans because this was one of the reasons that Kennedy was put up. Would you explain that?

MR. SCAMMON: Actually, with most Catholic voters, insofar as we can identify this, what has happened is a sort of schizophrenic personality in which most Catholic voters are Democratic, and they vote Democratic in local elections, but they have voted for Eisenhower for President. And this, I think, is the cause for the discrepancy which you note.

If they stay with Nixon, and also vote for Republicans for local officials, then I think we'd have to say they had moved over. But so far, most areas that you can identify as heavily Catholic may have been carried by Eisenhower and have elected a Democrat to Congress, Democratic sheriff, city coroner, and so on.

QUESTION: What influence, if any, do you think these political pollsters have on the outcome of elections?

MR. SCAMMON: Well, you knows there's a wonderful story about that, by a writer on radio, that polls are very important in American politics, and they are read and studied closely by everybody, from the janitor right up to President Thomas E. Dewey. And I think that the 1948 example is fairly conclusive on this. I don't know any election on which the pollsters were so unanimous as they were in '48, that Truman didn't have a chance. In fact, one man even quit taking polls along about October, because he felt so certain that he said, "Why should I waste my money?" Well, later it was proved that he wasn't wasting his money, and he really should have stuck around, because it didn't come out that way.

I would think actually that there is a school of thought which feels that it's in the reverse. In the last week or so I've heard some very interesting comments about the Nixon people being very disturbed about being ahead, because if you're ahead, you can't play the under dog. And if you are far enough ahead (a) you don't get money, for what it's worth;(b) people start sitting on their hands and saying: "Why bother? Let's go fishing. You're ahead. You don't need my help." And yet, if you're behind, you can always remember '48 and say: "Get out and work, fellows" and they really do get out and work under those conditions.

Now, this I think is a little esoteric, I would say quite frankly. I wouldn't want to try to defend this. I think Mr. Nixon ought to be quite happy to be where he is. But there is a very definite feeling, I think, amongst politicians that the polls are useful--after all, there wouldn't be many private polls if they weren't useful, because the politicians are the people who pay for them--

but that they are useful not so much in saying who is going to win, as they are in identifying areas of strength. Let me give you a case in point.

Just yesterday on the telephone we talked with the Governor of one Middle Western State, who actually called up because he had gotten a quotation on a poll and he wanted to know if it was too much money. But what he was interested in was not whether he was behind or ahead, because this could be off 4 or 5 percentage points. What he really wanted to know was: "With what groups in the population have I made a particular impression? What issues ought I to stress in the remaining eight or nine weeks of the campaign? Where can I best spend my time?" because in politics, in a campaign, time is worth a lot more than money. "Where can I spend my time?"

This is the value of the polls to the professional. Its influence on politics, the way in which it causes people to either be for the under dog or join the bandwagon, as I say, President Thomas E. Dewey would have to give me the answer on that one.

QUESTION: Since FDR's time it appears that it might have been a practice on the part of the policy makers of the two greater parties to select their future political candidates at least four years in advance, and in the Nixon case eight years in advance. Do you have any indication that this is the case?

MR. SCAMMON: No. I would think that some partisans of the individual would like to think this. But actually, the selection process is a relatively immediate one. I wouldn't say that anyone has really been selected

much before a year in advance.

Now, by last summer, a year ago, I think you could begin to get the frame of reference for the candidates who were picked in July at Los Angeles and Chicago. But the American political process is too anarchic to allow the kind of organization of which you speak.

I don't think the party leaders could ever get together a year in advance, even if they all agreed on anybody, and push him through automatically. There are just too many other things and factors that have to be considered.

In the case of an incumbent President who is up for re-election, of course, this is almost automatic. And, obviously, there are cases, like Mr. Nixon's, where one candidate gets way out in front, and there really isn't much of a contest. But I don't think this is due to the fact that the leaders get together and decide this in advance. It's due to the actual events themselves.

QUESTION: It is well known that the number of registered Democratic voters far outnumbers the [redacted] Republicans, and that the present popularity of President Eisenhower has not reversed or changed the ratio of Democrats to Republicans. It appears that unless there is a radical change in the number of Republicans, it will remain such that they will never regain control of Congress in the foreseeable future. What do you see in this regard for the future?

MR. SCAMMON: Well, I think that it's perfectly true that if you went out and asked every American what his political sympathy was, you would

get about 60-40 on the Democratic side. But there are two problems involved here.

No. 1, by and large, Democrats do not register to vote in as great numbers as Republicans. This is why today, for example, you've got a big registration drive on the part of the Kennedy people, while the Republicans are not disinterested, but they are not emphasizing registration as much.

The reason for that lies in the character of the people who vote. By and large, the largest participation of voters comes from what you might call the residential upper middle class, people who live in the suburbs--not suburbs of Washington, because here you have a greater turn-over of population. But the average suburb casts a great many more votes than the average slum district of similar population. By and large, the workers tend to register and vote in less proportionate numbers than do the middle class. So that your 60-40 comes down a bit to begin with.

Secondly, in the South there are a very large number of so-called Presidential Republicans. In other words, in November the number of Republicans who are going to be elected to Congress from Southern States will not exceed 5 or 10 percent; but the vote for Nixon in the South in November is going to be much, much higher than that. I don't know how high, but at least 25 or 30 percent and it may be a great deal more.

So that when you start out with this 60-40, if you apply to that the problem of registration and the problem of the South, you end up much closer to 50-50 in the average Presidential contest.

Now, you asked about Congress specifically. Your point is very well taken. I think now that if one looks back over the last 30 years, Congress has been in the hands of the Republicans only twice--once in 1946, when there was a tremendous sort of war-weariness election; and once in '52, when Eisenhower was elected. And I think it is fair to assume that unless there is a dramatic change in American politics within our lifetime, it's quite possible that in the time that you gentlemen are with us, you're not going to see more than one or two Congresses under Republican control. The rest of them will be under Democratic.

However, as I pointed out, when you say "Democratic," you have to talk about northern Democratic and southern Democratic. And the problem on medical care for the aged, which faces Kennedy and Johnson right now in the Senate and the House, is the measure of that difference, because theoretically, as Mr. Eisenhower pointed out in a press conference the other day, the Democrats have a two-thirds majority in both Houses right now, but they cannot pass the Kennedy-Johnson program because that two-thirds is made up in very substantial part of southern Democrats who are actually more conservative than the Republicans.

So that when you talk about this three-party system, what you're likely to have for the great majority of the next ten, fifteen, or twenty years is about what you've got now--a more or less equal division between northern Democrats, southern Democrats, and Republicans--in which the party label of the Democrats theoretically controls the Congress, but actually it's a sort of three-way dog fight as to who actually is going to control legislation.

On the vote for President, though, I would emphasize that this 60-40 is misleading. Though it is correct if you were to ask every person who his view was in a general way, it really comes down to about 50-50 when you consider the actual registration of voters and when you consider the Presidential Republicans in the South.

QUESTION: Early in your speech you made a statement to the effect that the Democrats bring war and the Republicans bring peace.

MR. SCAMMON: No. I didn't say that. I said this was the impression that some people had as indicated by the polls.

QUESTION: Can you give us any reason for there being this general impression among the people?

MR. SCAMMON: I would think--and this is just based again on this reaction of people--that the argument over the period of about a generation, because these are just sort of general ideas that people have, has been that our two major wars were fought under Democratic Presidents--Roosevelt and Wilson, going back to World War I. The Korean War was fought under Truman.

Now, whether this is a correct impression, again, or not, I'm not concerned with. What I'm concerned with is that many people feel that under a Democratic Administration we are more likely to be involved in war.

Now, I would think this may change, because historically the Republican Party is a party of isolation; and therefore less inclined to involve itself in anything. That certainly has changed. As of today I don't really think there is any party of isolation any more in American foreign politics.

But the image remains, as so often political images remain after the actuality has changed.

I would think myself that there is still in the minds of a fairly good number of people--certainly the Republicans think so--this feeling that the Republicans are the party of peace, the Democrats the party of war. It's an unfortunate image, I think, for anyone to have; but it does exist.

QUESTION: In most of our talks on politics nobody has mentioned or stressed the smaller parties other than our two major parties. Do you believe that these have gone by the board, or do they crop up again in the future?

MR. SCAMMON: Well, there are, of course, other candidates in the election this year. As a matter of fact, you will remember that the debates which have been scheduled between Kennedy and Nixon--indeed, Nixon's appearance on the Parr show last night--was dependent upon the passage by Congress of legislation on equal time, which would limit equal time to the major party candidates; and there are other candidates. There is a Socialist Labor Party candidate; there's a Socialist Workers Party candidate; there's a Prohibitionist candidate; there's a Vegetarian candidate; There's a Theocratic candidate.

Now, you gentlemen, I'm sure, don't know their names. In a sense it's a measure of the amount of publicity they have gotten; and in a sense it's a measure of how many votes they're going to get.

The Socialists, Norman Thomas, are actually not putting up any candidates this year. I don't think these people have gone by the board.

I think that what has actually happened is that in our politics, if they develop a good idea, one of the big parties steals it. Both of them steal it. Norman Thomas once complained that if you took the 1912 Socialist Party program and applied it to contemporary politics in America today, there was nothing left. It was all either enacted or promised by one of the major parties.

What happens is that the Socialists argue for a generation in favor of old-age insurance and unemployment insurance, and then when you really need it, the big parties come and steal it and leave the Socialists out in the wilderness somewhere; and they never get any credit for all their thirty years of work, at least no political credit.

I would think myself that many of these minor parties, historically at least, have contributed to the American political scene by generating new ideas. But almost none of them have had an opportunity to put these ideas into effect, because once the idea has taken root and gotten support, one or the other or both of the big parties will take it over. But there are other parties. Some of you who may vote in Virginia, for example, where the ballot laws are relatively free, lax, will find perhaps four or five on your ballot in November if you have a legal voting residence there.

QUESTION: Mr. Scammon, last night there appeared in the Washington newspapers several articles that seemed to indicate a recurrence of the religious issue in American politics in this campaign. What effect do you think this will have in the coming campaign?

MR. SCAMMON: This is a very difficult question to answer. One reason it's difficult is that it's very difficult to get people to tell you honestly

what this is. I've done enough interviewing myself to know perfectly well that if you go out and talk to somebody and you know perfectly well that this man is going to vote for Kennedy because he's a Catholic and his next door neighbor is going to vote against Kennedy because he's a Catholic, and neither one of them will say this. What they'll say is, on the one hand they'll say: "Well, Mr. Nixon is the more experienced man" and in the other case they'll say: "Well, Kennedy and the Democrats are for me, for the worker." So you never really know. This is something that's way back and you really never know until the man goes into a polling place and pulls the lever and marks the ballot, and then, of course, you don't know, because it's a secret ballot.

I think all you can say is that in the minds of many people, religion will be an issue in the coming campaign. It will be an issue on two levels. It will be, first, an issue on what I would call the theological level, that is, what is the position of a Roman Catholic in the United States with respect to religious discipline? And this is something that you can discuss and consider in a fairly rational way, because there's a great deal of literature on the subject. Mr. Kennedy has addressed himself to this question. Officers of the church have addressed themselves to this question. This is not beyond the realm of discussion.

And then there will be a sort under-the-locks kind of operation, which will be a much more primitive kind of prejudice operation. The first, no one could object to, whether Catholic, Protestant, Jew, or anybody, because it's as reasonable to talk about this as it is to ask whether or not Mr. Nixon's

Quaker upbringing would cause problems to him in the administration of a military defense program, which I don't think many people have asked, but it's a perfectly reasonable question to ask.

The second matter is pure prejudice, and that's much harder to either try to combat or argue with, because this isn't based on any kind of real argument as to the issue.

Now, it's hard on both sides. I think we have to recognize that this isn't just a matter of backwoods partisan bigots voting against a Catholic. There are also Catholics who will vote for Kennedy, I am sure, only because he is a Catholic; and this is a two-edged operation. My own guess, quite frankly, would be that the religious issue--and this is just a guess--on balance will help Kennedy, not Nixon; that there are more people in this country who will become concerned about the nature of religious prejudice and who may vote for Kennedy, Protestants and Catholics alike, for that reason, as there were in West Virginia, than there are people who would normally vote Democratic but who will be taken over to the other side because of religious feelings.

Not only do I think there are more people in this first group, but I think this number of people is more strategically located in terms of the electoral votes that are at stake in an election. This is a very complex thing, as you know. You would have to sit down and work this out in great detail. But I think it will be an issue and I don't think it's necessarily a bad issue. Like so many things, it's bad only if you approach it in a primitive or prejudicial way. And if you are willing to approach this problem

simply and the nature of the issue, as both Senator Kennedy and Mr. Nixon have--what is the problem of religious discipline to a Roman Catholic or to a Quaker, or one raised in the Quaker tradition because I don't think Mr. Nixon is an active practicing member of a Quaker community now--what is the relation of this religious background or religious discipline to the course of action that a reasonable man may expect A or B to take if they are President. This is a perfectly legitimate question for any kind of discussion, and if it does come out, I hope it will be discussed at that level.

DR. SANDERS: Mr. Scammon, I wish to thank you for a very informative lecture and very interesting answers to a lot of questions. Thank you.

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