

# RIPON FORUM

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## POLITICS: REPORTS

### NEW MEXICO

The New Mexico gubernatorial election will be an unusual contrast of styles and ideologies. A moderate conservative, affable, aggressive Republican — Joe Skeen — will face a suave, dedicated, low-key, liberal Democrat — Jerry Apodaca.

Skeen, who handles his own political reins, runs a highly personal, loosely-knit campaign. The result is a sloppy and frantic organization searching for a constructive direction. Skeen, however, is his own strongest asset. His free-wheeling approach to voters is impressive; his political ambition is unyielding.

In contrast, Apodaca has a detached, reserved style. He does not project well in public appearances, appearing disinterested. He concentrates on one-to-one campaigning, backed up by his finely-tuned organization. Composed of both former McGovernites and old pros, that organization is gearing to deliver traditional New Mexico margins for the Democrats. Early rumors of severe party splits caused by a rough and crowded primary seem to have been spiked by recent "arrangements" by Apodaca. The new Democratic state chairman, for example, is a highly-regarded member of the old guard.

Apodaca is bidding to become the first Spanish-American governor of New Mexico in 54 years; over 40 percent of the state's population is Spanish-surnamed. A subtle undercurrent of racism will cut Democratic margins in the Anglo, conservative eastern counties of the state. The Democrats, however, will gain only mar-

ginally from among Spanish-surnamed voters since their party has won the predominate proportion of that vote since 1932. Republicans have never mounted a serious challenge in Hispanic areas of the state.

Neither candidate lacks for adequate financing: Skeen has support from oil, agricultural and business interests. Apodaca receives support from labor, professional, and mail solicitations. Apodaca accuses Skeen of "special interests" representation because of a Skeen stint as a legislative lobbyist. In return, vague allegations of Mafia money are leveled against Apodaca by Skeen supporters. Both men have served as state party chairmen and both claim Senate experience (Skeen, 1960-70; Apodaca, 1966-present).

Skeen looks strong personally and ideologically but very weak structurally. Apodaca has the organization but lacks a strong public image. A series of scheduled television could be crucial to both candidates.

In the races to the Potomac from the Rio Grande this year, both incumbents are heavily favored. In the northern congressional district, U.S. Rep. Manuel Lujan (R) will face Lt. Gov. Robert Mondragon (D). The lieutenant governor, whose principal campaign tactic has been the singing of Spanish ballads with his own guitar accompaniment, has been unusually quiet. Lujan's low-key style and unpolitical ways will probably prevail over Mondragon's singing.

In the state's southern district, U.S. Rep. Harold "Mud" Runnels, named one of the nation's ten dumbest congressmen by *New Times* magazine, has only token GOP opposition. Don

Trubey, a young Republican speech professor, is apparently using the campaign as exposure for a possible future race. He has no experience, no organization, no issues, no money, and no chance.

Other statewide GOP candidates are giving no better chance of upsetting Democratic incumbents than they have had in the past 40 years of Democratic control. And with little state party support for local candidates, Republicans have little likelihood of improving their share of lesser offices — now only have about 25 percent. ■

### FORD-KENNEDY

Behind the impeachment headlines of July, there was a lot of presidential analysis. One curious aspect of the analysis was the concurrence of articles analyzing the presidential fitness of



Gerald Ford

Vice President Gerald Ford and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. Though Kennedy moved ahead of Ford in recent Gallup polls, Ford was the clear winner in the magazine and newspaper stories which appeared.

Kennedy's presidential aspirations were badly damaged by two articles. Robert Sherrill's *New York Times Magazine's* story, "Chappaquiddick Plus Five," devastated even Kennedy admirers, according to the *Washington Post's* David Broder. He quoted former Democratic National Chairman Lawrence O'Brien as telling friends that Sherrill's recitation of the repeated inconsistencies in the Chappaquiddick episode "shook me — it had a helluva impact."

Compared to the Sherrill piece, Vivian Cadden's account in the August *McCall's* is more definitive about what actually happened at Chappaquiddick. Cadden recounts not only the inconsistencies in Kennedy's statements, but also draws her unabashed conclusion: "Five years after Chappaquiddick there are no longer any doubts about the basic facts of the tragedy. Most people believe, as Judge (James) Boyle did, that the senator and Mary Jo (Kopechne) were on their way to the beach, and many persons close to Kennedy no longer even try to deny it. The question is if, and when, and under what circumstances the senator himself may wish to acknowledge it. Whether or not he seeks the Presidency in 1976, a public and a press that have always doubted the 'wrong turn' would welcome his candor if even at this late date he affirms that, yes, it was after midnight and he and Mary Jo were headed for the beach; that their going there was entirely innocent, but that the appearance of immorality was so inevitable that, in his grief and remorse after the accident itself, he despaired of answering that

question straightforwardly at the time with any chance of being believed."

In an analysis of Kennedy's presidential prospects, Knight Newspapers' Loye Miller, Jr., observed, "He talks like he's running for President in 1976. He acts like he's running for President. He insists that he has not finally decided whether he will run for President." Miller points out that Chappaquiddick has not yet had an impact in the polls, but deeply concerns Democratic leaders. "Informal samplings of . . . party chieftans show that a heavy percentage of them concede that Kennedy can walk away with the party's 1976 nomination if he wants it, but that an increasing number are unhappy at the prospect, for fear of future Chappaquiddick fallout."

As Walter Pincus commented in a June issue of *The New Republic*, "Now the news media will almost certainly resurrect the entire event: the car's route will be traced, the 'boiler-room girls' tracked down and reinterviewed, Edgartown Police Chief [Jim] Arena and District Attorney Dinis will be back and in the news, the Kopechne parents will be questioned over and over again. The aggressiveness of the press will be stimulated in part by its desire to appear impartial, to show the same, sometimes irresponsible doggedness that went into attacks on President Nixon and former Vice President Agnew."

The impact of the Chappaquiddick stories is likely to be so great that Robert Sherrill may be Edward Kennedy's version of Richard Nixon's Robert Woodward and Carl Bernstein.

The articles about Gerald Ford did not expose the spice in his life. They instead suggested that the very lack of spice was what the nation needed. The complaint that Ford lacks a "first class brain" has been made so often

that some consensus on who does have first class brains seems needed. In articles in *Harpers* and the *Atlantic*, three respected Washington reporters propose that Ford may have more presidential qualities than was generally assumed by the late Lyndon Johnson. Writing in the August *Atlantic*, columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak conclude, "For now at least, candor and decency are elevated above cleverness and glibness. What might have seemed weaknesses two years ago are political strengths today. 'Jerry doesn't really have a first-class mind,' commented one of his former House colleagues. 'But then, neither did Eisenhower.'"

In his *Harper's* article, "In Praise of Honest Ignorance," Knight Newspapers' Saul Friedman recounts the story of how one condescending member of the Harvard Young Republican Club asked Ford to comment on Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Ford admitted he had not read Solzhenitsyn. There wasn't "a snicker in the room," wrote Friedman. "In a small and subtle way, Ford had displayed the honest ignorance of the average man and made no attempt to hide it with the politician's makeup kit."

In contrast to articles in the *Wall Street Journal* by Fred Zimmerman and the *Washington Post* by David Broder, Friedman treats Ford's staff sympathetically. Robert Hartmann, the former *Los Angeles Times* reporter who serves as Ford's chief of staff, is credited by Friedman for much of the Vice President's independence from the White House. Elsewhere, Hartmann's treatment has been less kind.

The *Wall Street Journal's* Zimmerman observes that, "Many in Washington express the view that Mr. Hartmann is less than qualified for the crucial job he holds. This view may stem, to some extent, from Mr. Hart-

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mann's tough approach to politics, which has made him a number of enemies over the years."

According to Evans and Novak, "As a former newspaperman, Hartmann knows he is not the man to run a burgeoning vice presidential staff. His political judgment is shrewd, but his ability to manage the daily routine of a Vice President traveling 76,000 miles to 29 states in his first six months in office is questionable."

More importantly, however, Broder and Zimmerman both report questions of about the competence of Ford's staff. Writes Broder, "It is predominantly middle-aged, Midwestern, conservative in its politics, and savvy in the ways of Capitol Hill. It is even less flashy in its collective personality than the man it serves. The Ford staff is also, in the view of some of the Vice President's friends, seriously underequipped in the range of expertise, viewpoints, and ideas needed by a man who is a heartbeat — or an impeachment — away from the White House."

According to Zimmerman, "Mr. Ford's main problem with his staff, if he ever reaches the White House, is much more likely to be mediocrity than lawlessness. Reporters figure it may be just a matter of time, for in-

stance, before Mr. Ford's pleasant but inept press secretary lands the vice president in some sort of embarrassing flap. And the chief of staff is so abrasive that colleagues find it takes considerable skill just to get along with him."

A curious parallel emerged in some observations about Kennedy and Ford. Though partisans, both try to avoid the extremes of partisanship. Ford has avoided the role of the President's chief defender and Miller suggests that Kennedy will take a back seat in any impeachment trial. Moreover, both have seemed to move toward the political center in the past year, both have strong respects for Congress and congressional traditions, and both try not to alienate the press or politicians.

Writes Pincus on Kennedy: "He is willing to compromise. He sees a limit to legislative solutions but looks to laws as a means of lessening the weight of problems on people's lives. He believes you must do something for the many before you can do more for the underprivileged minorities. He has a healthy respect for congressional committee chairmen, perhaps more than they deserve. He tries to avoid making enemies."

Writes Friedman on Ford: "His

years in Congress, his simplistic Americanism, have given him a reverence for the institutions of government and the delicate balances among them. He is a highly partisan, yet thoroughly professional politician, and a conservative in the best sense of the word — a political descendant of the Midwestern founders of the Republican Party . . . . Because he is a more genuine and principled conservative than Richard Nixon, Ford is much more rigid, even stubborn."

The spate of Kennedy-Ford articles have impeachment implications. Gerald Ford is ready — though he tries hard not to act it — to become President.

Writes Broder about Ford's staff, "Ford has surrounded himself chiefly with men and women he has known well for years, and has gone out of his way to convey the desire that they behave as they always have — and not take on the airs of a White House staff-in-waiting."

But Friedman makes a different observation: "And on the Vice President's plane, the growing contingent of reporters and cameramen chat constantly with Ford's staff about the future. The vice president's people no longer speculate in hushed tones about the big 'if.' They talk openly of 'when.'" ■

## POLITICS: PEOPLE

● Herrick Roth, former Colorado AFL-CIO leader, won the top line designation for the Democratic nomination to oppose Sen. Peter Dominick (R), but he was given a surprisingly close race at the Colorado Democratic assembly by former McGovern campaign manager Gary Hart. Both Hart and former Arapahoe County D.A. Martin Miller will be on the September primary ballot. Miller hopes to win the Democratic nomination as a moderate in comparison to Roth and Hart. Two other candidates did not get the required 20 percent of the assembly vote. All three Democratic gubernatorial candidates will be on the September ballot, but two of the candidates are mad at the third, Mark Hogan, who released the results of a poll showing it may not make any difference who gets the Democratic nomination. The polls showed Gov. John Vanderhoof beating the Democrats by margins ranging from 59-36 percent to 65-23 percent. Ironically, Hogan, who was low man at the Democratic assembly was high man in the polls. State Rep. Dick Lamm (D) who received top-line designation at the convention, trailed Vanderhoof 65-26 percent. In another vote at the July 20 state assembly, the high vote for state treasurer was accumulated by Sam Brown, one of the key organizers in the anti-Vietnam War movement. Remember Vietnam?

● A new degree of urgency entered Massachusetts Gov. Francis Sargent's renomination campaign recently when he ordered all members of his staff to immediately reregister as Republicans and enlist their friends to do the same. Since many of the Republican governor's top aides are Democrats, the move was seen as a belated recognition that Carroll Sheehan, Sargent's opponent in the September GOP primary, may upset the liberal governor. Meanwhile, Josiah Spaulding, a GOP hopeful for attorney general, was endorsed in his primary race for attorney general against former Sargent aide William Cowin by John J. McCarthy. McCarthy, a staunch conservative, had received White House help in his 1970 campaign to oppose Sen. Edward Kennedy. Spaulding, a staunch progressive, defeated McCarthy in that primary.

### Contributor Notes

J. Brian Smith ("Legislating by Press Release") is a press aide to U.S. Rep. John Rhodes (R-Ariz.). Robert H. Donaldson ("What the World Needs Now") is Ripon vice president for research and a member of the FORUM Editorial Board. Dick Behn ("Law and Order") is better deleted.

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# COMMENTARY: DETENTE

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## What The World Needs Now

by Robert H. Donaldson

Leaving the Moscow summit last month, Henry Kissinger issued a call for a broad national debate on the fundamentals of detente — a debate which would transcend the narrow issues of numbers of missiles and warheads and instead focus on the larger purposes of U.S. nuclear power in an era of relaxed international tensions.

The secretary's proposal is well taken, especially in the present context of spreading disillusionment with the fruits of U.S.-Soviet relations — a phenomenon which is itself partly attributable to President Nixon's lamentable practice of oversimplifying and overselling detente. Unfortunately, however the opportunity for a reasoned and dispassionate debate may be lost for three reasons: 1) Washington's total absorption in impeachment politics; 2) the weakening of Kissinger's own position as a result of the wiretapping imbroglio; and 3) growing stridency with which the main opponent of the Administration's policy, Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.), is fashioning his arguments to promote his own presidential ambitions.

Nixon is well aware that his handling of foreign affairs is his remaining asset with the American public. A Gallup Poll taken prior to the Moscow trip gave him a 54 percent approval rating in this sphere, contrasted to only 18 percent in the domestic

arena. The President's determination to exploit this relative strength has been evidenced not only by the increasing frequency of his foreign travel, but also by his unseemly harping in Moscow on his "personal relationship" with Leonid Brezhnev and his overly-complacent and platitudinous report to the nation upon his return from the summit.

But the President's opponents also read the polls, and the recent spate of attacks on Kissinger and the sharpening criticism of detente seem to be motivated — in some quarters at least — by the desire to finish off Nixon. The focus by both sides upon the President's personal fortunes has badly obscured the underlying substantive issues. As for Sen. Jackson, his recent behavior has brought into serious question his sense of propriety and responsibility. Jackson's pre-summit accusations that Kissinger had signed secret SALT protocols with the Russians were fabricated in a patent attempt to create alarm and thus tie the President's hands in the negotiations of new arms control accords. Jackson's subsequent handling of his trip to Peking seemed designed to introduce unnecessary complications in both Sino-American and Sino-Soviet relations.

In the meantime, in the absence of serious national discussion of America's role in the world, the public commitment to responsible internationalism is fast eroding. A recent Potomac Associates survey revealed that the proportion of the public expressing internationalist views has fallen from 65 to 41 percent in ten years, while the percentage of isolationists has risen from 9 to 21 percent in only two years.

The object of detente is to lessen the danger of nuclear war. The dual means to this end have been the fashioning of a new set of rules of self-restraint in the conduct of our relations with the Soviets and Chinese, and the search for agreements on controlling the spiraling arms race. It is in arms control that the most notable disappointment of the Moscow summit occurred.

The failure to reach agreement at the summit on limiting the deployment of multiple warheads (MIRVs) has been widely attributed by the me-

dia to bureaucratic warfare between the State Department and the Pentagon, with the President allegedly siding with the military in its refusal to give up the U.S. strategic advantage. In fact, however, the relative role of bureaucratic politics in shaping the outcome is greatly over-stated. Kissinger's post-summit complaint that both sides would have to convince their military establishments of the benefits of restraint was far more applicable to the Kremlin than to the Pentagon.

When the U.S. proposed a MIRV limitation which would leave the Soviets with more (and heavier) launchers but the U.S. with more warheads, the Soviet leadership decided to insist on its own demands for "real parity" — which the Pentagon in turn interpreted as leaving the Russians with an advantage in "throw-weight." While U.S. defense planners envision an unacceptable *future* "worst case" in which the Soviets quickly deploy the maximum number of MIRVs on their new and heavier missiles, Soviet planners confront an unacceptable *present* situation in which the U.S. — several years ahead in MIRV deployment — has a lead in warheads of about 3-1. Moreover, the "worst case" for Russian planners includes the possibility of a coordinated Sino-American threat — a nightmare which must strengthen Soviet determination not to settle for "second-best." This "China factor" is likely to loom ever larger as Peking's strength grows; China's absence from the SALT negotiations may indeed ultimately doom the prospects for U.S.-Soviet limitations or cutbacks.

Though some strategists express the fear that a Soviet strategic advantage might give Moscow a "first-strike capability," the real significance of the numbers game is more political than military. As his post-summit news conference made clear, Defense Secretary James Schlesinger does not fear the U.S. will lose its "overkill" capacity, but that it will lose its international political influence and perhaps ultimately its nerve in the face of *perceived* Soviet strategic superiority.

It is on precisely this point — the political uses and perceptions of nuclear weapons — that Kissinger has called for national debate. For in a

context of continuing distrust, the disposition of each side's military establishment to plan on the basis of "worst case" analysis renders agreement on "essential equivalency" unlikely and opens the prospect of a continuing action-reaction cycle. Failing an arms control breakthrough in the next year or two, Kissinger fears a world in which the opportunities for nuclear warfare exist which were unimaginable 15 years ago.

Equally terrifying is the specter of nuclear weapons proliferation — recently raised anew by the India nuclear explosion. Yet there is no indication that the two superpowers discussed this awesome question at the summit. By settling for an underground test ban treaty which exempts both explosions under 150 kilotons and "peaceful nuclear explosions," the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. may have missed a greater arms control opportunity. Whereas a comprehensive test ban treaty might have given impetus to the control of proliferation, the partial ban not only left open to doubt the superpowers' sincerity, but also undermined their previous refusal to distinguish between explosions for "peaceful" or military purposes. While the partial test ban did contain some useful precedents on inspection, this treaty — like the agreement limiting each side to one ABM site and the proposed extension of the interim limitation on the size of strategic forces — does not represent a significant advance in the process of arms control.

The balance sheet of Soviet-American relations in recent years contains both positive and negative entries. Superpower competition continues amidst a number of complex and unsolved problems. The process of exploring avenues of agreement will be lengthy and occasionally frustrating: detente is not yet irreversible nor is a generation of peace assured. But the stakes are so high that the effort must be continued. Neither the Administration nor its critics should allow current domestic preoccupations or the hope of narrow gains to deflect the country from the needed foreign policy debate. For only a patient and fully informed public — confident in its purpose and united in its commitment — can ensure that America's leaders will be able to maintain the course. ■

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## COMMENTARY: IMPEACHMENT

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# Law And Order

*by Dick Bebn*

The impeachment process is many things, but it is not a test of partisan loyalty. Whether President Nixon should or should not be impeached is a matter to be decided by interpreting his actions in the light of the Constitution.

The FORUM has deliberately not taken an editorial stand on the impeachment — to urge Congress to decide one way or another. We have believed that it is inappropriate to tell representatives and senators how to vote. Their votes should be determined by their examination of the evidence, not the winds of political tempests.

We expect more of Congress, especially Republican members of Congress, than mere kneejerk partisanship or kneejerk revulsion. Republicans have long prided themselves on their dedication to law and order. The implications of this dedication ought to be weighed heavily on Republicans as they cast their votes.

The House Republican leadership deserves praise and admiration for their statesmanlike positions on impeachment. For these leaders — House Minority Leader John Rhodes (R-Ariz.), House Republican Conference Chairman John Anderson (R-Ill.), and

House Republican Policy Committee Chairman Barber B. Conable, Jr. (R-N.Y.) — have interpreted impeachment question as the judicial vote it should be, not the partisan rallying cry that some Republicans wish they would make it. It is regrettable that Minority Whip Leslie Arends (R-Ill.) has not taken a similar stand.

What Americans — and Republicans — should expect from their representatives is a vote on the facts. Republicans should not — as a conservative group of House Republicans known as the "Good Guys" or "Chicken Shack Gang" did in late July — deride Minority Leader Rhodes for not assuming a more forward stance in defending the President. Republican National Chairman George Bush has similarly adopted a policy of non-interference in the impeachment process, recognizing that comments on what is now a judicial matter will politicize an issue which should not be partisan. It is too bad Democratic National Chairman Robert Strauss has not also kept his mouth closed.

Comments from White House spokesmen have frequently tended to poison the debate. Such comments are lamentable because they further tend to inject non-judicial judgements into the proceedings.

Some conservatives — like former OEO Director Howard Phillips — have adopted a pro-impeachment position on the grounds that President Nixon isn't really one of "them" anymore. That attitude is as deplorable as voting against impeachment merely because the President is a Republican.

If a stand is taken to impeach the President, it ought to be for the sort of rationale offered by U.S. Rep. William Cohen (R-Maine): "I am proud of the traditions of the Republican Party. It does not stand for bugging or burglary or the obstruction of justice. No individual can stand above the law. Our loyalty must be to the Constitution, and not any one man."

This fall, American voters *ought* to scrutinize the stands of their representatives on impeachment. But the key to such scrutiny is the motive for the representative's decision. Representatives should vote their consciences, not their parties. ■

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# COMMENTARY: CONGRESS

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## Legislating By Press Release

*by J. Brian Smith*

In 1974, the most important documents issued by members of Congress will not be pieces of legislation but press releases that describe that legislation. This fundamental distortion of priorities must be corrected if Congress is to ever regain its viability as a coordinate branch of government.

Public relations in Washington have sadly become the key ingredient to political success when it should only be one of many important ingredients. Members of Congress are caught up in a relentless propaganda syndrome which in many cases precludes their effective involvement in the legislative process. It frequently matters not whether a congressman is successful in terms of program. What does matter is whether he is perceived to be effective by the voters back home. "Credo quod habes, et habes," Erasmus once told Thomas More. Believe that you have it, and you have it.

The American people are well aware that something is dreadfully awry on Capitol Hill, as evidenced most recently by Lou Harris' discovery that garbage collectors are held in far greater esteem than members of Congress. There are several institutional corrections that Congress can make to boost its credibility with the public (budget reform, committee restructuring, etc.) that enjoy better-than-even chances of adoption in light of our post-Watergate desire to "shape up." But the over-reliance on public rela-

tions which has so diminished the effectiveness of Congress cannot be remedied procedurally. What is needed for Congress to snap out of the propaganda syndrome is a dramatic change of attitude on the part of its members, as well as the press and the American people. For all three groups are to blame for the massive distortion of priorities that has been allowed to occur.

The finger of blame should first be directed towards the congressman who lacks either the "smarts" to recognize the danger of overemphasis on public relations or the guts to stand up and do something about it. In fairness, not all members fit these categories. John Rhodes, the recently elected House Republican leader, survived quite nicely during his first twenty years in the House without a press secretary. However, the absence of reelection difficulties may be one reason why he was content to concentrate on legislative responsibilities. Other members for whom the threat of defeat is an ever-haunting reality, cannot afford to be so casual about attracting attention to themselves. One youngish member once directed me to issue a press release proclaiming that he had "solved" the energy crisis, the basis being a very intricate mathematical equation that only he could understand but which would (and did) make for great headlines in the hometown newspaper.

The "great commanding theatre of this Nation," which Thomas Jefferson called the Congress, has degenerated over the years into a rat-race for publicity. Most members are keenly aware of the need to establish an image, and the skilled press secretary can fuel that image almost at will. Joe Biden, for example, who is the youngest member of the Senate, gets considerable mileage as a candid straightshooter. "I may be the youngest one-term senator in history," he states time and again before launching into something controversial. Point to a flaw in his analysis and candid Joe will admit it, a technique which disarms even the fiercest antagonist. And if you forget for a moment that you are up against the candid gentleman from Delaware, he will be sure to remind you.

Once he has etched out for himself a comfortable image, the member can

rely on a multitude of congressional services designed to generate favorable press, all of them divorced from reality. A freshman member of the House in need of some public notice can be named "assistant to the leader" for a week or two. In a press release issued by his office or the congressional committee of his party (or both), he is praised by the floor leader as "one of the bright young stars in the Congress" who has "earned the respect of his colleagues on both sides of the aisle." In truth, it is a standard line routinely used to describe everyone so honored. If the member is in particular trouble, he can be named "Outstanding Member of the Month" for his "proven leadership" on such-and-such an issue.

But these are the minor, harmless things that can be easily overlooked. What is difficult to overlook is the way that the legislative process has been twisted to accommodate the need for publicity. It is a distortion of the system which clearly inhibits Congress' ability to accomplish things for the American people.

Such is the case with the staple of congressional business — legislation. In the 92nd Congress, 20,458 bills were introduced in the House, 7,999 of them identical to the last word. A far greater percentage were different in only minor details. This duplication chokes the legislative process. It is a result of members' reintroducing legislation to which they are particularly attracted, under their own names, even though that legislation has been developed by one of their colleagues. The legislation then becomes the property of the member who has most recently introduced it. He gets credit for it in the press, not because he had anything to do with its inception, but because his press release refers to him as the author.

Another example of how the system is geared to generate congressional "PR" is the procedure whereby government grants and contracts are awarded. Millions of dollars are so awarded daily to industries, organizations, and community civic groups. This money represents the "bread and butter" of congressional PR, for the agencies maintain the standard practice of releasing this information through the office of the congressman

whose district is affected. The congressman in turn issues a press release to the media in his state announcing the money. His name appears in print as the source of economic good news, and he can campaign in the fall on the amount of federal money he was able to procure for his area. In truth, his office is frequently nothing more than an information service.

As if this were not enough of a farce, it was recently revealed that the Nixon White House worked with the Nixon campaign committee to gear the delivery of government grants and contracts to those areas of electoral importance to the President's 1972 reelection. Only later have the newspapers reported that this effort was known in CREEP circles as "Project Responsiveness," a bit of irony which no doubt would cause the founding fathers to flip in their graves.

Congressmen are not the creators of this farce. In many ways, they are the victims, for generating consistently favorable press is no easy task. Most members would probably welcome a change that would permit them to concentrate their energies on strictly legislative matters and would find it easier to excel in that capacity. But they are trapped by a system in which they are judged on their level of visibility back home. Certainly, most would like to "play it straight" with the voters — to act like statesmen instead of ad-men — but there is a saying on Capitol Hill that every member lives by: "The founding fathers never had to run for reelection."

So we look elsewhere to place the blame, and we arrive at the press. Advocacy journalism, bias, and all of those things that media-haters dredge up to make their case have nothing to do with this. The press shares the blame for the publicity put-on because they frequently parrot what congressmen have told them. I am not referring to the heavy-hitters in the national press corps, those individuals whose business it is to report as news what their experience and intelligence tells them it is. No one is going to tell a David Broder what is news and what is not news.

However, the press is not unlike other professions in at least one respect: the true professionals are in the minority. Too often, members of the

press are willing accomplices to any congressman intent on obtaining coverage. This is true for a number of reasons, not the least of which is laziness. It is easier for a reporter who covers the Washington scene simply to file the press release of the congressman he is responsible for covering (with a few minor alterations) than it is for him to go out and produce an original piece of journalism which requires time, energy, and access. Besides, how can the home paper possibly know whether the 350-word dispatch it receives on the Telex from Washington is composed by their bureau reporter or by some congressional press secretary? The answer is that they cannot and probably don't even think to ask. The result is what every press secretary on Capitol Hill smugly knows — that around 50 percent of the news stories printed about a congressman in local newspapers is taken verbatim from his press release.

Why should a reporter do his own reporting and risk the disfavor of the congressman he must cover daily? Washington, after all, is the choicest of national assignments, and there are countless journalistic hopefuls back home who crave placement there. If a congressman decides to cut off a bureau reporter, that reporter is going to have difficulty satisfying the daily demands of the paper he serves. In a word, his stay in Washington is likely to be short.

Like the congressman, the press cannot be entirely blamed for the publicity put-on. So we are left with the people. It is to them that we direct the final finger of blame. It is with them that ultimate responsibility is supposed to rest in this country. The congressman initiates what is essentially a distortion of reality; the press by and large reports the distorted version; and the people buy it. If they are content with image-building, then why should they be given reality, either by congressmen or the press? They are, in the final analysis, responsible for the lack of congressional relevance because they do not demand anything better. Their apathy perpetuates the propaganda syndrome.

The answer, of course, is for all of us — the congressmen, the press, and the people — to snap out of the propaganda syndrome. As to how this

can be accomplished is a difficult proposition to calculate. Changes of attitude, which is what we are talking about, must by necessity come from within. There can be no "Political Attitude Reform Act of 1974," though the craving for publicity by some members of Congress may prompt its introduction.

The people must lead the change of attitude necessary for Congress to be relevant again. They have a long way to go. Louis Harris told Sen. Edmund Muskie's Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations that no more than 59 percent of the American people can name one senator from their state, only 39 percent can name both senators, and 46 percent — less than one-half — know who their congressman is. The people must also learn to ask relevant questions, such as, "Tell us, what actually happened to that mass transit bill that you introduced amidst a splash of rhetoric and press coverage?" Americans simply must condition themselves to focus more on what is said than on the sound stage from which the statements are delivered.

Congress will have advanced light-years toward its goal of becoming a viable institution if the congressman's press coverage comes to reflect his actual activity rather than his manufactured motion. If a congressman is hard-working and generally effective, that fact should be advertised. But public relations should always remain wedded to the truth. That is generally not the case today. As a result, most members of Congress are more concerned with style than substance. They have become more adept at acting than legislating.

The Congress of the United States is presently lamenting its drastic loss of federal influence and is wondering what can be done to reestablish itself as a coequal branch of government. The outcome of this important reflection will depend largely on whether or not we recognize what is really wrong with us — that we have lost touch with reality. ■

IN MEMORIAM  
LARRY FINKELSTEIN

JANUARY 20, 1947 to  
JULY 30, 1974

## DULY NOTED: POLITICS

● "Snyder Admits 'Bribe' Offer a Hoax to Aid Laxalt Image," by UPI. *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, July 18, 1974. Earlier this year, columnist Jack Anderson reported that Jimmy "the Greek" Snyder had offered former Nevada Gov. Paul Laxalt (R) a \$500,000 bribe: Laxalt, now a Republican Senate candidate had reportedly refused the offer. Snyder has now told the Nevada Gaming Control Board that no one ever asked him to approach Laxalt about the bribe "Mr. Snyder further testified that he has on a number of occasions, including his conversation with Jack Anderson, embellished this incident in order to dramatize the honesty of Gov. Laxalt," according to the chairman of the gambling board. Laxalt had not reported the incident because he thought Snyder was joking.

● "Republican Right Preparing for a Comeback," by Douglas E. Kneeland. *New York Times*, July 23, 1974. "The Republican right is preparing for a comeback. Viewing Watergate and related problems of the Administration as the work of clumsy and misguided interlopers that may almost shatter the party, conservatives meeting [at the Young Americans for Freedom conference in San Francisco] indicated that they were looking forward eagerly to picking up the pieces in 1976." According to Kneeland, the YAF delegates believe Watergate has proved that conservatives were wrong to back "centrist" Richard Nixon in 1968 and "right" to back conservative Barry Goldwater in 1964. Ronald Reagan was clearly the YAF favorite for 1976 in keeping with American Conservative Union president M. Stanton Evans' observation that, "If one wants a conservative government, then the thing to do is nominate conservatives and elect conservatives."

● "Racial Attitudes Affect Campaign," by Howell Raines. *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, July 21, 1974. "Save for the occasional maverick, the out-and-out race-baiter is a vanishing breed in Georgia politics. Nonetheless, statistical studies consistently show there is a strong, submerged white racism in Georgia to which the skilled politician can appeal in subtle ways," writes Raines. He cites a recent Georgia poll which revealed a very strong undercurrent of racism among white voters which explains the continuing appeal of Lt. Gov. Lester Maddox (D). "However, the same survey which yielded these figures set Maddox' committed vote at about 40 percent. Thus, many of the people who harbor some anti-black sentiment — perhaps on the crime issue or housing or education — are still in the vote pool available to Maddox' opponents [in the Democratic gubernatorial primary.]" Raines points out that the sophisticated appeals to the marginally racist vote center on crime and capital punishment this year rather than busing. Former Sen. David Gambrell has attempted to steal these marginal voters away from Wallace while other Democratic contenders have simply muted any comments that might be construed as pro-black. "Bert Lance and George Busbee, two leading Democratic contenders for the black vote, have stopped well short of actually doing or saying anything which could be tabbed as an outright appeal to the black voter . . . The arithmetic of coalition politics in Georgia dictates this course. Both white and black strategists agree that it is the proper course to take in a state where black voters are a significant force, but still far outnumbered by whites." Gambrell and Lance are Maddox' closest competition for the Democratic nomination in the August 13 primary.

● "Upstate Voters Hold Key to Wilson's Reelection Hopes," by Vic Ostrowidzki. *Albany Times-Union*, July 21, 1974. "Gov. Malcolm Wilson would carry eastern and central New York if the elections were held today, a secret poll commissioned by the area's party leaders indicates. Wilson would have a harder time beating U.S. Rep. Hugh Carey of Brooklyn than Howard Samuels, the Democratic Party's designated candidate, the poll showed." The Becker Associates poll showed Wilson defeating Carey upstate, 57-45 percent, while he topped Samuels, 65-37 percent. The poll showed, however, that Nassau County Executive Ralph Caso, the GOP candidate for lieutenant governor, is barely known upstate.

● "Driggs In Early Primary Blitz; Others in GOP Scrape for Cash," by John Kolbe. *Phoenix Gazette*, July 8, 1974. Former Phoenix Mayor John Driggs appears to be moving out front in the Arizona GOP gubernatorial race. Driggs' name recognition combined with advantages in campaign funds have given him the clear lead. Other candidates are having a much more difficult time raising money.

● "Brown Leads Flournoy — At Least for Now, Experts Agree," by Kenneth Reich. *Los Angeles Times*, July 22, 1974. Although California Secretary of State Jerry Brown is ahead of his running Republican gubernatorial counterpart, Controller Houston Flournoy, both Democrats and Republicans tend to agree with Flournoy that the GOP could upset Brown. "There are several scenarios for a Flournoy victory, but most of them involve the Republican candidates somehow locking Brown into a series of significant debates, clearly displaying a superior knowledge of state government and coming across a more mature political figure," writes Reich. The Brown lead in part can be attributed to the unexpected political maturity of the Democratic candidate and the failure of the Flournoy campaign to ignite either internally or externally. "It is now widely believed that if Brown is to be beaten, Flournoy must develop an imaginative campaign that will solve the difficult problem of boosting the low Republican turnout of the primary while appealing enough to Democrats to offset the huge Democratic registration edge in the state." Republicans hope, however, that Brown will begin to grate on the voters the way he does on the nerves of many Democratic party professionals. Flournoy, they hope, will wear better with the California electorate.

### Jaws of Victory

In *Jaws of Victory*, the Ripon Society book on political gamesmanship, Clifford Brown describes progressive Republicans in the following manner:

What do all these people have in common? They don't need the government to hold their trousers up. They are committed to accomplishment and excellence. They like to see society performing in an honest and efficient manner. Most important, they are the kind of people who innovate, improve, and exercise their freedom in a constructive way. These are the workers, managers, capitalists, and professionals in the best sense of these words.

*Jaws of Victory* should be at the front of every book store. If it is not, there is a coverup under way. Investigate. Or better yet, order your own copy for \$10.95 from The Ripon Society, 509 C Street N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

## RIPON FORUM

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