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AUG 21 1973

Advice From Presidential Advisers

Speaking of "The Living Presidency," a new book by Emmet Hughes, historian Henry Steele Commager describes it as "quite simply the most original, the most thoughtful and the most perspicacious book on the Presidency that I have ever read. Its timeliness is overwhelming. What a good idea if you could get Mr. Nixon to read it."

I, too, have been impressed. This, however, is not a review but a report on a unique and newsworthy special supplement in the book called "The Presidency as I have Seen It." It is a series of brief commentaries by a group of men who have been advisers to all the Presidents of the last 40 years, Republicans and Democrats alike.

Like Hughes himself, who served under former President Eisenhower, they have all seen the White House from the inside. What they have to say could hardly be more timely, considering the present concentration of interest in the Presidency. I have selected one thought from each contributor, in the following alphabetical order:

Sherman Adams, Eisenhower's chief of staff: "In making important decisions, seek out the opinions of a few people for whom you have respect, and who are known to differ with the views of yourself, the Cabinet or your personal staff."

Clark Clifford, adviser to three Presidents: "Perhaps the most dangerous instinct that beats strongly in the human breast is the desire for vindication. This has led our government down more dead-end streets than almost any other one failing. A President who makes a mistake, admits it and then rectifies it, gains the under-

standing, approval and affection of his people."

Benjamin V. Cohen, adviser to Franklin D. Roosevelt: "A President must be conscious of his responsibility to enlighten public opinion, not to manipulate it . . . The right to govern depends on his ability to lead and convince, not to dictate and coerce, on his ability to enlist, not to command, the support of an informed Congress and an informed people."

Ralph Dungan, adviser to John F. Kennedy: "I believe that a greater diffusion of power within the executive branch, rather than centralization in a presidential staff, is far preferable . . . No doubt the President needs a personal staff; what he does not need is a command-post bunker where large numbers of operational decisions are made."

Abe Fortas, former Supreme Court justice and adviser to several Presidents: "An essential quality in a President is the ability to view complex problems with utter simplicity . . . This means the strength to stand in the rushing, turbulent stream of events, pressures and advice, where each President finds himself, and never to lose sight of the water that flows from the deep springs of our history and our ethics and our values . . ."

Bryce Harlow, adviser to both Eisenhower and Mr. Nixon: "All legends aside, the truth is that we do not have a government of laws or procedures or protocols, but of men."

Averell Harriman, adviser to four Presidents: "There is only one Presidency, and all talk of 'two' Presidencies—one foreign and one domestic—is nonsense. All policies *within* and *beyond* our national frontiers have to be

concerted and integrated. They can only be different aspects of the same national purpose."

David Lilienthal, presidential adviser and former head of TVA: "The best preparation for a President is the trial of running for and serving in elective office. This forces him to know people and all the not-at-all-logical motives and purposes that sway them . . . The worst preparation has to be strictly managerial or business experience."

Nelson Rockefeller, governor of New York who served with Eisenhower: "Modern technology can offer powerful tools for strengthening presidential leadership . . . We have yet to enlist the computer's enormous potential for informing our highest civilian leadership of the complex, swift-changing status of world conditions that affect the infinitely more fateful decisions governing the conduct of the public's business."

Judge Samuel Rosenman, recently deceased confidant of F.D.R. and Truman: "A President—any President—has to learn to compromise . . . The readiness of Roosevelt to compromise in order to get his ends was one recurrent source of friction between him and his famous, often zealous, wife. She had never had to run for office or face a legislature, so she could barely understand it when he said, 'You have to compromise, either to win elections or get laws passed.'"

Theodore Sorensen, counsel to J.F.K.: "The most important of all a President's decisions are likely to come before he even takes office. For it is then that he makes his appointments and selects his advisers . . . Any one of them may fatally mislead him or stain his administration."

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