

COMMENTARY

RULERS V. REALITY

Of all the human flaws that haunt the White House transcripts, the most apparent is misperception—a common affliction of men in power. It is a familiar pattern: the greater a leader's power, the more distant from reality he is likely to be. He misperceives the facts, misjudges his options, and risks fatal mistakes. Seeking comment on this phenomenon, Harper's received all sorts of responses. Among them:

The problem is that when a President gets removed from reality so do the people who write about him.

For example, I now feel that I invented President Nixon and Vice-President Agnew and Watergate. I sincerely believe that I concocted the whole thing on June 17, 1972. They are all my characters and they belong to me. I get very angry when other people write about Nixon and Watergate as I feel the material is copyrighted.

I ask you to use your magazine to tell people to lay off. I thought of Nixon first.

—Art Buchwald

Art Buchwald's claim is presently in litigation.

Among the many causes of Richard Nixon's troubles, surely one was that he let himself be isolated in the splendor of the White House. In that Oval Office no voices were heard save those of sycophants, reflecting back his own mood and thoughts—or what the courtiers took them to be. Much could have been avoided if he had heard a few saying this should not be done, that is in error, but all such advice came to him filtered through a glass, darkly. Such isolation feeds upon itself until in time all perception becomes distorted. Whatever else those famed

tapes show, they show a man shut off from the world.

In the extreme, this can be fatal. It was thus that Charles I and Louis XVI lost their heads. It was thus that Richard Nixon was brought to the edge of impeachment.

Mr. Nixon was not the first of our Presidents to be so afflicted. It has been a growing problem of the twentieth-century Presidency since the Roosevelt era, when we first began to view the President not merely as first citizen but as the omnipotent leader responsible for all our blessings—or ills. With power come the trappings of power, and with those trappings the inevitable isolation. Lyndon Johnson, once one of the most sensitive of politicians, surely would not have followed his Vietnam policy to disaster had he not been so isolated from the moods, thoughts, and feelings of the people.

How are we to avoid leaders cut off from the led? Inevitably there have been gropings for some new law, some new form of institutionalized arrangement to protect that man in the White House from misperceiving reality, misjudging his options, and so perhaps someday being misled to a fatal misjudgment.

I doubt this can be done by new laws, by new institutional arrangements. The trouble now is too many laws giving the President too much power, too much institutionalizing of the Presidency. The solution, if indeed there is one, is to diminish our expectations of the office and so diminish its powers and its panoply. At the very least, we should cease paying for those multiplying courtiers, that White House staff, those men beholden only to the President. All public servants should be answerable to the public, for so long as we have courtiers

so long will we have a court around the President.

But the best hope is that the debacle that has come to Richard Nixon will teach his successors. Let's hope it will remind them of the age-old problem of all leaders, that calamity awaits him who lets his perception of reality be distorted by isolation, however splendid.

—Vermont Royster

Vermont Royster is a contributing editor of The Wall Street Journal.

How to make sure that future Presidents do not cut their ties to the reality principle? I doubt whether legislative or constitutional solutions to this problem are necessary, or possible. The first answer is surely to elect Presidents who, like most Presidents in our history, have an inner commitment to accountability and understand that their success depends on their capacity to elicit and mobilize informed consent. In the future voters will have to pay more attention than they have in the recent past to personal evidences of this inner commitment: temperamental openness and accessibility; a relish for face-to-face consultation, discussion, and debate; a readiness to meet the press and to level with the people; a belief in reason and persuasion; a dislike of furtiveness and secrecy; and those old-fashioned virtues of integrity and character.

Obviously even rather open Presidents have been corrupted in time by the pleasures and perquisites of the Presidency. The antidote is to reject the latter-day myth of the President as a man above the people, a myth bulwarked by the ghastly contention of the new conservatives that institutions of authority must command respect, whether or not they have done anything to earn it. Not-

ing is more mischievous than the singular idea of recent years that the President has a sacred right to be protected from secular exposure and confrontation. An American President, let us never forget, is simply a politician luckier than the others—one who has made it to the top of the greasy pole. Shinning up the pole does not, however, transform a politician into a quasi-deity or carry him out of our sight and jurisdiction; and he can expect to stay on top only so long as he remembers and respects the disciplines of consent. The transubstantiation of the Presidency has gone far enough. It is a recent development; it is not inherent in the process. If the electorate will get the Presidency back into proportion and restore the historic system of accountability, future Presidents will be quite as much tethered to the reality principle as the great Presidents of the past have been.

—Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., is the author of The Imperial Presidency (Houghton Mifflin).

According to the orthodox political-science model of the way government works, all the important information about our society and the world gets passed upward through the various hierarchical orders of government. At each step the chaff is discarded, until finally the President knows the most cru-

"Americans are always boasting about bribery and corruption, as if it was their own special invention, and as if nobody else had any."—Brendan Behan
"Where We All Came into Town," *Evergreen Review*
May/June 1961

cial things about every facet of reality, the pristine distillate of the world's critical information. In fact, almost the reverse happens: less and less gets known as we move to the top. Not only is much vital information lost at each step of the process, but also there is a built-in bias to throw away unpleasant data. Advancing in the hierarchy depends on pleasing one's superiors, and good news confirms their own previous estimates of reality.

All of this refutes the notion that we rank-and-file citizens must go along with the President's policies on foreign and even domestic affairs because he *knows*, he is privy to all the secret information that only he can receive. We now see that he not only does *not* know all; he knows considerably less than any well-informed reader of the *New York Times*.

No cosmetic reform can improve this situation. Putting "good" men in office is no solution to this fatal flaw, which is inherent in the bureaucratic structure of government. There is only one solution: taking all the major decisions—and minor ones as well—out of the hands of government and putting them back where they belong, in the individuals and voluntary groups of the private sector. Allow individuals to act on their own knowledge and to communicate with each other freely through the marketplace. For the free-market economy is unequalled in its ability to communicate knowledge through the signals of the free-price system, and thereby to guide production and exchange without the coercive power of government and its bureaucracy.

Orthodox political scientists also maintain that while private citizens are wrapped up in grubby, short-range concerns, the rulers of government, up there on Mount Olympus, can and do plan wisely for the distant future. There is no clearer conclusion from the Nixon transcripts than the almost incredibly short-range vision of the top executive bureaucracy. They are interested, not just in the next election, but in the next six o'clock news on television: hence the Nixon belief that the transcripts would be a propaganda coup on his behalf. It was—for twenty-four hours. Again, the lesson is that there is no group of rulers we can trust to plan ahead for us; we must plan for ourselves, or else the far-sighted planning won't get done at all. In this Bicentennial season, it is well to

"Richard Nixon is given to suggesting that history follows him about with a Polaroid camera lest history miss something."

—William F. Buckley, Jr.
May 20, 1973

be reminded that this is the true meaning of the Declaration of Independence.

—Murray N. Rothbard

Murray N. Rothbard is a professor of economics at the Polytechnic Institute of New York.

In the good old days, politicians operated in a world where the realities of power were understood by other members of the political nation, i.e., the exercisers of power whose opinions mattered—landowners, industrialists, bankers, bishops, et cetera. In that world, there was much sympathy for the politicians' evasions, duplicities, dishonesties, secrecies—not to say lies and corruptions—because most of those in power in other fields understood, from their own experience, how difficult it is to avoid these vices, how much they are an inevitable part of getting things done in the real world. A saving measure of cynicism, of tolerance, was built into the system.

What is new today is the extent to which the political nation includes a whole range of people—loosely described as intellectuals—whose values inhibit any understanding of the realities involved in the exercise of power. Because of the dependence of almost all forms of organization—military, industrial, bureaucratic—on specialized knowledge, intellectuals are an increasingly essential and influential part of the new power structure. But they do not feel at home in it. Theirs is the world of theory, abstractions, concepts, ideals—of conclusions rather than decisions.

Since reporters are also drawn largely from the same background, they share the same lack of sympathy for the flawed nature of politics, with the result that many of those within government, and many of those judging and commenting upon it, are joined together in a common reaction of disgust and disapproval.

Is it any wonder, therefore, that those charged with the responsibility of governing tend to isolate themselves from "informed" public opinion, believing with much justification that today much of it is unprecedentedly out of touch with the real problems of power? It is only possible for statesmen to

be frank and open, relaxed and civilized, if they are presiding over a nation that is politically sophisticated, not to say cynical, at least in its higher reaches, in private if not in public. This used to be the case. Today, however, it is precisely in the higher reaches, where brainpower divorced from practical experience increasingly predominates, that political sophistication is most noticeably absent.

Thus I do not believe that the danger today comes primarily from *rulers* getting out of touch with reality. In my view, the danger comes primarily from the *ruled* getting out of touch with reality, or rather being encouraged to do so by a new kind of political nation which simply does not understand what politics is, has been, and always will be all about.

I did not like what I read in the Watergate transcripts. But I recognized in them a truer picture of political reality than ever I recognize in the editorials of the *Washington Post* or the *New York Times*. There is a disturbing connection between the political dreamworld inhabited by the intellectuals and the nightmare world inhabited by the President, the fantasies and absurdities of the former provoking the indecencies and crudities of the latter.

—Peregrine Worsthorne

Peregrine Worsthorne is on the staff of The Sunday Telegraph and author of The Socialist Myth.

If a President really wanted to know what the people of the country were thinking, he/she could at least spend an hour every day making telephone calls to grass-roots America. School superintendents, shop stewards, grocers, and county agricultural agents, as well as the recognized leaders in various fields, could give the President valuable unfiltered views.

In the real world, however, professional bureaucrats know that Presidential misperception balances with the cop-outisms of Congress. This permits the bureaucrats to go on running things as they always have. It's the ebb and flow of the status quo.

—James Boren

James Boren is the president of the International Association of Professional Bureaucrats.

Diary of a Celebrated Personage on tour:

Monday it was all ruffles and flourishes, "Hail to the Chief," and standing ovations. *Tuesday*, again, ruffles and flourishes,

"Hail to the Chief," and more standing ovations. *Wednesday*, once again...

Conceded, the man selects his formal speaking audiences carefully. In any case, most Americans have been infused from childhood with an intangible middle-class abhorrence of *lèse majesté*, which, in affirmative form, we call "respect for the Office." So we come to our feet, instinctively, when the trumpets blare and a stentorian voice bellows, "Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States."

But then, what about those low-profile entrances into places like Trader Vic's? They're something else again. No fanfare, no announcement. Only a flurry of recognition, followed by a slow gathering of excitement across the dining room—and suddenly, once again, a standing ovation.

And what about those spontaneous plunges into crowds (the real, not the Potemkin village kind) that drive his Secret Service protectors wild—but which the man loves, as did his flesh-pressing predecessor, and for the same reason: all those screaming, leaping, shouting, child-lifting people, reaching out for a famous hand, a touch of a celebrated garment.

All right, then, to paraphrase Howard Baker: what does the President know and *how* does he come to know it? Do Gallup and Harris show his popularity rating down below 30 percent? Well, now, there must have been something wrong with those polls—if Richard Nixon was to believe his own eyes and ears.

But there isn't, of course. The public-opinion polls indicate reflective attitudes toward people and issues; the ovations, an electronic-age genuflection to the great modern god, Celebrity. And not simply in the case of a President, either.

Item: Senators Sam Ervin and Howard Baker, the Old & Young Country Boy act of the summer of '73 televised Watergate show, find themselves overwhelmed with publishers' offers and speaking invitations. Baker, who pre-Watergate would have had trouble attracting a bellman's attention at the Palmer House, is more recently driven to fleeing into the hotel men's room to escape a horde of female autograph-seekers.

Item: A little-known Houston lawyer comes to Washington as Watergate Special Prosecutor. He is immediately seized by social lion-tamers as the capital's catch of the year.

And before even specially prosecuting his first case, Leon Jaworski is given the standing-ovation treatment wherever he appears. Being human, he goes along with it. Amiably. Indeed, enthusiastically.

Item: A Nobel Prize-winning Secretary of State, on arrival at a public theater, receives a standing ovation from an audience of popular-music fans. Frank Kellogg, 1929? Don't be silly. Even in the celebrity-crazed era of F. Scott Fitzgerald, American pop-music fans weren't given to fawning over their foreign ministers. No, the Celebrated Personage in this instance was, of course, Henry Kissinger, who made the scene for Frank Sinatra's performance at Capital Centre only a few minutes after a Celebrated Nonpersonage, former Vice-President Spiro Agnew, was also given a—you guessed it—standing ovation.

The Agnew ovation drew critical attention as a commentary on the perverse morality of our times. More important than the reception given a leader stripped of power, however, is what we're told by the elevation of a Secretary of State—a remarkably successful practitioner of the uses of power—to superstar status.

To be sure, since the day James McCord (minor celebrity) blew the Nixon White House cover story with his letter to John Sirica (major celebrity), we have wallowed in editorial warnings about the imperial hubris that brings our leaders to confuse their Personage with their Office. Yet there was Kissinger, beaming amid his mass of sycophants. No returning Roman proconsul could have asked for anything more.

More power to Henry, I guess. But that being the case, let's stop kidding ourselves that post-Watergate there are signs of a New Political Morality. For in the age of Johnny Carson, Dick Cavett, *Face the Nation*, and *Meet the Press*, it seems that the magic medium makes Celebrity-worshippers of us all, with the subjects of our adulation picked amorally and indiscriminately: (*Look, son, at the corner table. That's Jeb Magruder, the best-selling author. Why don't you go over and ask him to autograph the menu for you?*)

New Morality? Oh, sure. Any day now. But, meanwhile, why not even things up for history's sake? I mean, the least we could do is give a standing ovation, in memoriam, for poor Frank Kellogg, born fifty years

too soon. And while we're at it, let's not forget good old Albert B. Fall. —Victor Gold

Victor Gold was press secretary to Vice-President Agnew.

When I worked with Barry Goldwater, he was accused of simplistic thinking when he said that (1) the American Presidency has become an elected monarchy, (2) secrecy in government is anathema to freedom, (3) secret diplomacy is an affront to democracy, and (4) federal welfare programs do not end poverty, they simply enroll selected dependent populations into new political constituencies.

Now he defends the most absolute privilege of the President, seeks to jail those who penetrate government secrecy, absolutely supports the most secret diplomacy imaginable, and sits in virtual silence while the great corporations become recipients of massive federal welfare. His former detractors, meantime, now echo many of his former supposedly extremist positions.

What has changed? Well, Goldwater is in, and his former detractors are out. So what else is new?

I derive from such experiences the following notion: what is crucially involved in the misperceptions of great leaders is not the isolation of power but the possession of power. Great leaders behave in bad ways not because of some imperfection in the system or even because of imperfections in the souls of the leaders. The system (here or in the U.S.S.R.) is fundamentally hierarchical and representative. It demands that a few rule. Here they are said to rule because they represent "the people." In the Soviet Union they are said to represent a progressive state and a force of history. But what they do is rule. The same thing applies in a commercial empire. The boss may be said to represent the stockholders. What he does is rule the employees.

Everywhere this system works perfectly.

A few do rule. They rule because they want to rule. It is their character to do it, not a failure of their character.

Would-be leaders who do not have power are renowned throughout history for their stirring calls for freedom. Leaders who do have power are known for their stern insistence on order, obedience, loyalty, progress, duty (to the institution that they represent or embody), and sacrifice (of

everyone who isn't doing anything more important).

Dreamy liberal theorists still tell us that baked into some pie in some sky there is a prize way of doing things in which great leaders would not be isolated, would heed wisdom and rule in elegant style. If the Joint Chiefs just read the right journals, they seem to say, they would have showered Cambodia with rose petals. But the Joint Chiefs are hired to kill the enemies chosen by their boss, the Commander-in-Chief. And that's exactly what they do—not in contravention of the system, but in exact keeping with it. This seemed clear enough to some of our leading political theorists when the people being killed were John Kennedy's enemies. They supported his war as hotly as they opposed Johnson's.

Rather than moaning about how we are going to get along with great leaders, it seems to me that a millennium or so of experience might urge us to ask how, instead, we can get along without great leaders. The anti-Federalists in America had some notions along those lines and it might befit our upcoming Bicentennial to give them some second thoughts. The town meeting and local sovereignty once put these ideas into a real social form. Participatory rather than representative democracy sort of sums up the alternatives. Such ideas, it seems to me, are more realistic than various schemes of how best to speak wisdom to power.

When will we learn? Power is deaf. Not isolated. Stone cold deaf.

—Karl Hess

Karl Hess was Barry Goldwater's chief speechwriter during the 1964 Presidential campaign. He is now a commercial welder and community organizer in Washington, D.C.

In his book, *The Rules of Chaos*, Stephen Vizinczey states as the second rule, "Power weakens as it grows." In other words, the level of chaos rises as the situation expands. Personalities of those who hold power have some bearing on whether or not the rule operates. But two rather different situations, President Johnson's conduct of the Vietnam war and President Nixon's efforts

"It may be true, as Lincoln pretended to believe, that you can't fool all the people all the time; but you can fool enough of them to rule a large country."

—Will Durant

"Is Democracy A Failure?"
Harper's, October 1926

to manage the 1972 election and the Watergate affair, appear to demonstrate the validity of the rule.

In each case the President thought that he had adequate power—in fact, growing power—sufficient to control events. In each case the President found that power is always relative and can be measured only against a controlled situation. President Johnson could not control the situation in Vietnam. President Nixon could not control Watergate.

Johnson avoided facing up to the reality of his powerlessness by renouncing the Presidency. I believe that he could have been reelected, had he chosen to make the race, but he would have had to give up the war and acknowledge the inadequacy of his power. He chose to give up the office and retain the appearance of power, rather than retain the office and admit that he did not have power. His role in the campaign was to see to it as best he could that whoever succeeded him—Richard Nixon or Hubert Humphrey—would at least for a time maintain the pretense that President Johnson had had power.

In dealing with Watergate, President Nixon has demonstrated the failure of power in a somewhat different way. "The available federal machinery" referred to in a White House memo was not adequate in a situation that grew beyond defined or definable limits until it reached the level of chaos.

President Nixon did not have open to him the way of escape that was available to President Johnson. Johnson could forgo reelection and say that he was doing so in order to be more effective. Resignation by President Nixon would have been an admission of impotence, an admission he kept evading. In the end his evasions made him impotent and destroyed his Presidency.

—Eugene J. McCarthy

Eugene J. McCarthy was a contender for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 1968.

In legend, a young king disguises himself as a beggar and mingles anonymously among his subjects, thus to discover how things in his realm truly are. In the United States today the ruler's problem is quadruply difficult.

First, there is the difference in vantage point: rulers see from the macropicture, but citizens live in the microworld of their own families, neighborhoods, occupations. Technology

increases the distance between vantage points.

Second, the United States is not a homogeneous country with a single moral culture. What some groups believe to be moral (abortion, gambling, the death penalty), others hold to be immoral. It is difficult for a single personifier of the whole people—a President—to comprehend, let alone to represent accurately, all the diverse groups of this tumultuous yet peaceful land. Which “realities” weigh heaviest in his recognition?

Third, the national press systematically distorts reality. Out of touch with heterogeneous realities, it presents a homogeneous image of the nation. The vast numbers of evangelical, fundamentalist citizens, for example, are treated with condescension. An anti-Catholic bias has been built into the language; although they number one-quarter of the population, Catholics can scarcely feel that one-quarter of the nation’s symbols, biases, and preoccupations reflect their own symbols, biases, and preoccupations.

The upshot is that many Americans feel excluded from public presentations of “reality.” They feel excluded, not only by the White House, but by the media and other institutions. Indeed, many social institutions—the schools, the universities, the media—seem intent upon misinforming us about the variety.

Thus, even if a President wants an accurate view of the United States, he can turn to very few institutional supports.

Fourth, in the Presidency as organized by the Founding Fathers, two quite separate roles are conflated: that of personifying the people, the kingly role; and that of executing the government’s business, the executive role. For our own protection, we need to devise a way of separating these roles.

We do need someone to personify the people, to be the mythic link in the nation’s narrative history, from Washington through Jefferson and Jackson and Lincoln and Wilson to the present. Our Presidents loom larger than any other figures in the national imagination.

We also need an executive officer who can be held accountable for policies that affect the many diverse publics of the land.

For six years Richard Nixon used the former role as a “cover” for certain activities in the second role. These

“The enthusiasm of this country always makes me think of a bonfire on an ice floe. It burns bright as long as you feed it, and it looks good, but it doesn’t take hold, somehow, on the ice.”

—Finley Peter Dunne
Mr. Dooley Remembers, 1936

other activities of his were designed to rearrange the power base of American politics. These activities are in one sense quite traditional for some Americans, as dramatized in Melville’s *Confidence Man*, in *The Sting*, and in the history of the building of many great family fortunes; but they are justly feared and disdained in Presidents.

In an odd way, Nixon was more in touch with the messy, multiple realities of American life than his enemies. Yet he committed certain symbolic violations; he violated the nation’s kingly ideals. But he still was king.

To impeach a king is more awe-inspiring than to impeach a mere manager. The king can identify as brazenly as he dares with one part of the population, over and against another part. He can use the nation against itself.

Those who hate Nixon don’t anymore. Ironically, it was his paranoia regarding his enemies that led him to hand his enemies the dagger of his own undoing. Reinhold Niebuhr used to speak of the one iron rule of human life: each of us is in the end done in by what we take to be our strength. (Niebuhr himself succumbed to this law.)

So it was also with Kennedy and his love for images of the new, the quick, the daring, the aggressive; so it was also with Johnson’s unrestrained energy, on which he so prided himself.

There is only one sound political advice: lean, as Aristotle put it, against the wind of your own strength. A pitifully weak instrument against the ironies of history; and yet even attempts to improve upon it are subject to its bite.

The strength of our Presidents is their kingly, symbolic role. The strength of our activists is their moral passion. The strength of our conservatives is their economic power and Protestant symbolism.

No one group perceives realistically the complicated social texture of the entire country. The road to realistic perception is to acquire the perceptions held by our profoundest enemies—and to find ways to ne-

gotiate between their perceptions and our own. Respect for diversity is the highest form of politics. When politics declines, moralism rises: enemies are no longer partners in negotiation but objects of retribution. When the effort to respect diversity is more habitual to many in America, it will be easier for our Presidents to manifest it, too. We cannot ask Presidents to do what we do not do ourselves.

—Michael Novak

Michael Novak is associate director for humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation. His latest book is Choosing Our King (Macmillan).

Men in power usually know when they are doing wrong but believe they are powerful enough to keep the facts covered up. Even so, they need a new answer to the old question, “What is the right thing to do?” For example, when does one stop being a team player? How should one reconcile a feeling of personal loyalty with the public’s right to know all the facts? What is the proper course of action when one has a financial or personal interest in one side of a situation? When, if ever, does the end justify the means?

As a guide in answering such questions, I propose a very simple test: *do that which you would feel comfortable explaining on television.*

The Watergate hearings made it painfully clear that many witnesses would have acted otherwise if they had anticipated the need to explain their actions in public. Reputations and careers have been jeopardized by failure to contemplate how actions taken in secret would appear when exposed to public scrutiny. Watergate witnesses have learned the hard way but, thanks to television, the rest of us are now in a position to learn from their experience.

Even if we are never called upon to explain our behavior, the proposed TV Test is still useful, since an action is inherently good or bad regardless of whether it is ever disclosed in public. The fact that we disclose our actions in public does not make those actions right or wrong, but the possibility that we will have to disclose them in public helps us to evaluate the actions properly.

—Arjay Miller

Arjay Miller, former vice-chairman of Ford Motor Company, is now dean of Stanford University’s Graduate School of Business. A longer version of these remarks appeared in the San Francisco Examiner.

Short of a radical change in the form of our government, such as an elected triumvirate to serve as our Executive branch, which might provide better insurance against the possibility of some Hitler-like madman coming to power, I fail to see how to avoid the ills you outline.

However, as I see it, we shall emerge from the morass in which we, as a people, allowed ourselves to be bogged down. The checks and balances written into our Constitution, the moral courage of leaders in our Congress and throughout our nation, and the final arbiter, the common sense of the American people, will suffice to tear apart the veil of self-deluding grandeur of any American chief executive, or other key governmental official, restoring him to a balanced perception of reality and his very small place in the scheme of things. There are signs that the decent-thinking majority of our citizens has been shocked to the point where the downward trend has been halted. This vast majority is determined to start us on the upward path again.

What an opportunity we have in this upcoming Bicentennial era to exemplify again those high principles with which our Founders once ignited a flame that spread throughout the world.

—Matthew B. Ridgway

Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway was supreme commander of the Allied Powers in Europe and Army Chief of Staff.

In light of the effort by modern political scientists to reduce everything to a mathematical equation, I submit the following:

- P = the extent to which a President is in danger of mis-perceiving reality
- V = that President’s percentage of the two-party vote
- St = the number of members on his White House staff
- N = the average daily number of nonofficial, unscreened newspapers, letters, and other documents read by the President

$$P = \frac{V \times St}{N}$$

—Theodore C. Sorensen

Theodore C. Sorensen, formerly special counsel to President Kennedy, is now with the law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison.