

**The original documents are located in Box 49, folder “8/10/76 - Time” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

NOTE FOR:

*Connie G.*

FROM

: RON NESSEN

*Discussed by  
phone with  
Bergen.*

*RAN*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~NOTE~~ FOR:

~~FROM~~

RON NESSEN

FROM: JIM SHUMAN

Here are copies of the  
Q+A's prepared for the  
TIME cover story on the  
future of the Republican  
Party.

Dave is supposed to go  
over them with the President

Jim.

REPUBLICAN HEROES

Q. Who, in your view are the great heroes of the Republican Party in history, and how would you describe their contribution?

A. Lincoln, who kept the Union together and freed the slaves.

Teddy Roosevelt, who led us into our present role as a world power and who stood up against the excess of corrupt business without destroying the important role business plays in our society.

?  
And Dwight D. Eisenhower, who has been greatly underestimated but whose virtues as a President are becoming increasingly apparent.

JBS - 8-10-76

DRIFT TO RIGHT

Q. Do you agree with Clifton White and other Republican strategists that the country as a whole is, in some ways, drifting to the right on the ideological spectrum? If so, how?

A. I don't want to get into a semantic discussion of what is right, left, liberal or conservative. But I do see a change in public attitude toward government. More and more people are coming to realize that the federal government cannot solve all our national problems, and that the federal government cannot spend and spend beyond its resources. *Govt. servant, not master.*

If that is moving toward the right, then there is a move toward the right.

## PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCES

- Q. What are the key philosophical and economic issues that distinguish Republicans from Democrats in 1976?
- A. The key difference is the role of government in people's lives. The Democrats believe in a large central government, remote from the people it governs, which will supervise and plan most of the important activities in the economy and the nation. We Republicans believe in a limited federal government, with responsibility placed as close to the people as possible.

Economically, we believe in a free market economy with balanced federal budgets and as little interference as possible to keep the private sector competitive. The Democrats believe in a heavy federal hand in managing the economy.

JBS/8-10-76

CRISIS OF SURVIVAL

Q. There are only 13 Republican governors, 31 Senators, and 145 Representatives. Do these figures indicate a danger of the Republican Party withering away? Is the GOP faced with a crisis of survival?

A. I do not think there is a danger of the Party withering away. It survived the 1930's, which was it's low point. Even after 1964 the Party came back and in 1970 we occupied 32 of the state houses. We did it before and we can do it again.

I do think we must do more to build up the Party, and I intend to do that because I think it is imperative for the functioning of our government to have a strong two Party system.

*Good people.*

*GOP Pres = 16 of last 25 years.*

AW/JBS - 8-10-76

REPUBLICAN DECLINE

Q. Today, less than 20 percent of the electorate identifies itself as Republicans. Why, in your view, has there been this decline? What can be done to reverse it?

A. Both parties have been losing ground among the voters. Americans have become adept ticket splitters and there is no question that party allegiance has weakened.

There are a number of reasons for this, but basically our society has changed and people look at persons and events in different ways. Appeals come from many sources. Television, for example, has had an enormous impact on the way in which people form their attitudes and perceptions. I think it is important to note that.

Paralleling the decline in party allegiance, there has been a similar decline in voter participation. This is a problem for both parties and frankly, no one has come up with answers on how to reverse these trends.

## REPUBLICAN EVOLUTION

- Q. How has the Party evolved since then. If you were addressing a group of young voters who were trying to decide whether to affiliate themselves with a party, what argument would you use to persuade them to become Republicans?
- A. The Party has, of course, changed with changes in political and social attitudes, just as the Democrats have. But I think the basic principles remain the same.

If I were speaking to a group of young voters, I think I would use the same arguments that persuaded me to become a Republican: the need to maintain a free enterprise economy with a fiscally responsible government, the need for balance between the three branches of government, as laid out in the Constitution, and the fact that the Republican principle of limited government creates the best climate for individual freedom.

I think it is interesting that Governor Carter, during the primaries, repudiated the principles of the Democratic Party and ran on the essentially Republican issues. In fact, some Democrats viewed him as a Republican running under the colors of a Democrat. Since then, he has, of course, adopted all of the Democratic positions on the issues.

WHY I BECAME A REPUBLICAN

Q. Why did you originally become a Republican? What set of principles characterized the party then, and what attracted you to them?

A. There was, of course, family background. My parents were Republicans, and Grand Rapids was heavily Republican.

However, I did think FDR's efforts to pack the Supreme Court following the 1936 election was shocking. I also opposed his seeking a third term and a fourth term.

I saw all those actions <sup>and power where</sup> as the first steps in the growth of government to a size when it could destroy the development of individual freedom for which this nation was founded.

The Republicans appealed to me because I believed that their philosophy of a free enterprise economy and limited government provides the best climate for free individuals to make their own choice and to seek their own goals in life.

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