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SIGMA DELTA CHI
NATIONAL PRESS CLUB
JUNE 28, 1974, 7:30 PM



PRESIDENT NAIL, PRESIDENT-ELECT EMORY, MEMBERS AND
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS OF SIGMA DELTA CHI, THE SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL
JOURNALISTS. FIRST LET ME CONGRATULATE THE NEW MEMBERS, THE WINNERS
OF SIGMA DELTA CHI SCHOLARSHIPS, BEN BRADLEE FOR RECEIVING THE WELLS
KEY AWARD, AND THE FOUR NEW MEMBERS OF YOUR HALL OF FAME.

I HAVE OVER THE YEARS BENEFITTED MUCH FROM THE WASHINGTON COMMENTARY
OF ERIC SEVAREID, ROSCOE DRUMMOND, BOB DONOVAN AND DICK STROUT AND
AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER HAVE ENTHUSTICALLY AGREED AND VIOLENTLY
DISAGREED WITH ALL FOUR. TO ACCOMMODATE SUCH A DISTINGUISHED
QUARTET OF GREAT WASHINGTON REPORTERS, SIGMA DELTA CHI WILL HAVE
TO CONSIDERABLY ENLARGE ITS HALL OF FAME.



OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES WISELY OBSERVED THAT FAME USUALLY
COMES TO THOSE WHO ARE THINKING ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE. I KNOW THIS
IS TRUE IN MY CASE / BECAUSE UNTIL I ACQUIRED A MEASURE OF
INSTANT FAME ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO I WAS THINKING OF HOW I MIGHT
LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO BECOME SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, AND MY WIFE
BETTY WAS THINKING ABOUT WHEN I WOULD EVER GET HOME TO DINNER.



I KNOW THAT ALL YOUR AWARD WINNERS HAVE BEEN THINKING FOR AT LEAST
THE SAME SPAN OF MOMENTOUS YEARS ABOUT DOING THE BEST POSSIBLE
JOB OF FINDING OUT WHAT WAS GOING ON AROUND WASHINGTON AND THE WORLD,
AND EXPLAINING CLEARLY AND COGENTLY WHAT YOU THINK IT MEANS TO
YOUR READERS AND LISTENERS -- PREFERABLY AHEAD OF YOUR COMPETITORS.

AS YOU KNOW, I AM A GREAT BELIEVER IN COMPETITION AND I
AM PERSONALLY CHALLENGED AND STIMULATED BY IT. TO THAT EXTENT
I DO MISS THE DAILY DEBATE AND PARLIAMENTARY CONTESTS OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES. SOME OF YOU HAVE WRITTEN LATELY TO CHIDE ME
A LITTLE ABOUT DOING BATTLE WITH STRAW MEN. WELL, IT IS TRUE I HAVE
TAKEN SOME SWIPES AT CREEP WITHOUT PERSONALLY DEFAMING THE CREEPERS,
AND I HAVE EXPRESSED DISMAY AT THE PROSPECT OF A VETO-PROOF DEMOCRATIC
CONGRESS NEXT YEAR WITHOUT VILIFYING ANY OF MY GOOD FRIENDS ON THE
MAJORITY SIDE OF THE AISLE -- AFTER ALL, 85% OF THEM VOTED FOR ME. WHAT
OTHER VICE PRESIDENT CAN MAKE THAT CLAIM?



I HAVE BEEN WARNING PEOPLE ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY OF THE
DAMAGE TO OUR AMERICAN SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES AND THE TWO-PARTY
SYSTEM IF THE OTHER PARTY GAINS FROM 50 TO 100 SEATS THIS NOVEMBER
AS SOME OF YOU HAVE SPECULATED. I BELIEVE THE SPEAKER SAID THE
OTHER DAY HE COULD LIVE COMFORTABLY WITH 300 DEMOCRATS AND 135
REPUBLICANS IN THE NEXT HOUSE. I HAVE BEEN SAYING AND WILL SAY
AGAIN THAT THIS WOULD BE NOTHING LESS THAN A LEGISLATIVE DICTATORSHIP
AND THAT AMERICANS DON'T LIKE DICTATORS.



BUT I WILL CONFESS WITHIN THESE WALLS, WHERE NOTHING EVER
LEAKS, THAT I DO HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY VISUALIZING CARL AS A DICTATOR
OR NOT BEING LIKED BY MOST OF US.



SO IF THE SOUND THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE OF HATING THE SIN
BUT LOVING THE SINNER IS APPLICABLE TO POLITICS, I GUESS I AM
GUILTY OF BEING SOFT ON DEMOCRATS AND TOUGH ON STRAW MEN. IT HAS
BEEN MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE THAT IT IS A LOT MORE FUN TO MAKE
FRIENDS THAN ENEMIES, ALTHOUGH IT USUALLY TAKES MORE THOUGHT AND
PATIENCE.



ON THE OTHER HAND, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT CONFLICT IS THE
ESSENCE OF NEWS. THE SUREST WAY FOR ANYONE TO DRAW A CROWD IS
TO START A FIGHT, AND THE SUREST WAY TO GET YOUR STORY ON PAGE ONE
OR THE SIX O'CLOCK NETWORK NEWS IS TO BE THERE WHEN THE FIGHT
STARTS.



WARS MAKE THE BLACKEST HEADLINES. THE FIRST PART OF THE

morning or afternoon
1 PAPER I TURN TO IS THE SPORTS PAGE. CRIMES, COURTROOM BATTLES,

DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS, AND CERTAINLY POLITICAL CONTESTS ARE

ALL FORMS OF CONFLICT, AND THEREFORE NEWS.



SO I COME TO MY OWN DILEMMA IN MY RELATIONS WITH YOU
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE PRESS. THOSE REGULARS WHO TRAVEL
WITH ME HAVE BEEN COMPLAINING LATELY THAT MY SPEECHES ARE TOO BLAND
AND BORING. LOOKING BACK ON IT, THE SPEECHES I'VE MADE SINCE
BECOMING VICE PRESIDENT THAT GOT THE MOST ATTENTION IN THE NEWS WERE
THOSE WHEN I TOOK THE OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE AFL-CIO, OR CREEP, OR
THE FACELESS ACCUSERS OF HENRY KISSINGER, OR "THE STRIDENT VOICES
ON THE BANKS OF THE POTOMAC" -- FROM WHICH, OF COURSE, ALL PRESENT
COMPANY IS EXCEPTED.



BY THIS YARDSTICK AND ALSO FROM THE FORMBOOK OF SOME OF MY
PREDECESSORS IN THIS OFFICE -- AND I MEAN MORE THAN JUST ONE -- THE
BEST WAY FOR ME TO GRAB YOUR ATTENTION, TO GUARANTEE THAT THIS SPEECH
WILL BE NATIONALLY NEWSWORTHY, WOULD BE TO LAUNCH AN ALL-OUT ATTACK ON
THE NETWORKS AND NEWSPAPERS, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF "THE EFFETE EASTERN
ESTABLISHMENT". BUT THERE ARE GOOD REASONS WHY I'M NOT GOING TO.



FIRST, SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE EFFETE EASTERNERS, AND I TAUGHT

SOME OF THEM HOW TO PLAY FOOTBALL AT YALE. SECOND, I DON'T REALLY

CARE WHETHER I READ WHAT I SAY TONIGHT IN TOMORROW'S WASHINGTON

^{BEN}
POST. INCIDENTALLY, I ALWAYS BEGIN MY DAY READING THE WASHINGTON

¹
POST FROM SPORTS SECTION TO COVER. I ALSO READ THE NEW YORK TIMES

AND THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS, ABOUT A DOZEN OTHER DAILY PAPERS, ALL

THE NEWS-MAGAZINES, AND ONCE IN A WHILE I EVEN READ THE NEW REPUBLIC.

I ALSO WATCH THE NETWORKS.



THE REASON I'M NOT CONCERNED ABOUT MAKING HEADLINES IS
THAT I CAME HERE TONIGHT SIMPLY TO VISIT WITH MEMBERS OF THE
WASHINGTON PROFESSIONAL CHAPTER OF SIGMA DELTA CHI AND TO SHARE
WITH YOU SOME OF MY THOUGHTS ABOUT YOU, AS YOU FREQUENTLY SHARE
WITH MILLIONS YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT ME.



I HAVE HEARD A LOT OF NONSENSE ABOUT THE INEVITABLE
ADVERSARY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REPORTERS AND POLITICIANS, AND
BETWEEN FREE GOVERNMENT AND A FREE PRESS. I MAY EVEN HAVE UTTERED
SOME OF IT MYSELF. BUT I HAVE COME TO BELIEVE AFTER 25 YEARS HERE,
DURING WHICH I HAVE DEALT WITH MANY MEMBERS OF THE NEWS MEDIA AND
WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OF ALL BRANCHES AND FROM BOTH PARTIES,
THAT WHAT WE ARE ALL PRIMARILY CONCERNED ABOUT CANNOT BE CATEGORIZED
OR REDUCED TO FORMULAS.



MOST OF YOU, I THINK, WOULD AGREE WITH ME THAT "THE PRESS"
AS A CLASS HAS BEEN UNFAIRLY CHARGED WITH BIAS, ARROGANCE, AND
VINDICTIVE CONSPIRACY. PERHAPS YOU WOULD ALSO AGREE THAT POLITICIANS
AS A CLASS HAVE BEEN UNFAIRLY ACCUSED OF BEING VENAL, HYPOCRITICAL
AND OF THE MOST MODEST INTELLECTUAL ATTAINMENTS.



YET SOME JOURNALISTS WE ALL KNOW, AND SOME POLITICIANS
WE ALL KNOW, SURELY CAN BE SO CHARACTERIZED -- NOT SO MUCH
OBJECTIVELY AS CHARITABLY. YOU AND I, OF COURSE, ARE HONORABLE,
UNBIASED AND FORGIVING, DEDICATED AND DISTINGUISHED PRACTITIONERS
OF OUR NOBLE PROFESSIONS.



THE FACT IS THAT HUMAN BEINGS ARE ALL DIFFERENT AND WE
ARE ALL FALLIBLE. EACH OF US IS SOME KIND OF MIXTURE OF GOOD
AND BAD, AND NOBODY IS EITHER PERFECT OR VILE. AND AS FOR REPORTERS
AND POLITICIANS -- PERHAPS I SHOULD SAY JOURNALISTS AND STATESMEN --
THE ONE SURE THING WE HAVE IN COMMON IS THAT WE DO NOT TAKE VERY
KINDLY TO CRITICISM. WE WOULD BOTH, REALLY, MUCH RATHER DISH
IT OUT.



SO WHEN PEOPLE ASK ME "HOW IS THE PRESS TREATING YOU?"
THERE ISN'T ANY ANSWER\ BECAUSE THERE REALLY ISN'T ANY SUCH THING
AS "THE PRESS." THERE ARE MEN AND WOMEN, SOME THAT I KNOW AND
MANY MORE I DON'T KNOW, AND THEY ALL TREAT ME A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY
IN WHAT THEY SAY AND WRITE. IF I HAD THE TIME TO READ AND LISTEN AND
ADD IT ALL UP AND ANALYZE IT -- WHICH I ASSURE YOU I DON'T -- I
SUPPOSE IT WOULD COME OUT A LITTLE BIT BETTER THAN I DESERVE.



BUT THERE IS A CONVENTIONAL WISDOM IN WASHINGTON THAT
ALL HONEYMOONS BETWEEN PRESS AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS ARE BOUND TO
END, SO I WONDER WHEN MY TURN WILL COME. I HAVE ENJOYED ALWAYS
PLEASANT, OFTEN WARM PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE
IN THE NEWS BUSINESS FOR MORE THAN A QUARTER CENTURY. I DON'T
MIND SAYING I HAVE DONE MY BEST TO MAINTAIN SUCH A RELATIONSHIP
OF MUTUAL TRUST AND MUTUAL BENEFIT.



BUT I REALIZE THERE IS SOME DANGER IN IT. THE INFORMATION
AND IMPRESSIONS THAT PEOPLE ALL OVER AMERICA GET OF JERRY FORD
SHOULD NOT DEPEND UPON WHETHER OR NOT YOU LIKE ME, OR I LIKE
YOU, BUT UPON WHETHER JERRY FORD IS DOING HIS JOB FOR THE PEOPLE
ALL OVER AMERICA.



SIMILARLY, AND A FRIEND NEEDS TO SAY IT, THERE IS DANGER
AND DISTORTION INHERENT IN A SITUATION WHERE A GREAT PREPONDERANCE
OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES HERE IN WASHINGTON DISLIKE OR
DISAPPROVE OF THE SAME PUBLIC OFFICIAL. I AM NOT SUGGESTING THIS
IS A NEW PHENOMENA, BUT THE ELECTRONIC AGE AND THE PERSONALIZATION
OF REPORTING HAVE INTENSIFIED ITS EFFECT ON THE POLITICAL PROCESS.



SOME OF YOU HAVE WONDERED ALOUD WHY I SPEND SO MUCH TIME
FLYING AROUND THE COUNTRY MEETING PEOPLE AND MAKING SPEECHES AND
HOLDING PRESS CONFERENCES AT ALMOST EVERY STOP. SINCE SOME HIGH
OFFICIALS WITHIN MY MEMORY HAVE BEEN SEVERELY CRITICIZED FOR NOT
DOING ENOUGH OF THAT, I COULD HAVE EXPECTED A CHORUS OF EDITORIAL
PRAISE. AND I HAVE HEARD A FEW HALLELUJAHS, MAINLY FROM YOUR
COLLEAGUES WHO DON'T WORK IN WASHINGTON.



TO BE FRANK, ONE OF THE REASONS I LIKE TO GET AROUND A LOT IS THAT, JUST AS THE EIFFEL TOWER IS THE ONLY PLACE IN PARIS WHEN YOU CAN'T SEE THE EIFFEL TOWER, WASHINGTON IS ABOUT THE WORST PLACE IN AMERICA FROM WHICH TO SEE AMERICA.



POLLS ARE USEFUL, BUT PERCENTAGES AREN'T PEOPLE WHO CAN TALK AND LISTEN AND SMILE AND ARGUE. AND PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF WASHINGTON DON'T HAVE THE SAME INTERESTS AND CONCERNS; OR, MORE PRECISELY, THEY DON'T HAVE THE SAME MIX OF PRIORITIES. THEY AREN'T THE SAME IN ANY TWO PLACES I GO. AND I CAN PROVE THIS BY THE WAY LOCAL REPORTERS AND EDITORS TREAT WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME FORD STATEMENT IN THE DIFFERENT PLACES I VISIT, AS WELL AS THE DIFFERENT NEWS JUDGMENTS APPLIED BY THE FLYING WASHINGTON PRESS CORPS THAT TRAVELS WITH ME.



THE FUNNY THING IS THAT ALL OF THEM ARE RIGHT. FROM
THEIR SEVERAL ENVIRONMENTS AND BY THEIR OWN HONEST EVALUATIONS,
ALL ARE BEING OBJECTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL, EVEN THOUGH THEIR LEADS
ARE ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT. SO I SUBMIT THAT SOME OF THE ZIGZAGGING
I AM ACCUSED OF IS THE RESULT OF CHANGING MY QUESTIONERS RATHER
THAN CHANGING MY MIND.



OVER THE PAST DECADE SINCE I BECAME MINORITY LEADER,
I HAVE MADE THE SAME KIND OF JET-STOP JOURNEYS AROUND MOST OF OUR
50 STATES EVERY OTHER YEAR, AND HAVE DONE A GOOD BIT OF TRAVELING
IN BETWEEN TIMES AS WELL. THE MAIN DIFFERENCE WAS THAT I BOUGHT
MY OWN AIRLINE TICKET AND CARRIED MY OWN SUITCASE AND WAITED IN
AIRPORT LINES LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE, PLUS THE FACT THAT MY MEDIA
FRIENDS IN WASHINGTON RARELY FOLLOWED ME AROUND.



BUT IT TOOK A TRIP TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO
GIVE ME A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON ALL THIS. AS YOU KNOW, MY DEAR
COLLEAGUE THE LATE HALE BOGGS AND I REPRESENTED THE HOUSE ON
THAT FASCINATING MISSION JUST TWO YEARS AGO.



AS THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN TO THE MAINLAND OF CHINA KNOW,
THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CHINESE WE ENCOUNTERED PUMPED US FULL OF THE
ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE GREAT CULTURAL REVOLUTION. TO MAKE A LONG
STORY SHORT, THIS OCCURRED A FEW YEARS BACK WHEN CHAIRMAN MAO
DECIDED THAT MANY OF HIS BUREAUCRATS, PLANT MANAGERS, PROFESSIONAL
PEOPLE, STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND OTHER INTELLECTUALS WERE GETTING TOO
BIG FOR THEIR CHAIRMAN MAO TROUSERS. SO HE DECREED THAT ALL OF THEM
HAD TO GO BACK TO THE FACTORIES AND RICE PADDIES FOR A YEAR OR SO TO
LEARN HOW WORKERS AND PEASANTS REALLY LIVE.



THIS NEARLY RUINED CHINA'S EMERGING INDUSTRIALIZATION
PROGRAM AND HIGHER EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, INDEPENDENT CHINA-WATCHERS
BELIEVE, BUT IN A LESS SEVERE FORM IT APPEARS TO HAVE BECOME
INSTITUTIONALIZED AS PART OF THE SYSTEM.



AND AT THE RISK OF ANOTHER SCOLDING FROM HUMAN EVENTS FOR SUGGESTING
THAT ANY GOOD IDEA EVER CAME OUT OF CHAIRMAN MAO, IT SEEMED TO
HALE BOGGS AND ME THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING TO BE SAID FOR IT. AFTER
ALL, WE AND ALL ELECTED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAD TO GO BACK TO OUR
DISTRICTS REGULARLY AND PUT OUR POLITICAL CAREERS ON THE LINE EVERY
TWO YEARS, ON THE BASIS OF HOW WELL WE UNDERSTOOD AND RESPONDED TO
THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE BACK HOME.



I DON'T KNOW WHETHER CHAIRMAN MAO INCLUDED JOURNALISTS
IN HIS BACK-TO-THE-RICE PADDIES EDICT, BUT I TOSS OUT TO YOU THE
HALF-SERIOUS SUGGESTION THAT THE QUALITY OF POLITICAL REPORTING
MIGHT BE IMPROVED IF ALL WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENTS TOOK A
YEAR OFF EVERY FEW YEARS AND TRADED JOBS WITH THE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
REPORTER OR THE FARM OR LABOR OR BUSINESS EDITOR ON YOUR
HOMETOWN PAPER, OR WITH THE NEWS TEAM OF YOUR LOCAL STATION.



I KNOW THAT MANY OF YOU DO GET AROUND THE COUNTRY EXTENSIVELY, IF YOU
HAVE GENEROUS EXPENSE ACCOUNTS OR ENLIGHTENED EDITORS, OR BOTH,
BUT I BELIEVE IT WOULD BROADEN YOUR PERSPECTIVE TO PERIODICALLY
PRACTICE YOUR PROFESSION OUTSIDE OF THE CAPITAL OF THE UNITED STATES,
AND IN OTHER THAN AN ELECTION-SEASON CONTEXT, SO THAT THE VAST AND
VALUABLE DIFFERENCES IN THE WAY AMERICANS THINK AND LIVE WOULD
BECOME A PART OF YOUR OWN NEWS JUDGMENTS.



I'M NOT SURE YOU WILL TAKE KINDLY TO THIS IDEA, BECAUSE
WE ALL LEARN TO LIKE IT HERE IN THE POLITICAL COCKPIT OF OUR COUNTRY
AND THE NEWS CAPITAL OF THE WORLD. BUT SINCE SO MANY OF MY FRIENDS
IN YOUR BUSINESS HAVE BEEN ADVISING ME TO STAY IN WASHINGTON MORE,
I KNOW YOU WON'T MIND MY COUNSELING YOU TO GET AWAY FROM WASHINGTON
MORE. DON'T WAIT FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO SEND YOU A MESSAGE;
GO OUT THERE AND GET IT FROM THEM FIRSTHAND.

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REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD
SIGMA DELTA CHI
NATIONAL PRESS CLUB
WASHINGTON, D. C.
7:30 p.m., JUNE 28, 1974

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY



President Nail, President-elect Emory, members and distinguished guests of Sigma Delta Chi, the society of professional journalists. First let me congratulate the new members, the winners of Sigma Delta Chi scholarships, Ben Bradlee for receiving the Wells Key Award, and the four new members of your Hall of Fame. I have over the years benefited much from the Washington commentary of Eric Sevareid, Roscoe Drummond, Bob Donovan and Dick Strout and at one time or another have enthusiastically agreed and violently disagreed with all four. To accommodate such a distinguished quartet of great Washington reporters, Sigma Delta Chi will have to considerably enlarge its Hall of Fame.

Oliver Wendell Holmes wisely observed that fame usually comes to those who are thinking about something else. I know this is true in my case because until I acquired a measure of instant fame about six months ago I was thinking of how I might live long enough to become Speaker of the House, and my wife Betty was thinking about when I would ever get home to dinner. I know that all your award winners have been thinking for at least the same span of momentous years about doing the best possible job of finding out what was going on around Washington and the world, and explaining clearly and cogently what you think it means to your readers and listeners — preferably ahead of your competitors.

As you know, I am a great believer in competition and I am personally challenged and stimulated by it. To that extent I do miss the daily debate and parliamentary contests of the House of Representatives. Some of you have written lately to chide me a little about doing battle with straw men. Well, it is true I have taken some swipes at CREEP without personally defaming the creepers, and I have expressed dismay at the prospect of a veto-proof Democratic Congress next year without villifying any of my good friends on the majority side of the aisle — after all 85% of them voted for me. What other Vice President can make that claim?

I have been warning people all around the country of the damage to our American system of checks and balances and the two-party system if the other party gains from 50 to 100 seats this November as some of you have speculated. I believe ~~the Speaker~~ said the other day he could live comfortably with 300 Democrats and

(more)

135 Republicans in the next House. I have been saying and will say again that this would be nothing less than a legislative dictatorship and that Americans don't like dictators.

But I will confess within these walls, where nothing ever leaks, that I do have some difficulty visualizing Carl as a dictator or not being liked by most of us.

So if the sound theological principle of hating the sin but loving the sinner is applicable to politics, I guess I am guilty of being soft on Democrats and tough on straw men. It has been my personal experience that it is a lot more fun to make friends than enemies, although it usually takes more thought and patience.

On the other hand, it seems to me that conflict is the essence of news. The surest way for anyone to draw a crowd is to start a fight, and the surest way to get your story on Page One or the six o'clock network news is to be there when the fight starts.

Wars make the blackest headlines. The first part of the paper I turn to is the sports page. Crimes, courtroom battles, diplomatic negotiations, and certainly political contests are all forms of conflict, and therefore news.

So I come to my own dilemma in my relations with you ladies and gentlemen of the press. Those regulars who travel with me have been complaining lately that my speeches are too bland and boring. Looking back on it, the speeches I've made since becoming Vice President that got the most attention in the news were those when I took the offensive against the AFL-CIO, or CREEP, or the faceless accusers of Henry Kissinger, or "the strident voices on the banks of the Potomac" — from which, of course, all present company is excepted.

By this yardstick and also from the formbook of some of my predecessors in this office — and I mean more than just one — the best way for me to grab your attention, to guarantee that this speech will be nationally newsworthy, would be to launch an all-out attack on the networks and newspapers, particularly those of "the effete eastern establishment." But there are good reasons why I'm not going to. First, some of my best friends are effete Easterners, and I taught some of them how to play football at Yale. Second, I don't really care whether I read what I say tonight in tomorrow's Washington Post. Incidentally, I always begin my day reading the Washington Post from Sports Section to cover. I also read the New York Times and the Grand Rapids Press, about a dozen other daily papers, all the news-magazines, and once in a while I even read the New Republic. I also watch the networks.

(more)

The reason I'm not concerned about making headlines is that I came here tonight simply to visit with members of the Washington Professional Chapter of Sigma Delta Chi and to share with you some of my thoughts about you, as you frequently share with millions your thoughts about me.

I have heard a lot of nonsense about the inevitable adversary relationship between reporters and politicians, and between free government and a free press. I may even have uttered some of it myself. But I have come to believe after 25 years here, during which I have dealt with many members of the news media and with government officials of all branches and from both parties, that what we are all primarily concerned about cannot be categorized or reduced to formulas.

Most of you, I think, would agree with me that "the press" as a class has been unfairly charged with bias, arrogance, and vindictive conspiracy. Perhaps you would also agree that politicians as a class have been unfairly accused of being venal, hypocritical and of the most modest intellectual attainments.

Yet some journalists we all know, and some politicians we all know, surely can be so characterized -- not so much objectively as charitably. You and I, of course, are honorable, unbiased and forgiving, dedicated and distinguished practitioners of our noble professions.

The fact is that human beings are all different and we are all fallible. Each of us is some kind of mixture of good and bad, and nobody is either perfect or vile. And as for reporters and politicians -- perhaps I should say journalists and statesmen -- the one sure thing we have in common is that we do not take very kindly to criticism. We would both, really, much rather dish it out.

So when people ask me "how is the press treating you?" there isn't any answer because there really isn't any such thing as "the press." There are men and women, some that I know and many more I don't know, and they all treat me a little differently in what they say and write. If I had the time to read and listen and add it all up and analyze it -- which I assure you I don't -- I suppose it would come out a little bit better than I deserve.

But there is a conventional wisdom in Washington that all honeymoons between press and public officials are bound to end, so I wonder when my turn will come. I have enjoyed always pleasant, often warm personal relationships with people who are in the news business for more than a quarter century. I don't mind saying I have done my best to maintain such a relationship of mutual trust and mutual benefit.

But I realize there is some danger in it. The information and ~~impressions that~~ people all over America get of Jerry Ford should not depend upon

(more)

whether or not you like me, or I like you, but upon whether Jerry Ford is doing his job for the people all over America.

Similarly, and a friend needs to say it, there is danger and distortion inherent in a situation where a great preponderance of your professional colleagues here in Washington dislike or disapprove of the same public official. I am not suggesting this is a new phenomena, but the electronic age and the personalization of reporting have intensified its effect on the political process.

Some of you have wondered aloud why I spend so much time flying around the country meeting people and making speeches and holding press conferences at almost every stop. Since some high officials within my memory have been severely criticized for not doing enough of that, I could have expected a chorus of editorial praise. And I have heard a few Hallelujahs, mainly from your colleagues who don't work in Washington.

To be frank, one of the reasons I like to get around a lot is that, just as the Eiffel Tower is the only place in Paris where you can't see the Eiffel Tower, Washington is about the worst place in America from which to see America.

Polls are useful, but percentages aren't people who can talk and listen and smile and argue. And people outside of Washington don't have the same interests and concerns; or, more precisely, they don't have the same mix of priorities. They aren't the same in any two places I go. And I can prove this by the way local reporters and editors treat what is essentially the same Ford statement in the different places I visit, as well as the different news judgments applied by the flying Washington press corps that travels with me.

The funny thing is that all of them are right. From their several environments and by their own honest evaluations, all are being objective and professional, even though their leads are altogether different. So I submit that some of the zigzagging I am accused of is the result of changing my questioners rather than changing my mind.

Over the past decade since I became Minority Leader, I have made the same kind of jet-stop journeys around most of our 50 states every other year, and have done a good bit of traveling in between times as well. The main difference was that I bought my own airline ticket and carried my own suitcase and waited in airport lines like everybody else, plus the fact that my media friends in Washington rarely followed me around.

But it took a trip to the People's Republic of China to give me a new perspective on all this. As you know, my dear colleague the late Hale Boggs and I ~~represented the House on that~~ fascinating mission just two years ago.

(more)

As those of you who have been to the mainland of China know, the English-speaking Chinese we encountered pumped us full of the accomplishments of the Great Cultural Revolution. To make a long story short, this occurred a few years back when Chairman Mao decided that many of his bureaucrats, plant managers, professional people, students, teachers and other intellectuals were getting too big for their Chairman Mao trousers. So he decreed that all of them had to go back to the factories and rice paddies for a year or so to learn how workers and peasants really live.

This nearly ruined China's emerging industrialization program and higher educational system, independent China-watchers believe, but in a less severe form it appears to have become institutionalized as part of the system. And at the risk of another scolding from Human Events for suggesting that any good idea ever came out of Chairman Mao, it seemed to Hale Boggs and me that there was something to be said for it. After all, we and all elected Members of Congress had to go back to our districts regularly and put our political careers on the line every two years, on the basis of how well we understood and responded to the needs of the people back home.

I don't know whether Chairman Mao included journalists in his back-to-the-rice paddies edict, but I toss out to you the half-serious suggestion that the quality of political reporting might be improved if all Washington Correspondents took a year off every few years and traded jobs with the county courthouse reporter or the farm or labor or business editor on your hometown paper, or with the news team of your local station. I know that many of you do get around the country extensively, if you have generous expense accounts or enlightened editors, or both. But I believe it would broaden your perspective to periodically practice your profession outside of the capital of the United States, and in other than an election-season context, so that the vast and valuable differences in the way Americans think and live would become a part of your own news judgments.

I'm not sure you will take kindly to this idea, because we all learn to like it here in the political cockpit of our country and the news capital of the world. But since so many of my friends in your business have been advising me to stay in Washington more, I know you won't mind my counseling you to get away from Washington more. Don't wait for the American people to send you a message; go out there and get it from them firsthand.

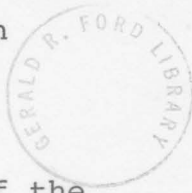
Remarks by Vice President Gerald R. Ford
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Oliver Wendell Holmes wisely observed that fame usually comes to those who are thinking about something else. I know this is true in my case because until I acquired a measure of instant fame about six months ago I was thinking of how I might live long enough to become Speaker of the House, and my wife Betty was thinking about when I would ^{ever} get home to dinner. I know that all your award winners have been thinking for at least the same span of ^{momentous years} ~~the past quarter century~~ about doing the best possible job of finding out what was going on around Washington and the world, and explaining clearly and cogently what you think it means to your readers and listeners, ^{preferably} ahead of your competitors.

As you know, I am a great believer in competition and I am personally challenged and stimulated by it. To that extent I do miss the daily debate and parliamentary contests of the House of Representatives. Some of you have written lately to chide me

a little about doing battle with straw men. Well, it is true I have taken some swipes at Creep without personally defaming the creepers, and I have expressed dismay at the prospect of a veto-proof Democratic Congress next year without vilifying any of my good friends on the majority side of the aisle -- after all 85% of them voted for me. What other Vice President can make that claim?



I have been warning people all around the country of the damage to our American system of checks and balances and the two-party system if the other party gains from 50 to 100 seats this November as some of you have speculated. I believe the Speaker said the other day he could live comfortably with 300 Democrats and 135 Republicans in the next House. I have been saying and will say again that this would be nothing less than a legislative dictatorship and that Americans don't like dictators.

But I will confess within these walls, where nothing ever leaks, that I do have some difficulty visualizing Carl as a dictator or not being liked by most of us.

So if the sound theological principle of hating the sin but loving the sinner is applicable to politics, I guess I am guilty of being soft on Democrats and tough on straw men. It has been my personal experience that it is a lot more fun to make friends than enemies, although it usually takes more thought and patience.

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On the other hand, it seems to me that conflict is the essence of news. The surest way for anyone to draw a crowd is to start a fight, and the surest way ~~you~~^{to} get your story on Page One or the six o'clock network news is to be there when the fight starts.

Wars make the blackest headlines. The first part of the paper I turn to is the sports page. Crimes, courtroom battles, diplomatic negotiations, and certainly political contests are all forms of conflict, and therefore news.

So I come to my own dilemma in my relations with you ladies and gentlemen of the press. Those regulars who travel with me have been complaining lately that my speeches are too bland and boring. Looking back on it, the speeches I've made since becoming Vice President that got the most attention in the news were those when I took the offensive against the AFL-CIO, or CREEP, or the faceless accusers of Henry Kissinger, or "the strident voices on the banks of the Potomac" -- from which, of course, all present company is excepted.

By this yardstick and also from the formbook of some of my predecessors in this office -- and I mean more than just one -- the best way for me to grab your attention, to guarantee that this speech will be nationally newsworthy, would be to launch an all-out attack on the networks and newspapers, particularly those of "the effete eastern establishment." But there are good





reasons why I'm not going to. First, some of my best friends are effete Easterners, and I taught some of them how to play football at Yale. Second, I don't really care whether I read what I say tonight in tomorrow's Washington Post @ Incidentally, I always begin my day reading the Washington Post from Sports Section to cover. I also read the New York Times and the Grand Rapids Press, about a dozen other daily papers, all the news-magazines, and once in a while I even read ^{the} New Republic. I also watch ^{the} networks.

The reason I'm not concerned about making headlines is that I came here tonight simply to visit with members of the Washington Professional Chapter of Sigma Delta Chi and to share with you some of my thoughts about you, as you frequently share with millions your thoughts about me.

I have heard a lot of nonsense about the inevitable adversary relationship between reporters and politicians, and between free government and a free press. I may even have uttered some of it myself. But I have come to believe after 25 years here, during which I have dealt with many members of the news media and with government officials of all branches and from both parties, that what we are all primarily concerned about cannot be categorized or reduced to formulas.

Most of you, I think, would agree with me that "the press" as a class has been unfairly charged with bias, arrogance, and vindictive conspiracy. Perhaps you would also agree that politicians

as a class have been unfairly accused of being venal, hypocritical and of the most modest intellectual attainments.

Yet some journalists we all know, and some politicians we all know, surely can be so characterized, not so much objectively as charitably. You and I, of course, are ^{honestable,} unbiased and forgiving, dedicated and distinguished practitioners of our noble professions.

The fact is that human beings are all different and we are all fallible. Each of us is some kind of mixture of good and bad, and nobody is either perfect or vile. And as for reporters and politicians, perhaps I should say journalists and statesmen, the one sure thing we have in common is that we do not take very kindly to criticism. We would both, really, much rather dish it out.

So when people ask me "how is the press treating you?" there isn't any answer because there really isn't any such thing as "the press." There are men and women, some that I know and many more I don't know, and they all treat me a little differently in what they say and write. If I had the time to read and listen and add it all up and analyze it -- which I assure you I don't -- I suppose it would come out a little ^{bit} better than I deserve.

But there is a conventional wisdom in Washington that all honeymoons between press and public officials are bound to end, so I wonder when my turn will come. I have enjoyed always pleasant, often warm personal relationships with people who are





in the news business for more than a quarter century. I don't mind saying I have done my best to maintain such a relationship of mutual trust and mutual benefit.

But I realize there is some danger in it. The information and impressions that people all over America get of Jerry Ford should not depend upon whether or not you like me, or I like you, but upon whether Jerry Ford is doing his job for the people all over America.

Similarly, and a friend needs to say it, there is danger and distortion inherent in a situation where a great preponderance of your professional colleagues here in Washington dislike or disapprove ^{of} the same public official. I am not suggesting this is a new phenomena, but the electronic age and the personalization of reporting has intensified its effect on the political process.

Some of you have wondered aloud why I spend so much time flying around the country meeting people and making speeches and holding press conferences at almost every stop. Since some high officials within my memory have been severely criticized for not doing enough of that, I could have expected a chorus of editorial praise. And I have heard a few Hallelujahs, mainly from your colleagues who don't work in Washington.

To be frank, one of the reasons I like to get around a lot is ^{that} ~~because~~ just as the Eiffel Tower is the only place in Paris where you can't see the Eiffel Tower, Washington is about



the worst place in America from which to see America.

Polls are useful, but percentages aren't people who can talk and listen and smile and ~~shout~~^{argue}. And people outside of Washington don't have the same interests and concerns; or, more precisely, they don't have the same mix of priorities. They aren't the same in any two places I go. And I can prove this by the way local reporters and editors treat what is essentially the same Ford statement in the different places I visit, as well as the different news judgments applied by the flying Washington press corps that travels with me.

The funny thing is that all of them are right. From their several environments and by their own ^{honest} evaluations, all are being objective and professional, even though their leads are ~~altogether~~ different. So I submit that some of the zigzagging I am accused of is the result of changing my questioners rather than changing my mind.

Over the past decade since I became Minority Leader, I have made the same kind of jet-stop journeys around most of our 50 states every other year, and have done a good bit of traveling in between times as well. The main difference was that I bought my own airline ticket and carried my own suitcase and waited in airport lines like everybody else, plus the fact that my media friends in Washington rarely followed me around.

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But it took a trip to the People's Republic of China to give me a new perspective ^{on} ~~of~~ all this. As you know, my dear colleague ~~the~~ late Hale Boggs and I represented the House on that fascinating mission just two years ago.

As those of you who have been to the mainland of China know, the English-speaking Chinese we encountered pumped us full of the accomplishments of the Great Cultural Revolution. To make a long story short, this occurred a few years back when Chairman Mao decided that ~~some~~ ^{many} of ~~the~~ ^{his} bureaucrats, plant managers, professional people, students, teachers and other intellectuals ⁹ were getting too big for their Chairman Mao trousers. So he decreed that all of them had to go back to the factories and rice paddies for a year or so to learn how ~~the~~ workers and peasants really live.

This nearly ruined China's emerging industrialization program and higher educational system, independent China-watchers believe, but in a less severe form it appears to have become institutionalized as part of the system. And at the risk of another scolding from Human Events for suggesting that any good idea ever came out of Chairman Mao, ~~there~~ ^{it} seemed to Hale Boggs and me ^{that} there was something to be said for it. After all, we and all elected Members of Congress ^{had} ~~had~~ to go back to our districts regularly and put our political careers on the line every two years, on the basis of how well we understood and responded to the needs of the people back home.

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I don't know whether Chairman Mao included journalists in his back-to-the-rice paddies edict, but I toss out to you the half-serious suggestion that the quality of political reporting might be improved if all Washington Correspondents took a year off every few years and traded jobs with the county courthouse reporter or the farm or labor or business editor on your hometown paper, or with the news team of your local station. I know that many of you do get around the country extensively, if you have generous expense accounts or enlightened editors, or both. But I believe it would broaden your perspective to periodically practice your profession outside of the capital of the United States, and in other than an election-season context, so that the vast and valuable differences in the way Americans think and live would become a part of your own news judgments.

I'm not sure you will take kindly to this idea, because we all learn to like it here in the political cockpit of our country and the news capital of the world. But since so many of my friends in your business have been advising me to stay in Washington more, I know you won't mind my counseling you to get away from Washington more. Don't wait for the American people to send you a message; go out there and get it from them firsthand.

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HEAD TABLE GUESTS FROM YOUR LEFT TO RIGHT AS YOU ARE SEATED AT TABLE

Paul Miltich - Press Secretary - VP
Allan Schrader - Evening Star-News
David Kraslow - Washington Bureau Chief, Cox Papers
Richard Stroud - Christian Science Monitor (Hall of Fame)
Sam Yett - Immediate Past Pres. SDX Wash. Chapter, Professor, Howard U.
James Quello - FCC Commissioner
William Small - CBS VP (Also National VP of SDX)
Mary Lou Forbes Warren - Star News Metro Editor - New VP Washington Chapter
SDX Columnist
Roscoe Drummond - Columnist - (Hall of Fame)
The Vice President
Dawson Nail - Television Digest (Outgoing President Washington Chapter)

PODIUM

Allen Emory, Watertown, N.Y. Times (incoming Pres., Wash. Chapter)
Russell Hearst - Executive Officer SDX (National)
Richard Kleeman - Newspaper Publishers Assn. (Dinner Chairman)
Ben Bradlee - Washington Post Executive Editor
Jane Denison - UPI (Member of SDX Board)
Eric Sevareid - CBS (Hall of Fame)
Alvin Spivak - General Dynamics (Outgoing Washington Chapter Sec'y)
Robert Donovan - L.A. Times (Hall of Fame)
Robert Hartmann - Chief of Staff, VP
Bonner Day - U.S. News & World Report (New Chapter Bd. member)
Paul Hood - National Observer (Former Chapter President)