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Don Ramsfeld

Thanks

Robert A. Goldwin: Bridge Between Thinkers and Doers

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN *de.*

The White House's lightning rod for outside ideas has traditionally been an eminent academic. His presence, usually much ballyhooed, helps foster the impression that the denizens of the White House are not wholly antipathetic to those of ivory towers. Arthur Schlesinger performed this useful service for President Kennedy, Daniel Moynihan for President Nixon.

President Ford's choice for White House thinker-in-residence is a man quite different from his predecessors in both style and substance. Robert A. Goldwin describes himself as "not a star, but more like a manager or agent." Whereas his luminous predecessors hailed from Harvard, Goldwin is a former dean of St. John's College, Annapolis, an institution best known for the idiosyncratic nature of its curriculum. Strangest contrast of all, Goldwin bristles at the label of intellectual and in fact chides those who so style themselves for their folly, arrogance, and apartness from the common run of humankind.



Goldwin's appointment as special consultant to the President, announced on 9 December, was overshadowed by an event held the same evening, a dinner-time seminar he had organized for the President, at the hands of historian Daniel Boorstin, James Q. Wilson, professor of government at Harvard, and Martin Diamond of Northern Illinois University. The meeting was apparently a free-ranging discussion of such topics as the purpose of prisons, the mood of the nation as it approaches the bicentennial, and presidential leadership in an age of pessimism.

Goldwin has been setting up get-togethers between academics and politicians ever since 1960, when he became director of the public affairs conference center at the University of Chicago. The first meeting he organized there was attended by then-Representative Gerald Ford, Senator Edmund Muskie, and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, then the attorney for the NAACP.

While at Chicago Goldwin came to know Illinois Congressman Donald Rumsfeld. When Rumsfeld became ambassador to NATO he was allowed to take a personal assistant and chose Goldwin. Rumsfeld brought Goldwin into the White House when he himself was appointed Ford's chief of staff.

Goldwin conceives his job as being to seek out individuals with interesting ideas and bring them to the attention of the President and his staff. This will be done sometimes by seminars, but more often in written form. He is looking for people, in and out of university, who are both sound analytical scholars, and can make their

ideas intelligible. He declines to say what specific issues he is exploring but notes that while he makes proposals, the President decides on who should be invited and what is to be discussed. The general aim is to hasten the process by which ideas reach the White House. The people Goldwin is after "are not the kind who think of calling up the White House when they have an idea; their natural tendency is to sit down and write an article."

"We don't ask academic people for a 10-point program," Goldwin says. "What they are best at is saying what the problem is." Goldwin has no well-defined method for seeking out the individuals he wishes to cultivate, but he already knows many people in the academic and practical worlds. He regards himself as a bridge-builder between the two. "I think I know how to make their encounters more fruitful. Lots of times people may go away shaking their heads if these things are not properly arranged, the politicians saying 'These damned professors think they know it all' and the academics thinking how hard it is to communicate with these thick-headed pols. Both are wrong."

Although he is an official conduit for the flow of outside ideas to the White House, Goldwin has a notably detached attitude toward the intellectual community. He stresses that he is interested only in individuals, not in the academic community per se. He does not describe himself or those he deals with as intellectuals, because of reservations about what the term has come to connote. "There is something fishy about the word 'intellectual,'" Goldwin says. "I think of 'intellectuals' as people who have a real distaste, sometimes even contempt, for the common sense approach, which is fundamentally the political approach. So 'intellectuals' don't have much that is helpful to say to people who have to run the government. They don't even have much to say to the ordinary citizen, except that 'You have no standards of taste, you don't understand things as they really are, and the only way to have a better society is to reorder it according to our principles rather than yours.'"

Goldwin sees the academic community and society as natural adversaries, with the government standing as the ultimate guarantor of the intellectuals' freedom and safety. "People who study are not very popular most of the time. Government protects their freedom, because any enlightened leader knows that progress depends on the quality of study that goes on. There is both interdependence and independence between people who study and people who make decisions."

Goldwin is a political scientist by background, and author of a book on Locke. He is a graduate of St. John's College, Annapolis, and from 1969 to 1973 was its dean. The college's unique curriculum is based on the study of some 130 "great books" of western civilization, students dividing their time between science and the humanities. "We bridge the two worlds of C. P. Snow," says college president Richard D. Weigle. Goldwin's forte, however, is in political science, and he has no immediate plans for convening a presidential seminar on matters scientific.—N.W.

wanted to get rid of, and the two of them let it out that they'd be doing the men in the battery a favor by letting those sweaters go at six dollars apiece.

"I've been told that those men were like a bunch of women at a bargain basement sale. They just mobbed the canteen and bought up every sweater there was. And later one of the officers was going over the books, and it turned out Harry and Eddie had only paid three dollars apiece for those sweaters, and so the profit was exactly one hundred percent."

Harry Truman: "I got kidded a lot about those sweaters, but I always said, 'Well, that's the reason we made a profit, and we were there for that purpose.'

"Besides, those boys couldn't have bought those sweaters anyplace else for less than fifteen dollars. So I was doing them a favor."

→ *When you went overseas, you went to France.*

"We went to France. We landed at Brest, France, on April 13, 1918, and just twenty-seven years later on that same day you may remember I spent my first full day in the White House.

"I told you. I went to a French artillery school, and then I went to Camp Coëtquidan for some more instruction in French artillery, and then in July—the rest of the Hundred and Twenty-ninth had come over by that time—in July the colonel called me in and told me I was going to be the new captain in charge of Battery D, which was known as Dizzy D, and it had, to say the least, a very bad reputation indeed. They'd had four commanding officers before that, and none of them could control those Irish boys. They were most of them Irish boys from Kansas City, many of them college boys from Rockhurst College, which is a Jesuit school in Kansas City. They were very well educated, many of them, but they were wild.

"I told the colonel; I said he might just as well send me home right then and there. I was never so scared in my

life, not even later when we were under fire, but I—well, it was one of the things I had to do, and I did it.”

Judge Albert A. Ridge of the federal district court in Kansas City, a veteran of Battery D: “The first recollection I have of Harry Truman actually taking over the battery was the day he succeeded Captain Thatcher.

“Thatcher had been well loved by all the men in the battery, and there was a general feeling of unrest, of anger when he was relieved of duty. The men in the regiment . . . in the battery just didn’t want to lose Captain Thatcher, and when it was learned that Captain Truman had been assigned to Battery D, there was a good deal of talk about mutiny, about causing trouble.

“I remember it was at retreat when he came before the battery, and I can visualize even now the emotion of that time. There was a stirring among the fellows in rank. Although they were standing at attention, you could feel the Irish blood boiling—as much as to say, why, if this guy thinks he’s going to take us over, he’s mistaken.

“I think perhaps Captain Truman could feel it, too.

“He looked the battery over, up and down the entire line, about three times, and the men were all waiting for the castigation that they really knew they were entitled to receive from a new commander. Because of their previous conduct.

“But Harry Truman . . . he just . . . continued to look at them, and then . . . his only command to the battery was—*Dismissed.*

“Well, of course, the dismissed battery went toward their barracks. But I think that that command to that Irish group was a sort of benediction. He had not castigated them. He had dismissed them as much as to say—like the Good Lord said to Mary Magdalene, ‘Go and sin no more.’

“From that time on I knew that Harry Truman had captured the hearts of those Irishmen in Battery D, and he never lost it. He has never lost it to this day.” ←

ON
Eugene Donnelly, a
City lawyer: “We were
way, we thought we w
commanding officers w
like a sitting duck to u
four eyes.

“And then he called
said, ‘Now, look, I didn
guys. You’re going to
any of you thinks he c
give you a punch in th

“He was tough, but

“I remember once a
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found out about it, and
We’d have done anythi
I know has changed his

Mike Flynn, a Kans
acquainted with Harry
from Battery D to Ba
during the war. He wa

“He used to get a
mothers of the boys in
manders, company co
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at night before he answ

“I used to come in,
dawn even, and I’d see
swearing the letters he’d

“And he never chan
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“In 1948, in Decem
My only son . . . he
and we were driving do
truck skidded in front
very badly hurt, and h

“And during the ti

And one day some young lieutenant asked Grant if he'd read that book, and Grant said, 'Hell, no.' Of course he hadn't. He said he didn't have to. He said what you have to do to fight a war, you have to find the enemy, and you have to hit him with everything you've got, and then you've got to keep right on going. And that's what he did. He never stopped to issue fancy statements about this and that. He just kept right on going."

→ *Mr. President, last week when I was back in Brewster I was reading W. E. Woodward's biography of Ulysses S. Grant, and he says that when Grant went back into the service in 1861, he took over a very unruly regiment that I believe two previous officers had been unable to manage. This was in Galena, Illinois.*

And when Grant arrived, wearing an old felt hat and a beat-up coat and his beard needing a trim, the men expected he'd give them a long lecture, eat their tails out, as they used to say when I was in the Army.

But Grant didn't. He just stood up in front of them, of the regiment, and all he said was, "Men, go to your quarters."

And that very much reminded me of what you said when under very similar circumstances you took over Battery D. All those men expected that you'd give them a very hard time, but all you said was, "Dismissed."

I hope you won't think my question is impertinent.

"I've told you before. If I think you're impertinent, I'll let you know."

I was just wondering if you'd read that about General Grant before in the First World War you said what you said to the troops in Battery D.

"Well, you might say that at that time I was familiar with the history of the Civil War or the War Between the States, whatever you want to call it, and so I may have happened on that incident. I've told you. One of the reasons for reading history is to learn from it and, if possible, make use of it."

That was the second and last time that I believe Mr. Truman winked. ←

II
was an old man to us kids who were in our early twenties at the time.

→ II "And then I got a job in the courthouse in Kansas City, as a clerk in one of the courts. And I got to thinking about going to law school at night, and I talked to Harry Truman about that.

"He encouraged me to go to night school and study law, but he said that just knowing the law wasn't enough. He said that was the trouble with far too many lawyers, that they knew the law but did not know much of anything else. He said . . . he encouraged me to also study about the nature of man and about the culture and heritage of Western civilization in general.

"I was just a young . . . a not very serious young man, and I'd never studied any of those things; I'd never even thought of most of them, and they sounded a little profound to me, a little difficult.

"But Harry Truman always said that I . . . that a man could do anything he set his mind to, and that encouraged me. I once asked him. . . . No, I believe he volunteered once to give me a list of about ten or so books that I ought to read. I don't know what happened to that list, although I treasured it greatly. But I can remember that it included Plutarch's *Lives*. And Caesar's *Commentaries*. And Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*. He used to say, 'Al, you'll find a good deal in there about how to make use of every minute of your day and a lot of horse sense about people.' And he was always talking about the Roman lawgivers. He knew all about them. And he had read all of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* several times. He was . . . himself he was always reading two or three books at a time and always making notes in the margins, especially in history books. Frequently . . . very often he knew much more than the writer, the historian, and he would . . . his favorite word was 'bunk,' and I guess it still is.

"He told me to read a book called *Bunker Bean* and one called *Missouri's Struggle for Statehood*. The Bible. I remember he said even back then that the King James

Version was the best and that he doubted it could be improved on. I believe he still thinks that. . . . Plato's *Republic*. Shakespeare. He said I'd have to read all of Shakespeare, but he recommended *Hamlet* and *Lear* and *Othello* in particular, and the sonnets. He insisted on the sonnets.

"He recommended to me the complete works of Robert Burns, which he was always reading himself. And Byron. All of Byron, too, I believe, although his favorite was *Childe Harold*, which is a poem most people who do not, did not, know Harry Truman would not have expected him to choose. It's a very . . . you might say it is not an easy poem.

"There was a book called *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*. Harry Truman felt that you had to understand war to understand mankind. Because man was always getting into wars, and if you didn't understand how wars happened, you couldn't be expected to understand how to prevent them.

"And I remember Charles Beard had just come out with a book on the history of the Constitutional Convention: *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*. I believe that book was a best seller at the time, and Harry and I each got a copy."

Bluma Jacobson: "Harry always kept in mind the other person's point of view. I remember not long after Harry got to be President, he came back here to Kansas City, and he and Eddie and some of the others were playing poker. Eddie lost. I don't know how much, but he lost, and the next morning Harry came into the store and bought eighteen or twenty pairs of socks. I don't think he actually needed that many pairs, size eleven, I think. It was just something he wanted to do for Eddie. Harry Truman has always been very, very aware of how other people feel about things."

Tom Murphy, a veteran of Battery D and a Kansas City salesman: "Our hang-around was the old haberdashery

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Date 1/27/75

TO: DON RUMSFELD

FROM: JERRY H. JONES

For your information.