

A STUDY OF DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER'S CONCEPT
OF THE PRESIDENT'S ROLE IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

by

Willard G. Coody

A THESIS

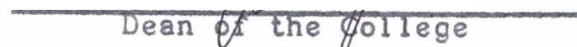
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A STUDY OF DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER'S CONCEPT
OF THE PRESIDENT'S ROLE IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

A THESIS

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Sam Houston State Teachers College
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

by

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Purpose

It was the purpose of this study to consider the domestic policies of the Eisenhower Administration, seeking particularly to point out those factors and instances which illustrate the change in Eisenhower's concept of the presidency from a diffused, subordinated position to that of a strong and forceful Chief Executive.

Methods

This study was compiled from material in books, government documents, newspapers, and periodicals to be found in the Estill Library at Sam Houston State Teachers College.

Findings

From the evidence presented in this study the following conclusions appear to be in order:

1. The administrative ability that Eisenhower was expected to display in directing the affairs of the Republican party and the nation was not forthcoming during the first six years of his presidency.

2. Early in his presidency Eisenhower showed reluctance to meet problems squarely and evidenced a lack of adherence to traditional Republican standards.

3. From 1957 to mid 1958, Eisenhower at times exercised purposeful leadership but often reverted to the passivity which characterized the earlier years of his presidency.

4. When Eisenhower lost his aide Sherman Adams, on whom he had depended to direct the domestic affairs of the nation, a marked change occurred in both his attitude and activity as President.

5. From mid 1958 to the end of his presidency Eisenhower became an increasingly strong and forceful Chief Executive, effectively utilizing the political weapons available to him as President.

Approved:

Supervising Professor

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Dwight David Eisenhower was born in Denison, Texas, on October 14, 1890, the third of seven sons born to David Jacob and Ida Elizabeth Eisenhower. His parents were of German extraction and personified the rugged, independent American ideal. Dwight Eisenhower's grandparents, who were early settlers of Pennsylvania, were energetic, frugal and deeply religious. They belonged to a Protestant sect known as the Brethren in Christ, which was essentially based on pacifism. In 1878, the Eisenhower family moved from Pennsylvania to Kansas and here Eisenhower's father grew to manhood. Here also he met and married Ida Elizabeth Stover.

Eisenhower's father was not successful in business, and it was the strong character of his mother that held the family together. Young Eisenhower grew up in frontier Kansas, a wild and raw country. Here he developed the qualities of self-reliance and perseverance, in an atmosphere of hard work and stern morality. He graduated from high school in 1909 with better than average grades, having excelled in history and English.

Undecided as to a career, Dwight Eisenhower took examinations for both Annapolis and West Point. He finished first in the Annapolis exam and second in the West Point test, but elected to go to West Point after discovering that

he was over age for the Naval Academy. At West Point he participated in athletics and in student affairs, and graduated sixty-first in a class of 168 in 1915. Following graduation he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the infantry and assigned to Fort Sam Houston, Texas. It was here that he met and married Mamie Geneva Doud, and together they began the army career which was to last more than thirty years.

Eisenhower's early military years were typical of army life in peacetime, with slow promotions and moves from base to base. He was a sound and capable officer performing ably the tasks assigned to him, but at this time he showed very little promise of becoming a brilliant leader. Given the opportunity in 1925 to attend the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, however, a determined Eisenhower finished first in his class and became known as a soldier with great potential. Even so, promotions were still slow in coming and the years prior to World War II saw him rise to the rank of lieutenant colonel over a period of some twenty years. World War II, however, brought about unprecedented promotions as he rose from lieutenant colonel to the rank of five-star general by 1944.

Dwight Eisenhower was respected and admired by his men and recognized as an extremely capable officer of outstanding executive ability by his superiors. He held the position of Chief of Staff in various commands and also showed great ability in commanding a tank corps. In all his assignments

his tremendous desire to learn everything he could about his job was clearly evident. This quality was a great aid to him during World War II as time and again he drew on knowledge and experience from these years. It was during these great war years that Eisenhower's abilities as a military leader were so clearly demonstrated, and with the Allied victory the General became a hero to peace-loving people throughout the world.

General Eisenhower served as Army Chief of Staff from 1945 to 1948 when he left the military and became president of Columbia University. His tenure as head of this institution was not marked by any outstanding achievements, and in 1950 he took a leave of absence from this position. He returned to the military and assumed command of the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe. As commander of this operation he demonstrated once again his executive ability as he organized an effective and harmonious operation composed of officers of widely diverse backgrounds and training.

In 1952, there was a political movement to "draft" Eisenhower for the presidency. At first he refused, but was finally persuaded to accept the challenge and become the Republican nominee. He was quick to point out, however, that he was not a politician and, further, that he was not sure his military executive experience qualified him for the presidency. Despite his misgivings Eisenhower exhibited outstanding ability to handle world problems and international

affairs. This ability can be attributed in part to his foreign service with the army and it became one of his strongest assets as President.

However, as his military experience abroad aided him in dealing with foreign affairs, his political inexperience at home proved a definite hindrance to him as he was confronted with domestic issues and problems. His years as an officer had trained him to give and take orders, to size up a situation or a problem, make a decision, and carry it to its outcome. It had not prepared him for the task of dealing with the extremely intricate workings of the American institution of politics, a fact which became increasingly evident as the first term progressed. The fact that Eisenhower did possess remarkable ability as a military leader is indisputable, but his leadership ability as Chief Executive was not so clearly and immediately evidenced as had been expected.

The office of the President of the United States embodies one of the world's most powerful and influential governmental positions. Leadership from this position must be provided by one person, and that person is the Chief Executive himself. Executive direction within the governmental framework has its basis in the Constitution, in precedent, and in the personal ability of each President. He must be able to achieve a harmonious balance between his branch and the legislative and judicial branches, yet at the same time he must maintain the pre-eminence of his office.

The position itself demands strong leadership ability if the Executive is to fulfill adequately his duties as voice of the people, Commander-in-Chief of the military, chief legislator, party leader, and chief of state. The task is unrelenting, and the demands are great. The components of presidential leadership are varied and complex, but must come from the President himself through the practical application of dynamic concepts to his office. External forces affect the President's ability to lead both favorably and unfavorably. The demands of the time, party demands, majority in Congress, emergencies and crises provide opportunities for the Chief Executive to exhibit power, yet a reluctant President cannot be forced to assume the reins of positive leadership.

The office of the President affords unlimited opportunity for powerful leadership, yet no formula is given and no guarantee is made. This is the task of each President, to practice his own particular style of leadership whether it be strong or weak, active or passive. There are two basic, conflicting views in regard to the concept of presidential leadership. One view is that the executive and legislative branches are on the same level as far as leadership is concerned. The other view is that the Chief Executive is the natural source of leadership, and that while he must be intimately associated with Congress, it is his responsibility to provide direction for that body.

Eisenhower adopted the former view in the early years of his presidency assuming a somewhat passive role and allowing Congress to take over the responsibility for its own direction. These early years were characterized by drift, indecision, and vacillation as a result of the lack of presidential leadership. It was not until the latter part of his second term that Eisenhower finally began to prove to the nation that he was just as able a political leader as he had been a military officer. He became in fact the natural source of leadership which the nation had expected him to be. Thus it is possible to point out a definite change in his concept of the presidency, a circumstance which was much more evident in the field of domestic than it was in his handling of foreign affairs.

As a matter of record, it is generally felt that Eisenhower was a strong President in the field of international relations. His experience abroad with the army, his widespread knowledge of foreign affairs, and his keen mind all combined to aid him in his dealings with other nations, both friendly and unfriendly. So it was not in this field that he had any real difficulties or received any widespread criticism. His difficulty lay in the field of domestic affairs, and most of the criticism he received came as a result of his passive role, his delegation of authorities and duties, and his use of the Eisenhower team. The nation wanted a dynamic, forceful leader to handle the affairs of

the nation at home as well as abroad, and Eisenhower finally provided such leadership in the latter part of his second term.

For the reasons mentioned above, this study has been limited to a survey of the domestic policies of the Eisenhower Administration, because it is in this field that the change in concept is so clearly illustrated. The evolution of Eisenhower as President from the period of the team concept, through the loss of presidential aide Sherman Adams, and finally to the position of assuming control presents a challenge to the student of history and government. Eisenhower's years of drift followed by a period of vacillation from strength to weakness, culminating in the brief period of strong and capable executive leadership provide a measure by which history may judge him.

CHAPTER 11

DRIFT AND INDECISION AS ADMINISTRATOR

The Republican party pictured the newly-elected Dwight D. Eisenhower as a President who would form a strong and vigorous Administration, a Chief Executive who would lead the nation in the positive direction of unity and achievement. As leader of the nation both in name and in fact he would guide the affairs of government, assist Congress in turning out vital and necessary legislation, and revamp the Administration on an institutionalized basis. The new Administration, however, was characterized by lack of leadership and delegation of duties and authority to the Eisenhower "team" and to his assistants, chiefly Sherman Adams. Instead of the expected strong and vigorous leadership, the President developed ill health and a policy of absenteeism which led to further delegation of duties. The problem of Communist infiltration in the government proved a serious challenge, and Eisenhower's mishandling of this issue greatly damaged his prestige as President.

Eisenhower, the Administrator

The Republican Convention faced a choice between the political experience of Senator Robert A. Taft, of Ohio, and the personal popularity of Dwight D. Eisenhower for their presidential candidate, with the Eisenhower supporters

emerging victorious.¹ There were those who were quick to point out that military experience did not necessarily qualify a man for the presidency, and further, that Eisenhower's short term as President of Columbia University had failed to produce any conclusive evidence of capable leadership. Some indication of what was to come was pointed out by Richard Rovere in his summation of Eisenhower's disappointing record at Columbia: "It isn't so much that he is a bad president as that he hardly ever functions as president."²

Leadership

According to his supporters, Eisenhower's leadership was to be shared; in effect, he would institutionalize the executive branch, subordinating the executive position to a system of government by group decision, the group being a "board of directors" made up of successful businessmen unspoiled by politics who would manage the government. Congress would assume the leadership, thus congressional prestige would be restored and, at the same time, Republican Congressmen would be given the opportunity to assume roles

¹ For an extremely capable insight to Eisenhower's winning the nomination from Taft see Richard H. Rovere, The Eisenhower Years, pp. 23-35.

² Ibid., p. 16.

of responsible leadership, factors which they said were lacking under the opposition party.³

Eisenhower's leadership during his first term was extremely complex and not only differed from what the Democratic opposition expected, but it soon proved to be a vacillating reversal of what his own party had expected. Summarizing the leadership displayed by Eisenhower during his first term, James Reston writes:

. . . that leadership, because of the President's illnesses and his concept of delegating authority to many different men of differing philosophies, has been spotty, episodic, and sometimes contradictory.⁴

The Team Concept

Eisenhower was convinced that professional politicians had too long determined governmental policy and his remedy was a return to practicality using business leaders who could bring new concepts to the government. Though inexperienced in political techniques, these men could, through their managerial prowess, produce harmonious governmental relations much more conducive to practicality in national leadership.⁵

The political inexperience of Eisenhower was matched

³James Reston, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 22, 1956, p. 42.

⁴Ibid., p. 42.

⁵"Eisenhower Holds A Board Meeting," U.S. News & World Report, XXXIV (January 16, 1953), pp. 22-23.

by that of his Cabinet. Under the circumstances, with Eisenhower's leadership so heavily dependent upon sound political advice from those around him, his Cabinet should necessarily have been made up of men whose views were in political harmony with those of his own. However, just as was the case with Congress, members of the Cabinet held widely divergent political views, with three of the most important posts being held by men of the Old Guard. Their orthodox Republican philosophy was out of step with the "new" Republican views of Eisenhower.⁶

Of further significance in Eisenhower's problem of building a team for leadership was his appointment of key personnel at the highest party level. An example of major importance was his appointment of a chairman of the Republican National Committee. This position as Republican party spokesman carried with it the responsibility for creative direction in the party as well as the maintenance of executive-party ethos. For this post Eisenhower appointed Leonard Hall, ex-Representative of New York, whose

⁶ William S. White, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 23, 1956, p. 13.

congressional record was almost an antithesis of Eisenhower's professed beliefs.⁷

President Eisenhower had promised in his 1952 campaign to staff his "team" with outstanding intellectuals in order to assure new concepts and ideas that were to be founded on youthful leadership. The "team" for the most part proved politically sterile and the key positions were staffed by older men not prone to the adoption of new ideas.⁸ He created positions never before utilized; a formal Cabinet secretariat for work organization and, in addition, he appointed a sub cabinet to support the Cabinet itself.⁹ His improvement of the Cabinet was a real accomplishment but the political divisions and differing philosophies of its members soon aroused criticism, particularly for their inexperience, a factor which was pointed out early in the term by Senator Robert A. Taft:

Men who have been eminently successful in their own lives have been chosen, [for positions in the Cabinet] but as far as I

⁷Bruce Catton, "Wanted: A President," The Nation, CLXXVII (July 4, 1953), p. 9 indicates a breakdown of Hall's voting record in Congress; in 1948 against Federal Soil Conservation, 1949 voted to reduce by one-half the Military Aid to Europe, 1950 voted to kill the Point Four program, 1952 against extension of Reciprocal Trade Act, Social Security, Federal Aid to schools, slum clearance, and rural electrification, all of which Eisenhower supported.

⁸James Reston, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, August 3, 1956, p. 7.

⁹Clinton Rossiter, The American Presidency, p. 140.

know they don't have a single day's experience running a federal government--the biggest institution the world has ever seen.¹⁰

Congress and Whiggism

Eisenhower faced the monumental task of dealing with a small majority in Congress, a situation demanding Democratic coalitions and cooperation.¹¹ Because of his political inexperience he tried to rely on Republican congressional leaders to assume command and to create the leadership the party so badly needed after its forced inactivity in past administrations. He placed responsibility for legislative direction on Senator Robert A. Taft, leaving to him the burden of pushing through Congress administrative requests. It was also left to Taft to encourage unity and singleness of purpose among the Republican Congressional members.¹² Thus the Whig theory, the practice of delegating executive duties to members of

¹⁰ Bruce Catton, "Ike's First Hundred Days," The Nation, CLXXVI (May 2, 1953), p. 362.

¹¹ John M. Brown, Through These Men, pp. 71-72. In the House the count was 221 Republicans, 210 Democrats, one Independent, and three vacancies. In the Senate the balance was more precarious with 48 Republicans, 47 Democrats and one Independent.

¹² Arthur N. Holcombe, "Presidential Leadership and the Party System," The Yale Review, XLIII (March, 1954), pp. 322-323.

Congress, proved useful to the President in his dealings with the first session of the Eighty-third Congress.¹³

Eisenhower, stung by the aggressiveness of Democratic Congressmen, relied more and more on Senator Taft as the only capable Republican leader, since the inexperienced "team" could offer little help in the area of legislative direction. The President adopted the strategy of avoiding conflicts and final decisions as he assumed a vague and passive policy. Eisenhower had no positive program, little Republican leadership and a short lived "honeymoon period." Many of the Republican leaders failed to cooperate with Taft's leadership and the Old Guard publicly criticized many of the Administration's proposals. To add to the confusion Senator Joseph McCarthy, Republican of Wisconsin, initiated his fight against Communism in America. The failure of Republican leaders to act together and the reluctance of the President to assume positive leadership resulted in a static situation. The inactivity of the first hundred days in

¹³Arthur N. Holcombe, "Presidential Leadership and the Party System," The Yale Review, XLIII (March, 1954), p. 322. The standard model for Whiggism was designed by Henry Clay when he was the opposition leader to Andrew Jackson. It was utilized when the Whig Party succeeded in putting General Harrison into the White House, while Clay remained at the head of the party in the Senate. Holcombe suggests that this was a wise choice by Eisenhower to allow Taft leadership and content himself with administration. It would be difficult to dominate the party without Republican cooperation and Democratic support.

office was a guide to the coming inefficiency of the Administration.¹⁴

The death of Senator Taft in the summer of 1953 left the President at the mercy of his political colleagues. The loss of Taft coupled with the problem of an economic recession facing the country widened the gap between the modern and the Old Guard Republicans. Leadership of the Old Guard Republicans was assumed by Senator William Knowland, of California, an outspoken critic of Eisenhower. Knowland recognized the Republican inexperience and lack of positive leadership, as he explained in an interview:

. . . there was not a single Republican Senator out of the 48 that we have here who have ever served under a Republican Administration. So no one can be said to have actually had the experience in working with an Administration of their own party--the executive also is new--and many of their leading Cabinet members have not had experience in Washington before. They need some time both to learn the ropes of their own jobs and also in working with the legislative arm of the government.¹⁵

In an effort toward more positive action, the President tried an indirect method of leadership using personal meetings, breakfasts, and other similar activities. The

¹⁴Bruce Catton, "Ike's First Hundred Days," The Nation, CLXXVI (May 2, 1953), pp. 361-362. During the first one hundred day period 6,000 bills were introduced, 13 enacted into law, and only one considered a major piece of legislation.

¹⁵"Ike Doesn't Want A Rubber-Stamp Congress," U. S. News & World Report, XXXV (July 24, 1953), pp. 43-44.

result of this effort was that he often permitted Congressional Committees to assume authority reserved to the executive branch, in effect turning party leadership back to the Republican party itself. He attempted to justify his action while speaking at a dedication of the Theodore Roosevelt home at Cyster Bay, New York, in discussing Roosevelt's leadership qualities not as a swashbuckler, but as a wise leader saying, "He used every form of polite advance that there was open to him including . . . many breakfasts."¹⁶

This reluctance to assume leadership was clearly evident in February, 1953, when Eisenhower allowed Congressional leaders to announce an eleven-point legislative program, and even failed to send a Presidential message to Congress. With the Democratic minority refraining from any widespread personal attacks on the President the Congress and the nation sought some evidence of executive leadership. The executive apathy is clearly demonstrated by Bruce Catton:

Given the man, the situation, and the temper of the country, it is incomprehensible that so far no leadership has appeared . . . No one is quite sure what the President's program is. He can get just about anything he wants, but aside from a truce in Korea he does not seem to want anything very badly.¹⁷

By the middle of 1953 Eisenhower had become fully

¹⁶ Public Papers of the Presidents, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953, p. 418.

¹⁷ Bruce Catton, "Wanted: A President," The Nation, CLXXVII (July 4, 1953), p. 8.

cognizant of the seriousness of the inter-party split finding himself hardly able to deny the aptness of Stevenson's label of the Republican party as a, "two-headed elephant trying to swim in both directions in very rough water."¹⁸ The Old Guard having failed to block Eisenhower's nomination by the party were now vindictively gaining revenge by obstructing and criticising his programs at the expense of the American people and international prestige. Columnists, for the most part favorable to him prior to this deadlock, were now demanding a realistic program. Chester Bowles warned the Administration that party clashes in domestic issues tended to overlap into foreign affairs and that the party and the nation could not allow dissension to threaten the nation's position in international relations:

. . . Whatever the causes, it can be agreed that the division presents a massive obstacle that the Republican party must overcome if it is to offer positive and effective leadership to a new consensus in meeting the issues which we shall almost certainly face in the next few years.¹⁹

The President, vexed by the lack of cooperation within his party, worriedly faced the 1954 election. Democratic party comparison of his administrative record with 1952 campaign promises was not a pleasant prospect. Instead of

¹⁸ Brown, Through These Men, p. 72.

¹⁹ Chester Bowles, American Politics in a Revolutionary World, p. 119.

leading a re-unified party toward constructive legislation he had been plagued with bickering and factionalism within the party. Thoroughly thwarted and disillusioned Eisenhower toyed with the idea of forming a new political party to which moderates from both parties might rally.²⁰

Abandoning any hope for a third party, Eisenhower instead began encouraging a coalition of modern Republicans and Democrats who had generally supported his views. The minority party was practicing a policy of refraining from direct attacks on the President, using the record of the Republicans against them in the upcoming campaign.²¹ Eisenhower had been forced to use capable Democrats to achieve constructive legislation, primarily Senator Walter F. George, of Georgia, in foreign relations and Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, of Texas, in domestic affairs. Thus in late 1953 and early 1954, he began to emerge as a leader above factions and parties, working toward bi-partisan support to put through his legislative programs. His motives in doing this were perhaps debatable, but the fact remains that even if he had preferred a Republican led Congress, he was forced to rely

²⁰Robert J. Donovan, Eisenhower, The Inside Story, pp. 142-143.

²¹"The Democrats and Ike," U.S. News & World Report, XXXV (July 24, 1953), p. 9. The article shows a concentrated attack by Congressional Democrats upon the Republican stand toward farm policy, tight money, and the unbalanced budget.

on aid from Democrats. John Brown supports this view in his remark:

Where . . . many . . . Democrats were big enough time and again to put the country above their party, Republicans in disconcerting numbers were unwilling to put even their party above their party differences.²²

The President, although reluctant to participate in the 1954 campaign, nevertheless yielded to party urging and conducted a vigorous, record-breaking campaign in a loyal attempt to help the cause of his party. Forced by his unenviable position to attack the very Democrats who had supported and cooperated with him, he championed Vice-President Nixon's condemnation of the Democrats. His efforts were unavailing, as the Democrats swept into Congressional power. Eisenhower now faced a Democratic Congress, and the pseudo-political experts pondered the possible effects of his attacks on the Democrats in the campaign. It was quite feasible that these attacks might well cause the Chief Executive more than a little trouble.²³ The Democrats harbored little ill-will against the President for upholding Nixon's remarks and considered his stand the penalty one must pay for being the one designated the head of his party. The

²² Brown, Through These Men, p. 74.

²³ James MacGregor Burns, "Another 'Do-Nothing' Congress," New Republic, CXXXI (November 15, 1954), pp. 6-7 and Wilfred Binkley, "No Place To Hide," pp. 8-9.

fact that the Democrats appreciated his position was brought out by William S. White:

. . . this liking does not, of course, alter their conviction that he has not been an effective President. The most common view of him among the Democratic politicians is that he is a basically good man "in the wrong business," . . . the Democrats persist in regarding him as hardly a Republican at all--an opinion widely held among the orthodox Republicans.²⁴

Thus in 1954, the President started the second half of his first term with a Democratic Congress--and the nation watched as a new era of bi-partisanship developed.²⁵

²⁴William S. White, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 23, 1956, p. 13.

²⁵An extremely interesting facet in American politics developed during Eisenhower's first term. The President was apparently the nation's rallying point and his strong popularity was evidenced by his success at running far ahead of his Republican colleagues who barely mustered a weak minority in 1952, this was accomplished probably by abnormal party-shifting and split ticket voting. His work with the Democratic coalition in Congress was widely approved and in 1954 his popularity was still high with the American people yet his party bearers went down in defeat at the polls. This created a basis for the thesis that we had entered a new order in party politics--the Moderate Center staffed by individuals from both major parties. Arthur N. Holcombe, "Presidential Leadership and the Party System," The Yale Review, XLIII (March, 1954), p. 327 gives support to this view by professing that we were on the "verge of such a period in the development of the American Party System." Undoubtedly the American people were undergoing changes in political views, to the extent that sectionalism in politics was over, that two-party systems were gaining in strength, and that no party could count on a set determined voting pattern. For periodicals portraying a change in attitude toward political thinking and the American people attempting to avoid radical polar ends and tending to group toward moderation see-- William S. White, "Consensus American--A Portrait," The New

Sherman Adams

The "team" concept of government was never more evident than in the case of Sherman Adams, Eisenhower's Assistant to the President. In reality he was the civilian chief of staff in the military chain-of-command network designed and set up by the President to bring efficiency,

York Times Magazine, November 25, 1956, p. 14. V. O. Key, Jr., "The Moral Victory of the Republicans," New Republic, CXXXI (December 6, 1954), p. 9. Samuel Lubell, "Can the GOP Win Without Ike?" Saturday Evening Post, CCXXIX (January 26, 1957), p. 34.

William G. Carleton, "The Triumph of the Moderates," Harpers, CCX (April, 1955), pp. 31-37 proposes the thesis that the American political scene drifted into what he terms an "Era of Moderation" where moderates have triumphed in both parties and the parties are both closer together on fundamental issues than any time in previous history. He credits Eisenhower for the success of this program by holding together the "warring elements" of his party--thus letting them wear themselves out. The 1954 elections reduced the powerful conservative right-wing extremists and the moderates from both parties gained. This, according to Carleton, was accomplished by the President's concessions, patience, and skillful maneuvering.

Holcombe's "American Party System" and Carleton's "Era of Moderation," both attempt to prove the theory that a center of consensus on issues had been brought forward and Arthur Larson accepts this thesis in his book A Republican Looks At His Party (1956) by saying Eisenhower had for the first time in political history established the "Authentic American Center in politics."

These theories are opposed by William V. Shannon, "Eisenhower As President," The American Past, edited by Sidney Fine and Gerald S. Brown, p. 550, who says that the claims are unjustified and maintains that the decay of the Republican party on the state and congressional level is enough to discredit the thesis. Shannon admits the President was the spirit of the times and that there was split-ticket voting but that Eisenhower was not a great new figure of a new Republican age but ". . . the last of an old Democratic generation."

The theory of a "center of consensus" is also refuted

order and a sense of unity to the White House staff.²⁶ Impressed by Adams' leadership in defeating Taft's nomination at the 1952 Republican Convention, and awed by his organizational ability in the following campaign, the President expressed his admiration to Adams when he said, "I have been thinking this over. You had better come down with me to the White House. You would be down there at my right hand."²⁷

At this position Adams remained throughout the first term, assuming a great deal of responsibility in areas which formerly had been the sole responsibility of the executive. In reality Adams assumed the position of the most powerful figure in the Administration. The label "Acting President" was given to Adams upon his acquisition of the authority to issue orders to all executive departments and agencies in

by James W. Prothro, "Verbal Shifts in the American Presidency: A Content Analysis," The American Political Science Review, L (September, 1956), p. 739, who feels that there is no concrete evidence to support Carleton's rationale and remarks, "In terms of the materials examined here, it would appear to be correct to speak of a triumph of the moderates only with the important qualification that there has been a general shift to the left. 'The conservative' Eisenhower would have sounded 'liberal' in 1932; at the highest level of leadership a verbal revolution has taken place in American conservatism."

²⁶ "When the President's Away--How the White House Runs," U.S. News & World Report, XXXIX (August 12, 1955), p. 46.

²⁷ Robert J. Donovan, "The Man At Ike's Right Hand," Colliers, CXXXVI (October 14, 1955), p. 29. For an extremely interesting insight to Adams' work see Louis W. Koenig, The Invisible Presidency, pp. 351-352.

the absence of the President, and to screen all documents, problems and issues prior to review by the President. For practical purposes his powers were all-inclusive and involved the complex nature of determining policies and views which were brought to the Chief Executive; his scope covered the executive branch and he spoke with the executive's voice --justifying his title as "Acting President."²⁸ His importance was amply stated by Donovan:

What has been even more significant in fixing his influence is the fact that by the time many of these projects have reached the President they have already been shaped in part by Adams himself.²⁹

The extent of Eisenhower's dependence on Adams can be seen in his willingness to see only those papers bearing the stamp of Adams' approval--"OK, S.A."³⁰ This arrangement did not go unchallenged by the Democrats. Even the leading Republicans were outspoken against Adams' virtual "isolation" of the President.³¹

Eisenhower condemned criticism of Adams, saying of the critics, "The trouble with these people is they don't

²⁸ "Who's Running The Country Now," U.S. News & World Report, XXXIX (October 7, 1955), pp. 26-27.

²⁹ Donovan, Eisenhower, p. 70.

³⁰ "If It's O.K. With Adams, It's O.K. With Eisenhower," U.S. News & World Report, XXXIX (October 14, 1955) p. 56.

³¹ "Who's Running The Country Now," U.S. News & World Report, XXXIX (October 7, 1955), p. 27.

recognize integrity."³² This dependence on the capable aide was described by a White House official:

The President . . . has great faith in Adams and has told me many, many times that with Adams as his assistant he can sleep better at night. He finds it a great relief to have Adams around--to know that no one is going to come knocking at the door to make a deal.³³

Adams' ability to direct the team was demonstrated during the President's illnesses in September, 1955, and June, 1956. In the absence of the President, the Cabinet was forced to function as a unit as Adams issued orders from Denver, directed the governmental business in Washington, and even issued orders to Vice-President Nixon. It was now clearly evident that the staff-system type of government was in effect and that in the absence of the President, Adams, and Adams alone, would direct the affairs of the nation.³⁴ Critics were not surprised to find the staff-type of government working in the absence of the President, as

³²Robert J. Donovan, "The Man At Ike's Right Hand," Colliers, CXXXVI (October 14, 1955), p. 29.

³³Ibid.

³⁴"Who's Running The Country Now," U.S. News & World Report, XXXIX (October 7, 1955), pp. 26-27. Adams' role and workday as well as his importance to the President is reflected in "Stand-In For The President," U.S. News & World Report, XXXXI (July 6, 1956), p. 28. Eisenhower's heart attack on September 24, 1955, required 93 days recuperation, and the ileitis attack on June 8, 1956, required 22 days rest. He was ill or convalescing 115 days and Adams, in his absence, was in charge of the White House for nearly one-third of the year.

most of them were aware that it had been in effect for some time. Opponents attacked the arrangement, charging institutionalization of the Presidency and accusing the President of failure to carry out his constitutional duties and responsibilities. Adams steadfastly denied any such failure, ". . . irrelevancies of the office . . . passed on to myself . . . have been done not to the detriment of the President's responsibility in any way, shape or manner."³⁵ The President also commented on the sharing of responsibility:

I would like to make one thing clear: no President can delegate his constitutional duties. I am the responsible head of the Executive part of this government, and there is no more chance of me delegating away the responsibilities. I might delegate someone, "You take the action but I will take the gaff," you might say. But that I have to do, and I expect to do it, and I should do it.³⁶

By the end of Eisenhower's first term the situation had reached a point where Adams acted without bothering to consult the President, since he had, in his opinion, reached a stage where he was certain he knew the workings of Eisenhower's mind in detail.³⁷ The self assurance of Adams may be depicted in his description of his role in government: "I

³⁵"What's This About A 'Do-Nothing Congress'?" U.S. News & World Report, XXXX (April 13, 1956), p. 123.

³⁶"Presidential News Conference," The New York Times, May 5, 1956, p. 8.

³⁷Herman Finer, The Presidency, p. 214.

have done whatever the President has not done," and, on another occasion; "I only say what the President thinks" ³⁸

According to the Cabinet, only minor, irrelevant, and non-essential matters were delegated to Adams to relieve the President of some of the burden, allowing him time for more important decisions. The purpose of such an arrangement is admirable, but the consequences might prove dangerous as Rossiter warns:

. . . a long list of routine tasks, each of which appears "nonessential" when viewed by itself, may well add up to an inspired performance of a great function of State. For him as for all of us there is no final escape from hard and pedestrian labor. And as the gentlemen of Congress warned in the law of 1950 . . . "nothing contained herein shall relieve the President of his responsibility" for the acts of those "designated by him to perform his functions." ³⁹

Health and Absenteeism

The burden of the Chief Executive is extremely heavy, filling the average workday with demands to meet world crises as well as less important but time consuming routine matters. ⁴⁰ The duties and responsibilities of the Chief

³⁸Finer, The Presidency, p. 188.

³⁹Rossiter, The American Presidency, pp. 138-139.

⁴⁰The chores of a typical workday for the President are shown in "A Day In The Life of the President," U.S. News & World Report, XLIV (March 14, 1958), pp. 36-37.

Executive have increased sixfold since the Administration of Washington, and this increase alone necessitates some delegation of authority.⁴¹ And yet the President, and he alone, is responsible for all decisions, major or minor, and for their implementation.

Eisenhower's concept of teamwork and delegation of authority was subjected to an acid test during his two serious illnesses within a nine-month period. While he was unable to perform the functions of the Presidency, Eisenhower maintained that his absence was inconsequential and in no way detracted from the efficient operation of the Administration. This was an open defense of his method of teamwork which operated under a system of graduated authority. In this system problems and issues were passed through a long succession of "teams," each of which assumed some degree of authority for decision-making. As a result, the President himself seldom if ever received an overall general picture of a problem, receiving instead the finished product of his team. This situation lent support to Reston's suggestion that more notice should be taken of the fact that "the President has tried to institutionalize his concept of teamwork."⁴²

During the convalescence of the President, the public

⁴¹ James Reston, "The Presidency-II," The New York Times, June 19, 1956, p. 19.

⁴² James Reston, "The Presidency-IV," The New York Times, June 21, 1956, p. 20.

was kept informed as he gradually reassumed the duties and responsibilities of his office. As he progressed from routine duties to those of a more complex nature, doubts were raised as to the "executive energy" of the President. The Democrats were skeptical about his ability to exhibit the individual strength and forceful personality that his position demands. It was not the question of Eisenhower's ability to handle routine matters that caused anxiety, but rather his capacity to face the crises, make the decisions, and in effect guard the safety of the nation and the Western world. Thus many Americans were led to question the advisability of a second term for Eisenhower in view of his ill-health and the demanding nature of his position.

Urged by the Republican party, the President announced he would run again, leaving it up to the American people to judge his capabilities:

Now I feel good, but I don't feel as well as I did a year ago at this time.

. . . this is a decision that the American people are going to have to face. . . . I have made up my mind this is the thing I should try, and we shall see what the American people have to say about it.⁴³

As the Republicans rejoiced, critics and Democratic leaders commented that any gamble with the health of the

⁴³ "Presidential News Conference," The New York Times, August 2, 1956, p. 10.

Chief Executive was in reality a gamble with the nation's future. It was pointed out that the danger of Eisenhower's being absent at times could be expected to increase in the future since the President himself had admitted that his activities would be somewhat curtailed.⁴⁴ Democratic leaders reminded the public that he had often left the White House in a state of turmoil for extended periods, turning all routine decisions over to his advisors. A leading Democrat charged that any increase in such delegation of responsibility could only lead to an Administration characterized by drift, indecision and confusion at a time when the nation was in critical need of direction.⁴⁵

In the face of these attacks and stung by the label "part time" President, Eisenhower promised that all obligations of the office would be fulfilled, saying: "As of this moment, there is not the slightest doubt that I can perform

⁴⁴ James Reston, "The Presidency-II," The New York Times, December 3, 1957, p. 23 states that Eisenhower was out of Washington or convalescing 723 of the 1,777 days he was in office. Of the 723 days, 140 were spent away on official or political business, 101 recovering from his three illnesses, and 482 resting or vacationing at resorts or at his farm.

⁴⁵ John J. Sparkman, "A Full Measure Of Health Is Basic To Command," U. S. News & World Report, XXXX (March 16, 1956), p. 128.

as well as I ever have all of the important duties of the Presidency."⁴⁶

The President's opponent, Adlai Stevenson, expressed the opinion that the issue of Eisenhower's health was greater than party differences; that, in fact, it was a circumstance that involved not only the nation's future, but also a fundamental concept concerning the governmental structure:

. . . the election of 1956 is a unique one in our country's history.

The American people have to decide this year . . . whether we are to permit a fundamental revision of the role of the President of the United States. This is not a question of President Eisenhower's health but of the nature and stature of the Presidency in our system.⁴⁷

Eisenhower, the Unifier

In their campaigning preceding the 1952 elections, the Republicans had placed great emphasis on the need for a crusader, a man of forceful personality who could lead a badly divided government and nation in the direction of unity and reform. Eisenhower was depicted as the "knight in shining armor" who could end the Korean stalemate, stop

⁴⁶"Text Of The Broadcast By President Eisenhower On His Decision To Run Again," The New York Times, March 1, 1956, p. 15.

⁴⁷Adlai E. Stevenson, "Stevenson Tells Eisenhower Part Time Is Not Enough," U.S. News & World Report, XXXX (March 23, 1956), p. 120.

Communist infiltration and excessive spending in Washington, and lead a unified America back to normalcy. Whatever chance of his success as a unifier was greatly reduced by his support of Vice-President Nixon's attacks on the Democrats as being soft on Communism and his toleration of Senator Joseph McCarthy whom James Reston described as, "the most violent and divisive political force in recent American history."⁴⁸

McCarthy and Communist Infiltration

The issue of Communism in the government had been very evident in the 1952 campaign and Eisenhower as well as Nixon had stressed the danger at every opportunity. Speaking before a group in LaPorte, Indiana, on the topic of Communist infiltration in our government, Eisenhower said, ". . . it is time to clean them out--not only the Communists and the people that have abused our trust . . . but the people that put them there."⁴⁹ The attack was continued after the election and in his first State of the Union message in February 1953, he clarified his responsibility:

The primary responsibility for keeping out the disloyal and the dangerous rests squarely upon the Executive branch. When

⁴⁸ James Reston, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 22, 1956, p. 42.

⁴⁹ Anthony Lewis, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 30, 1956, p. 1.

this branch so conducts itself as to require policing by another branch of the Government, it invites its own disorder and confusion.⁵⁰

Eisenhower was aware that Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, Republican of Wisconsin, was conducting his own campaign against Communist infiltration in the government under the auspices of his position as Chairman of the Senate Permanent Investigation Subcommittee. While the President recognized that McCarthy might prove to be a deterrent to harmony in Republican ranks, he was convinced that the Senator would exercise more discretion under the Republican Administration, and would abandon his method of irresponsible attacks used against the Truman Administration. But it was soon evident that McCarthy had lost none of his zeal as he opposed Eisenhower's appointment of Charles E. Bohlen as Ambassador to the Soviet Union, labeling him a "security risk." This was followed by McCarthy's long, drawn-out investigation of the State Department's International Information Administration, the Voice of America, and inclusion of the books of left-wing writers in American overseas libraries. McCarthy also antagonized the American clergy by his refusal to remove

⁵⁰"Text of Eisenhower's State of the Union Message on New Domestic and Foreign Policies," The New York Times, February 3, 1953, p. 15.

staff member J. B. Matthews, director of the Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee.⁵¹

McCarthy continued his attack on the Eisenhower Administration in November, 1953, crediting the Republicans with doing "infinitely" better than Truman, but adding that there were "a few cases where our batting average is zero--we struck out."⁵² He illustrated these Republican failures with the case of John Paton Davies, Jr., a career diplomat who was retained after McCarthy had branded him a security risk. He also chided the Administration for continued mutual assistance to the British who were trading with Red China. He openly disagreed with the President's opinion as to administrative success in dealing with Communism in government, declaring that, "Communism is an issue and will be an issue in 1954."⁵³

Eisenhower chose to leave it up to Congress to challenge McCarthy, feeling that his executive responsibility lay in encouraging leaders in Congress to deal with extremists within their ranks. The President was reluctant to take any

⁵¹ Donovan, Eisenhower, pp. 93-95. Matthews had written in an article in "The American Mercury," that the Protestant clergymen comprise the largest Communist bloc in the United States. A strong wave of protest came from the religious groups but McCarthy refused to dismiss Matthews. However, the President's sympathetic reply to the religious groups forced McCarthy to accept Matthew's resignation.

⁵² Ibid., p. 246.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 246-247.

action against McCarthy, apparently fearful that he might alienate McCarthy supporters located in strategic positions in the Congressional committees and in the Republican party.⁵⁴ It is entirely possible, however, that Eisenhower over-estimated McCarthy's strength both within the party and in Congress.⁵⁵

Eisenhower was following a policy in this case with which the Republican party evidently did not agree. The practice of giving the responsibility to Congress to handle McCarthy led to suspicions of congressional determination to subordinate the authority of the Chief Executive. The consensus of opinion among Republicans seemed to be that if Eisenhower disapproved of McCarthy's methods and actions, then Eisenhower, and not Congress, should voice this disapproval.

In spite of his failure, Eisenhower remained in command of the party but the party was on the "verge of demoralization," and his "passive resistance disillusioned many of his supporters and seemed to confirm Democratic

⁵⁴George H. Mayer and Walter O. Forster, The United States and the Twentieth Century, p. 702.

⁵⁵This support was probably overrated, see "The Myth of McCarthy's Strength," Look, XVIII (June 1, 1954), p. 108.

sneers that he was an amiable straw man like General Grant."⁵⁶

Repeated requests by Republican leaders to induce the President to make a public rebuttal to McCarthy's accusations were refused by Eisenhower, who declared, "I will not get in the gutter with that guy."⁵⁷ This patient attitude based on the sincere desire to heal party differences was admirable, but it involved much more than personal prestige. The entire nation was caught in the tangled web of unchallenged accusation aimed at the Eisenhower Administration. Arthur Holcombe described the situation:

. . . his political prestige could not endure unimpaired if he declined to accept the challenge of Senator McCarthy, because prestige depends upon a reputation for the possession of moral qualities, deemed essential for successful leadership, which are incompatible with avoidance of an ordeal by battle.

President Eisenhower's hold on the country is not contingent upon his leadership of the Republican Party, but his hold on the country is contingent upon his retention of the actual power to govern.

. . . The public interest must always come before any partial or special interest,

⁵⁶ Mayer and Forster, The United States and the Twentieth Century, p. 705.

⁵⁷ Walter Johnson, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, p. 292.

even one so important as the payment of obligations to a political party.⁵⁸

Unchallenged by the Executive Branch, McCarthy next attacked the army, accusing General Ralph Zwicker of harboring Communists. Here he met a counter-attack as the army charged that McCarthy and his assistant Roy Cohn had attempted to secure preferential treatment for Private David Schine, Cohn's former co-worker, by threats against the army. In April of 1954, the nation witnessed through televised hearings a parade of charges and counter charges as McCarthy at long last met with some resistance. As Robert Donovan writes, "For thirty-six days the hearings were the national business, the national pastime and, as some said, the national disgrace."⁵⁹ This proved to be the beginning of the end for McCarthy. He had finally attacked a victim who could and would fight back, as the Secretary of the Army, Robert T. Stevens led the way.

In July of 1954, Senator Ralph E. Flanders, Republican of Vermont, introduced a motion to censure McCarthy. After a qualified approval by Eisenhower and considerable debate,

⁵⁸ Arthur N. Holcombe, "Presidential Leadership and the Party System," The Yale Review, XLIII (March, 1954), p. 325.

⁵⁹ Donovan, Eisenhower, p. 256.

the Senate voted 67 to 22 in favor of the motion, and in December of 1954, McCarthy's power was broken.⁶⁰

Eisenhower's dealing with McCarthy had in the long run been successful, but the victory had been gained at the expense of the Republican party and the prestige of the American people. The value of such a victory is debatable as illustrated by Walter Johnson:

With his immense prestige, Eisenhower might have been able to isolate McCarthy in 1953 and prevent his outrages. But, while the Senator was playing himself out, countless citizens were subjected to unjust attacks, the machinery of government thrown into confusion, the standards of legislative investigations debased, and an ugly picture of America exported to the world.⁶¹

Nixon and the Democrats

The Republicans, who wanted to retain their small margin in Congress, were definitely worried about the danger of an economic recession, and charges of McCarthyism in the coming 1954 election. Vice-President Richard M. Nixon was probably more aware of the danger to the party and to his own

⁶⁰For Flander's initiation to censure, the Senate's referral to a Senate panel, and the decision to censure, see three articles in chronological grouping, written by Anthony Leviero, in The New York Times: July 31, August 3, and September 28, 1954. For accounts of Senate debate and conflicting views see The New York Times, November 30-December 2, 1954. For the final vote see, Anthony Leviero, "Final Vote Condemns McCarthy, 67-22," The New York Times, December 3, 1954, pp. 1, 14.

⁶¹Johnson, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, p. 295.

political career than anyone else in the Administration. As a result he conducted a campaign of tremendous personal effort and sacrifice.⁶²

President Eisenhower had advised the nation during the battle with McCarthy that the Communist question would probably be kept out of the 1954 campaign, but Nixon felt that it was definitely a legitimate issue. He perceived that the Democrats would be vulnerable to this harassment and felt that the public would be receptive to this approach. In an effort to recover Republican losses in the Western States, Nixon opened his attack by labeling Democratic Senate candidates in this area "left-wing" declaring that the Communist party "has determined to conduct its program within the Democratic party."⁶³ Following this beginning, Nixon started the "numbers game" with the politically loaded statement:

There is no difference between the loyalty of Democrats and Republicans. But some misguided officials of the previous Administration were blind or indifferent to the danger. They ignored the repeated warnings that J. Edgar Hoover and others including myself brought to them. . . .

We have not only fired the Communists and fellow-travelers and security risks off

⁶² Donovan, Eisenhower, p. 280 states, "Nixon's political activity in the first three years of the Administration reached its zenith in the 1954 campaign, in which he flew 26,000 miles, visited 95 cities in 31 states, delivered 204 speeches and held over a hundred press conferences.

⁶³ Donovan, Eisenhower, p. 280.

the Federal Payroll by the thousands; we don't hire them in the first place. I can assure you that no one in this Administration regards Communism as a red herring.⁶⁴

The Democrats, wincing from this attack, waged a "numbers" rebuttal, demanded proof, and it soon became obvious that Nixon had grossly overestimated the number of security risks and had used unreliable information and statistics in his statement.⁶⁵ The failure of Nixon's attacks was shown in the results of the 1954 election which saw the Democrats regain a Congressional majority. Nixon's failure was most clearly shown in the Western states where his attacks had been concentrated and where the Democrats won decisively. This loss of Congressional majority was a serious impairment to the President's attempt to unite the country behind Republican leadership.⁶⁶

If the President disapproved of Nixon's bringing Communism into the 1954 campaign it was not apparent in a

⁶⁴Cabell Phillips, "One-Man Task Force of the G.O.P.," The New York Times Magazine, October 24, 1954, p. 55.

⁶⁵For concise and thorough numerical breakdown of security risks and undesirables in the government and a breakdown of Republican action against this weak and overstressed element--see Anthony Lewis, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 30, 1956, p. 22, and Walter Johnson, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, pp. 288-290.

⁶⁶Anthony Lewis, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 30, 1956, p. 22.

letter to the Vice-President just prior to the election in which he wrote:

I admire all the more the tremendous job you have done since the opening of the present campaign. Whatever the outcome I can find no words to express my deep appreciation of the contribution you have made toward that goal.⁶⁷

The Republicans had hailed Eisenhower as the great unifier, but in Rovere's opinion the party and the nation had been bitterly disappointed, as he explained:

There was a kind of vividness about Eisenhower in 1952 that Eisenhower in 1955 lacks . . . Everyone has seen how Washington under Eisenhower wallowed in politics as it always had. He has not been a great unifier in his own house--his own party and cabinet have been rent by fractional strife as bitter and destructive as anything known under the Democrats.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Letter from President Eisenhower to Vice-President Nixon, as quoted from Robert J. Donovan, Eisenhower, The Inside Story, p. 281.

⁶⁸ Rovere, The Eisenhower Years, p. 371.

CHAPTER III

DRIFT AND INDECISION AS POLICYMAKER

Indecision characterized the early years of the Eisenhower Administration, as was clearly evident in the areas of power and natural resources and in his development of Modern Republicanism. Evidence of this indecision can be seen in his handling of such problems as the Dixon-Yates controversy, failure to balance the budget and to establish an adequate agricultural program.

Power and Natural Resources

The Eisenhower Administration was deeply concerned about participation of the Federal Government in private enterprise, having campaigned against Federal entanglement in the development of power and natural resources of our nation. President Eisenhower specifically called for an end to government activity in this area, advocating a "partnership" philosophy as described in his first State of the Union message:

The best natural resources program for America will not result from exclusive dependence on Federal bureaucracy. It will involve a partnership of the states and local communities, private citizens and the Federal Government, all working together. This combined effort will advance the

development of the great river valleys of our nation and the power they can generate.¹

It was apparent that Eisenhower and his Administration were concerned about the laxity of the Democrats in allowing the nation to move in the direction of socialism. In an address to Republican leaders, in June, 1953, Eisenhower expressed his fear of this "creeping socialism," citing as an example the expansion of the Tennessee Valley Authority and the inroads it had made in power production around Memphis. While he insisted that expansion in this vein must be halted, he was quick to point out that he, ". . . had no intention of crippling the T.V.A."²

In the summer of 1953 the Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay announced the intention of his department to withdraw from all phases of the production of electrical energy, restricting its activities in the future to reclamation of arid and non-productive areas.³ McKay's announcement was quickly followed by the elimination of Democratic sponsored power projects, a move which some Democrats labeled abandonment, and which left some Republicans feeling that

¹"Text of Eisenhower's State of the Union Message On New Domestic and Foreign Policies," The New York Times, February 3, 1953, p. 15.

²Robert J. Donovan, Eisenhower, The Inside Story, p. 337.

³Allen Drury, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 27, 1956, p. 4.

the government was withdrawing from the power business in toto. Old Guard elements of the Republican party, under whose guidance McKay was acting, expressed approval of the move.⁴

The Pacific Northwest bore the brunt of this movement with the abandonment of the King's River power project in California in 1953, and the scuttling of the John Jay Dam project in Oregon by the failure of the Administration to appropriate the necessary funds. The budget of the Bonneville Power Administration in the Columbia River basin was slashed and the Priest Rapids project was shelved. Plans of the Democrats for a Federal dam in Hell's Canyon on the Idaho-Oregon border were discarded as this project was awarded to the Idaho Power Company. These and other such actions indicated that the participation of the Federal government in power projects had come to an end.⁵

The disappointment over these abandoned projects by the citizens of the Pacific Northwest was further intensified by the paradoxical insistence of Eisenhower that the development of the Fryingpan-Arkansas project and the upper Colorado River project, costing in excess of three million dollars

⁴James Reston, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, August 3, 1956, p. 7.

⁵Allen Drury, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 27, 1956, p. 4.

were acceptable because the primary purposes of these projects were flood control and water conservation and that the power features were only secondary in nature--thus did not conflict with Administration policies.⁶

Partnership or "Giveaways"

Outraged cries of "giveaway" programs reverberated throughout the nation in 1953, when the Administration carried out its announced campaign promises of returning the Tidelands and their oil rich deposits to the states of California, Louisiana, and Texas on the ground of traditional natural boundaries. The Truman Administration had repeatedly killed bills of this nature and the Supreme Court had consistently ruled in favor of Federal retention. The issue of the Tidelands was perennial, and usually received little attention from the majority of the people who were probably unaware of the nature of the individual state claims.⁷ This may have been an example of good strategy by the Administration in pushing this legislation through Congress, but the Democratic criticism which followed proved extremely damaging. Critics labeled this action a political payoff to oil lobbies and to Democrat-turned-Republican state politicians

⁶ Allen Drury, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 27, 1956, p. 4.

⁷ "Tidelands Oil and the Political Tides," The Nation, CLXXVI (May 16, 1953), p. 407.

and denounced it as a tremendous farce perpetrated under the guise of state's rights.⁸

President Eisenhower in signing Public Law 31, the Submerged Lands Act, referred to the bill as one recognizing the interests of the Federal government, but more important as a bulwark of state's rights, saying, ". . . I will always resist federal encroachment upon rights and affairs of the states."⁹ Critics, however, expressed fear that this action, in releasing some \$64 billion to the aforementioned states, might set a dangerous precedent for further state assumption of other federally-owned public resources.¹⁰

The Administration had won a victory but other states began making charges of plunder, bribery, and theft of valuable Federal resources. Senator Wayne Morse, of Oregon, reflected an opinion shared by many critics in his comment: "It may not be going too far to say that in its victory on the offshore oil case, the Eisenhower Administration took the first long step toward its ultimate downfall."¹¹

The "giveaway" charges continued as the general public

⁸"Tidelands Oil and the Political Tides," The Nation, CLXXVI (May 16, 1953), p. 407.

⁹Public Papers of the Presidents, Eisenhower, 1953, p. 327.

¹⁰Michael W. Straus, "Give It Away!" The Nation, CLXXVI (May 16, 1953), p. 416.

¹¹"Tidelands Oil and the Political Tides," The Nation, CLXXVI (May 16, 1953), p. 408.

ultimately realized the significance of the Tidelands cases. Because of this precedent, succeeding Administrations will be powerless to recover property, lands, or resources once they have been surrendered to the states.¹²

Dixon-Yates Controversy

During the first four years of the Eisenhower Administration its power policies were a prime target for the opposition. The climax of the power controversy was reached with one of the most explosive political fiascos of the Administration--the Dixon-Yates contract. The Administration, which had in general held true to the philosophy of private power, now became entangled in a political controversy.

In late 1953, Gordon R. Clapp, the outgoing chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, requested that the T.V.A. be relieved of its commitments to furnish the power to the Atomic Energy Commission since the Administration was planning a reduction in allocations of power funds.¹³ The city of Memphis was in need of additional power, yet the Administration refused to allow the T.V.A. to expand to fill the

¹²See Warren Unna, "Republican 'Giveaways': The Charges and the Facts," Harpers, CCXII (May, 1956), pp. 29-35 for a scrutiny of the main issues and a breakdown of six major instances where pieces of federal property or national rights were passed, sold, or surrendered to private hands by the Republican Administration.

¹³Donovan, Eisenhower, The Inside Story, p. 337.

need and hedged on the issue of empowering the city to contract with a private concern, requesting time for continued study of the problem. As an alternative, a recommendation was made to the President that a merger be formed between Edgar H. Dixon, head of Middle South Utilities, Inc., and Eugene A. Yates, president of the Southern Company, to provide the needed power for A.E.C. and the city of Memphis.¹⁴

President Eisenhower, acting on advice from Budget Director Rowland Hughes, ordered the A.E.C. to negotiate a contract with Dixon-Yates in excess of \$107 million for the construction of a privately owned power plant at West Memphis. This plan met with immediate opposition from the Democrats who opposed this as an arrangement between the A.E.C. and Dixon-Yates, which bypassed T.V.A. The biggest complaint, despite the T.V.A. support, was that the A.E.C. was now involved in a political struggle and its non-partisan nature would be damaged causing its progress to be endangered. This was pointed out by Senator Lyndon Johnson, who said: "We had hoped that the A.E.C. could be kept out of the political field and that it could use its time in assuring

¹⁴For inside details on political maneuvering see William M. Blair, "President Revives T.V.A. Power Issue by Order to A.E.C.," The New York Times, June 18, 1954, pp. 1, 12. For a critical analysis of the Administration's bypassing of T.V.A. and the uncertainty of its legality see Michael Straight, "More Light on Dixon Yates," New Republic, CXXXI (October 18, 1954), pp. 6-11.

America's maintenance of superiority in the atomic field."¹⁵ Senator Clinton P. Anderson, Democrat of New Mexico, expressed a similar view urging the President and the A.E.C. to withdraw from the contract by quipping, "More importantly, let the Atomic Energy Commission put its time and talents into bombs and not bonanzas . . ."¹⁶ In the period before signing the Dixon-Yates contract the Administration ignored these and other Democratic protests.

Eisenhower reassured A.E.C. commission members that he had no intention of destroying the T.V.A., but was acting in the best interests of the nation.¹⁷ After the contract was signed the Democrats continued their attacks and finally succeeded in forcing the President to give a complete disclosure of the history of the contract. During the subsequent investigation Senator Lister Hill, Democrat of Alabama, discovered that Adolphe H. Wenzell, an unpaid special consultant of the Bureau of the Budget in the preparation of the contract, was at the same time an official of an investment firm financing the Dixon-Yates operation. Rowland R. Hughes, the Budget Director, informed the President of Senator Hill's

¹⁵Walter Johnson, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, p. 283.

¹⁶William M. Blair, "Dixon-Yates Pact Signed; U.S. Can Recapture Plant," The New York Times, November 11, 1954, p. 1.

¹⁷"Text of President's Letter on Power Pact," The New York Times, November 11, 1954, p. 25.

conflict of interest charges and denied their validity.

Eisenhower's opponents quickly charged that this incident was ample proof that the President was not made fully aware of the situation.¹⁸

Critics were quick to take advantage of this chance to tarnish the Presidential image at his press conference on June 29, 1955, when the President defended the Administration's stand by elaborating:

Mr. Wenzell was never called in or asked a single thing about the Dixon-Yates contract. He was brought in as a technical adviser in the very early days when none of us here knew about the bookkeeping methods of the T.V.A. or anything else. He was brought in as a technical adviser and nothing else, and before this contract was even proposed.¹⁹

This was later clarified by Press Secretary James C. Hagerty to the extent that the Bureau of the Budget had received technical advice from Wenzell; this was in defense of earlier testimony by Rowland R. Hughes that Eisenhower knew of Wenzell, ". . . and his connection and all about him. In fact, he approved him before we got him down here . . ."²⁰

The city of Memphis rescued the embarrassed Administration by announcing that it would construct its own power

¹⁸E. W. Kenworthy, "Dixon-Yates: The Riddle of the Self-Inflicted Wound," The Reporter, XIV (January 26, 1956), pp. 19-20.

¹⁹Russell Baker, "Dixon-Yates Files Barred to Kefauver by President," The New York Times, June 30, 1955, p. 14.

²⁰Donovan, Eisenhower, The Inside Story, pp. 339-340.

plant and on July 11, 1955, President Eisenhower cancelled the Dixon-Yates contract.²¹ The A.E.C. denounced the contract as illegal and void on the grounds of "conflict of interests." Thereupon, Dixon-Yates sued for construction costs, but were turned down by the Justice Department on the grounds that the agreement was "contrary to public interest," and illegal from its inception.²²

Following this controversy Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay, whose conservative practices had alienated public power supporters in the Northwest, now felt the ire of the President as well. As a result, he was diplomatically removed from his Cabinet post by Sherman Adams' "letter and a shove" into the Oregon Senate race against incumbent Wayne Morse.²³ An indication that the Republicans might have failed to appreciate the expansion and population growth of the Northwest was shown in the sweeping victories of the Democrats in the 1956 elections in that section as Eisenhower's personally-backed candidates were defeated. There followed some hurried revamping of power policies by the Administration, but the disillusionment of Pacific Northwest

²¹Russell Baker, "Dixon-Yates Pact is Killed by President as Memphis Pledges Own Power Plant," The New York Times, July 12, 1955, p. 1.

²²Johnson, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, p. 284.

²³James Reston, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, August 3, 1956, p. 7.

Republicans was not lessened. This was reflected in a statement by a Seattle Republican leader: "There now are no Republicans left in Congress who are willing to fight for partnership."²⁴

Modern Republicanism

Among other promises in the 1952 campaign, the Republicans had stressed a return to governmental economy, calling for a halt to the "New Deal" spending that had characterized past Democratic Administrations. Reduced government spending, tax reduction, and a balanced budget were the means by which Eisenhower intended to achieve governmental economy.²⁵ He realized that government economy must not come at the expense of weakening the defense of the nation, therefore he stressed a carefully-planned, overall reduction in domestic spending.²⁶ He had expressed this opinion in a remark during the 1952 campaign: "Isn't it time we had, in Washington, an administration which knows how to keep spending down?"²⁷ In actual practice, Republican promises suffered severe setbacks

²⁴Joe Miller, "How the Republicans Lost in the West," The Reporter, XV (December 13, 1956), p. 32.

²⁵"Text of Eisenhower's State Of The Union Message on New Domestic and Foreign Policies," The New York Times, February 3, 1953, p. 15.

²⁶Donovan, Eisenhower, The Inside Story, pp. 58-59.

²⁷Johnson, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, p. 280.

as the Administration was forced to rely on deficit spending in all phases of the economy. A vacillating position was adopted as they advocated economy, but were compelled to resort to deficit spending, unhappily discovering that high government spending was an evil that could not be cured overnight. As the first term drew to a close, price supports for agricultural commodities were still intact, governmental spending was at an all-time high, and most of the so-called "New Deal" programs were still in effect. As Edwin Dale, Jr., described it: "A rather frightening leopard has indeed changed its spots--or at least some of them."²⁸

Early in the first term the Eisenhower Administration eliminated wage and price controls and initiated a reduction in military expenditures of \$4.5 billion from the amount Truman had requested. As Secretary of the Treasury Humphrey worked to secure "hard money" and tighter credit restrictions, the nation itself prospered and bumper taxes were collected. But at the same time the Administration was obligated to \$80 billion in expenditures authorized by the Truman Congress and hopes for a balanced budget faded.²⁹

In late summer, 1953, the prosperity had dimmed

²⁸ Edwin L. Dale, Jr., "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 24, 1956, p. 18.

²⁹ See Robert J. Donovan, Eisenhower, The Inside Story, pp. 56-58 for the attempts to balance the budget, discussions within Cabinet meetings, and resistance by Eisenhower to economic pressure.

somewhat. The tight money policy of Humphrey, combined with the drop in military spending, excessive inventories and an imbalance in sales and production, plus the inescapable reality of unemployment gave rise to the terrible fear of a full-scale depression. Eisenhower, despite the patient and optimistic forecasts of Secretary Humphrey and conservative opposition within the Republican party, set in motion emergency programs to rescue the floundering economy.³⁰ He won a hard fought battle against Daniel A. Reed, Republican of New York, and Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, who opposed the extension of the Excess Profits Tax although it would bring much needed revenue.³¹ In the fall of 1953, the Administration, plagued by threats of recession, chose to give up the campaign pledge of a balanced budget, a goal then still attainable, and operate under a deficit budget for the sake of the sagging economy.³²

The two years following the 1954 elections witnessed a

³⁰George H. Mayer and Walter O. Forster, The United States and the Twentieth Century, p. 705.

³¹James M. Burns and Jack W. Peltason, Government By The People, pp. 474-476 reveals that Eisenhower succeeded in getting Speaker of the House Joe Martin to sway the Rules Committee and bypass the Ways and Means Committee to secure the passage of the Excess Profits Tax; this disturbed some Representatives and hurt the President's influence in the House.

³²Edwin L. Dale, Jr., "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 24, 1956, p. 18.

spectacular parade of Republican legislation and also saw the Administration accepting deficit spending as sound economics in the face of recession, a movement which was supported by the Democratic majority in Congress.³³ Under the Democratic-controlled Eighty-fourth Congress Eisenhower proposed large scale public works including expansion of the new Federal Highway program and broadened Social Security. In addition, he worked for tax reductions and cheap money, and in 1955 accepted the Democratic version of the Reciprocal Trade Program.³⁴ With this succession of liberalized welfare programs the President not only surprised members of his own party, but he also pulled a political coup by taking old Democratic programs, changing names and successfully calling this new program Modern Republicanism.³⁵

It was partly due to Eisenhower's new Modern Republicanism that the 1956 campaign found the Democrats a party without any strong domestic issues with which to sway public opinion. Eisenhower's Modern Republicanism had literally taken their platform out from under them. By 1956, the Republicans had introduced a Soil Bank Plan, raised parity prices almost to the Democratic level and sponsored a Federal

³³ John M. Brown, Through These Men, pp. 74-75.

³⁴ William S. White, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 23, 1956, p. 13.

³⁵ James Reston, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, August 3, 1956, p. 1.

aid to school construction plan. They had also placed 13 million more workers under Social Security coverage, instituted a program of Federal highway construction and had supported demands for higher wages. In the face of this new Republican program the Democrats were confronted with the perplexing dilemma of either joining the conservative Republicans in opposition or admitting the success of Eisenhower's political coup. The latter course was the more realistic one as was stated by Stevenson:

If the Democratic Party, which has stood so brilliantly in our time for the constructive use of government to promote the general welfare, now tries to out-Republican the Republicans on the issue of budget cutting, it is going to be hard to take us seriously again as the party of the people.³⁶

Eisenhower's Modern Republicanism, with its overtones of the New Deal, was not entirely acceptable to members of the business world. The President attempted to counterbalance reaction against regulatory policies by staffing his agencies with men friendly to business.³⁷ Under the program of Modern Republicanism, real gains were made in the ranks of labor, long considered a Democratic stronghold. Secretary of

³⁶ Stewart Alsop, "Just What Is Modern Republicanism?" Saturday Evening Post, CCXXX (July 27, 1957), p. 88.

³⁷ Ibid.

Labor James Mitchell had succeeded in gaining union support through his skillful cooperation with labor leaders.³⁸

In spite of Eisenhower's success with Modern Republicanism, all was not serene within the Republican party. Old Guard Republicans were thoroughly disgusted with the change in policy and were loud in their criticism. George Sokolsky complained that the Republican party ". . . has gone so modern that it is indistinguishable from the New Deal."³⁹ Representative Noah Mason, Republican of Illinois lamented: "Essentially Ike's New Republicanism is a form of bribery, a program to buy votes with the voter's own money."⁴⁰

Opposition also came from within the Administration as in the struggle between the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby and the Budget Bureau to secure adequate funds to maintain her department. Despite this conservative opposition the new department made great progress sometimes benefitting from Democratic prodding.⁴¹

Problems with agriculture, however, were not solved by Eisenhower's new policy. The President was forced to realize

³⁸ Joseph A. Loftus, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 25, 1956, p. 18.

³⁹ Johnson, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, p. 279.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ John D. Morris, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 28, 1956, p. 20.

that the farmers could not receive "full parity in the market place" as he had promised in the 1952 campaign. The fact that there were no simple solutions to the problems of the American farmer also became obvious.⁴²

Department of Agriculture Secretary Ezra Taft Benson disagreed with the President on the method to be used in solving agriculture problems. Eisenhower felt that returning farm programs to control on the local level was the answer, as such a move would free agriculture from the "New Deal" government type supervision of his new policy.⁴³ Secretary Benson, however, was convinced that instability in agriculture was due in part to government surplus, and that lowered price supports would bring lower production, enabling the law of supply and demand to restore balance. At Benson's urging, the parity ratio was reduced, but the expected lowering in production did not materialize. As the situation grew worse members of the Farm Bloc demanded action. To keep in the good graces of the Middlewest the Modern Republicans urged

⁴²William M. Blair, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 26, 1956, p. 18.

⁴³Public Papers of the Presidents, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953, p. 123. Eisenhower outlined these objectives in a special Message to Congress in his Reorganization Plan No. 2, March 25, 1953, declaring that the purpose of the bill was to revamp and create new positions and to establish a clear line of responsibility from the Secretary of Agriculture down to the local levels of operations; this would enable the department to more quickly adjust to the constant changing Agriculture problems.

the Administration to reconsider a plan for removing acreage from production. The President had vetoed the Democratic-sponsored Soil Bank program and a Democratic bill fixing parity at 90 per cent. In 1956 Congress reduced the Democratic Soil Bank and parity bills and Eisenhower signed them. As a result Republicans were soon spending more annually on the farm program than had ever been spent by the Democrats. As farm income took an upward turn, Eisenhower carried practically all the farm states in 1956.⁴⁴

Eisenhower's Modern Republicanism had given the nation's economy a much-needed boost, but his budget was still the object of critical attacks from within the party. At a news conference the President reflected his changed attitude thusly:

I believe profoundly in the things that we have proposed necessary for this country, and in other cases we have programs that have been with us for years. There is no chance of reversing them, and, indeed, there is probably only a very few of them that should be dropped.⁴⁵

In the same news conference the President was reminded

⁴⁴ Stewart Alsop, "Just What Is Modern Republicanism?" Saturday Evening Post, CCXXX (July 27, 1957), p. 88. For an interesting evaluation and comparison of economic indices for mid 1952 and mid 1956 see James Reston, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 22, 1956, p. 42, which reflects the growth and vitality of nearly all phases of our economy, except the farm net income which fell from 14.7 billion in 1952 to 11.5 billion in mid 1956.

⁴⁵ "Presidential News Conference," The New York Times, April 11, 1957, p. 16.

of a recent statement by Senator Barry Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, that the President's Federal Budget of 71.8 billion was "a betrayal of public trust" to which he quickly commented:

Now I happen to believe that in this day and time we cannot use the governmental processes or limit ourselves to the governmental processes that were applicable in 1890, . . .⁴⁶

In an effort to evaluate the political prowess of Eisenhower, his manipulation of Democratic programs for the advancement of his Administration, and more important his influence in affecting a change in Republican attitudes, James Reston states:

It is surely one of the great paradoxes of recent American political history that the Republicans, who bitterly condemned the New and Fair Deals for almost a generation, and who particularly opposed the idea of a major role for government in guiding the national economy, should have swallowed the basic tinkering techniques of the past and not even attempted to repeal a single New Deal measure.⁴⁷

⁴⁶"Presidential News Conference," The New York Times, April 11, 1957, p. 16.

⁴⁷James Reston, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, July 22, 1956, p. 42.

CHAPTER IV

PERIOD OF VACILLATION

President Eisenhower regarded the large majority he had received in the 1956 election as a vote of confidence from the people. The Chief Executive had now undergone the trials of four years in the White House gaining experience and, above all, a self-confident approach to the duties of the presidency. The Cabinet, for the most part, was left intact and the press felt that the nation was going to witness a rejuvenated Administration full of new ideas and with a dogmatic, determined approach to positive thinking and leadership. Eisenhower was confident, articulate and much more poised before the press and the nation. This confidence in his own ability was illustrated by the President himself in a remark over a piece of string as he said, "Look if I push it I don't get anywhere. But if I pull it I can take it anywhere I want."¹

Members of the Administration who had expressed great optimism at the change in the President were painfully disappointed, however, as Eisenhower in the first two years of his second term showed flurries of Executive action and

¹ Cabell Phillips, "President, Then And Now--'53 and '57 Compared," The New York Times, January 20, 1957, sec. E, p. 3. See also Robert J. Donovan, "What Ike Will Do," Saturday Evening Post, CCXXIX (January 19, 1957), p. 73.

voiced strong proposals, but repeatedly lapsed back into the vacillating action so characteristic of this period. Despite attempts at positive leadership it became obvious that the domestic policy would be unchanged, and the team concept would remain in effect. It soon became apparent that the Administration would once again fail to produce any significant changes in domestic policy.²

From early 1957 to mid 1959, the Administration and the President can be described as falling into the category of what Sidney Hyman terms the "Cleveland" concept of government. That is, "government by defensive direction, policies of disengagement and negation of programs that the opposition had put into motion."³ This concept of the presidency fitted well with the views of the Administration and the Republican party could quite appropriately at this time have been termed in Hyman's words a "limitist" party, seeking to maintain a gravitational balance of political harmony through worship of the "status quo," swaying with political pressure, and making no demands upon government or the people.⁴

During these two years the President failed to utilize his executive power to promote legislation, seldom identified

²Rexford G. Tugwell, The Enlargement of the Presidency, p. 458.

³Sidney Hyman, "The Art of the Presidency," The Annals, CCCVII (September, 1956), p. 4.

⁴Ibid., pp. 5-6.

himself with proposals, failed to attack his opposition, and succeeded in shrinking the Executive's power; yet, paradoxically, he retained public support and he remained practically immune to public criticism.⁵

Reorganization of the Defense Department

President Eisenhower had stipulated that one of his major goals for 1958 would be the overall reorganization of the Defense Department. His chief objective as stated would be to strengthen the position of the Secretary of Defense over the Joint Chiefs of Staff and unified operational commands. The granting of this broad authority, in the opinion of the President, would be necessary to organize the Department for "one single, concentrated effort."⁶ The President felt he had a special competence for this reorganization and indicated that he would wage an all-out battle for its passage with the remark:

I don't care how strong they are or how numerous they are. Here is something that is necessary. I would get . . . onto the air as often as the television companies

⁵Laurin L. Henry, Presidential Transitions, p. 685.

⁶"Text of President Eisenhower's Message on Reorganization of Defense Department," The New York Times, April 4, 1958, pp. 6-7.

would let me on. I would keep it up until I would have the United States understanding that it is their safety.⁷

It was apparent that strong executive pressure would be required to achieve this reorganization since the Congress for the most part would be reluctant to give up its control of the "purse strings" which would require surrender of some measure of its authority.⁸

In pursuing this course the President became engulfed in opposition from the navy and from members of Congress who attacked the proposal as a diabolical usurpation of Congressional power. Representative Carl Vinson, Democrat of Georgia, speaking before the House, charged that Eisenhower's proposal would lead to a "Prussian-type" staff system which would abrogate the Constitution. Vinson also charged that it was completely contradictory to Eisenhower's Reorganization Plan of 1953.⁹ The President termed these charges ridiculous and waded into the opposition with fury, taking a strong stand that left no one in doubt as to his goal. He insisted that the Secretary of Defense must be given

⁷"Presidential News Conference," The New York Times, April 10, 1958, p. 18.

⁸"Outlook Now For Tax Cuts, Defense Shake-Up, Business," U.S. News & World Report, XLIV (April 25, 1958), p. 41.

⁹Carl Vinson, "President's Proposal Means Prussian-Type General Staff," U.S. News & World Report, XLIV (April 25, 1958), p. 80.

authority as he requested to accomplish unity, a mandatory need for economic and defense safety and that there would be no compromise nor retreat, saying ". . . any retreat from that is, to my mind, is retreat to a certain degree of defenselessness that is inexcusable."¹⁰

After several weeks of stiff opposition Eisenhower once more agreed to compromise on May 16, 1958, and expressed praise of the House Committee's work on revisions as being in accord with his proposals.¹¹ The Executive's vacillating position was now made obvious as twelve days later on May 28, 1958, his praise turned to invective rejection and in the language of castigation, he charged that these same revisions would promote lower echelon philandering and administrative "red-tape." He suggested that Congress was hoping to promote inter-service rivalry and in a rare blaze of indignation and fury again declared that no revisions would be accepted that would threaten his position, saying, ". . . pretty good is not good enough, and going part way is not going far enough."¹²

The President, however, began to withdraw from his

¹⁰"Presidential News Conference," The New York Times, May 1, 1958, p. 14.

¹¹Russell Baker, "House Unit Votes Compromise Bill On Defense Shift," The New York Times, May 17, 1958, p. 1.

¹²"Text of President's Statement on Defense," The New York Times, May 29, 1958, p. 8.

firm position and became reluctant to push through his proposal. In July both houses agreed on a final version of the bill, minus two important goals which Eisenhower had formerly deemed essential: (1) end of Congressional liaison with individual services, and (2) authority to change traditional service functions without Congressional restraint. The President accepted the revised bill, and dismissed the changes as minor. He warmly congratulated the Armed Services Committees for the bill, saying that this "adequately meets every recommendation I submitted to the Congress on this subject."¹³

Federal Aid to Schools

One of the major proposals stressed in Eisenhower's message to Congress in January, 1957, was financial assistance to local districts to relieve over-crowded school conditions due to ever-increasing enrollment. The President recommended to Congress a four-year general school construction program with a budget proposal which included a \$451 million allocation for the first year under proposed legislation.¹⁴

¹³Russell Baker, "Conferees Agree on Pentagon Bill; President Hails It," The New York Times, July 24, 1958, p. 1.

¹⁴"Text of President's Budget Message to Congress for 1958 Fiscal Year," The New York Times, January 17, 1957, p. 18.

Later in January, the President urged Congress to pass a four-year emergency program providing for school construction and Federal purchase of local school bonds amounting to approximately two billion dollars in expenditures. This comprehensive program was deemed critical, and the President urged Congress to act on its merits and to restrain from adding integration clauses to it which might cause delays or possible death of the program.¹⁵

The President's program was referred to the House Education and Labor Committee which generally approved of it, although the Democrats proposed an amendment which changed the Federal allocation of funds to states from the basis of "need," to distribution on the basis of state's school-age population. The President outwardly gave the amendment his support and on several occasions spoke out in favor of the program, but then as the Congressional session drew nearer to its close, there was no apparent executive move in support of the program and prospects for its passage grew dimmer. In July, as House debate on school construction began the Republicans expectantly waited for the President to speak out. The Democrats, who favored the bill, made an effort to clarify for the nation the fact that the bill carried no strings of Federal control. Representative James C. Wright,

¹⁵"Text of President's Message on School Building Fund," The New York Times, January 29, 1957, p. 16.

Jr., Democrat of Texas, offered an amendment to the bill which the Democrats as a body offered to adopt by a voice vote. The amendment assured that local control of schools would be retained and plainly stated that Congress was fully cognizant of state and local responsibilities in educational control.¹⁶

House debate on the measure continued with no statement forthcoming from the Chief Executive in support of the program. The Northern Democrats, fearing defeat of the bill, withdrew their proposal in regard to distribution and supported an amendment by Representative William H. Ayres, Republican of Ohio, which restored distribution based on "need."¹⁷ This returned the bill to Eisenhower's original proposal, but even this sacrifice failed to produce the desired results. The failure of the President to provide support, plus the combined efforts of Southern Democrats and conservative Republicans, some of whom were influential in Congress led to the defeat of the measure.¹⁸ It was quite

¹⁶"House School Vote Bars U.S. Controls," The New York Times, July 25, 1957, p. 21.

¹⁷John D. Morris, "School Aid Bill Killed in House by 208-203 Vote," The New York Times, July 26, 1957, p. 8.

¹⁸"Vote Killing School Aid Bill," The New York Times, July 26, 1957, p. 8. 57% of Democrats voted for the program, while 59% of the Republicans in the House voted to kill it. Voting to kill the measure were three top ranking Administration leaders: Charles Halleck of Indiana, and Leslie Arends and Leo E. Allen, both of Illinois.

conceivable that any executive urging could have changed the votes of these men to form the margin of victory, and yet the President expressed "disappointment" over the defeat of the bill. Democrats denounced executive apathy and chided the President for failing to take a strong stand, a view which some Republicans, including Marion B. Folsom, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, agreed with unofficially. Representative Cleveland M. Bailey, Democrat of West Virginia, maintained that telephone calls to key personnel could have assured passage of the measure and remarked, "I don't care to see any crocodile tears shed by the White House . . . The President didn't do anything as far as I can determine . . ."19

In a news conference, replying to questions about the defeat of the bill, the President insisted that the Republicans refused to support the Democratic version of the bill for fear of charges of a Federal "give-away." When questioned as to why he failed to lend personal support to the measure after the Democrats had accepted his original version, the President, apparently puzzled, replied, "I never heard that, . . . If that is true, why, you are telling me something I never heard."20 The fact that he "never heard"

¹⁹John D. Morris, "Democrats Blame President for School Aid Bill Defeat," The New York Times, July 27, 1957, p. 1.

²⁰"Presidential News Conference," The New York Times, August 1, 1957, p. 10.

is definitely an indictment of his self-imposed staff system and team concept of the Presidency. It certainly tends to substantiate the critics who maintained that the President's subordinates sheltered and secluded him to the extent that he often heard only what they permitted him to hear. The situation was described quite aptly by Frederic Collins:

The staff system is not good enough to show Mr. Eisenhower that the staff system is not good enough. The result is that, all too frequently, Mr. Eisenhower betrays a lack of knowledge of activities in his own administration.²¹

The Little Rock Incident

Eisenhower inherited the problem of Southern acceptance of the 1954 Supreme Court order to integrate schools "with all deliberate speed." His Administration had taken definite steps to eliminate racial discrimination in the government, but shied away from national leadership in the school problem. The President declined to call a White House conference to help solve problems which could arise from school integration, circumventing the issue by taking a "let-time-solve-the-problem" attitude.²²

The Chief Executive was very positive in his support

²¹ Frederic W. Collins, "Erosion of the Presidency," The Nation, CLXXXV (August 17, 1957), p. 64.

²² Luther A. Huston, "Eisenhower's Four Years," The New York Times, August 2, 1956, p. 14.

of states' rights, and declarations pointed to the fact that he was committed to a path of executive non-intervention. In answering a question on executive use of force to insure school integration, he quipped:

I can't imagine any set of circumstances that would ever induce me to send Federal troops into a Federal court and into any area to enforce the orders of a Federal court, because I believe that common sense of America will never require it.

. . . and I would never believe that it would be a wise thing to do in this country.²³

Civil rights legislation was prepared in response to the President's request for action in this area, yet at a press conference he advised moderation in these "delicate fields." He appeared to be unenthusiastic about the Civil Rights Bill, and on one occasion displayed apparent unfamiliarity with its contents. When questioned about the advisability of the use of force in school integration disputes, he commented, "over my dead body," and yet the bill prepared at his request authorized executive enforcement.²⁴

Eisenhower's position of reluctance to use this executive enforcement faced a severe test in September, 1957, when Governor Orval Faubus, of Arkansas, called out the

²³"Presidential News Conference," The New York Times, July 18, 1957, p. 12.

²⁴Arthur Krock, "President Under Fire in Civil Rights Debate," The New York Times, July 21, 1957, sec. E, p. 3.

Arkansas National Guard to prevent nine Negro children from entering Little Rock's Central High School. This was a clear case of a state using its authority to block the Federal court order to proceed with integration, but Eisenhower refused to take any action, apparently confident that Faubus would back down. On September 14, the President met with Governor Faubus at Newport, Rhode Island, some twelve days after the National Guard had been called out, and both men agreed to a "stay of execution." However, Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Jr., warned Faubus that the court order must be upheld.²⁵

The President received criticism from citizens, newspapers, and writers for moving so slowly and for treating the situation as a legal problem rather than a political one. These critics were demanding that the President use the power of his position to enforce the national will. An editorial in The New Republic summed up the situation in this manner:

The President can marshal public opinion. He can persuade and he can shame, both publicly and privately. The President can cease giving the impression that he is at best tolerant of the Supreme Court's original segregation decision.

The President--and only the President, not Herbert Brownell and not Sherman Adams--

²⁵"Ike and Faubus--The Inside Story," U.S. News & World Report, XLIII (October 4, 1957), p. 63.

can place the moral authority and prestige of his office and person behind the lawful orders of the court.²⁶

Governor Faubus withdrew the troops on September 20, 1957, but his arbitrary action had incited public resistance and the Negro children were now threatened by an ugly mob which had gathered around the school. On September 23, the President issued an Emergency Proclamation commanding all persons obstructing justice in Little Rock to cease and desist and ordered the mob to disperse or he would have to employ "whatever force necessary."²⁷ In the face of continued resistance the President finally sent in troops, federalized the Arkansas National Guard, and upheld the court order by force, declaring ". . . the President's responsibility is inescapable."²⁸

The political popularity of Eisenhower's action may have been debatable, but its legality was unquestionable, authorized as it was by the Constitution, fortified by precedent, and upheld by the Supreme Court's theory of the relativity of Presidential power.²⁹ The President was

²⁶"Arkansas," The New Republic, LXXXVII (September 16, 1957), p. 4.

²⁷"President's Statements," The New York Times, September 24, 1957, p. 1.

²⁸"Eisenhower Address On Little Rock Crisis," The New York Times, September 25, 1957, p. 14.

²⁹Joseph Tanenhaus, "The Supreme Court and Presidential Power," The Annals, CCCVII (September, 1956), p. 108.

criticized for his early inactivity and for failure to take any positive action from the time of the court order in 1954 until the crisis of Little Rock in 1957. It was pointed out that the presidential power could have been directed toward engendering public acceptance of school integration, but Eisenhower had formerly remained passive. Both the Chief Executive and the Justice Department were criticized for their obvious failure to prepare for opposition to integration by the Southern states.³⁰ Eisenhower accomplished his purpose in Little Rock as the court order was at long last tested and upheld through executive intervention. But it was at best a hollow victory marred by the President's previous hesitancy, his overly-cautious approach, and his reluctance to recognize a condition that he had refused to anticipate.³¹ In the aftermath of the Little Rock incident, the prestige of the United States was lowered in the eyes of the world, and domestically, the President angered Southern moderates and drastically alienated segregationists.³² The President's sharpest critics further accused him of inviting additional

³⁰ Richard P. Longaker, The Presidency and Individual Liberties, pp. 168-169.

³¹ Arthur Krock, "In the Nation," The New York Times, September 26, 1957, p. 24.

³² Virgil T. Blossom, "The Untold Story of Little Rock," Saturday Evening Post, CCXXXI (June 20, 1959), p. 30, 103.

opposition from the Southern states through his weak and ineffectual handling of this initial challenge.³³

The danger of executive reluctance to accept responsibility is effectively summarized by Richard Longaker:

Wise and persistent use of the instruments of the presidency . . . can nourish freedom . . . Executive neglect, on the other hand, may lead to the undermining of the very substance of American constitutionalism. What must be recognized today is that sustained leadership in the field must originate in White House direction, coordination, and sensitivity. Further, as the Little Rock episode made clear, the problems in this field are least effectively solved by drastic expedients imposed at the final moment.³⁴

The 1958 Budget

Against the wishes of the conservative Republicans and much to the embarrassment of the President, the budget for the fiscal year 1958 was the largest ever requested. This \$71.8 billion was, in effect, an acceptance of deficit spending by the Administration and offered a prime target for the Democrats.³⁵ Simultaneously with the release of the budget,

³³Averell Harriman, "Political Leaders and Editors Size Up the Little Rock Crisis," U.S. News & World Report, XLIII (October 4, 1957), p. 58.

³⁴Richard P. Longaker, The Presidency and Individual Liberties, p. 171.

³⁵"Text of President Eisenhower's Budget Message to Congress for 1958 Fiscal Year," The New York Times, January 17, 1957, pp. 15-19.

Secretary of the Treasury George M. Humphrey warned Congress and the nation that government spending must be reduced and taxes cut in the near future. Humphrey openly admitted opposition to several government programs while staunchly maintaining he was not at odds with the Administration. His action led Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, Democrat of Texas, to say that he was astonished by what he termed "divided councils." Secretary Humphrey warned that he would resign if the Administration continued the policy of deficit spending and he took a "back-hand" slap at Eisenhower with the stinging verbal blast:

If the Government cannot reduce the "terrific" tax burden on the country . . . I will predict that you will have a depression that will curl your hair, because we are just taking too much money out of this economy that we need to make jobs that you have to have as time goes on.³⁶

It was obvious that Humphrey was not in harmony with Modern Republicanism and as a strict adherent to the tenets of conservatism, he found the proposed budget incompatible with his personal views. His defiance of the Executive invited opposition to the budget from members of Congress, and further served as a catalyst in the reaction against the budget from members of the business world heretofore

³⁶"Secretary Warns Outlays and Taxes Must Decrease," The New York Times, January 17, 1957, p. 20.

generally in accord with the Administration.³⁷ Paradoxically, while Humphrey was inviting Congressional opposition to the budget he was, at the same time, insisting apologetically that the Administration had no alternative to it.³⁸ Humphrey's attitude toward the budget placed on the President the responsibility of having to seek support from the Democratic coalition in the House for a fiscal program that was being attacked by a member of his own Cabinet.³⁹ Humphrey continued his attack, adding insult to injury by his alliance with the Democratic group favoring reduction in the amounts and limitations of special tax write-off privileges for industry which the Administration had supported.⁴⁰ Eisenhower loyally denied charges of a split in the Administration, insisting that he, and he alone, determined the monetary policy of the government and discounting the charges of a rift between Humphrey and himself.⁴¹

Alarmed over the growing opposition to the budget, the

³⁷ Edwin L. Dale, Jr., "Humphrey Theory of Economics," The New York Times Magazine, March 17, 1957, p. 12.

³⁸ Arthur Krock, "Presidential Budget New Kind of Paradox," The New York Times, January 20, 1957, sec. E, p. 3.

³⁹ "Text of President's Letter to Rayburn on Reductions in Budget Request," The New York Times, April 19, 1957, p. 12.

⁴⁰ "Humphrey Backs Byrd's Tax Plan," The New York Times, May 8, 1957, p. 22.

⁴¹ "Presidential News Conference," The New York Times, May 9, 1957, p. 18.

President made a bold and unusual move by appealing to the nation over television for its support. In two broadcasts made during May, 1957, he stressed the importance of the budget, gave reasons for its size, and urged its passage as a security measure for the country. This indicated that Eisenhower was attempting to regain the executive initiative which he had allowed to decline in the earlier years of his term. After prodding from supporters, he adopted a firmer attitude, determined to use his personal influence and his presidential power to exert pressure on Congress to accept his budget. Eisenhower in a determined mood, acknowledged respect for Congress but proved rather dogmatic in fighting for his program:

. . . as long as I am in a fight, I never rest until I get . . . until the United States gets what I believe, . . . to be necessary for the operation of this Government, for the protection of ourselves in this critical world, and for the waging of peace. I shall never stop until a decision is reached.⁴²

The President thrived in the atmosphere of promoting and clarifying his program and became a source of information for the news media, an unprecedented action on his part. For the first time in his second term Eisenhower had attacked his opponents with the most powerful resource at his command, the

⁴²"Presidential News Conference," The New York Times, May 23, 1957, p. 14.

prestige of his position. In conjunction with this appeal for his program to the nation, the Administration began to contact Republican leaders, using the threat of withholding presidential patronage to get support. In the same vein, with the 1958 election in the offing, Eisenhower advised strife-torn factions within the Republican party to solve their differences and to provide solid backing for executive programs, particularly for his budget. In pointing out that warring Republican leaders were undermining their own political security, Sherman Adams warned, "What Peter says about Paul tells more about Peter than it tells about Paul."⁴³

This constructive program was impeded by the continuing administrative harassment of Humphrey. In an appearance before the Senate Finance Committee, in June, 1957, he openly agreed with oppositional leader Senator Harry F. Byrd, Democrat of Virginia and head of the committee. Humphrey concurred with Byrd's attacks on the Administration's fiscal policies, admitting that the government debt continued to increase and that high taxation and inflation were still very much present in our economy.⁴⁴ Humphrey's continued support for conservative policies in government were applauded by

⁴³Sherman Adams, "Carping Opposition To Ike Means Certain Defeat At Polls," U.S. News & World Report, XLII (June 7, 1957), P. 102.

⁴⁴"The Big Battle Over Money," U.S. News & World Report, XXXXII (June 28, 1957), p. 136.

business leaders and regarded by an economy minded Congress as an invitation to reduce the budget. Unfortunately, his inconsistent views proved very detrimental to Eisenhower's effectiveness as Chief Executive.⁴⁵

Once again the political axiom which demands that executive programs and policies must have full party support if effective legislation is to be forthcoming emphatically proved itself. Humphrey's actions in regard to the budget were not conducive to Congressional support, nor were they politically expedient. The Administration was hindered and finally suffered defeat largely due to his efforts which were in the words of Arthur Krock an, "honest, candid, and a genuine patriotic expression. But it was a disastrous tactic . . ."⁴⁶ The disaster was twofold in that Congress succeeded in cutting the budget, as Eisenhower failed to continue his constructive and aggressive leadership yielding to the Congressional opposition. Once again presidential prestige suffered as Eisenhower accepted Humphrey's belated resignation from his Cabinet post with this comment, "It has

⁴⁵Sidney Hyman, "George M. Humphrey Had A Great Fall," The Reporter, XVII (August 8, 1957), p. 41. Humphrey's pursuit of policy was quite different from his supposedly conservative views. During his tenure in office the total debt structure rose \$200 billion to a total of \$793 billion, and his last act in office involved a \$23.9 billion refinancing of the Federal debt, both of which were unparalleled in spending.

⁴⁶Arthur Krock, "In The Nation," The New York Times, May 30, 1957, p. 18.

been of real satisfaction to me that in working on these problems we have invariably found our conclusions and convictions to be practically identical."⁴⁷

The damage was far-reaching as cuts in the defense appropriations were forthcoming and disillusionment on both sides of the government reached a new high. Frederic W. Collins described the situation:

. . . the members of Mr. Eisenhower's own government, loyal "members of the team," were shocked, astonished and even angered by his vacillations. He cost himself a lot of support within his own administration. Men who had fought [for] their department budgets . . . were furious when Mr. Eisenhower invited Congress to cut them further. They felt they had been deserted. Surely an erosion of the Presidency can be registered on that point.⁴⁸

⁴⁷"Eisenhower's Letter Accepting Humphrey's Resignation," The New York Times, May 30, 1957, p. 11.

⁴⁸Frederic W. Collins, "Erosion Of The Presidency," The Nation, CLXXXV (August 17, 1957), p. 63.

CHAPTER V

THE CHANGE

Early in 1958 as Eisenhower began the sixth year of his presidency, the outlook was most bleak and discouraging. Confronted with a hostile Democratic majority in Congress, and hampered by the Twenty-second amendment, which barred him and all succeeding President's from a third term, Eisenhower could look forward to only two more years in the White House. Behind him lay six years of misused executive power, years marked by indecision, drift, and vacillation. It is significant that a political analyst of Walter Lippmann's stature should at this point be asking for some evidence of executive leadership and acceptance of responsibility. Lippmann had supported Eisenhower for President in the hope that he could achieve some measure of unity in the Republican party and would provide decisive leadership for the nation. Evidently, Walter Lippmann felt that six years was long enough to wait in vain for this leadership to be forthcoming.¹

The sixth year of the Eisenhower Administration was a year filled with domestic problems and political intrigue. The magnitude of the presidential task would have amounted to an extreme challenge to even the strongest of executives.

¹Walter Lippmann, "Walter Lippmann as Interviewed by Howard K. Smith," The New Republic, CXLIII (July 25, 1960), pp. 20-21.

The following year Eisenhower lost the two men on whom he had leaned most heavily. The President had depended on John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, to guide the foreign affairs of the nation, and on Sherman Adams to handle the domestic problems. The death of Dulles and the resignation under fire of Sherman Adams left Eisenhower, in a political sense, alone in the White House. It was at this point that a marked change occurred in the Chief Executive, as he gradually but positively assumed control of the White House, the Republican party and the nation. At long last Eisenhower began to emerge as the strong leader he had been expected to be, developing into a unifier in his party, and an administrator of great ability. Any change in tactics by a Chief Executive is extremely difficult, and yet, Eisenhower accomplished just such a rejuvenation under the most adverse of circumstances.²

This transformation was accomplished by Eisenhower through the paradoxical policy of consistently opposing the programs he had once supported. An example of major importance is found in his shift from a liberal view on domestic spending to his new theme of fiscal responsibility, which involved curtailment of spending, a new policy of economic thrift, and condemnation of Democratic spending policies. As Eisenhower assumed control, his new practice of

²Richard E. Neustadt, Presidential Power, pp. 82-83.

consistently and effectively thwarting the liberal proposals of the Democrats proved to be an almost insurmountable obstacle to Democratic leaders. The political transformation of Eisenhower did not go unnoticed as Richard E. Neustadt described it:

. . . Eisenhower's words and actions were consistent . . . His success was largely negative but it was still success. His reputation fed on his consistency and on accomplishment. The "new" Eisenhower was not universally approved by any means. Interpretations of his conduct were not always flattering. Both at the Capitol and near the White House some men saw him as the victim of an idée fixe. But those who held this view were all the more respectful of his will, at least within the range of his presumed fixation.³

Establishing Party Unity

Eisenhower's new-found strength and direction were powerful forces, but the President quickly recognized his lack of unified party support. Republican Congressmen displayed little or no unity of purpose among themselves and had practically ceased to look to the President for any direction or leadership. It soon became obvious that the President had resolved to repair the badly damaged prestige of his office and to restore relations between the White House and the Congress to a firm, constructive basis.

³ Neustadt, Presidential Power, p. 83.

Loss of Sherman Adams

For some time there had been complaints from Congressmen, particularly Republicans, who were finding it virtually impossible to have any close contact with the President because of the interference of Sherman Adams. Adams had isolated the Chief Executive to such an extent that few Republicans felt any real partnership with the White House, and the President was blamed for the existence of such a situation.

In 1957, the Federal Trade Commission and the Securities and Exchange Commission began their investigation of Bernard Goldfine and his dealings with the Administration, particularly with Adams. After months of questioning, Goldfine admitted before the House subcommittee on Legislative Oversight that Adams had accepted payment of hotel bills and had received gifts from the Boston industrialist. Adams denied, before the subcommittee, any attempt on his part to influence or to bring pressure on the Federal Trade Commission or the Securities and Exchange Commission in Goldfine's behalf.⁴ In spite of Adams' denial, the Democrats demanded his immediate resignation, but Eisenhower stubbornly retained his aide hoping the political air would clear. However, the 1958 election was drawing nearer and Republicans en masse

⁴Louis W. Koenig, The Invisible Presidency, pp. 392-393.

demanding that Adams must be removed if they were to have any hope of electing their candidates. Elections in the State of Maine, traditionally Republican and the testing-ground of national sentiment, returned crushing defeats for the Republicans and a tremendous boost for the Democrats. As the pressure continued from all sides Adams finally tendered his resignation in September 1958, leaving Eisenhower alone in the White House for the first time since his election.⁵

Without the assistance of Adams the remaining months of 1958 were difficult ones for Eisenhower. With the most important link in his chain-of-command gone, Eisenhower was forced to consult influential Congressmen in an effort to formulate some Executive-Legislative direction. Much to his dismay, the President realized that relations between his office and Congress were at a dismal low, and Congressmen who had once loyally supported his programs were now turning to individual projects without asking for his support or approval. The President was made painfully aware that Adams' strict control and executive isolation had made these Congressmen turn from him for personal as well as for political reasons.⁶

The President became increasingly aware of the

⁵Koenig, The Invisible Presidency, pp. 398-399.

⁶Robert Bendiner, "Pennsylvania Avenue Gets Longer and Longer," The Reporter, XVIII (February 20, 1958), pp. 25-26.

seriousness of the political situation, realizing that he must have the unified support of the Republican members of Congress if he was to accomplish anything with a Democratic controlled Eighty-sixth Congress. In this direction White House aides began hinting that a change in leadership and policy-formulation would be forthcoming from Republican leaders in the House.

Halleck Replaces Martin as House Leader

It was obvious that many Republicans, shaken by the sweeping Democratic victories, were ready to settle factional inter-party differences and respond to Eisenhower's appeal for unity within the party.

In January of 1959, the Republicans were divided on their choice of House Leader between Joseph W. Martin, Jr., of Massachusetts, and Charles A. Halleck of Indiana. Martin, long the Republican whip, was the immediate favorite, but it soon became apparent that a strong group of Republicans were making a stand for more active leadership than Martin had provided.⁷ Halleck emerged victorious over Martin in this contest and the Republican party announced that his efforts would be turned toward promoting unity among his colleagues in the House and cooperation with the President. Eisenhower

⁷ Allen Drury, "G.O.P. Group Seeks To Unseat Martin As House Leader," The New York Times, January 6, 1959, p. 21.

congratulated Halleck, welcoming the support of the new House leader in carrying out presidential programs. The White House had pledged neutrality in this contest, but Martin insisted that his defeat was helped along by Vice-President Nixon and other members of the Administration. This would seem to indicate, if Martin's charges were valid, that the White House was indeed taking positive steps in the direction of promoting cooperation between the Administration and members of Congress.⁸ It was clear now that there would be a new type of leadership in Congress as Halleck cooperated with the President in gaining the long overdue Congressional-Executive liaison necessary for positive, creative, governmental action.

Eisenhower Assumes Control

The President was aided in his new role as active leader by the improvement of his health and by the nation's quick recovery from the 1958 economic recession. These encouraging factors spurred Eisenhower to make the moves once taken by Sherman Adams in domestic affairs, and the President soon realized that his decisions were just as sound as, perhaps even sounder than, those made by his aide.⁹

⁸ Allen Drury, "Halleck Unseats Martin As G.O.P. Leader In House; Congress To Open Today," The New York Times, January 7, 1959, p. 1.

⁹ Kenneth G. Crawford, "The New Ike," Newsweek, LIV (August 17, 1959), p. 20.

Eisenhower abandoned his staff system, apparently realizing that he shared the responsibility with Congress for the passage of desirable legislation. Accordingly, he informed the Democrats of his intention to fight for a balanced budget as he once again stressed economy in government, but this time the President warned that he would not hesitate to use his veto power on legislation not acceptable to his program for fiscal responsibility. In this fight with the opposition party, Eisenhower made use of every medium available to him in putting the issue of government economy before the nation. Through his press conferences, public statements and speeches, and communications with Congressional leaders, he kept the nation informed of the progress of his fight for a balanced budget and his action in curbing excess spending programs of the Democrats.¹⁰ The President made it clear that he would spare no effort to secure passage of desired legislation when he remarked:

There are a number of things I have recommended to the Congress, . . . and when my conscience tells me they are right I'm going to use every single influence I can from the Executive Department to get the Congress to see the light. If that's lobbying, I'm guilty.¹¹

As Eisenhower assumed a more active role in promoting

¹⁰ Cabell Phillips, "The 'New Look' of the President," The New York Times Magazine, (August 16, 1959), p. 76.

¹¹ Ibid.

legislation through Congress, he exhibited a better grasp of the issues before that body as well as a working knowledge of the details involved. At the same time, he instituted a series of so-called "off the record" dinners for small groups of reporters using this means to channel his attitudes on matters before Congress to the press and thence to the nation. The President held high-level conferences with Republican leaders to study issues and problems, held press conferences as usual for the newsmen, and often wrote letters to influential people asking for their assistance. These and other efforts at positive leadership penetrated the Congressional ranks and spread into the Republican party as well. He accepted more invitations to make speeches, attend dinners and conventions, and he personally selected Senator Thruston B. Morton, of Kentucky, as the new Republican National Chairman.¹²

It was increasingly obvious that Eisenhower had finally accepted the fact that the President cannot remain aloof from politics and that he must assume an integral position with the legislative branch and his party leaders. He became a morale-builder for the Republicans. More and more they began to look to him for support and for direction and slowly emerged as a unified force working toward a definite

¹²"A Big Change at the White House," U.S. News & World Report, XLVI (May 4, 1959), p. 49.

objective, that objective being the declared programs of the President. This unified effort proved disconcerting to the Democrats, who had not expected any such challenge from Eisenhower. It may be true that the Democrats had underestimated the President's potential strength; at least one close friend of the President who supported this view stated:

It is clear now that the Democratic politicians miscalculated. They have found that they cannot hurt the President. They misjudged his strength with the people and they now know it. The President is making remarkable progress with an opposition Congress. It's quite clear that the boys on the Hill have slowed down.¹³

This change in Eisenhower's concept of the Presidency could have been the result of his experience or might have developed as an absolute necessity. Nevertheless, it was clear that at long last he had begun to achieve the cooperation between the White House and Congress which is so necessary to any constructive Republican progress.

New Republican Policies

President Eisenhower's success in controlling the Democratic Eighty-sixth Congress may be attributed in part to the strong, unpublicized work of the Republican floor leaders, Senator Everett M. Dirksen, of Illinois, and Representative Charles A. Halleck, of Indiana. Winning the inter-party

¹³"A Big Change at the White House," U.S. News & World Report, XLVI (May 4, 1959), p. 47.

tussle in January, 1959, these leaders quickly set out to revamp White House-Congressional patterns for molding an effective program of Republican leadership.

The Tuesday morning legislative conferences of the past were changed from the cold, unimpressive meetings formerly conducted by White House aides, to full and open discussions of pending legislation conducted by top-ranking Republican leaders in Congress. Eisenhower was now briefed on pending issues, coached on oppositional tactics, and was given the opportunity to express his views as well as to listen to the opinions of Republican Congressmen. These conferences became a sounding-board for important party matters as well as a method for promoting unity of Republican Congressional opinion and action.¹⁴

With the approval and cooperation of the President, Halleck and Dirksen led discussions at Congressional group meetings and emphasized the President's desires, thus they fostered agreement and clarification of aims and goals. At the same time, these discussions succeeded in adding vigor to the Republican effort and in building party morale.

This close relationship between the Congressional leaders and the President produced desirable results. The President realized that using the executive veto, patronage,

¹⁴"Winning Battles For Ike in a Democratic Congress," U.S. News & World Report, XLVII (August 10, 1959), p. 85.

and other methods of political fighting were not beneath the dignity of his office, but were necessary devices to be used in controlling a hostile Congress.¹⁵ Eisenhower's work with Halleck and Dirksen was one of the major facets of his changed conception of the presidency, as described in an article in the U.S. News and World Report:

They have given the President a new conception of his part in lawmaking. This has become an important current fact of government. And, to Mr. Eisenhower's delight, they have made congressional Republicans a part of the "Eisenhower team," as they never have been in the past.¹⁶

The ultimate goal of this Executive-Congressional liaison was to push through the Democratic Congress Eisenhower's program for a balanced budget and governmental economy. The President often referred to this program as "fiscal responsibility" and he was evidently determined that, with the aid of strong Congressional support, he would achieve his goal.

Fiscal Responsibility

Eisenhower's last eighteen months in office witnessed the end of executive complacency as he brought new vigor to the presidency. He "got tough" with Congress, dropped the

¹⁵"Winning Battles For Ike in a Democratic Congress," U.S. News & World Report, XLVII (August 10, 1959), pp. 85-86.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 86.

vacillating course of the past and began to come to grips with issues with a familiarity and confidence that had previously been lacking. During this period Eisenhower acquired a new respect for the prerogatives of the presidential office and exhibited unprecedented determination in using them. The Chief Executive laid out his patterns for progress, stated definite goals, and outlined the basic tenets of his program for Congress. He threatened that if his economic goals met with opposition he would employ every power available to him to block any alternate programs put forth by the Democrats.

Executive Veto

The power of veto is one of the most potent weapons available to the President. It can be used in a genuine effort to block undesirable legislation or it can be utilized as a political instrument of tremendous value. As the Chief Executive began his crusade for his program of fiscal responsibility he used his veto power against Democratic legislation to such an extent that the opposition party charged him with running "a government by veto." It is more realistic, however, to consider that Eisenhower was using the power of veto for more than the single purpose of defeating Democratic legislation, as Peter Odegard stated:

. . . an astute President can use his veto power to provide campaign material for himself and his party and to strengthen his own power and prestige in the country. It is

not surprising, under these circumstances, that "political" vetoes are more frequent where the White House and Congress are controlled by rival parties.¹⁷

The Democrats were staggered by Eisenhower's consistent opposition to their legislation and were angered by his use of the veto. There were even suggestions that the President was abusing his constitutional power in blocking the progress of Congress. However, an examination of executive use of the veto through the years shows that Eisenhower ranked only fourth in this respect. The fact that Eisenhower's veto was not once overridden in spite of Democratic majorities in Congress shows definitely that his use of the power was effective.¹⁸

In July, 1959, Eisenhower defended his use of the veto as he denied that he had any hope for personal benefit or any political ambitions since he intended to retire in 1961. He maintained that he had used the veto for the good of the nation, explaining his reasons in this manner:

So, the veto is used by me not lightly. I don't enjoy having to say these things are bad and to explain the reasons why I think they are bad. What I am trying to do is to

¹⁷Peter H. Odegard, "Presidential Leadership and Party Responsibility," The Annals, CCCVII (September, 1956), p. 75.

¹⁸"Using the Veto: Ike's Score," U.S. News & World Report, XLVII (August 10, 1959), p. 101.

get legislation passed that will benefit the United States and keep us solvent at the same time.¹⁹

Executive Opposition to Democratic Legislation

The Eighty-sixth Congress convened in January, 1959, with its large majority of Democrats, and bold plans were promptly issued for new legislation and increased spending programs. Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, Democrat of Texas, announced his fourteen-point program for Congress. In this program were included, among other things, extended work on dams, airports, and help for depressed areas. Federal aid to schools and a new housing program were also on the agenda which carried with it huge spending commitments.

Eisenhower immediately made it clear that spending commitments must be balanced by provisions for new sources of income or these programs would meet with executive disapproval in the form of the veto. In February, 1959, Senator Johnson accompanied the President as far as Austin, Texas, on the Chief Executive's visit to Mexico. During this trip Eisenhower made his views and intentions quite clear to the Democratic leader. Following this discussion, both Johnson and Speaker Rayburn publicly denounced the views of the President, but drew very little favorable response, as they

¹⁹ Herman Finer, The Presidency, p. 76.

worriedly realized that the majority of the American people were in agreement with the President's views on governmental economy.

The Democrats found the President true to his word in regard to Johnson's fourteen-point program. Either directly or indirectly, Eisenhower's veto proved effective as Congress went to work on the program. A bill designed to help depressed areas by factory relocations under a system of loans and grants was considerably trimmed. A billion-dollar Democratic plan to develop community facilities was delayed with no action immediately taken. The airport construction bill was held in conference, and a new general farm bill, which the Democrats had pledged to pass, remained in committee with no evident solution.²⁰

The Democrats found their major proposals blocked as the threat of the President to use the veto proved effective. In April, 1959, the President vetoed the rural electrification bill which was designed to remove his field from the control of the Secretary of Agriculture. The Democrats attempted to override this veto but fell short by the required two-thirds majority.²¹ In spite of this and other

²⁰"Democrats Change Signals: Big Spending is Soft Pedaled," U.S. News & World Report, XLVI (April 27, 1959), p. 52.

²¹"New Set of Signals for Congress," U.S. News & World Report, XLVI (May 11, 1959), p. 40.

failures, the Democrats felt that they could still save face and muster public support if they could succeed in passing their proposed housing bill. In July, 1959, this important bill cleared both houses only to fall to the President's veto. Eisenhower denounced the bill as extravagant, excessive, and not in accord with his fiscal policy. In defending his veto to the American people the President explained:

To my disappointment the Congress . . . has presented me with a bill so excessive in the spending it proposed, and so defective in other respects, that it would do far more damage than good.²²

These actions of the President made it plain that he was now in full command of the responsibilities of the presidency. Leaders of the Democratic party grudgingly conceded that Republican victories in 1959 Congressional disputes could have a definite effect on the 1960 election. The "new" Eisenhower, vigorous and hard-working, proved a formidable opponent to the Democrats. His charges against the Democrats for unwarranted and excessive spending met with widespread approval as the President appealed directly to the American public for aid in turning the tide against the Democrats and performing what he termed a "historic turnabout."²³

²²"Text of President's Message Vetoing Housing Bill," The New York Times, July 8, 1959, p. 18.

²³"Ike vs. Johnson on Congress," U.S. News & World Report, XLVII (October 5, 1959), p. 111.

He gave further warning to the Democrats of his intention to continue opposition to any excessive spending as he stated:

Should we again see extravagant proposals sponsored in the Congress, I shall continue to oppose them. I am confident of the continuing energetic support of the American people if such a struggle should develop.²⁴

Democratic plans for 1960, developed by Senator Johnson and Speaker Rayburn were designed to gain the favor of the American public for the upcoming election of a Democrat to the presidency. The Democratic strategy was planned so that it offered two alternatives. First, the Democratic Congress would attempt to pass legislation appealing to the masses of voters and if they succeeded this would result in strengthening their party support. On the other hand, if this legislation were vetoed by the President, the blame could be placed on the Republican party to the advantage of the Democrats. The President recognized the danger of this strategy to his own party and appealed to the public for continued support against the high spending programs of the Democrats. As pressure was duly exerted on Democratic Congressmen by an economy-minded nation, the Democrats were forced to eliminate or drastically reduce much of their proposed legislation. This action freed Eisenhower from his

²⁴"Ike vs. Johnson on Congress," U.S. News & World Report, XLVII (October 5, 1959), p. 112.

commitment to use the veto, and the Republicans successfully thwarted the strategy of the Democrats.²⁵

The 1960 Congressional year was one of continued frustration and defeat for the Democrats as they went up against the unified opposition of the Republicans. Legislation proposed by the Democrats failed to win support. The expected increase in the minimum-wage level died in the committees. Medical care for the aged under Social Security was bypassed, and the Democratic bill for urban renewal, public housing, and college housing was shelved. Federal aid to schools for construction and teachers' salaries never got out of the House committee. A bill designed to strengthen union picketing rights never reached the floor in either house and, finally, the politically-loaded farm program was never submitted to Congress for consideration. It was indeed a disappointing Congressional year for the Democrats as they were repeatedly outguessed and outmaneuvered by the Republicans. It was the general opinion of political leaders in both parties that the honors in this particular session would have to be conceded to the Republicans.²⁶

President Eisenhower had thwarted Democratic strategy by the wise and efficient use of the political weapons

²⁵"Story of a Session that Backfired," U. S. News & World Report, XLIX (September 12, 1960), p. 41.

²⁶Ibid.

available to the Chief Executive. This determined, effective leadership in opposing unwarranted increases in spending drew praise for Eisenhower from the entire nation and his popularity was definitely at an all-time high.

Eisenhower's Popularity

The President's strong popularity and his positive leadership had won for him the respect and support of Republican Congressmen, a feeling that was evidenced by their voting unity. In the early years of the Eisenhower Administration the Republican ranks had been split by dissension and their Congressional record had reflected this lack of unity. At the close of the 1960 Congressional session the voting record showed that the Republican Congressmen had voted with their party sixty-eight per cent of the time in 1960 as compared with the Democrat's record which showed that they had voted in unison sixty-four per cent of the time.²⁷ This unity of purpose among Republican members of Congress can be attributed at least in part to the efforts of the President as he became a party leader in fact, rather than a leader in name only.

Eisenhower's great personal popularity among the

²⁷ Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, (October 21, 1960), p. 1723.

American people was practically a political phenomenon.²⁸ The President was ending his last term with such strong personal popularity that Sidney Hyman, an outspoken critic of the President, grudgingly admitted that the Democrats would be forced to attack the Administration instead of attacking Eisenhower personally in the 1960 campaign to avoid antagonizing that large segment of the American public who idolized the Chief Executive.²⁹

Eisenhower's last months in office furnished a complete reversal in his concept of the presidency. He had begun as a weak executive who made little effort to achieve party unity, and who provided leadership only when forced by necessity to do so. He ended his tenure in office with his personal popularity undiminished, and his ability as an effective and capable leader finally and clearly evident. This remarkable transformation was very capably summed up by Cabell Phillips:

The Presidency is a job in which most men grow in wisdom and shrink in stature . . . Dwight D. Eisenhower seems destined to break that pattern in one respect at least, and maybe in its entirety. His stature, as he nears the end of his White House

²⁸ Norman A. Graebner, "Eisenhower's Popular Leadership," Current History, XXXIX (October, 1960), p. 230.

²⁹ Sidney Hyman, "Absorbing Study of Popularity," The New York Times Magazine, July 24, 1960, p. 24.

tenure, is growing rather than shrinking
. . . and in the techniques of the Presidency his hand is steadier than it ever has been.³⁰

³⁰Cabell Phillips, "The 'New Look' of the President,"
The New York Times Magazine, August 16, 1959, p. 17.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

It was the purpose of this study to examine those domestic policies of the Eisenhower Administration which best exemplified the varying degrees of his leadership.

The Republican party had not had a President in the White House for nearly twenty years. In 1952 they nominated, and the nation elected, Dwight D. Eisenhower, one of the world's most popular military heroes. They expected Eisenhower to create unity in the party and restore Republican prestige in the nation.

It was Eisenhower's intention to organize his cabinet and his Administration through diffusion of powers and delegation of authority to responsible Republicans. Thus the team concept of the Administration was originated to direct the domestic affairs of the nation. Eisenhower depended on Senator Robert A. Taft, Republican of Ohio, to handle all problems with the Congress, operating on an equal responsibility basis between legislative and executive branches. The effectiveness of this arrangement was brought to an abrupt end by the death of Senator Taft, leaving the President with a politically-inexperienced Cabinet to cope with the lack of

strong Republican leadership in a Congress dominated by an aggressive Democratic minority.

Eisenhower was so disillusioned by the lack of Republican cooperation that he spoke of forming a third party. However as this was impossible he decided to work for cooperation among members of both parties. In 1954 the Democrats gained control of Congress, an advantage which they succeeded in holding throughout the remainder of the Eisenhower Administration. By this time Eisenhower had become increasingly dependent on his aide, Sherman Adams who had gradually assumed a position of major importance in the Administration. The fact that he was in reality acting for the Chief Executive was demonstrated during the illness of the President in 1955 and again in 1956.

The issue of Communist infiltration in the government, publicized through the attacks of Senator Joseph McCarthy, Republican of Wisconsin, proved a serious detriment to the prestige of the Chief Executive. These largely irresponsible attacks, instituted under the preceding Democratic Administration, continued to harass the Eisenhower Administration. The reluctance of the President to exercise his authority against Senator McCarthy lowered the morale of the Republican party and the prestige of the nation.

Eisenhower had promised that Communist infiltration would not be an issue in the 1954 election; nevertheless, he condoned Vice-President Nixon's accusations that the

Democratic party had allowed infiltration of the government by Communists. Nixon's failure to substantiate his broad accusations with any valid proof further damaged the Eisenhower image.

Eisenhower had advocated a "partnership" arrangement between private enterprise and the federal government in developing the natural resources of the nation. The attempt to carry out this arrangement by withdrawing the federal government from extensive participation in Western power projects met with strong opposition from the Western States culminating in Republican defeats at the polls. The Democrats charged the Administration with "giveaways" following the restoration of the tidelands to certain Coastal States. The policies of the Administration regarding power projects were a prime target of Democrats and this problem reached its apex with the controversial Dixon-Yates contract. The Dixon-Yates affair proved to be the worst political fiasco of the first term, embarrassing the Administration and exposing the fact that the Chief Executive was out of touch with domestic issues.

The Republican party had continually stressed a return to governmental economy denouncing the New Deal policies of past Democratic Administrations. In the face of an economic recession, Eisenhower ignored warnings from the conservative wing of his party, and embarked on his program of Modern Republicanism. In essence, this was nothing more than a

revamping of New Deal policies and the acceptance of deficit spending by the government. This action and the failure to balance the budget were direct violations of Republican campaign promises.

In 1956, the President was re-elected for a second term by an overwhelming majority while the Republican party lost heavily in Congressional races. This vote of confidence from the people and the experience gained from the first term led political analysts to expect more definite and direct executive action from the White House. However, the first two years of Eisenhower's second term were marked by forceful demands and weak compromises as the President alternated between determination and surrender.

In 1958, Eisenhower had pledged that the Defense Department would be reorganized to meet the demands of the times. As one of his main objectives had been to strengthen the position of the Secretary of Defense, he pledged that he would accept no compromise, indicating an all-out battle for his proposals. The determination faded as he meekly allowed Congress to revise his proposed program, and accepted the revision without objection.

Eisenhower proposed a plan for federal aid to schools based on the need of each individual state. The Democrats revised the program while accepting the major portion of the Administration's proposals. However, when the bill was threatened with defeat the Democrats agreed to withdraw their

revisions and accept the original version of the Administration. Despite this cooperation the program was defeated, and Eisenhower was blamed for his failure to lend support when it was needed.

The issue of integration dealt a serious blow to the Eisenhower Administration with the crises at Little Rock, Arkansas. Eisenhower's reluctance to take any positive action in this matter shocked and angered the American people, as Governor Orval Faubus openly disobeyed the Supreme Court's order to integrate the public schools of the nation. The President delayed action until the situation got entirely out of hand, and then was compelled to use the force he had declared would not be necessary.

In early 1958, the Administration presented to Congress the largest proposed budget in the history of our nation. As the President defended the budget, deeming it necessary for the operation and defense of the nation, his Secretary of the Treasury George M. Humphrey denounced it. Hints of a rift in the Administration were denied by Eisenhower as Humphrey continued to attack the budget, inviting opposition from Congress. Although the resulting reductions were accepted by the President only after a determined effort to prevent them, his continued refusal to recognize Humphrey's opposition to the budget resulted in widespread disillusionment within the Republican party.

The 1958 elections again resulted in a large Democratic majority in Congress, and Eisenhower was not generally expected to abandon the passive leadership he had been practicing. In 1959, however, the President suffered two losses which precipitated a marked change in the direction of executive action. The death of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and the forced resignation of Sherman Adams left Eisenhower alone in the White House to handle the foreign affairs for which Dulles had assumed the responsibility and the domestic problems to which Adams had attended. It was at this point that Eisenhower abandoned his team concept and really began to assume control of the duties and responsibilities of the presidency. His subsequent transformation from a passive to an active executive was almost without political precedent, as he finally began to exercise the strong leadership that had been expected of him.

Eisenhower made a carefully planned and very effective effort at creating an executive-legislative liaison and encouraged a change in Republican leadership in the House. When Charles A. Halleck replaced Joseph Martin as Republican leader in the House, Eisenhower welcomed his support and pledged his cooperation. These were not empty promises, as the President proceeded to demonstrate in his fight for economy in government now termed "fiscal responsibility." In his fight for practical economy Eisenhower outlined his program

for Congress and declared his determination to block any alternate programs proposed by the Democrats. The executive veto was his major weapon and he used it effectively. His efforts at creating unity of purpose among Republican Congressmen were favorably evident in the voting record of the Eighty-sixth Congress.

Eisenhower ended his presidency with his personal popularity still very strong, and with his ability as a leader finally proven. He evolved from a weak executive to a strong and capable leader in the eight years as President, undergoing a complete reversal in his concept of the presidency.

Conclusions

From the evidence presented in this study the following conclusions appear to be in order:

1. The administrative ability that Eisenhower was expected to display in directing the affairs of the Republican party and the nation was not forthcoming during the first six years of his presidency.
2. Early in his presidency Eisenhower showed reluctance to meet problems squarely and evidenced a lack of adherence to traditional Republican standards.
3. From 1957 to mid 1958, Eisenhower at times exercised purposeful leadership but often reverted to the

passivity which characterized the earlier years of his presidency.

4. When Eisenhower lost his aide Sherman Adams, on whom he had depended to direct the domestic affairs of the nation, a marked change occurred in both his attitude and activity as President.

5. From mid 1958 to the end of his presidency Eisenhower became an increasingly strong and forceful Chief Executive, effectively utilizing the political weapons available to him as President.

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