

ILLUMINATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA'S MILLER CENTER

SPRING 2021



**WHAT'S
NEXT
FOR
AMERICA?**

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WHY I GIVE

WHY SUPPORT THE MILLER CENTER?

I'm not only a Wahoo but a government affairs major, so the Miller Center's focus falls exactly in my area of interest.

I never had heard of the Center until I watched *Statecraft: The Bush 41 Team* on PBS. I was wowed by that documentary and the story it told about the George H. W. Bush administration.

I didn't fully appreciate the scholarship and resources that went into the production until a few weeks later, when a former colleague sent me an email with information about an event that was to be hosted by the Miller Center. I attended and signed up to receive notifications about upcoming programming. Now I know about the two or three Miller Center events each week.

WHAT ASPECT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

The events. I feel like I'm sitting across from Bill [Antholis, director of the Miller Center]. It feels like a conversation designed for me.

When I worked at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., there was a regular Friday lunch where experts would come in to discuss important issues of the day. Miller Center events make me nostalgic for that.

HOW HAS THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED WHAT YOU CHOOSE TO WATCH?

Last year turned me into a 24/7 learner. I've participated in a lot of webinars—seen the good, the bad, the ugly—and the Miller Center is the gold standard.

These programs have been not just timely but a way to sustain me through the captivity. They really were an invaluable opportunity to hear civil discourse about critical issues. We should all be making sure the Miller Center has the funds to carry out that mission.



DIANE HODGES IORIO
UVA Class of 1980, College of Arts & Sciences

IN PURSUIT OF RACIAL EQUITY

THE MILLER CENTER FOCUSES ON ISSUES AFFECTING BLACK AMERICANS

America has struggled with racial inequities since our founding. It is part of our history.

With a dramatic rise in activism in this space, the Miller Center has been instrumental in facilitating critical national conversations, convening experts to explore such topics as race relations, criminal

justice reform, and the rise of white nationalist groups—all through the lens of history and public policy.

Here are a few highlights from recent events and curated online exhibits at millercenter.org:

"Each successive president, from Andrew Jackson on, tried to suppress those people who were pushing for racial equality. . . . That's the history that jangles against our perception of what American politics are all about—the idea that presidents are leaders on race. But, in fact, the long history indicates something different."

*Russell Riley, Miller Center professor;
"Presidential leadership and race" event*

"President Johnson recognized that poverty was the root cause of crime. So as part of the effort to address historical inequality and discrimination, he simultaneously launches a war on crime. . . . Crime becomes the essential issue that explains urban inequality, urban poverty. Urban programs increasingly become crime-control programs."

*Elizabeth Hinton, Harvard University professor;
Race and the Crisis of Justice documentary*

"Since the great migration of the 1920s, African Americans constituted a significant voting bloc. And so the first president to actually recognize that and seek out the African American vote was Harry Truman. For the first time, the leader of a major American political party backed the civil rights agenda. . . . Truman made that calculation and won narrowly in 1948."

*Kevin Gaines, Miller Center faculty senior fellow;
"Presidential leadership and race" event*



Russell Riley



Kevin Gaines



Elizabeth Hinton

Find more related content at millr.cr/racial-equity

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

By BILL ANTHOLIS *Director & CEO, Miller Center*

President Joe Biden came into the White House amid simultaneous epic crises: an insurrection at the Capitol, ongoing impeachment proceedings, the Covid-19 pandemic, an economic coma, a nationwide reckoning on racial justice.

No newly elected or re-elected president has faced so many crises at once.

In a recent study, David Marchick, director of the Center for Presidential Transition, and I examined 10 previous crises that presidents have had to manage during a transition. Five were political crises, where the victor of the election faced questions about the legitimacy of the outcome. Five were economic crises since 1900, where Americans' livelihoods were at risk.

Political crises are almost as old as the republic itself. In 1800–01 and 1824–25, Electoral College indecision threw the election to the House of Representatives. In 1860–61, seven states seceded after Election Day, and another four after the inauguration. In 1876–77, disputed vote tallies in four states led to a hasty Electoral Commission, which determined the winner. In 2000–01, controversial vote-counting in Florida led to six weeks of uncertainty, ultimately finding resolution in the Supreme Court.

Economic crises have also occurred with frightful regularity since 1900. Two were especially severe. In 1932–33, the new president faced nearly 25 percent unemployment and failing banks. In 2008–09, the greatest recession since the Great Depression left millions without jobs and homes.

The current moment combines an economic crisis, as deep as any our country has seen, with a political crisis—especially President Trump's efforts to challenge the legitimacy of the November election and the shocking insurrection on January 6.

History provides lessons for how to move forward.

First, in any crisis, presidential success depends on building a strong and experienced team that works well together. Political crises place a premium on reaching across the aisle to begin to heal the nation. This is always easier said than done. And yet, it still is worth doing.

After the divisive 2000 Florida recount, Vice President Al Gore gave an eloquent concession speech: "I say to President-elect Bush that what remains of partisan rancor must now be put aside, and may God bless his stewardship of this country."

Responding in kind, George W. Bush and his team attempted to reach across party lines, working with liberal lion Ted Kennedy on education reform and appointing Democrat Norman Mineta to his cabinet.



Economic uncertainty is fueled when political rivals fail to cooperate. In 2008–09, the outgoing Bush team and incoming Obama administration worked closely to address the recession. In contrast, FDR and Herbert Hoover had a hostile transition, deepening the crisis and delaying recovery.

Finally, flexibility and pragmatism are as important as fast, bold action. Charging at the problem may be critical. So is building support around a vision for national unity.

Bridge-building, focusing on recovery, and being pragmatic are not easy. Given the nation's deep polarization, any suggestion of bipartisanship can sound naïve.

Still, there are glimmers of hope. Many Republicans now have acknowledged President Biden's victory and have embraced his legitimacy. Biden focused his inaugural address on restoring our democracy and on calling for national unity. He also has assembled an experienced team, prioritized addressing the pandemic and economic uncertainty, and demonstrated a willingness to reach across the aisle.

The president's challenge moving forward is to restore a sense of common purpose consistent with the best of American tradition and values. You can count on us to stay engaged, with constructive nonpartisan analysis and advice.

READ OUR FULL STUDY, "TRANSITIONS IN CRISIS," AT
millr.cr/transitions-in-crisis



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NEW HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WILL PRESERVE THE HISTORY OF HER SERVICE TO THE NATION

Hillary Clinton ranks among the most accomplished women in American political history, having served as secretary of state, a United States senator, and First Lady. No other woman has secured the presidential nomination of a major party. Despite these accomplishments, there has been little scholarship about her career, especially as secretary of state.



The Miller Center's Hillary Rodham Clinton Oral History Project, beginning work this year, will address this gap.

The first phase of the project will address Clinton's tenure at the State Department. Clinton will sit for a remarkable 20 interviews and offer candid, detailed reflections on her service as America's chief diplomat. More than 70 other voices—supporters and critics, allies and rivals, diplomats and generals—will also be included.

"Secretary Clinton is one of the leading figures in American politics and diplomacy," said University of Virginia President Jim Ryan. "I am very pleased that she chose the Miller Center to conduct her oral history and am confident that this work will inform and inspire for years to come."

The Hillary Rodham Clinton Oral History Project will be directed by two scholars renowned for their study of government and diplomacy: Barbara Perry, the Gerald L. Baliles Professor and director of Presidential Studies at the Miller Center; and Allida Black, editor emeritus of the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, who joins the Miller Center as a distinguished visiting scholar.



For nearly a half century, the Miller Center has collected candid and confidential recollections from every White House from Gerald Ford to Barack Obama. These interviews, now



numbering in the hundreds, are conducted by Miller Center oral historians alongside leading experts in political science, history, law, business, and public policy.

"Capturing and preserving the thoughts and recollections of the most senior officials who worked with and for a historic figure such as Secretary Clinton allows scholars, students, and the general public to better understand the events of her time and their context," said William Antholis, the Miller Center's director and CEO.

The Hillary Rodham Clinton Oral History Project is being funded by private donations. All gifts are tax-deductible charitable contributions.



TO GIVE A GIFT TO THE MILLER CENTER, VISIT millercenter.org/donate

THE PRESIDENCY: FACING CONSTITUTIONAL CROSSROADS

NEW MILLER CENTER VOLUME EXPLORES THE NATION'S HIGHEST OFFICE DURING THE TRUMP ERA

Donald Trump's presidency challenged the Constitution on a daily basis. Born of a conversation exploring that idea during a Miller Center faculty meeting in 2017, the new book *The Presidency: Facing Constitutional Crossroads* will be published in May by the University of Virginia Press.

"We've had other times in U.S. history that the presidency was at a crossroads," said Barbara Perry, the Miller Center's director of Presidential Studies, who co-edited the volume with Michael Nelson, a Miller Center nonresident faculty senior fellow and professor of political science at Rhodes College in Memphis. The Trump presidency was one of those inflection points.

"The Founders were excited and hopeful about creating a new democratic republic," Perry added. "But they knew



what could bring down that democratic republic: the irrationalities of the people. Starting with Theodore Roosevelt, presidents realized they could have more power by relating directly to the people. They didn't have to be limited by the language of the Constitution."

The Presidency features insights from leading scholars and political scientists from across the nation, with a variety of specialties: constitutional law, public policy, ethics, military policy, Congress, and the presidency. In each chapter, these scholars go as far back as our nation's founding to provide the deep historical and constitutional context needed to put the Trump era into its proper perspective.

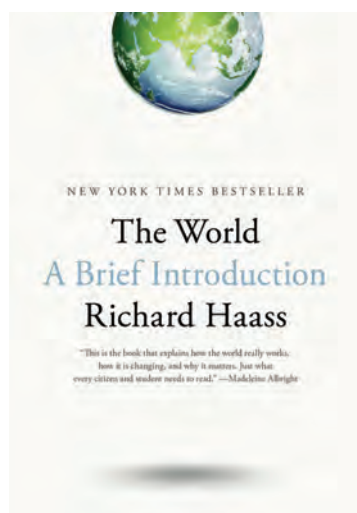
FOR MORE ABOUT *THE PRESIDENCY* AND TO ORDER A COPY, GO TO millercenter.org/the-presidency

THE WORLD: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

A CONVERSATION WITH ONE OF AMERICA'S MOST PROMINENT AUTHORITIES
ON FOREIGN POLICY

If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it's that we live in an interconnected society, where a virus that originated in a wet market somewhere in China can sweep across the globe within weeks, causing widespread death and upheaval. It has never been more important for Americans to understand the dynamics of the world around them. And yet, by and large, they do not.

In an attempt to educate the public, Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations and a veteran American diplomat, wrote his latest book, *The World: A Brief Introduction*. Last December, Haass sat down with Todd Sechser—a UVA professor of politics, a Miller Center faculty senior fellow, and head of the UVA Democracy Initiative's Statecraft Lab—to talk about the importance of understanding these issues.



Q: EVERYTHING IN OUR SOCIETY IS MORE GLOBAL. SO WHY ARE AMERICANS LESS INTERESTED?

A: One of the things the exit polls showed after our recent election is just how few Americans voted on the basis of foreign policy. If you watched all the debates and the town halls, these issues barely figured. And yet we are living with a virus that began in China; we just marked the 19th anniversary of 9/11; climate change is having terrible effects with fires and floods and storms. People aren't connecting the dots.

If people don't know about the world or don't care about it, they don't hold elected representatives to account. They don't ask questions. It makes it much easier for the United States to slide into isolationism. I do have a general policy preference as well, which is the United States stays involved in the world. Something that can probably best be sustained by the involvement and support of the American people.

Q: A SCHOLAR NAMED WALTER LIPPMANN WROTE THAT THE PREVAILING PUBLIC OPINION HAS BEEN DESTRUCTIVELY WRONG AT CRITICAL JUNCTURES. MASS OPINION, HE SAID, HAS SHOWN ITSELF TO BE A DANGEROUS MASTER OF DECISIONS WHEN THE STAKES ARE LIFE AND DEATH. ARE THERE DANGERS IN GETTING THE PUBLIC TOO INVOLVED IN FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES?

A: It takes one aback slightly to hear such a full-throated defense of elitism. I'm not sure this is unique to foreign policy; it applies to how to deal with money supply or full employment.

People may call for police reform, but aren't aware of the mechanics of what hundreds of real-world experiments and experiences have shown will or won't work. And that's why we don't have direct democracy for the most part. We don't run the country by plebiscites and referenda. We have a representative democracy, and the whole idea is that people are pretty busy going about their lives, and they entrust a small number with the full-time job of managing the affairs of the republic.

With all due respect to Mr. Lippman, who's one of the great minds to ever put pen to paper on these issues, I don't necessarily embrace the elites to the extent that that quote suggests.

Q: AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE AMERICAN PUBLIC IS DISENGAGED FROM FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, IT IS VERY DEEPLY POLARIZED. HOW DOES THIS AFFECT FOREIGN POLICY MAKING?

A: The president enjoys tremendous leeway when it comes to the conduct of foreign policy, even though the country is divided and polarized in many ways. I do think there's some potential for bipartisanship out there. I think there is a bipartisan pushback against authoritarian regimes around the world. There may be bipartisan support for increasing the resilience and diversity of supply chains. And there's been bipartisan support for a closer relationship with India.



RICHARD HAASS

Q: IS THERE A PARTICULAR HISTORICAL EVENT WHERE YOU FIND YOURSELF SURPRISED BY THE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OR KNOWLEDGE?

A: The question is how to use history rather than abuse it. When I worked for President George H. W. Bush, during Operation Desert Storm, we were doing extraordinarily well. And we had the air campaign, then several days of a ground campaign. And the question was, where do you stop? Or do you keep going? And do you go to Baghdad? I wrote a memo for the president, and I talked about the Truman-MacArthur decision after the liberation of South Korea, following the Inchon landing and the attempt to reunify the peninsula by force. And I talked about what I thought was history's lesson about this, about expanding your warrior aims and the flush of tactical success and the danger in doing that.

Q: CAN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA DO A BETTER JOB OF WORKING TOGETHER?

A: The answer is we can, and we have to. It's a very different 21st century. If the United States and China can't cooperate on regional and global issues—whether it's Korea, North Korean proliferation, climate change, or global health—it's a much, much worse century. So that seems to me the foreign policy challenge. How do you push back against China, where it's warranted, but do so in a way that doesn't preclude the cooperation that's in our self-interest? One might say, that's why God invented diplomats.

TO WATCH THE FULL CONVERSATION GO TO
millercenter.org/the-world

AFTER ELECTION 2020, WHAT'S NEXT FOR AMERICA?

Miller Center leads UVA Institute of Democracy initiative to put 2020 in context

In a year of the unexpected, one thing was predictable: The 2020 presidential election was going to be controversial. And perspective would be hard to come by. Enter the University of Virginia's new Institute of Democracy, a cross-Grounds collaboration among UVA scholars whose work—in history, politics, law, and other disciplines—would help assess America's political system as well as the beliefs and practices that underpin it.

At the nexus of this effort has been the Miller Center, offering both long-standing expertise on the American presidency and a consistent role as a convener of nonpartisan, wide-ranging dialogues.

In the days leading up to November 3, and in the weeks afterward, scholars met virtually at the Center to trade ideas and insights on the news of the day. Their work then appeared in two places:

mainstream media outlets—*Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, PBS, NBC, CBS, Fox, and many more—and the Miller Center's two election-related blogs, "Election 2020 and its Aftermath" (millr.cr/election2020) and "From Election to Transition" (millr.cr/transition), which took readers through Inauguration Day.

The Center also hosted six live virtual events to open the conversation to the UVA community and the general public, who attended in record numbers.

Here are a few of the many scholarly insights from this impressive collaboration, which owes much to the generous support of the George and Judy Marcus Democracy Praxis Fund.

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AVERAGE VIEWERS
PER EVENT

78

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271

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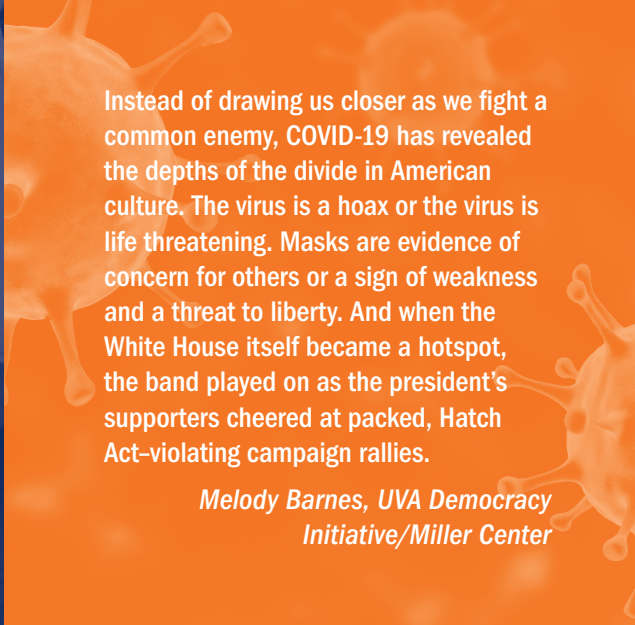
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TELEVISION
APPEARANCES



By sprinkling sand in the election gears, the Founders hoped to preclude their worst fear—the selection of demagogues to represent us.

Barbara Perry, Miller Center



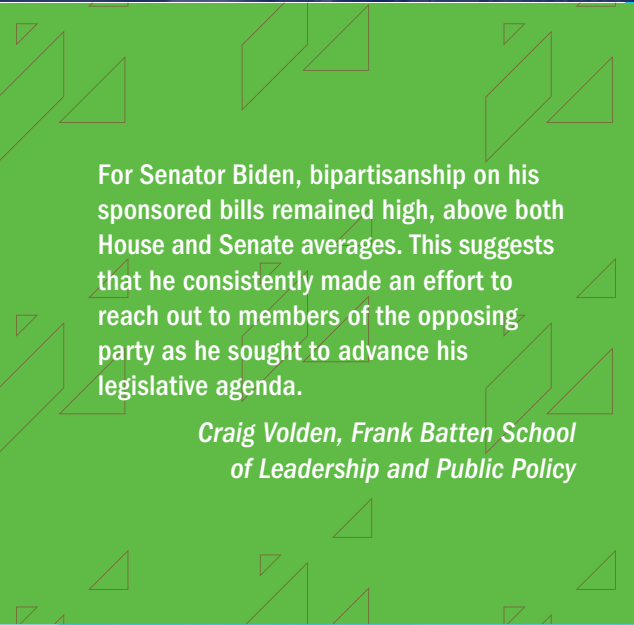
Instead of drawing us closer as we fight a common enemy, COVID-19 has revealed the depths of the divide in American culture. The virus is a hoax or the virus is life threatening. Masks are evidence of concern for others or a sign of weakness and a threat to liberty. And when the White House itself became a hotspot, the band played on as the president's supporters cheered at packed, Hatch Act-violating campaign rallies.

Melody Barnes, UVA Democracy Initiative/Miller Center



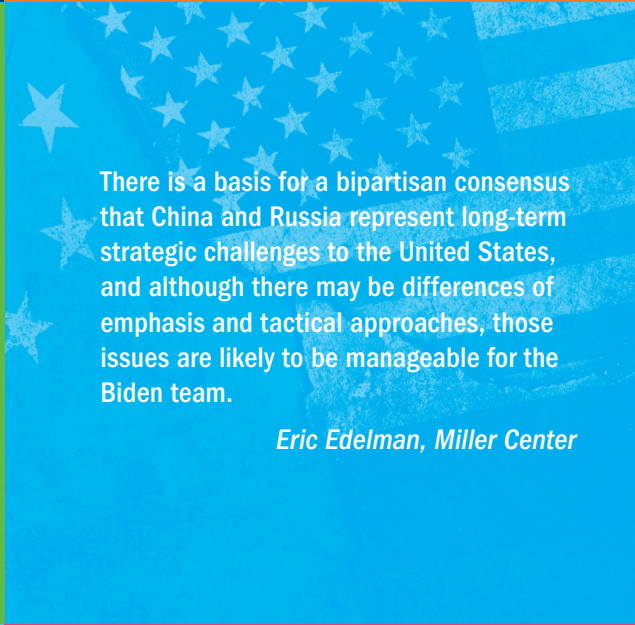
The American electorate did not embrace Trump's antagonistic stance toward the world. Public opinion surveys for years have shown that large majorities of Americans believe that alliances, international trade, and active engagement in world affairs are good for the United States. And on Election Day, several million more Americans voted for a candidate who advocated strengthening U.S. alliances, staying involved in international institutions, and cooperating to address transnational problems like climate change.

Todd Sechser, UVA Politics/Miller Center



For Senator Biden, bipartisanship on his sponsored bills remained high, above both House and Senate averages. This suggests that he consistently made an effort to reach out to members of the opposing party as he sought to advance his legislative agenda.

Craig Volden, Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy



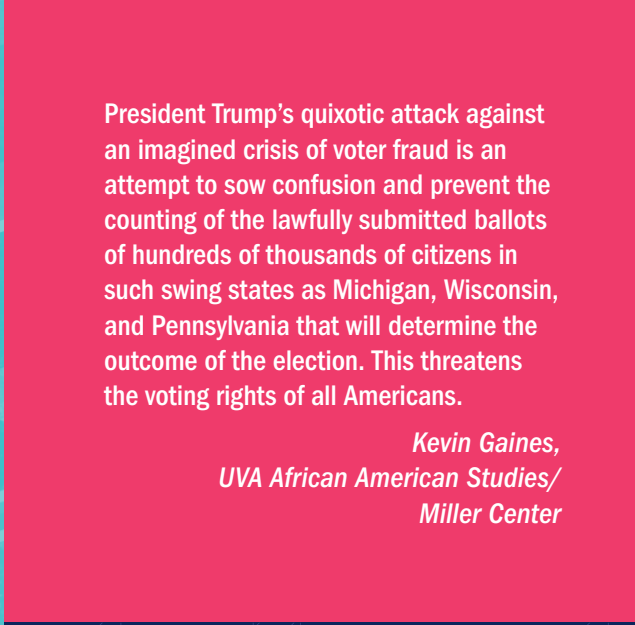
There is a basis for a bipartisan consensus that China and Russia represent long-term strategic challenges to the United States, and although there may be differences of emphasis and tactical approaches, those issues are likely to be manageable for the Biden team.

Eric Edelman, Miller Center



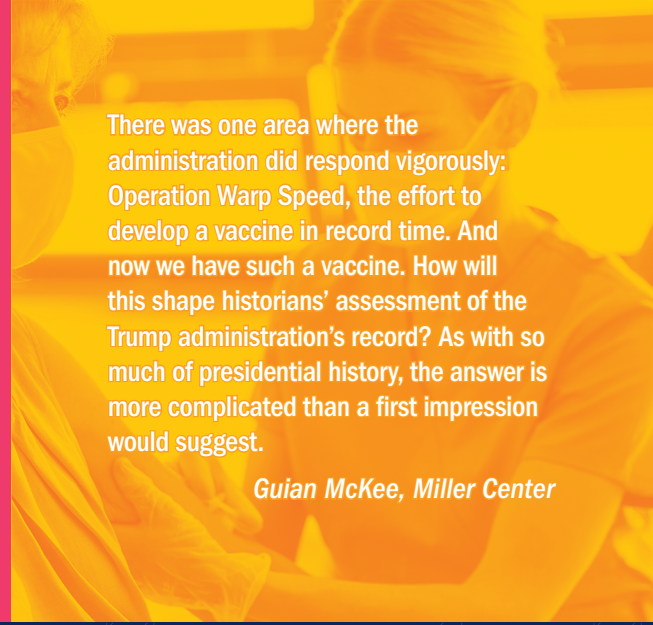
Party loyalty among voters was just as high as it always is in presidential elections: 94 percent of Democrats supported Biden and 93 percent of Republicans voted for Trump. Those numbers, if anything, represent a small uptick in partisan loyalty from 2016. Biden might plan to be a president for all Americans, but he wasn't a candidate for them. Independents voted for Biden over Trump by 14 points (54 percent vs. 40 percent), a significant change from 2016, when independents favored Trump over Clinton (46 percent vs. 42 percent).

Jennifer Lawless, UVA Politics/Miller Center; and Paul Friedman, UVA Politics



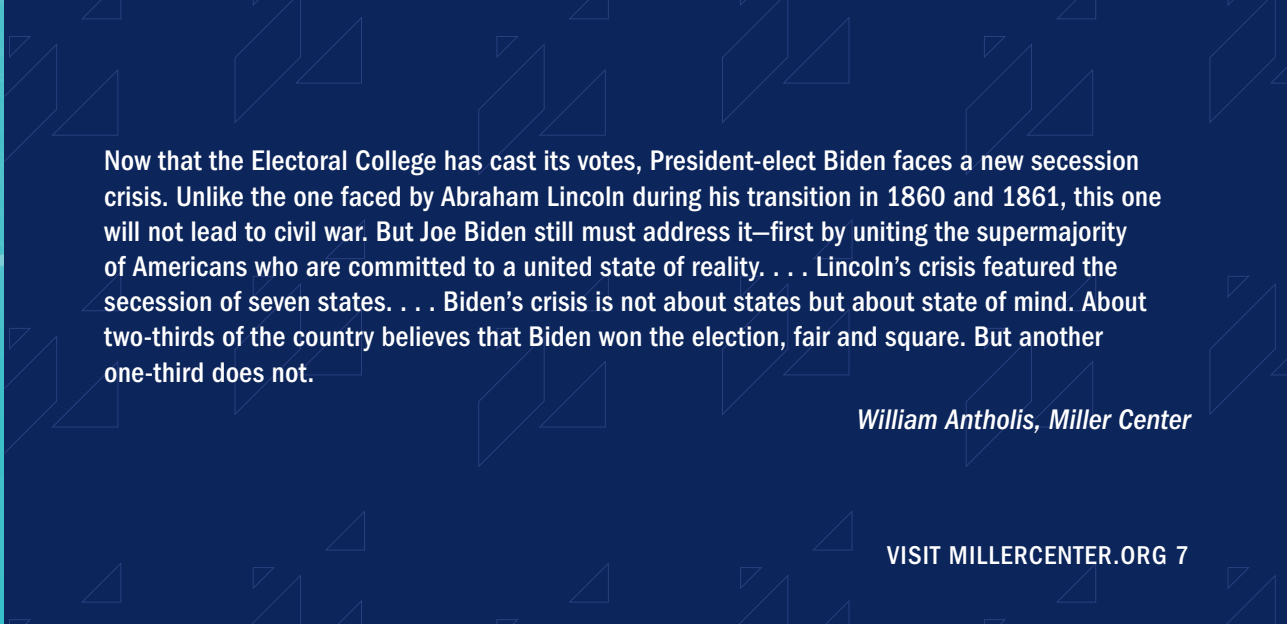
President Trump's quixotic attack against an imagined crisis of voter fraud is an attempt to sow confusion and prevent the counting of the lawfully submitted ballots of hundreds of thousands of citizens in such swing states as Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania that will determine the outcome of the election. This threatens the voting rights of all Americans.

*Kevin Gaines,
UVA African American Studies/
Miller Center*



There was one area where the administration did respond vigorously: Operation Warp Speed, the effort to develop a vaccine in record time. And now we have such a vaccine. How will this shape historians' assessment of the Trump administration's record? As with so much of presidential history, the answer is more complicated than a first impression would suggest.

Guian McKee, Miller Center



Now that the Electoral College has cast its votes, President-elect Biden faces a new secession crisis. Unlike the one faced by Abraham Lincoln during his transition in 1860 and 1861, this one will not lead to civil war. But Joe Biden still must address it—first by uniting the supermajority of Americans who are committed to a united state of reality. . . . Lincoln's crisis featured the secession of seven states. . . . Biden's crisis is not about states but about state of mind. About two-thirds of the country believes that Biden won the election, fair and square. But another one-third does not.

William Antholis, Miller Center

Transitions tend to be perilous intervals for first-term presidents, because critical decisions about policy and personnel are made in a pressure cooker, when electoral victory has made the incoming team supremely confident. In the words of presidential scholar Richard Neustadt, transitions are times of maximum ignorance paired with maximum arrogance. That's why so many consequential mistakes are made in transitions.

Russell Riley, Miller Center

While Vice President Biden has ample government experience, he and his team still need to appoint roughly 4,000 individuals to executive branch positions, designate about 80 people to fill senior positions in the White House, determine key legislative priorities, draft executive orders, and carefully consider the content of the forthcoming inaugural address (among many other less-glamorous tasks).

Kathryn Dunn Tenpas, Miller Center

Struggles over race, religion, and immigration have fueled ideological polarization and a legislative stalemate in Congress, which has made parties even more dependent on presidents to advance their objectives. As a consequence, presidents of both parties have sought to achieve their policy objectives with administrative powers rather than navigate a complex system of separated powers to pass legislation.

Sidney Milkis, Miller Center

Much of [the Trump] administration's deregulatory campaign has been carried out through a cumbersome and time-consuming bureaucratic process, known as "notice and comment" rulemaking. Since reversing course on these regulatory actions involves following the same process, this means the Biden administration could be tied up for many months—if not years—just in rolling back Trump's deregulatory program.

Rachel Augustine Potter, UVA Politics

In the wake of American withdrawal, 11 countries completed the Trans-Pacific Partnership without the United States—in effect, setting the region's trade and investment standards without its largest economy and traditional standard setter. In a region whose business is business, that gap between American rhetoric and action has been a source of consternation to governments that view full-spectrum U.S. engagement as an essential balance to the rise of Chinese power.

Evan Feigenbaum, Miller Center

Trump and his followers do not have such a coherent ideology, nor do they enjoy the kind of geographical monopoly that the Confederates possessed. But their arguments are animated by some of the same tactics that allowed the Lost Cause to thrive for more than 150 years, which may help Trumpism, too, live on past its political moment.

Caroline Janney, UVA History

[Biden's COVID-19 task force] needs trust, not mandates. Indeed, issuing mandates may even erode trust. By starting with a position of expertise that spans most of the essential domains, the task force will be able to provide states with coherent evidence-based data and guidelines—something that has been lacking since the beginning of the crisis.

*Margaret Riley, UVA School of Medicine/
School of Law*

[Hispanics] are a diverse cohort with distinct lived experiences, political histories, voting preferences, and generational differences. And paying attention to these distinctions may have proved critical to the way Hispanics voted this year.

*Cristina Lopez-Gottardi Chao,
Miller Center*

[The 1968 presidential transition] took place against the backdrop of several shattering developments that year: the Tet Offensive and a deeply divisive war in Vietnam; the withdrawal of President Lyndon B. Johnson from the presidential race; the assassinations of civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr. and Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Robert F. Kennedy; civil and racial unrest throughout the nation; and violent altercations at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. To many Americans, the nation seemed to be unraveling.

Marc Selverstone, Miller Center

GEORGE AND JUDY MARCUS: STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

\$1 MILLION FUND SUPPORTS CIVIL DISCOURSE IN A DIVISIVE POLITICAL CLIMATE



Praxis. There couldn't be a more fitting word for a philanthropic endeavor that sustains America's democratic principles. Like *democracy*, the word *praxis* has Greek roots, referring to the act of putting theory into practice. And it is the name of the fund created for the Miller Center by Greek-born George Marcus and his wife, Judy.

"Judy and I are proud to lend our support in these challenging times," said Marcus, who founded Marcus & Millichap in Calabasas, California, one of the largest commercial real estate brokerage firms in the United States. "Accurate information and real-time analysis provide a climate in which democracy can thrive.

I applaud and support the Miller Center's efforts around rebuilding public trust in our shared democratic institutions."

The George and Judy Marcus Democracy Praxis Fund was established in December 2019 to help the Miller Center provide substantive, historical, and fact-based context directly to government officials and the public. In particular, Praxis funds support facilitating civil discourse on issues that matter, with voices from across the political spectrum.

Since then, Praxis dollars have been put toward a slew of media projects, including a documentary about George H. W. Bush that the Center coproduced with VPM. *Statecraft: The Bush 41 Team* aired nationally on PBS last year and is now available on Amazon Prime. Praxis funds supported conversations from former Bush officials and other policy experts on the art of public service.

In the turbulent presidential election and transition period, the Praxis Fund supported the Miller

Center's events on these topics—viewable on demand at millercenter.org/past-events. It also facilitated enhancements to millercenter.org that give current events (impeachments, elections, and presidential transitions, for example) the historical context for which the Miller Center is known.

"From Election to Transition" is the blog that the Miller Center established in October 2020, in concert with UVA's new Institute of Democracy, to bring real-time analysis from experts across the University of Virginia directly to the public (millercenter.org/transition). This included both fellows and scholars from the Miller Center as well as UVA's Department of Politics, the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, UVA School of Law, and more—a true multidisciplinary effort.

"We're thankful to be a part of so many critical projects at the Miller Center," Marcus said. "This organization embodies the great values of public service: nonpartisan discourse, impact at the highest levels, and an abiding love of democracy."

TALKING TRANSITIONS

WITH THE PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE



For most of American presidential history, the transition from one administration to another was, in the words of the Miller Center's Russell Riley, "unremarkable." In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the president had much less power and his time was not as precious. A March inauguration allowed more leeway for a new administration to acclimate itself, and the entire process took place largely out of public view, wrote Riley in the *Washington Post*. Indeed, he noted, the term "presidential

transition" wasn't even in regular use until 1948.

Today the process is very different. Donald Trump's false claims about the election aside, the transition from one administration to the next—and even from a first to a second term of a presidency—is always fraught with peril. Coordination as thousands of important roles change hands affects both domestic and foreign policy in a constantly changing world. And the lessons of how to maximize efficiency and minimize risk come only with hard-won experience.

That experience was put to good use on October 2, as the Miller Center joined the Partnership for Public Service's Center for Presidential Transition to host "Talking Transitions: Perspectives for first- and second-term

administrations," with a cast of experts to examine all aspects of this critical process.

Former White House chiefs of staff Joshua Bolten (George W. Bush), Andrew H. Card Jr. (George W. Bush), Denis McDonough (Barack Obama), and Mack McLarty (Bill Clinton) looked at transitions from inside the White House. Former National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley (George W. Bush), former Homeland Security Advisor Lisa Monaco (Obama), and former Counselor to the President John Podesta (Obama) joined the Miller Center's Barbara Perry and Melody Barnes to discuss transition in unprecedented times. And the move to governing was the focus of Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman (Clinton), Counselor to the President Karen Hughes (George W. Bush), Senior Advisor Valerie Jarrett (Obama), and former Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (George W. Bush).

TO WATCH THE SESSION, VISIT millercenter.org/talking-transitions

LBJ ON WHAT NOT TO DO

PRESIDENT BIDEN COULD LEARN FROM THE MISTAKES PRESIDENT JOHNSON MADE AS HE MANAGED A SPLINTERED DEMOCRATIC PARTY

by Guian McKee

Among the many problems that face President Joe Biden is the question of how to manage his administration's relationship with the progressive wing of his own party. Handling such intraparty tensions will be crucial to his ability to keep his coalition unified.

Biden is far from the first president to face ideological tensions within his own party. One case stands out, though, in part because a secret White House taping system captured key aspects of the resulting conflict: that of Lyndon Johnson in the aftermath of his landslide 1964 election victory.

The details of these conversations are available thanks to the Miller Center's Presidential Recordings Program, which carefully transcribes and analyzes thousands of hours of tapes of American presidents, recorded between 1940 and 1973.

In early 1965, Johnson enjoyed large Democratic majorities in the new Congress. Over the next two years, he succeeded in passing landmark legislation on voting rights, health care, education, anti-poverty, housing, environmental protection, and the arts—the full range of what the administration had dubbed “the Great Society.”

Yet all was not well. Protests against the war in Vietnam and rebellions against racial injustice grew larger and more divisive. By mid-1966, Johnson's critics challenged not only his continuation of the war but also what they saw as an inadequate response to poverty and racial discrimination at home.

Among those calling for a greatly expanded federal effort in the latter area was Johnson's bitter rival, Senator Robert F. Kennedy of New York, who had begun to fashion an urban anti-poverty program. Meanwhile, Kennedy privately derided Johnson's proposed Demonstration Cities bill: “It's too little, it's nothing, we have to do 20 times as much.”

On August 1, 1966, the insurgency emerged in Congress when Senator Abraham Ribicoff



(D-CT) announced that he would soon hold a series of hearings on the problems of American cities in the Senate Government Operations Subcommittee on Executive Reorganization, which he chaired. Kennedy also served on the committee, and Johnson saw the hand of the slain president's brother at work in the hearings. The next day, he explained this in a recorded phone call to Treasury Secretary Joe Fowler:

PRESIDENT JOHNSON: *What I'm more concerned about than anything else now is that [Robert F.] Bobby Kennedy [D-NY], Martin Luther King [Jr.], [Joseph W.] Joe Alsop, all the papers, New York Times—they're getting on a \$100 billion jag for the cities.*

FOWLER: *Yeah.*

PRESIDENT JOHNSON: *And I've got a \$2 billion bill that they won't pass, but they want \$100 billion. And that's \$10 billion a year for 10 years. Now, if we got anything like that, we'd really be ruined. And I think that's what they're going to do with these riots. And I think they're going to have enough riots going on. I think, just between us, that Bobby's busy riding the labor people and riding the Negroes so that he can provide the solution. [Snorts.]*

Johnson had thus concluded that Kennedy would take advantage of urban unrest in order to further his own policy and political goals. In an August 10 conversation with Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-MT), Johnson warned that the hearings would jeopardize moderate and conservative Democrats around the country:

PRESIDENT JOHNSON: *Now, Mike, you know we're going to destroy ourselves with this interparty politicking, don't you?*

MANSFIELD: *Yes, sir.*
...

PRESIDENT JOHNSON: *And I think that you and Dirksen ought to sit down and talk to [John L.] McClellan [D-AR] and the ranking member of Government Operations. And this committee has no jurisdiction in the world to report a damn thing. All it's going to do is stir it up. It's an oversight committee.*

MANSFIELD: *Yeah.*

PRESIDENT JOHNSON: *And I think that if you've got to stir up something, you ought to do it in January, because you're just going to beat the hell out of people like [Lee W.] Metcalf [D-MT] and these boys in Omaha, Nebraska, that are in Congress, and five*

from Iowa, with all this damn fool \$100 billion Negro stuff.

...

PRESIDENT JOHNSON: And I don't think we can stand this publicity. I think that [Chicago Mayor Richard J. "Dick"] Daley's called me half a dozen times, and he said if you don't stop Bobby and them here it's just going to ruin me. He's got all the Poles mad, and got all the Germans mad, got all the Italians mad, and [Mayor Henry W.] Maier from Milwaukee was in this morning, said he was sitting on a tinderbox. He's got 100,000 Negroes, and the Poles, and the

KATZENBACH: Yes, I know they are.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON: [Daniel D. "Dan"] Rostenkowski [D-IL] called last night and was rather abusive because I hadn't denounced the rioters or nullified, and they quoted him what I said in Indianapolis. [Roman C.] Pucinski's [D-IL] written a big letter to us. And I was talking to some of the boys from the northern areas, upstate New York and others, and they're bitter. The Buffaloes and others.

KATZENBACH: No, they are. There's no question.

And he has my support and my confidence, and so forth. And I will, whatever figure I give in the budget, I will fight for it, as I did last year. But I cannot keep him from being the victim of Bobby [Kennedy] and Ribicoff and [Joseph S.] Joe Clark [Jr.] [D-PA] and [Wayne L.] Morse [D-OR]. And I cannot keep him from being victim to the Commies who were out here yesterday and said, "Give the money to poverty, not Vietnam." And I think that's hurt poverty more than anything in the world is that these Commies are parading, and these kids, long-hairs, saying, you know, that they want poverty instead of Vietnam, and the Negroes. And I think that's what the people regard as the Great Society.

So you look into that and call the signal; make the decision. And if he comes, maybe you come with him, or if you don't want to be involved in that kind of discussion, suggest to him what the agenda is, what we [will] talk about.

Johnson's linkage here of his liberal opponents in the Senate to what he saw as the "commies" and "long-hairs" protesting in the streets is telling. By this point in his presidency, LBJ had let himself become boxed in not only by Vietnam and its resulting budgetary pressures, but by his own anger at his opponents on the Left.

This is the negative model that Joe Biden must avoid in the difficult and controversial moments that are sure to emerge in the coming years between his administration and the modern progressive Left. Indeed, LBJ tended toward self-destructive outbursts of anger and frustration. But possessed of a very different personality, Biden should be better able to resist such damaging temptations.

Doing so will serve Biden well with less ideological elements of the American electorate, who will be crucial to his success. It also will help him remain open to real opportunities that progressives may recognize, to the new ideas that the Left has to address, and possibly to solve the pressing national and global crises.

Biden need not agree to every demand from progressives, but unlike Johnson, he will need to maintain their help in the coalition that brought him the presidency. In showing what not to do, LBJ's example helps to create space for more constructive models moving forward.

GO TO miller.cr/LBJ-Biden TO READ THE FULL PIECE AND TO LISTEN TO THE SECRET WHITE HOUSE TAPES MENTIONED HERE

Guian McKee, an associate professor in Presidential Studies at the Miller Center, is an expert on the presidency of Lyndon Johnson.



Germans, and everything are fighting each other. And we're stirring it up, up there, and Teddy [Kennedy] went down to Jackson, Mississippi, and said, "If you can spend \$2 billion on the soldiers in Vietnam, you ought to spend \$2 billion on the Negroes." And [it is] the sheerest demagoguery, saying that "if you can spend \$24 billion a year on 16 million Vietnamese, 14 million, [then] you can spend that much on 20 million good Negro Americans." Well—

MANSFIELD: [faintly] That's terrible.

Johnson had clearly concluded that his interests lay with the center of his party. As such, he saw little value in working with the party's Left, much less with even more radical figures in the civil rights movement. The next day, he expounded on that point in a conversation with Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach:

PRESIDENT JOHNSON: What I've got is I've got the people just calling me every day on this civil rights thing and I think if we don't get it through pretty quick, we're not going to get many of them because they're sure getting mad.

Although many of the witnesses at the hearings proved highly critical of Johnson's anti-poverty efforts and called for a massive increase in federal and private support for development in the cities, neither Kennedy nor Ribicoff directly endorsed the level of expenditures that Johnson feared.

Nonetheless, the hearings set out a liberal marker for a more aggressive approach than the president was willing to contemplate. In November's midterm elections, the Democrats lost 47 seats in the House and three in the Senate, vastly reducing their majorities and limiting Johnson's room to maneuver.

By the end of the year, the fight over funding had turned back to the War on Poverty. Sargent Shriver, director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, pushed for more funds for his agency, and contemplated resigning if Johnson and Congress did not agree. On the day after Christmas, LBJ discussed the situation with his press secretary, Bill Moyers:

PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Now, I'm not anxious for him [Shriver] to stay, more than I am Bundy. I would like for him to, and I think he's the best one for it.

KEY MON

IN A KEY YEAR



George H. W. Bush had Tiananmen Square and the Berlin Wall. Bill Clinton faced a World Trade Center explosion, a standoff in Waco, and Somalia. George W. Bush confronted the impact and aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Barack Obama entered office in the midst of a generational financial and economic crisis. For Donald Trump, the challenge of his first months came from his own radical confrontation with accepted political norms. It has now become axiomatic that each presidency, especially at its beginning, will be about dealing with the unexpected and overcoming the unforeseen.

As President Joe Biden embarks on his presidential journey, Miller Center senior fellows Mary Kate Cary, a veteran of the George H. W. Bush administration, and Chris Lu, who played key roles for President Obama, offer memories and lessons from their first year.

WHAT WAS AN EARLY CHALLENGE THE ADMINISTRATION FACED?

Cary: When the Democratic Senate rejected the nomination of Sen. John Tower for Secretary of Defense, he became the first Cabinet nominee rejected in nearly 30 years, and only the ninth in American history. In response, Bush successfully

nominated Congressman Dick Cheney, changing his career forever. Both National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft and Secretary of State James Baker backed Cheney's nomination, which led to the three of them collaborating to a remarkable degree over the next four years, a huge factor in the foreign policy success of the administration.

WHAT SURPRISED YOU MOST IN THE FIRST YEAR OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION?

Lu: The unrelenting pace and intensity. It was exhausting, exhilarating, and frustrating. Every day felt like a week, and no matter what you thought your day was going to look like when it started, a new crisis inevitably came up. It wasn't just the number of things on your plate; it was also the weightiness of the policy decisions. There were never any easy decisions.

Cary: I'm going with a funny handwritten sign that was posted over the phone in the White House Office of Media Relations that read: *When a reporter calls, first ask them what they want and THEN say no.*

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST DOMESTIC POLICY CHALLENGE THE ADMINISTRATION FACED AND HOW DID IT RESPOND?

Cary: The savings and loan crisis really took off in early 1989 after the collapse of Lincoln Savings and Loan. Because S&Ls typically deal in mortgage, auto, and other consumer loans, many Americans were financially affected by the collapse of these types of banks.

In response, President Bush introduced a bailout plan for troubled S&Ls through the sale of \$50 billion in government bonds and established the FDIC as the regulatory institution over S&Ls. By August, he'd signed legislation that was a compromise with Congress on additional aid and established the new Resolution Trust Company to oversee troubled banks.

The S&L crisis had the potential to wreak massive damage to the economy, but instead the administration was able to move quickly and stop the hemorrhaging.

Lu: When President Obama took office in January 2009, the country was facing the biggest economic downturn since the Great Depression.



EVENTS

→ *When presidents first take office, they usually find that winning the election isn't the hard part*

To turn around the economy, we needed to stabilize the financial and housing sectors, provide relief to the auto industry, prevent layoffs in state and local governments, and create private sector jobs. A critical part of the economic recovery was the successful implementation of the \$800 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which was overseen by Vice President Joe Biden.

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST MISTAKE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION MADE?

Cary: Bush and [National Security Advisor] Brent Scowcroft declared a “strategic pause” while they reviewed all aspects of U.S. foreign policy immediately after the inauguration. This also allowed the Soviets to look like they were driving the agenda, especially when James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze met in Vienna in March of 1989.

This led to criticism in the media that the new administration lacked “vision,” and seemed to annoy both our allies and our adversaries. In Doro Bush’s book, *My Father, My President*, Mikhail Gorbachev told the author, “I still

believe that we would have been better off without it, for relations between our two countries were already on a firm foundation, which George Bush had helped to create.”

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ADVICE YOU WOULD GIVE TO THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION?

Lu: Tap into the expertise of career federal employees. Whatever the issue—whether it’s the pandemic, the economy, or climate change—there are dedicated public servants in the federal agencies who are eager to roll up their sleeves and help address these challenges. We also need to do more to encourage the best and brightest to consider government service.

Cary: Get back to your roots—don’t forget the days of “Amtrak Joe” and being the party of working Americans. Be aware that the more than 70 million Americans who voted for Donald Trump have good-faith concerns about the future of our country. Our elected leaders need to start addressing the real worries of working Americans and their distrust of our political system.

I remember President Bush 41 occasionally used to answer the phone in the Oval Office with a smile, saying, “President of all the people. How can I help you?” President Biden would be smart to govern as president of all the people, not just the ones who got him elected.



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5 LESSONS

No previous experience fully prepares one to be president. The most important training presidents receive is on the job. But presidents and their aides can learn much about the first year from those who have gone before.

What follows—drawn almost entirely from the Presidential Oral History Program of the Miller Center—are five lessons that any new president can apply, or at least be informed by, from the knowledge of those who already have served in one or more administrations.

POLITICS IS PART OF POLICY, NOT ITS OPPOSITE.

Politics is about persuasion, an axiom that is no less true after the election than before.

David Rubenstein,
domestic policy
staff aide to
President Jimmy
Carter, 1977–81:

Early on, he was very much, "I only want to know what the best policy is and I'll worry about the politics of it later. You give me the best policy."

Later on those kinds of bravado statements tended to disappear and he wanted to know what he could pass, what we could get through, what did this committee chairman want, what did this interest group want.

Carter learned from experience that policy and politics are intertwined and, after his first year in office, listened hard to his congressional and interest group liaisons when shaping successful political strategies to secure approval of the Panama Canal treaty, civil service reform, and other controversial measures.

IF PAINFUL DECISIONS HAVE TO BE MADE, MAKE THEM IN THE FIRST YEAR.

The polls that matter are not conducted in the first year. The framers granted presidents a four-year term so that the long-range consequences of their sometimes-difficult first-year measures would have time to emerge.

Roger Altman, deputy secretary to
Secretary of the Treasury Lloyd Bentsen
in the Clinton administration:

Remember, you're playing for four years, you're not playing for one year. . . . One of the oldest rules of presidential management is, take your pain up front. . . . Nobody took more pain up front than Ronald Reagan. I mean, the worst recession since the Great Depression occurred in 1981 and 1982 and in the fall of '82, in early August, Reagan was being described as Herbert Hoover, politically dead, gone, might as well already make his reservations back to Santa Barbara and so forth. And it turned around and by November '84, as you remember, it was "Morning in America" and he won 49 states. That's the way to do it.

William Galston, deputy domestic policy advisor to President Clinton:

No president can be indifferent to sustained political support, but at the same time achieving sustained political support at the cost of doing what needs to be done is a hollow victory. Staff people around the president have to be worried about feeding a president's desire for sustained high poll ratings. At some point, you have to say, "Mr. President, you're right. You're going to pay a price. We're all going to pay a price. But if we don't do this, we'll never get another chance and the country will be the worse for it."

Clinton had no desire to cut federal spending and raise taxes during his first year in office. Nor did Reagan welcome the deep recession of 1981–82. But they chose to act in confidence (justified, as it turned out) that their policies would help get the economy in strong shape by the time they ran for reelection.

CREATE A DECISION-MAKING PROCESS SO THAT ROUTINE MATTERS DON'T REACH YOU.

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PAST PRESIDENCIES

EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER, EVEN IF IT'S DECADES OLD *by Michael Nelson*

Every decision that lands on the president's desk should be one that only the president can make or actively wants to make. If the process for making other decisions is clear and fair, they can be safely delegated to the president's team.

Stuart Eizenstat, domestic policy advisor to President Carter:

People knew that Carter was insisting on making every last decision. And so, if that's the case . . . take everything to him. What should have happened is the president should have said, Look, here is the [Presidential Review Memorandum]. You've given me the basic issues, here are my decisions, now you go and settle it . . . and don't come back to see me."

Dick Cheney, chief of staff to President Gerald R. Ford:

If you don't trust the process, you're going to start looking for ways around it. . . . All of a sudden you have people freelancing, trying to get around the decision-making process because they feel the process lacks integrity. So it's very, very important when you set up the shop to make certain that you have a guaranteed flow—you know what's going in; you know what's coming out. You know when it goes in that it's complete, that everybody's got their shot at the decision memo. You know if there's going to be a meeting, the right people are going to be in the meeting, that the president has a chance to listen to all of that and then make a decision.

Contrary to lore, Carter did not stay up late assigning playing times on the White House tennis court. But he did go over the massive federal budget line by line. Focusing on the forest, while allowing trusted OMB [Office of Management and Budget] officials and White House staff members to tend to each individual tree, would have served him better in persuading Congress to pass a budget that reflected his policy priorities.

DON'T ASSUME YOU'RE OBLIGATED TO FIGHT YOUR PREDECESSOR'S BATTLES.

4

Everyone in Washington who is unhappy with a decision made in the years before the new president takes office will want to relitigate it. The first year should not be filled with leftover issues. Working closely with Secretary of State James Baker, Brent Scowcroft (national security advisor to President George H. W. Bush) moved quickly to negotiate an agreement with Democratic congressional leaders that settled what had been a long-standing and contentious interbranch fight over U.S. policy toward Nicaragua during the Reagan administration.

Scowcroft:

At the outset of the [Bush] administration, Central America loomed large. It had been a major preoccupation of the Reagan administration. I thought excessively so. . . . in this constant confrontation with the Congress [over policy toward Nicaragua]. It was not producing results, it was embittering everything, and nothing was getting done. I thought we ought to change that. I thought we ought to go up and try to co-opt the Congress. And Baker, interestingly enough, the first time we talked about Central America, said the same thing. So that's what we tried to do.

Scowcroft served in an administration led by a president of the same party as his immediate predecessor. But even a change in partisan control of the White House can leave the new president with policies inherited from the

congressional party. "We were absolutely deluged" with "pet legislation" from congressional Democrats when Jimmy Carter succeeded Republican president Gerald Ford in 1977, says Carter's legislative liaison, Frank Moore. As a result, "we overloaded the circuits."

FOREIGN POLICY IS DOMESTIC POLICY.

No matter the nature of the domestic and economic issues that may dominate the first year, world leaders will be taking the new president's measure based on how they are handled.

Warren Christopher, secretary of state to President Clinton:

It's hard to overestimate the degree of credibility the president gained internationally by taking steps to balance the budget [in 1993], and I think he owed that to his own determination. But the presence of [Secretary of the Treasury] Lloyd Bentsen and [National Economic Council Chairman] Bob Rubin and [Office of Management and Budget Director] Leon Panetta steered him to make that very difficult decision and changed the whole course of the administration, I think, and put it on a much sounder track.

Some senior foreign leaders were initially inclined to regard Clinton, whose prepresidential experience was as governor of a small Southern state, as an unimpressive statesman, especially compared with his globally surefooted predecessor, George H. W. Bush. Clinton's early resolve in the first-year budget battle caused these leaders to reassess him and, eventually, change their minds.

THIS ESSAY IS PART OF THE MILLER CENTER'S FIRST YEAR PROJECT. READ MORE AT FIRSTYEAR2017.ORG

Michael Nelson is a nonresident faculty senior fellow at UVA's Miller Center and the Fulmer Professor of Political Science at Rhodes College in Memphis.

5



Hyde Park, New York
November 22, 1940

My dear King George

I have been intending to write to you for a month and more but, as you know, my time before the elections was of necessity taken up with a series of speeches and inspection trips. Personally, I was much torn between the real duty to run for election again and a deep personal wish to retire. Therefore, it was gratifying that the majority was so large, if there had to be any majority at all!

Also, I think and hope that there will be definite benefit to your Nation and to this by a continuity of existing policies. There is absolutely no question that the appeasement element, the pro-Germans, the communists, and the total isolationists did their best for my defeat.

In regard to materials from here, I am, as you know, doing everything possible in the way of acceleration and in the way of additional release of literally everything that we can spare.

I think I realize a bit how splendidly all of your good people are standing up under these terrific air attacks -- but I have what we call a "hunch" -- not necessarily based on cold figures, that you have turned the corner and that the break of the luck will be more and more with you.

May I also tell you that you, personally, and the Queen have deepened the respect and affectionate regard in which you are held in this country by the great majority of Americans. All that is being done in Great Britain and the way it is being done make me feel very futile with respect to our own efforts.

At least the monthly production over here is speeding up and will continue to do so.

I am spending four days at home over Thanksgiving Day. Early in December I hope to get a bit of a holiday by going over to the Bahamas and several other prospective bases. That destroyer arrangement seems to have worked out perfectly. There is virtually no criticism in this country except from legalists who think it should have been submitted to the Congress first. If I had done that, the subject would still be in the tender care of the Committee's of the Congress!

My wife joins me in sending our best wishes to you and to the Queen.

Yours very sincerely

Franklin D. Roosevelt

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENCY

As 1940 drew to a close, Franklin Roosevelt (pictured at right) felt pressure from both sides of the Atlantic. The United Kingdom pleaded for American help to survive an onslaught from Nazi Germany. Should they fall, the United States eventually might have had to face a more powerful Hitler alone. But at home, FDR strove to maintain a neutral posture in his bid for a third term in office. His victory in November prompted this letter to King George VI (left), expressing gratitude at having overcome "the appeasement element, the pro-Germans, the communists, and the total isolationists."



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