

## **“Campaigning versus Governing”**

**Interviewee:** Colin Powell

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**Project:** George H. W. Bush Oral History

Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for President George H. W. Bush, discusses campaigning versus governing in an effective presidency.

**Colin Powell:** I’ve been around long enough to know that campaign rhetoric does not always cross the river into the 18 acres and survive. I’ve seen it in every Presidency. It’s one thing to campaign; it’s something else to govern.

**Interviewer:** And of course President [George H. W.] Bush, on one of the most important promises he makes—

**Powell:** “No new taxes. Read my lips.”

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Powell:** I think this is what makes him such a significant figure and such a good President, in that he knew the difference between campaigning and governing. When he had to go out to Andrews Air Force Base with these guys and deal with the issue of what to do to stabilize the economy and get this place going, he was ready to overlook that and eat his campaign words from the previous campaign, with full knowledge, I’m sure, that this was going to hurt him in the next campaign. And it did.

**Interviewer:** Is it fair to say he’s one of those Presidents who liked governing much more than campaigning?

**Powell:** I think any human being with an IQ over 40, who is a mammal, loves governing more than campaigning.

*End of excerpt.*

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