Young: This is an oral history interview session with former Vice President Dan Quayle. We have a few little things that we have to get out of the way for the tapes first. One of them is that we go around the table and have everybody say a few words so that the transcriber can pick up who’s who on the voice and not make a mistake. Just let me say, very briefly, that Mr. Quayle and I did discuss the general agenda for the day, which is as we discussed yesterday. We understand that it is conversational. We also reviewed the ground rules, which are okay with you, I understand, and the final disposition of the work product. He particularly mentioned that he would like to have the final product also go to the Quayle Museum, and there may be other documents that will go there. So welcome.

Quayle: Thank you very much. Welcome to sunny Arizona. I hope you’ve enjoyed your stay. I’m looking forward to this. I think the best way to proceed is along the lines that you suggested. You raise the area or the topic you want to discuss and I’ll take it from there and then, if you want to interrupt for any clarification or specificity, feel free to do so.

Young: That’s fine with us. Chuck, do you want to say who you are and—

Jones: I’m Chuck Jones, a professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, but I used to teach at the University of Virginia some time before.

Young: Also Arizona.

Jones: Also Arizona.

Quayle: You taught in Tucson, U. of A.?

Jones: Yes, ’61 to ’69 and, just for the record, I want to express how pleased we are that the Badgers are in the NCAA [National Collegiate Athletic Association]. That’s not a guarantee anytime.

Quayle: They didn’t do so well in the tournament this last weekend.

Jones: Well, you would follow that. [laughter]

Quayle: Yes, I followed that. Indiana got beat, too, and Purdue was a nonstarter.
Young: Steve.

Knott: I’m Stephen Knott. I’m an assistant professor and research fellow at the Miller Center. It’s a pleasure to be here.

Young: Joined us recently from the Air Force Academy, where you were on the faculty.

Quayle: From the Air Force Academy?

Knott: Yes.

Riley: I’m Russell Riley. I’m a research professor at the Miller Center and I’m also happy to be here.

Young: From Alabama.

Riley: Exactly, although I went to school at Auburn and they had a terrible year. Chuck made the mistake of mentioning that Alabama was doing well, which was not something that I was pleased to hear.

Quayle: I think Alabama, they’re in the tournament. They’re doing well. Whereabouts in Alabama?

Riley: Auburn.

Quayle: Oh, you’re from Auburn?

Riley: Yes.

Young: Okay, and then Beatriz Lee.

Lee: I’m Beatriz Lee and I’m the administrator at the University of Virginia and I’m the Latin American connection. I’m from Colombia, South America.

Quayle: I was down there for the inauguration back in ’91.

Lee: Right, I read about that in your book.

Young: Okay. The general subject here is Dan Quayle’s political career, emphasizing the pre-Bush part of it, the pre-Vice President part of it. Your experience—you started as a very young man, I can say that. And your career covered a very interesting and important slice of American history and was quite extensive. You participated in it and also observed it from several different vantage points, so that’s one reason that we’re interested in the political—in your career path and your career choices and what light you can shed on what your goals were, starting perhaps with your service in the Congress or even earlier.
Quayle: As you well know, and a lot of this is in *Standing Firm*, so it may be a little bit repetitive. I ran for Congress when I was 29. Marilyn [Quayle] and I had been married three years and a few months when I announced. We got married in ’72. We had one child, one on the way. I’d always been interested in politics, grew up in a newspaper family that was very political—my grandfather in particular. It was not a given, but certainly throughout my upbringing politics was always very much of an option. Many people had always wanted my father to run for office but he was in the newspaper business, worked on-again, off-again for my grandfather, who didn’t really like politicians. So he always wanted to be in politics but never felt he could do it.

My mother was actively involved in politics. Got started out here, in Arizona, campaigning for Barry Goldwater in his reelection campaign in 1958—I would have been 11 years old at the time—at the Arizona State Fairgrounds.

When I graduated from college, I knew that politics was something I wanted to pursue. I wanted to go to law school because that’s a pretty good avenue to get into politics, since many of the politicians are lawyers. Law does help in writing legislation and understanding how the judges and the courts are going to interpret things. Contracts, evidence, and criminal procedure are all important subjects. So I was going to go to law school right after college. However the draft laws changed and law school was no longer an exemption.

So I had to decide then whether I was going to join the Army, get drafted, join the Air Force, National Guard, or the Army Reserves. And I chose the National Guard. Actually, it turned out I didn’t have to join it because my lottery number was so high. So I took a year out for active duty and then I went to law school. After I graduated from law school, I moved back to Huntington, Indiana, with the desire to run for state representative. I had the idea of some day running for Senator or running for Governor.

But the powers that be in the Fourth District really importuned me to run for the Congress, which I said I’d be willing to do. I was running against a 16-year Democrat incumbent. Anyway, they promised me no primary opposition and they promised me they’d raise a lot of money.

Well, both promises turned out to only be promises and not true. I had primary opposition and they didn’t raise the money in the primary I thought they were going to raise. So that was my first baptism in politics. The idea of being able to control a primary system and the idea that they’re going to raise money was like a check being in the mail—it just doesn’t work that way.

I was successful in 1976 when [Jimmy] Carter was elected. I think I wrote this in the book, that I took the colors of Carter. There were a lot of things that I used that I thought were interesting that Carter was using. He was an outsider. He was the first one to tap into the evangelical Christian community as a constituency. I had a lot of Carter people working on my congressional campaign and it really offended some of the Republicans. I said I was really interested in winning rather than necessarily satisfying the Republican Party. As far as I’m concerned, a vote is a vote and here’s what I believe in, and if it cuts into some of Carter’s base and Carter’s independence, so be it. And, as it turned out, we won.
We won quite handily, about 54 percent, 55 percent, or something like that, against a 16-year veteran. John Brademas, who was the third-ranking Democrat in the House—he turned out to be a good friend of mine later on—said it was probably the upset of the year. There were only 20 Republicans elected, and over three Democrat incumbents who were defeated. Two of them were under a cloud of criminality or something of that sort. But mine was not. I ran against a very honest, ethical, hard-working Democrat who just simply had been there too long and had a record that was not really reflective of what the constituents wanted. I was very good friends with his son in high school.

So, after I had won, I was interested in getting my family to Washington. I was interested in what my committee assignments were going to be, what the House was going to be like. I discovered very quickly that being a freshman Congressman in the minority party had little influence on what happened on the floor.

After the first year I said, “I’m going to run for the Senate.” [Birch] Bayh was up in 1980. I said, “I’m not staying around here. This is very interesting, I really enjoy it, but I’m going to move on where I can have real influence. I got reelected in ’78. During my reelection, I would go down to other districts in Indiana and campaign. One statewide reporter sort of wondered, Why is he doing this? He just got elected up there. And I said, “I’m just helping out my colleagues.”

So I put my toe in the water for statewide politics and got reelected by a fairly convincing margin. I got on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, which gave me an opportunity to get more involved in foreign affairs and national security, which was of great interest to me. On the Foreign Affairs Committee I was very involved in drafting and trying to amend the Taiwan Relations Act. I go to Taiwan today, periodically, and they remember very well my role as a second-term member of the House there on the Taiwan Relations Act.

The Small Business Committee I was on helped me back home. I came from a small business, Huntington Herald Press. It helped me politically more than the Foreign Affairs Committee. Foreign Affairs was really a launching pad to go to the Senate and to start my career in national security.

So I decided to run for the Senate early on and Doc [Otis] Bowen, who was our Governor, was thinking about running and I was wise enough to say, “If he runs, forget it. I’m not going to run. It’s his.” Before Bowen made his decision we had these little campaign buttons, “If not Bowen, then Quayle.”

A good friend of mine worked for Bowen at the time and sort of indicated Doc might not run. He said, “I can’t tell you for certain, because Doc’s never told me this, but I don’t think Doc’s going to run.” And I said, “Well, I don’t know why he would run.” His wife, at the time, was quite ill, unfortunately, and I just guessed that he wouldn’t run. If he did run, then I’d just stay in the House and look for another opportunity—

Jones: But you’d set it up, essentially, as you being the alternative.
Quayle: I actually took a leaf out of Thad Cochran’s political playbook, because I watched this interplay between Thad Cochran and Trent Lott in 1978. I’d just gotten there. There was a Senate seat. James Eastland was retiring, I believe. Trent actually had seniority over Thad and Trent was sort of a House person anyway. He was on the staff of a Democratic Congressman, got elected as a Republican and was trying to work his way up into the House leadership. Thad had gotten there later than Trent, but when it opened up, Thad just said, “I’m running,” and he said it right off the bat. Trent said, “Well, you know, I might too,” and the interplay was Thad saying, “That’s fine. We can both run.”

Thad announced first and, as a result, Trent did not run. He waited. He was a little bit more cautious, perhaps at that time perceived to be as a little more prudent. You never know. Carter was still very popular at that time, particularly in the South. Thad was taking a roll of the dice.

I saw him stake out his position early and basically get the primary with very little fuss. So that’s what I did. After Bowen got out in May of 1979, within ten days I’d formed my committee and transferred the money that I had left over from the House, put it in the Senate campaign committee. I looked at the Indiana Republican Congressmen and I said, “I’m going to run for the Senate. If you want to run, come along.” Two of them were thinking about running and within six months they both basically dropped out. I did have a primary, but it wasn’t a real tough primary.

It was the same thing Thad did. I saw that once you commit early and say you’re going to go and get out there and start raising money, the opposition realizes it’s going to be a real race. If they’re going to have a real race and you got started early, you’re making the phone calls—this is the way it’s going to be.

Lamar Alexander is doing almost the same thing in Tennessee right now. It’s open. He’s out there saying, “I’m running,” and the others are thinking about it. He’s out there and we’ll see what happens. He may get some primary opposition, but he’s doing it the right way. It’s open—boom—and you say, “Come, come in if you want.”

It’s something in politics, because a lot of it is commitment. A lot of these people like to be “coronated,” but they don’t really want to run. They’re afraid of losing. And if you get out there and you show that you’re not afraid of losing and you’re willing to do it, people will back off, particularly if they realize they’re going to have a tough race. What you want to try to do is elevate the risk factor for those who are going to come in. If they see it’s going to be a risky race and they’ll probably lose, then the tendency is to take the safe route, which is to stay where they were.

Riley: Can I interrupt and ask one question about whether you were spending any time looking back into state politics in Indiana at the time? Did you ever think about coming back and running for Governor or—

Quayle: Not at that particular time, because the Republicans had a pretty good thing going. We had Ed Whitcomb from ’68 to ’72, who I worked for, and he was a Republican. Bowen was from ’72 to ’80, and then Bob Orr, his Lieutenant Governor, was going to run in ’80. So from ’80 to
’88, you’re locked out. He had a very good Lieutenant Governor in John Mutz, who ran against Evan Bayh in ’88 but lost. So the Republican gubernatorial candidates were pretty well locked in during that period of time.

Riley: Right. But if you had gone into the state house in 1976, that might have been—

Quayle: Yes, if I’d gone into the state house in 1976, then I would have been in a very attractive position for Lieutenant Governor with Bob Orr, because Orr came from Evansville. He’d be looking for somebody from the northeast part. Mutz was a little bit controversial because he’s from Indianapolis. Indianapolis politicians have not done well statewide. As a matter of fact, [Richard] Lugar is the only one who’s really gotten elected statewide. Bayh never said he was from Indianapolis, even though he was from there. He was basically from D.C. and his father was from the Terre Haute area in Shirksville.

Riley: Right. But once you went to Washington—

Quayle: Once I went to Washington, there’s a possibility—going from the House to the Lieutenant Governor, if in fact Bowen had said that he was going to run, then there is a possibility I would have pursued the Lieutenant Governor thing.

Riley: Sure.

Quayle: As a member of Congress then, coming from Huntington, it would have been a natural balance for Orr. I could have done that. That would have been another option at the time. But when you’re in the House, you really just think about going to the Senate. There are not too many House members that come back, necessarily, to run for Lieutenant Governor. Some come back to run for Governor. But as young as I was, I could have done that.

Young: At what point—or maybe this is premature—were you thinking beyond the Senate, to national elected office?

Quayle: When I was elected to the Congress at 29, in discussions with people in my district and in the cloakroom—obviously you’re thinking about running for President or Vice President. It’s there. You don’t do it overtly. It’s something that you have in the back of your mind and you set out a path to do it. Running for President is either through the Senate or through being a Governor. Many Vice Presidents have come from the Senate—you had [Lyndon] Johnson, [Hubert] Humphrey. [Richard] Nixon. [Walter] Mondale. Myself. [Albert, Jr.] Gore. So there’s a lot of Senators who ended up being Vice President. This is just sort of a stepping-stone—and Joe Lieberman was a Senator. So it is a real stepping-stone.

Jones: And [Lloyd] Bentsen.

Quayle: And Bentsen was, that’s right. So you go back and look at that. The real stepping stone for Senators, except for Jack [John F.] Kennedy, has not been to the Presidency directly. It’s been to the Vice Presidency, which then gives you the opportunity to run for President. That may
change a bit. Washington is different, it’s viewed differently. It is more difficult to get elected President as a sitting Senator than it used to be, just because of the feeling toward Washington.

If I was going into politics today, I would probably really focus more on the governorship, because that’s more important. That’s where the Presidential candidates seem to do better, through the Governor’s office. That was not the case when I started out, in 1976. Just because you had Nixon before then—you had Kennedy, Johnson, Humphrey, all basically congressional people, not gubernatorial. It started with Carter, then [Ronald] Reagan, then [William J.] Clinton, and now George W. Bush. So you had that change.

But when I got in, clearly the Senate was the place to leapfrog into national politics. So I got elected to the Senate and got on the Senate Armed Services Committee and was number three on the Education and Labor Committee, which was my constituency committee. We were dealing with the Job Training Partnership Act and education. The committee that I was most interested in, and where I did most of my work, was the Armed Services Committee. I felt that it was more important for the country but it wouldn’t necessarily get me recognition back home, because Indiana is not known as a big defense state.

It’s not like Virginia. You get on the Armed Services Committee from Virginia—that’s good. Because it’s jobs, it’s shipbuilding and all that.

Young: Can I ask you to dial back to the defeat of Birch Bayh? Could you tell us how you did that?

Quayle: The real upset in my political career was not against Birch Bayh. That’s the one everyone focuses on. The one that was really more difficult, probably more dramatic, was the one against Ed Roush in 1976.

Young: Okay.

Quayle: Because that was the year Carter won. It was not a Republican year, it was a Democratic year. I was running—and House members are more difficult to beat than Senate members that have been there for a long period of time, just because the House members do so much for their next-door neighbor. Senators, in a state like Indiana—it’s so big that you can’t really touch everybody. It’s a little bit like Virginia. You can’t touch everybody. You can have a presence there. And in Indiana we have five different media zones. We have the Chicago area, we’ve got the South Bend area, we’ve got the Fort Wayne area, we have the Indianapolis—actually six. We have the Evansville area, then we have New Albany and Jeffersonville, so we have six basic media zones. So it’s hard to get around in that state. But in a congressional district you can do that.

That’s why 1976 was really more of an upset than Birch Bayh. Birch Bayh had barely won in 1962, in 1968, and 1974. So his vulnerability was there. You could just see it in the numbers.
Senators who are really out of step with their constituents on a political basis tend to sink on their own. Congressmen don’t. Bayh and I had seven debates. We ran, obviously, a very good campaign.

I think that his son Evan Bayh actually has learned a lot from that campaign where he was the campaign manager in 1980. His son has really focused on trying to be much more of a moderate Democrat. When Evan Bayh was running for the Senate and he was talking about a Governor who balanced the budget, didn’t raise taxes and reformed welfare. Coming from out of state, people used to ask me, “Is Evan Bayh a Republican?” I’d say, “No, he’s not a Republican. He’s a Democrat.” [laughter] The reason a lot of those things happened was the fact that he had a Republican legislature and he had to do those things.

Young: Yes.

Quayle: But he did learn from his father.

We ran a very clear-cut, issue-oriented campaign. Carter clearly did not help Birch Bayh in Indiana in 1980. I remember our last debate because I kept goading Bayh. I said, “He’s going to vote for Jimmy Carter and I’m going to vote for Ronald Reagan for President.” I thought Reagan was going to get elected and we put it as Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan.

Finally, Jack Colwell, a reporter from the South Bend Tribune, asked Bayh in our last debate, “Who are you going to vote for?” That was an interesting question because [John] Anderson was in the race. He gave a very convoluted answer without saying who he was going to vote for. I said, “Well, who are you going to vote for?”

The reporters also pushed him. So he finally said, “I’ll end up reluctantly voting for Jimmy Carter.” He was trying to get the Anderson vote and play the center, which he had done so well for so many years.

I actually got more votes, a higher percentage, than Reagan did. That’s because Anderson was on the ticket. The margin between Reagan and Carter was bigger than my gap, but I got more votes and had a larger percentage of votes than Reagan did.

Bayh was very awkward in that debate. I’ll never forget that. I turned to my wife afterwards and said, “I think we’re in pretty good shape.” But he was a very good campaigner, very glib. His son has been very successful. The son is very much like his father, a very good politician.

Knott: Did you campaign with Ronald Reagan during that year? Did he make any appearances—

Quayle: He made an appearance in Evansville during the primary because it was contested, and he made another appearance in Kokomo during the general election. I remember a famous Reagan line about the difference between a recovery and a recession and a depression— “A recession is when your neighbor loses his job, a depression is when you lose your job, and a recovery is when Jimmy Carter loses his job.”
Usually, you want to have a Presidential candidate come in just to give you a shot in the arm. They’re not as helpful as people think they are. In our case, we ignored the logistics of it and just showed up in Kokomo and made a short speech to the crowd.

**Young:** Back to the Senate. I dialed you back.

**Quayle:** Yes. I went to the Senate. I was elected when I was 33. I pretty well knew at that time that I would someday try to figure out how to run for President. Obviously, Reagan had just gotten elected, and if I got reelected hopefully in ’86, then ’88 would be a possibility.

We got through the ’86 election fairly easily, had a big number, even though it was a bad year for Republicans. We lost a lot of our Senate freshmen. I talked to my wife and talked to some others and thought I might just run. I talked a little about it and they said, “Yes, yes, yes.” You had George Bush, you had Bob Dole, who was thinking about running. Others said, “You’re still a junior Senator. You’ve got plenty of time. Do you really want to jump out and do it right now?” I thought about it and I finally decided, “Let’s not do it.” So we didn’t do it.

Then, obviously, the campaign in ’88 rolled around. In ’85—I know I put this in the book—I called Vice President George Bush and told him I wanted him to come and do a fundraiser for me for my reelection. I wanted to do it in Fort Wayne because the mayor of Fort Wayne at that time was thinking of running against me. When I spoke to Vice President Bush he said, “I haven’t even decided whether I’m going to run for President or not.” I said, “You’re going to run.” And he said, “No, I haven’t really decided.” I said, “Okay, when you make your mind up, I want you to come in. I’d rather do it sooner than later.”

So he called back in two or three weeks and said, “We’ll do it.” I was the first person he campaigned for after the ’84 elections and when he had internally made the decision to run for President. He had campaigned for me in 1978 as well.

Then ’88 rolled around—

**Riley:** Can I interrupt and ask one question before you get into the campaign? That is, did you find your service in the Senate to be more satisfactory? You expressed frustrations with the House—

**Quayle:** Oh, yes.

**Riley:** Is that a body that you felt like you might have, under other circumstances, been happy developing a much longer career in?

**Quayle:** Yes, clearly. First, we went from the minority to the majority, which is a huge difference. But even in the Senate, the minority can actually do things. I was able to write the Job Training Partnership Act. We did the Adult Literacy Act. There was a whole host of education, social issues that got enacted into legislation.
On national defense, we were able to get into manpower issues, all the treaties, the INF [Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces] Treaty in particular, which we had them renegotiate. That was really unprecedented—an ambiguity that came up because of the old, antiquated ABM [Anti-Ballistic Missile] Treaty, about what were considered future weapons. It was very vague in this INF Treaty. The reinterpretation was not what I wanted but at least we had clarity on what the treaty meant.

The Senate was very satisfying. I got to travel more overseas. I got involved in national security issues. The Senate was, at that time, much more collegial than it is now. It is really very, very partisan, even at this time of war against the terrorists.

**Young:** Did you get, excuse me—

**Quayle:** Go ahead.

**Young:** Did you get the committee assignments you wanted?

**Quayle:** Actually, Armed Services I did want. What I wanted was to be able to keep the Armed Services Committee and eventually get on the Finance Committee. I didn’t think I would ever have been able to do it. I enjoyed Armed Services so much that I probably would not have given it up for the Finance Committee. I didn’t have to make that choice when I went there because the Finance Committee was not available. Those were the two committees that I wanted, but they are considered “A” committees and you’re only allowed to serve on one “A” committee.

Once I got on the Armed Services Committee and got involved more in national security matters, I probably wouldn’t have changed. Actually, my first committee choice, if I couldn’t get Finance—because that’s really where the power is and you can get your foreign policy just by being a Senator—was Foreign Relations, because at that time it was a very prestigious committee. It is less so now. But Lugar was on there so I was blocked. I couldn’t get on the Finance Committee because they do it strictly by seniority and I was fifth or sixth—

**Jones:** You’re pretty explicit in the book about your thinking and your seeking to position yourself to be selected as Vice Presidential candidate, but what’s less clear is what your thinking was in regard to staying in the Senate, which is also one way of asking what if you hadn’t been selected and you had stayed in the Senate and your career—

**Quayle:** I’ve given that some thought as sort of an exercise in futility because it didn’t happen. One, you can never pick when you’re going to be selected for Vice President. You just can’t choose it. You can choose when you’re going to run for President. You cannot really select when you’re going to be—or choose when you’re going to be selected Vice President.

**Jones:** You can position yourself. You can seek, as you did, to—

**Quayle:** Yes, you position yourself, but you never know whether it’s going to be ’88 or ’92 or ’96. You want to be in a position. I was positioning myself to eventually run for President. Now, obviously, the Vice Presidency was a stepping-stone to that. I mean, that’s why people want to
be Vice President. That’s why nobody really turns the job down. Some people don’t want it, but I
might have turned it down then because it was such a losing situation. But people just don’t turn
it down.

So I was positioning myself all along. I just never knew when the opportunity was going to
become available.

Riley: Sure.

Quayle: When I was talking to some of my Senate colleagues, I said, “I have a good chance of
being George Bush’s V.P.,” and they said, “Well, don’t you think you ought to wait?” I said,
“Why? If the opportunity is there, take it.”

Riley: Sure.

Quayle: It’s the decision of one person—and you’re not going to pass it up. I know a lot has
been written, that I would have been better to stay in the Senate, continue the great career that I
had, be there for ten, fifteen years, and then run for President. Some have made the argument that
I would have been stronger in running for President by having stayed in the Senate longer.

Jones: Clearly, there was a bug in there, even in your House career, perhaps before, to lead. Is
that correct?

Quayle: Absolutely. I grew up with it. It’s part of my heritage. Fortunately, it’s something that
I’ve always done. I’ve always been able to take tough positions, form consensus, and then move
things in my direction. I’m always convinced if I get people in the room long enough, lock the
door, I’m going to get it resolved. I just know how to do it. And I was fairly successful at it.

Jones: So it’s conceivable that, if the chance didn’t come along, you would have sought to do
the same in the Senate, at some point—to be a leader in the Senate?

Quayle: Actually, John Warner, your Senator, had always told me, “Now you need to be the
majority leader.” I remember he announced that at one of his golf outing things. When he
introduced me, he said, “Now this is the next majority leader of the Senate some day.” And my
colleagues were saying, “What’s this all about?”

Warner was just looking at the future. It’s interesting that many of my political advisors, when I
decided to run for the Senate, said, “Don’t do it. You need to be like Charlie Halleck first.” And I
said, “Charlie Halleck?”

Jones: That needs a little explaining.

Quayle: I loved Charlie Halleck. He was the minority leader [Gerald] Ford deposed of in 1962
or ’64. The “Ev (Dirksen) and Charlie (Halleck) show” that they used to have back then—I’m
sure you all remember that. So I told them, “I really don’t have any interest in staying in the
House for 20 years or 15 years to become minority leader. So thank you very much.” They said, “Oh you can’t, it’s going to be a tough race against Bayh. You’ve got so much, a great future, don’t blow it.” And I said, “Well, life is full of making decisions. So I’m going to make this.”

So it gets back to—I just felt like I could prevail. And I’ve always prevailed. The majority leader would have been, obviously, something I would have pursued, had I decided to stay in the Senate for a long period of time.

Jones: Should we turn to the campaign?

Young: Sure.

Jones: Integrating a Vice Presidential candidate into a campaign, given that you’re likely to have selected a Senator who is—Senators are reasonably independent and so forth. That is always a problem, trying to manage two campaigns for someone who has had an independent staff and so forth. In thinking about your case, how might you have done it?

Quayle: As far as integrating myself?

Jones: How might you have, what—

Quayle: As far as Vice President?

Jones: Right, your campaign into the Bush campaign. How might you have done it, have you reflected?

Quayle: Are you talking about how I would have done it for myself or done it for somebody else—

Jones: Sure, let’s go at it that way.

Quayle: For myself?

Jones: Right.

Quayle: When George Bush called me, to talk about the Vice Presidency, I knew that it was serious because he didn’t really owe me anything. I hadn’t endorsed him. I didn’t endorse Dole either. So that helped. Because most of my Senate colleagues did endorse Dole. I just told Bob, “Look, I’m just going to sit this one out.” So that was obviously a plus, not having endorsed Dole. But I did not endorse Bush.

So when he called, I knew that it was serious and then when Bob Kimmitt, who did all the background, called I could feel this building. I talked to him and said, “One of the things that really needs to be done if it’s going to be me is you need to work on an introduction.” I said, “You’ve got to figure out how you’re going to introduce me to the American people. I’m still the junior Senator from Indiana. Yes, I have a track record and it’s good, and I’ve risen high very
quickly. People in Washington clearly know who I am but the American people don’t.” And he said, “We recognize this.”

As it came down, I knew it was between Dole and myself. I knew it wouldn’t be Kemp. But Dole was a real clear alternative. I think, to George Bush’s credit, he wanted to do something different. It was a generational selection. I was the first post World War II candidate for Vice President. As a matter of fact, by him selecting me, he made it much more probable for his children to get involved in politics.

Jones: Interesting, yes. I hadn’t thought of that.

Quayle: I told the Bush people, “You really need to figure out an introduction because I know how these things work. If you don’t define yourself and you let the media and your opponents define you, you’re in trouble. You’ve got to have your say for at least the first few days.” I said, “It’s very important and very critical, particularly for somebody like myself.”

Riley: Were you telling this to other people or was the communication—

Quayle: I communicated this to Kimmitt, in particular, and I told Jim Baker this, too, who was then the campaign chairman. I did not talk to then-Vice President Bush about this. I talked to [Robert] Teeter and I talked to [Roger] Ailes. They all knew it. His campaign people felt a safer choice was to take Bob Dole, who was well known. They felt this would be more in his style, even though many recommended me to Bush. They just didn’t factor in that George Bush was thinking of the future and willing to make a bold choice.

He knew me very well. Many in his inner circle recommended me to him but I think they felt, when it really came down, that the easy choice would have been Dole. Looking back on the selection, they were just totally unprepared for my introduction to the American people. They handed out as background information the *Almanac of American Politics* by Michael Barone, which is a very straightforward-type thing. That’s what they were handing out to the media—“Here’s our candidate.” So they really hadn’t done any work in anticipation of my candidacy.

When the media sees a void there, they’re going to go in and define you. Within 48 hours, of course, you had all this National Guard firestorm, which proved to be absolutely nothing. The thing in particular in national politics is that the introduction is very critical.

Looking back on that, it was something that I had a difficult time overcoming from the get-go, and it should never have happened.

The media, to their credit, normally will give somebody a free ride for a period of time. Okay, you tell your story. They love to build people up and then tear people down. That’s just the nature of the beast, and I understand that. I understood that going into this. We never got the introduction, never got the buildup— the first introduction was a negative, controversial-type thing, and I spent the whole time trying to recover.

Clinton took three days to introduce Gore.
Young: The question is why they didn’t do it. You observed that at first, at least, people may not have thought that he would really choose you. But isn’t it also, if the President himself, the Presidential candidate has decided that there will be no run up, that it will be a dramatic and surprise announcement, doesn’t that almost foreclose the introduction?

Quayle: Not really. The decision was made on Tuesday of the convention. I could have had 48 hours of biography rather than all the controversy.

Young: After the announcement.

Quayle: Yes. After the announcement. The campaign staff knew it was either going to be Dole or myself. That was a given. They just assumed that it was going to be Dole. That’s what most of them assumed, even though some of the ones that assumed it was going to be Dole had recommended me to the inner sanctum. There was just a total lack of preparation to deal with my candidacy. You have to deal with me entirely differently than you deal with Bob Dole.

Jones: So it wasn’t a surprise to you—because you justify, I think, quite clearly and logically in your presentation in the book, that it wasn’t a surprise to you—but the Vice President really hadn’t prepared his own key people, signaled sufficiently in advance to the point where they would have prepared an introduction which was needed in the case of you and not Dole.

Quayle: Yes. I think what happened is that he had this list of six and it really came down to two of us. The campaign staff, for whatever reason, did not take the “what if”—“Okay, if it is Dole, what are we going to do? If it is Quayle, what are we going to do?”

They basically had hired Stu Spencer and [Joseph] Canzeri to run the Vice Presidential campaign. They just turned it over to them. They never really sat down and said, “Okay, how do we do it? With Dole, we do this. If it’s Quayle, we do this.”

Jones: I don’t want to put words in your mouth, but aren’t you saying that as they were thinking about it, Baker and others, they were thinking 60-40, 70-30 Dole, so why would we expend energy doing the “what if”?

Quayle: I think that’s what clearly happened. He wanted to keep it a surprise and then when it was a surprise, I think some of them said, “Gee, why didn’t he let me know?”

He didn’t let anybody know. He didn’t tell his wife until they were on the way to New Orleans and he told Reagan when Reagan left New Orleans. So he didn’t tell anybody. I know how staff get their noses out of joint. They always want to be the first ones to know, but he said, “I’m not going to tell anybody.”

See, the thing is, when George Bush says something—it’s like the son—when he says something, you’ve got to take it at face value. If he says he’s not going to tell anybody, guess what, he’s not going to tell anybody. I think a couple of them, in particular, thought he should have tipped them off, but he didn’t tip anybody off.
In the staff briefing that we had before our first news conference, no one raised the issue of the National Guard. Kimmitt had done it all and looked at it, but no one had raised it as a possible issue. Bayh tried to make it an issue in my campaign in 1980, so I should have been a little bit more alert.

**Young:** Yes.

**Quayle:** The thing that dominated that press conference we had never discussed. Could I have answers 20 years ago? Of course not. I could go back, “How did you—?” I said, “I applied.” “What do you mean?” It was just ridiculous.

**Young:** Is it possible that Bob Kimmitt did not share his information with anybody? I think that’s the understanding he had with the President. So that he knew it, but that was very closely held information, I think.

**Quayle:** But not after I was selected. See, that’s the—

**Young:** I’m wondering where he was.

**Quayle:** Oh, he was there.

**Young:** He was there.

**Quayle:** He was there. He was at the convention. He was there because he had—

**Young:** Was he at the briefing for the press conference?

**Quayle:** I don’t think so. But he had all the material. Because they went back to Kimmitt and asked him how much research he had done on this, and he said, “I did it all.” He said, “There’s no problem. I did my job.” Kimmitt was a Vietnam veteran and my National Guard service was no problem with him. He had done his homework.

**Young:** Yes, he was outside then.

**Quayle:** He was outside that little group. They were more focused on the President and what he was going to do, rather than us. Looking back, Vietnam was an obvious question. All in my generation have answered the question: Clinton, Gore, and George W. Vietnam was a defining moment for my generation.

**Jones:** If there aren’t any other hits on that, would you move ahead then beyond that point. Again, for obvious reasons, you chafed against some of the direction of your campaign from the Bush folks, but how might it have been done better, from your standpoint?

**Quayle:** What, the campaign itself?
Jones: Not having Canzeri and Spencer move over. Or, if you were the Presidential candidate, is that the way you’d do it?

Young: You mean apart from the personalities involved, Canzeri and Spencer, the whole question is the President’s campaign people sending their people into the Vice President’s—

Jones: Back to the whole problem of integrating—

Quayle: That’s not unusual. I think you always want an interface there. We basically did what any Vice Presidential candidate does. We went to the battleground states. We went to the states where the President was not going to go, which means a lot of the Rocky Mountain states. We spent time in California. We spent a lot of time in Ohio, a lot of time in Illinois, a lot of time in Michigan, Pennsylvania, western Pennsylvania in particular. We went to those states, those particular areas. We wanted the campaign integrated.

Basically, they pretty well left us alone after we got beyond this National Guard story. They basically said, “Okay, fine.” They got back and focused on [Michael] Dukakis.

You go back and you look at the coverage, and there is a plus and minus on the media coverage. Bush, I think, was close, like plus seven. Bentsen was like plus 14. Dukakis was minus nine, and I was like minus 15. So from a political strategy point of view, if they wanted to go after the Vice Presidential candidate and put all the energy into going after the Vice President, fine, because then they’d be giving more of a free ride to the President, and people really don’t vote for the Vice Presidential candidate. They vote for the Presidential candidate. That goes without saying.

It was very interesting to see the review. Bentsen was way up there, which is great because I always played Bentsen up. I said, “It’s too bad that Bentsen isn’t at the top of the ticket. It would be different,” and reporters would sort of roll their eyes. They knew exactly what I was doing. But a lot of people believed that. Gore tried to do that to some extent in 2000 with Cheney.

I remember talking to [Lee] Atwater. I said, “Fine, if they want to go after me, they’re wasting their time.” Because I know what I’ve done in the House, I know what I’ve done in the Senate. I know who I am. I know that we’re going to keep the focus on Dukakis and I’m convinced we’re going to win this election. So if they want to waste all their ammunition on me, so be it.

And they did, to a great extent, and it didn’t help them at all. As a matter of fact, I think it hurt them. It hurt them and as a result, if you look at the ’92 campaign, they basically left us alone. During the campaign itself, we were hardly ever mentioned. Clinton hardly ever mentioned my name in the campaign. They just focused on the President. So they learned a lot from that ’88 campaign about how futile it was.

Now, did it help me personally? No. The role of the Vice President is to get the President elected, so you do that and then you think you’re going to be able to put things back together.
Young: There was, of course, the dynamic of the handlers’ reporting. The fixation on the handling itself seems to have a dynamic of its own in the campaign, so that if that becomes the story, then it is almost—I don’t see what you can do about it, except what you did do.

Quayle: The thing is, I was never really comfortable with these so-called handlers. I remember when I was running for the Senate, Jack Heinz, who was on the Senate campaign committee, said, “You have to hire a political consultant.” I said, “Why do I have to hire a political consultant?” and he said, “Well, because you’re running for the Senate and you need a political consultant.”

I said, “I’ve got a bunch of them back in Indiana. They’re called my advisory group.” “No, no, no. A paid political consultant.” And I said, “Well, that just doesn’t sound right.” He said, “This is just one of the requirements, basically. One of the requirements to get funding from the Senate Campaign Committee.” I said, “Are you threatening me?” and he said, “No, no, no. I’m not threatening you. It’s just one of the things, the check-off things.”

I said, “I’ll tell you what. Why don’t you send some of these guys over—”

Jones: This is in ’86?

Quayle: Eighty. In ’80, I was running my first Senate race. I’m going to bring this back to the handler question. So they sent a couple over, and one of the suggested consultants was Dick Morris, who later worked for Clinton. After many discussions, we never did hire a political consultant and they gave us the money.

I am not a fan of consultants and political handlers. I am hands on and I like to control things. However, in a national campaign you have all these people out there speaking for you because they keep you so isolated. Part of it is because of security and part of it is because they want to be able to control the message.

Finally, I think it was halfway through the campaign, I said, “From now on, I’m going to be Dr. Spin.” I just got fed up with it because I wasn’t used to it, in the House or the Senate.

It was quite an adjustment. I know that one time they had a speech that I was supposed to give on foreign policy and I read the speech. I said, “This is just ridiculous.” I said, “Who wrote this speech?” And they gave me someone’s name who wrote the speech and I said, “This is not a very good speech.” So I got up there and I just talked about what I knew for 30 or 35 minutes with no notes. Of course, the press was all going wild—“What’s this all about?” They were back there saying, “Well, he’s off the reservation again.” I mean, these are my people. “Off the reservation again. He’s not following the script.”

These people had never heard me speak about foreign policy for 30 or 40 minutes without a note in front of me, going through all the technicalities of the INF Treaty and arms control and balance of forces and all that. They said, “He didn’t give the speech that he was supposed to give.” And so, instead of a positive, it turned into a negative. My own people were doing it to me.
Finally, after that, Ken Khachigian joined the campaign. After he got there, things settled down quite a bit because we were like-minded souls and really got along. I trusted him and he was quite good. But until then, it was just a disaster. And they did it intentionally, I found out. I said, “Where did this all come from?” They said, “Your staff told the media.” They were back there, basically saying, “Okay, I guess we have to teach him a lesson. If he doesn’t go according to script, then he’s not going to get good press.”

If it had been my campaign, I would have fired all those people on the spot, but it wasn’t my campaign. It was a Vice Presidential thing, and I had to do what the Presidential campaign wanted—the last thing I wanted to do was cause the President any kind of tough decision or personnel problem during the campaign. So I just let it go.

**Young**: These people were on the plane with you? They were traveling with you?

**Quayle**: Some, sometimes they were. But when Khachigian joined—

**Young**: Did he—

**Quayle**: When he joined, he was helpful because we knew what we wanted to do. Up until then, they tried to just force-feed me. I said, “Look, I’ve been a Senator. I know these issues. I know these issues better than you do.”

**Jones**: Essentially a candidate is a commodity. Their perspective is that—

**Quayle**: Yes. They said, “You’ve got to have this and that.” I said, “That’s interesting, but let’s do it this way.” “We’re the pros,” they said. I said, “Okay, I’m the candidate.” So we had sort of a standoff.

**Young**: There’s an interesting statement in your book in regard to transitions. I think you say, “Transitions describe every aspect of our lives during the time.” You did go through some pretty breathtaking transitions—from Senator to candidate, from candidate to Vice President-elect, and then Vice President-elect to Vice President in a stretch of a matter of months. Can you reflect on that a little bit, just from a personal standpoint? You’re really talking about assuming a fair number of roles. As you state, you had in your own mind a clear direction, but still, just what you did in each of these roles was very different in a period of a few months.

**Quayle**: The life in the Senate was a very rewarding, very comfortable life. The family was in Virginia. I went home in Indiana on the weekends maybe once a month, twice a month, but I could always get back on Saturday night if I wanted to. During the work periods, I’d go home for a few days. I had a very good constituency. It’s not like Virginia, where you’re expected to show up at everything because it’s so close. Indiana was far enough away that I wasn’t expected to show up all the time.
I had a fairly normal, if you will, family life. I was able to coach my kids’ basketball team and go out to their soccer games and be a father, do what a father is supposed to do, go to parent-teacher meetings and things like that.

Then when the Vice Presidential campaign began and they went to New Orleans—you’ve seen that picture, when they got off the plane. There were 1,300 photographers to greet these kids that would have been—let’s see, that was ’88, so they would have been 14, 11 and 9 at the time. They were shell-shocked, and I could see this on their faces. So that was a dramatic change.

Then, of course, you had the Secret Service. They sort of took over. But we sent the children on their merry way back to their grandparents and then back to D. C. We were in and out those few months and we said to them, “Don’t worry, the campaign will soon be over.”

Well, the campaign was over and it got a little better, but then I was Vice President. They had to change schools, they had to go live in the Vice President’s residence. There was a big iron gate there. They were going to have security and their whole lives just turned upside down. I could feel it, as a parent. I could feel the sea change. From a personal standpoint, that was the most difficult thing to manage, the new relationship with all the people outside looking at my family.

Our children were at very sensitive ages. Since they were going to have to make new friends, they thought the new friends would be friends only because of who they were. They look back on it to this day and say, “Those were the roughest four years that any kid could possibly have,” and I say, “You’re just exaggerating. I mean, think of all the opportunities.” I go through all their opportunities—travel to foreign countries, seeing America, being at the heart of the political capital of the world. I say, “Give me a break on this.” They say, “You didn’t walk in our shoes, and it was much more difficult than you thought.” I say, “That may be.” It was more difficult for them than I realized.

To manage the family life, particularly the children, during the V.P. campaign was the worst time because I really was gone. As the Vice President, even though I traveled a lot, 47 different countries in four years, unless I had a crisis at the White House, which obviously happened during Desert Storm and Panama and a few other times, I had a set schedule. If I said I was going to be home at seven o’clock at night, I could get home at seven o’clock at night. In the Senate, I would say, “I’ll try to be home by eight,” and at midnight I rolled in. “What happened?” “Well, these Senators rose and offered an amendment.” We had unexpected votes and I had to stay. I never knew.

The life of a Vice President—there’s more certainty and stability, to that extent, than the life of a Senator. In the Senate I never knew when I was going to come home. The family would watch C-SPAN [Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network] and I’d call and say, “It looks like we’re not going to have any more votes,” and they’d try to wait for dinner. Marilyn did a great job of trying to balance all those things. As Vice President, I could say, “I’ll be home at seven.” At six, if I knew something was going on, I’d just call and say, “I’m not going to be home.” In the Senate, I never knew when it was going to be—
Riley: I want to ask you a question related to this. Having gone through what you went through at the convention and the early part of the campaign, what did you do to try to get yourself recentered and refocused and sort of back to where you felt like you were in command of yourself and your schedule? Who did you consult with and what kinds of personal things did you do to try to move past that?

Quayle: After my selection as Vice President, I was under the protection of the Secret Service. I could make phone calls, I could have people come in if I set it up, but the schedule became so hectic. I was in four different states in one day and I had all these meetings that I really didn’t have much time to reflect, other than just get through the day.

When I made seven, eight, ten speeches a day, it was just getting through the day. Forget about sitting down with outside advisors or things like that.

I tried to do a couple of things. One, I tried to shut out all the negative stuff—because I knew most of it was nonsense, I focused on the game plan, which was really attacking Dukakis and getting out with people and crowds and keeping the drum beat against him. Then there was an inner voice trying to say, “Okay, regain your confidence that brought you to where you are today.” That was an internal thing, and that was more difficult to do because I had all these other distractions. I just had to remind myself, “Hey look, you’re here because of what you’ve accomplished, who you are and what you can do.”

With all the noise and everything going around for those first three or four weeks, just trying to get back a center of gravity—of where I was before—was something I tried to do. By the end of the campaign, it came around. Actually, about halfway through the campaign, if you noticed, the press coverage really tapered off and that’s when I knew I was back on stride.

Young: But for this inner centering, you had no support for that except your own family?

Quayle: My own family, yes, and some Senate friends and a few friends from Indiana.

Young: That you can—

Quayle: No. As a matter of fact, it got to the point where, except for a couple of people like Ken Khachigian, I just didn’t trust anyone. It’s really difficult to operate in that kind of an environment. As I said, if it was my campaign, I would have just gotten rid of them, but it wasn’t my campaign and to get rid of them would have caused a real problem.

Riley: Mitch Daniels came on the plane after a while?

Quayle: He was on the plane for a while. The guy who was really a little bit of a soul mate on the plane was John Tower. Tower came on the plane periodically and, of course, he was close to Bush, so I could talk to him as a Senator. John Warner was on the plane as well. They started putting some Senators on the plane, which was good because I could talk to them, but Tower in particular, because we were so close in the Senate.
Riley: Did you have many communications at all with the President?

Quayle: Yes, we talked. Not on a daily basis, but three or four times a week.

Jones: You mean Bush?

Riley: Yes, Bush.

Quayle: We talked three or four times a week and it was usually about what the line of the day was and how the campaign was going.

Riley: But you never aired any of your frustrations directly?

Quayle: No. He knew. We talked about it afterwards. He knew that there were problems but he didn’t want to get involved in that. He didn’t like personnel problems, anyway. None of us do. He wasn’t going to get into that. I didn’t really let on that there was any problem, but I’m sure he sensed it—he’s a pro. He knew about it.

Knott: In your debate with Senator Bentsen, how well did you know him prior—I know you served with him in the Senate—had you tangled with him before?

Quayle: Yes, I knew him fairly well. Actually, we had been to his house a couple of times. My wife and B.A. [Beryl Ann Bentsen], who was his wife, they were really pretty good friends. He was a big tennis player. We’d played in the Gardner tennis tournament in Arizona. So I knew him fairly well. He actually knew my grandfather a little bit. I think the connection was through Lyndon Johnson. I think the story was that Bentsen gave his ticket to the State of the Union address to my grandfather back in the 1960s.

Young: Yes.

Quayle: So we knew him fairly well. In that debate, what we focused on was just taking it to Dukakis as often as we could. We scored many points because Bentsen didn’t defend Dukakis. Bentsen was much more moderate than Dukakis.

The debate coverage focused on the Kennedy line. People came up afterwards and said, “You should have had a lot of comebacks on that.” I said, “Okay, fine, you tell me what.” The most interesting comeback would have been, “Now wait a second, if my memory is correct, you voted for Senator Johnson in those days. You weren’t even for Senator Kennedy when he was running for President, so what’s this buddy-buddy business?” That was the best one. There are some other ones that came up.

Jones: Well, he wasn’t that good a friend.

Quayle: That’s right, not that good a friend. But that was a good line. I gave him an opening on the thing, but he was going to use that line in any event—I had said this on the campaign trail,
referencing Dukakis’s lack of experience, and mentioned the Kennedy thing. He was going to use that however he could.

Jones: One thing that occurred to me in reading about the campaign in your book, but elsewhere as well, was that you were really conducting, at minimum, two campaigns. One was a recovery from the initial period—negative press attention, as you put it—to regain your confidence, and the other was obviously associated with the overall campaign to win. Is that overstating that?

Quayle: No, but regaining confidence was really something that I had to settle myself and just focus on how I could establish myself, where I was, before all this nonsense started.

Jones: In a sense, I suppose, that might have been done in the introduction, what you then had—

Quayle: For the introduction, I would have gone through the reasons for the selection very clearly. Then I would be been able to thwart any of these nonsensical issues like the National Guard that were going to come up. That’s the way you do it.

Jones: Sure.

Quayle: Here’s what we want to present— the first of the post World War II generation, the Midwestern roots, the record I had in Congress. I had been tagged by many in the media as a rising star. I’d write the whole thing, very glowing. That’s part of the ledger and the other part—now what’s the criticism about me. Well, I’m too young. I’ve got to be able to answer that. Nixon was young, [Theodore] Roosevelt was young. The experience question— go back to Kennedy or whomever, particularly on national security, which was one of the most important things of any Vice Presidential candidate or Presidential candidate. For the whole qualifications question, just say, “Look, there are many people who are qualified to be Vice President or President. There are many of them in the Senate. I happened to pick one that is fully qualified, and here’s why.” And be able to answer the questions that are going to come up. But that was never done.

As a result, since I didn’t have that going for me, that part of it, I was in the position of having to come up with all this, and I had people around me who really didn’t particularly care.

Jones: That’s what I mean by the second campaign.

Quayle: Yes, sort of the second campaign. Yes. And in a way there was a second campaign.

Young: Almost a self-rescue operation of the campaign itself.

Quayle: As I said, halfway through the campaign, the press lost interest in us because the National Guard story went away. Some things started coming out about what I had done in the Senate, and I regained my voice on the campaign trail and answered the press’s questions. They’d turned to more serious things and I was able to talk about Dukakis and I kept the focus on Dukakis, where I wanted it.
Young: On the introduction side—maybe my memory is faulty—to me, one of the most conspicuous absences in the lack of an introduction was any reference to the considerable experience you’d had in both houses of Congress, that you were experienced, quite an experienced legislator. But, you know, it’s—

Quayle: It is really amazing because—although she ended up having other problems, financial problems with her husband, primarily, Geraldine Ferraro was what, a three-term member of Congress?

Young: Yes.

Quayle: I don’t remember all this discussion about experience or qualifications with her. Maybe they felt that Mondale was never a serious contender and they didn’t want to get into that. But, clearly, that’s one of the things that they could have done. They could have gone down the record I had in the House, the record I had in the Senate.

Young: Yes, but the perception of the inexperience—the young guy is inexperienced.

Quayle: Yes, the perception of youth clearly was there because not only was I young, I looked young.

Young: That, in part, would have offset—

Quayle: Just to have been ready—rather than with the Almanac of American Politics.

Jones: Or even have available Dick Fenno’s book, which was pretty good.

Quayle: They hadn’t even heard of Dick Fenno’s book. And Dick Fenno—I haven’t talked to him for a while, but he kept getting all these calls. He is such a purist about this stuff that he refused to take any press calls. I said, “Why didn’t you just answer?” He said, “I can’t inject myself into politics,” but then he said to me, “you really got hosed.” [laughter] I said, “Thanks a lot. You might have been able to help turn that thing around.”

He did it after the fact. He said, “I did it as a political scientist and I would have been viewed as being helpful to you and that was not my role. But I’ve never seen—”

Jones: We’re a little slow.

Quayle: You guys know Dick?

Jones: Oh, very well. Yes.

Quayle: I haven’t seen him for a few years. He’s not with—

Jones: He’s still with Rochester.
Quayle: He is still with Rochester? I’ll give him a call sometime.

Jones: Hasn’t retired.

Quayle: See what he thinks these days.

Jones: Back to the transition. Would you reflect a little bit on the special nature of the transition in this regard, that you were having a transition within the same party? Now that doesn’t occur that often. It was a same-party transition. With the new President having been a part of the previous Presidency, there was a special set of problems associated with that. Could you talk a little bit about that?

Quayle: The normal transition is that everybody resigns and you have a different administration coming in, a different party, so that’s easy.

In this particular case, it was difficult. My transition into the Vice Presidency was very, very easy. Bush had been Vice President. He knew exactly what I needed to do and that was fairly simple. His transition was a little bit more difficult, particularly in dealing with the Cabinet, if you will. He kept some of the Reagan people around. After we got going, some of the old Reagan people came to me and said, “The Reagan people are really getting shafted down in the bureaucracy.”

Young: Yes.

Quayle: So I said, “Give me some cases in point.” They gave me some and I remember taking them to the President.

There was no real concerted effort to get rid of Reagan people, but there was a concerted effort to put in people who had been loyal to George Bush. So it’s natural, but it’s hard.

Bob Novak, every time there was a Reaganite fired, he wrote some big column about it—“The purge of the Reaganites” and “how can this happen.” All the conservative columnists would come unglued and I’d have to go out and tell them, “Guys, this is a conservative administration. Give us a break, cut us some slack.”

George Bush, first of all, had a very high opinion of Ronald Reagan. They had a very close working relationship. He had a great deal of respect for him and he was not going to go out with any notion of settling the score, if you will, and get rid of the Reagan people. But he wanted to put in his own people, which is quite natural.

Jones: Did you do other things in regard to appointments and so forth? Were you consulted in the—

Quayle: We always had a meeting—during the transition, every day, with the President and his people, to go over the appointments.
I remember the one real leak that came out was with Tower. It got leaked all over the front pages how I was pushing Tower and telling these people that we ought to stick with Tower. I think they put it out there, the fact that I was for Tower, so that it might hurt Tower. But it didn’t. It actually did the opposite. It just solidified the support for Tower. There was a real division—it was almost half and half. As I said, I was very close to Tower and I was the most proactive Tower person and the others were opposed to him. Teeter was opposed to him. Baker was somewhat neutral. [Nicholas] Brady was opposed to him. I think most of the people were opposed to Tower. [Brent] Scowcroft was opposed to him. They were all opposed to Tower. So I said, “Wait a second.”

Anyway, the President went with Tower, who unfortunately was rejected by the Senate where he had served for 24 years. I think part of that was because, once the President made the decision, the President went against a lot of his advisors and they didn’t do a lot of the groundwork they should have done to get Tower through the Senate.

Riley: I want to ask—

Quayle: We really laid the foundation for Vice Presidents traveling the world. I think Nixon did a lot, Mondale less so, because Carter really wasn’t into that and he got bogged down in the economy. Gore did some foreign travel. Now Cheney is picking it up, too. Cheney’s Vice Presidency is much more normal now than it was in the first six months. He’s out, he’s on the campaign trail, he’s traveling overseas. That’s what you’re supposed to do.

Young: You referred in your book to speaking with former Vice Presidents Nixon and Mondale. You found them useful?

Quayle: Yes. Nixon had a couple of good insights. Nixon said, “Just remember, if you have a popular President, the press is going to go after the Vice President.” Of course, he always had a popular President and he was attacked. He was right. The press, just intuitively, they have to pick on one of you. And just watch. They’re either going to pick on the President or they’re going to pick on the Vice President. Also, to some extent, the First Lady, although most First Ladies get pretty much of a free ride unless something really goes haywire, although Nancy Reagan—she got criticism, which I think was really undeserved.

Nixon also, as far as foreign travel, said, “This is what you should do. This is your background. Make sure you do this as much as possible.” Within the first three weeks, I was taking that trip to Venezuela and El Salvador, just to say, “Okay, this is going to be a big part of my Vice Presidency.” Then we went to Australia, Japan.

Mondale was more pragmatic, if you will. He said, “Now make sure that you get all the briefings and you’re in the meetings,” because I think there were times when Carter would keep things from Mondale. I just had that sense. He said, “Get your people all plugged in, therefore you’re never really out of the loop.” I’d already had that conversation with George Bush and we already had that set up. So I told him that. He said, “That’s good.” From his perspective, that was the most important thing, for Mondale—“Make sure you’re in the loop. Make sure all of it comes to your office.”
Nixon really wasn’t into that. Nixon was more into what a Vice President should be doing as far as on the international stage, which said to me that Nixon and [Dwight] Eisenhower didn’t really work that closely together. Nixon was sort of his own Vice President and Mondale and Carter gave the appearance of working closely together and I think they did, with Mondale moving to the West Wing. But Mondale never had this international role—either Carter never gave it to him or Mondale never really assumed it. Mondale did say he spent a lot of time in Latin America and some of the Asian countries. But that was not his interest. He was very pragmatic and Nixon was looking at the big picture.

**Knott:** Did Nixon talk to you about how to deal with the press, other than just—

**Quayle:** I’m trying to think about that conversation. His advice about the press was, “Just ignore them.” That’s basically what he—

**Jones:** He had such good luck—

**Quayle:** He just said, “They’re not with us,” and I said, “Yes, really?” [laughter] He said, “You know, they are our enemy.” “Right, yes, I understand that.” “You’ve got to deal with them, but ignore them.” He was just going on, Nixon giving advice on the press. You can see it was rather amusing because he really had great, great contempt for those guys.

[BREAK]

**Knott:** Nixon and advice on the press.

**Young:** Nixon’s advice about the press. I want to be clear about this, I think it was probably Carter and Mondale that was the beginning of the new—the buildup of the Vice Presidency as a more significant position. I think it probably began there.

**Quayle:** Actually, that’s not necessarily the case. I think it really began when Nixon moved the office from the Senate to the Old Executive Office Building, because that was a more dramatic move than moving from the Old Executive Office Building to the West Wing. So I think I give—

**Young:** You date it from there?

**Quayle:** When Nixon decided to move his office from where the Vice Presidents had always been, up on Capitol Hill, down to the Old Executive Office Building, to me that was far more significant, as far as establishing the modern-day Vice Presidency. Now, it is not insignificant what Mondale did, and any future Vice President who loses the West Wing office is a fool, because in Washington power is proximity. But it is a longer a move from Capitol Hill to the Old Executive Office Building than it is from the Old Executive Office Building to the West Wing.

**Young:** I believe Carter and Mondale had some weekly lunches or something like that.

**Quayle:** I don’t think they had—
Young: I think it was fairly regular.

Quayle: They may have had regular lunches. It wasn’t institutionalized like Reagan and Bush and like ours. I don’t know what Gore and Clinton did. But we had a regular lunch meeting when we were in town. It was on the schedule and was not movable.

Young: Right.

Jones: And that was Bush’s doing or your—

Quayle: He did that with Reagan. It was a carryover from his Vice Presidency. With him having been Vice President, it was very helpful to me because he knew the constraints and the opportunities of the Vice Presidency. The constraints are obvious—it’s the President’s agenda and that’s it. It’s not your agenda, and loyalty is to be practiced and adhered to. It wasn’t difficult with me or with him. There are two requirements of being Vice President, that is to be prepared and be loyal.

Jones: Yes.

Quayle: That’s basically it. Be prepared—you’re in the loop, you’re in all the meetings—and you should be loyal.

Young: What did he mean by the Quayle model?

Quayle: Basically, when he talked about the Quayle model, he said, “You’ll set your own model.” Much of it, as far as I was concerned, would be a lot of foreign travel. I think in my particular situation, since I had been a member of the Senate, that I would be much more involved in the Senate and Senate activities. I had many Hill connections since I served there for 12 years.

Bush came back to the Vice Presidency after having been out for quite a while, even though he had a lot of friends there. He wasn’t steeped in the day-to-day minutia as I had been for the last 12 years on Capitol Hill. I had two specific duties in the Council on Competitiveness and the Space Council.

[John] Sununu was always the best. He would say, “Mr. President, they really want you in California at the Republican State Convention.” He’d say, “Boy, I’d really like to do it.” Sununu would say, “But if you can’t do it, I’m sure they would be happy to have the Vice President.” So I’d always get that.

I knew that was just a routine. Sununu would go through all of his things and he would say, “They really want you here in Chicago,” and if there was any hesitation, he said, “But I’m sure they’ll be glad to take the Vice President.” The Quayle model was foreign travel, Capitol Hill, politics, governance, and the President’s confidant.
Young: Before we get into some of the business part of your work in the Vice Presidency and your assignments and your initiatives, can we talk a little bit about the setting up of your own staff and how that coordinated or didn’t coordinate with the selection and setting up of the President’s own White House staff?

Quayle: His staff was determined in tandem to some extent with mine, although he had all the Cabinet appointments and the Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries. It was just an ongoing personnel situation, Chase Untermeyer and that whole crowd down there doing their thing.

In my case, the Vice President’s staff was fairly small. The first person I hired was David Beckwith, who was the press secretary. He was one of the few reporters who was at least considered to be somewhat favorable towards Bush. I met him and I thought it would be good to have somebody from the national media, if you will. He was with Time magazine. So I hired him. Then I made a decision on who was going to be my Chief of Staff. I talked to a bunch of people inside and outside. Tom Duesterberg, who had been my Chief of Staff on the Hill, really had more interest in doing something in commerce and trade, so we got him a slot with Bob Mosbacher as Assistant Secretary for Trade, which he really enjoyed. I initially selected Bob Guttman as my Chief of Staff and Bill Kristol as my domestic counsel.

Then, after six months, Bob Guttman said, “I really don’t enjoy this as much as I do writing legislation and getting into the nitty-gritty. I don’t like the politics of it.” I said, “Okay, fine.” So he transitioned out and I moved Kristol in and then we had Mark Albrecht running the Space Council, who was Pete Wilson’s defense person on the Hill. I had some other of my former staffers—

Young: That’s what we wanted to ask. Where did you—

Quayle: Almost half my staff came with me and half of them remained on the Hill. That’s the approximate number.

Young: Okay. Did you have people suggested to you? Did you work off of a list that Chase Untermeyer or John Sununu or others—

Quayle: Sununu was the one who actually suggested Kristol to me. He said he was considering Kristol for a position in the White House and he wasn’t going to get it, and he said, “You ought to take a look at him.” I’m trying to think. Not really any others, because as I said, there weren’t really that many positions to be filled.

Young: You had a Congressional person, didn’t you?

Quayle: I had Bill Gribbin, who was the Senate liaison—well, Congress I guess, but his office was in the Senate. He was Congressional liaison. I’d known Bill for a long period of time and he wanted the job. As a matter of fact, he worked in the Reagan White House at one time in, I think, Congressional affairs. He was a real insider. A good speechwriter. He was a former speechwriter for Jim Buckley. He actually did help me out with some of my speeches during the Vice Presidency.
As I said, it was probably about half my Senate staff. Almost all the ones—my secretary Cynthia Ferneau I kept, her assistant, Eva Grace, Les Novitsky came down with me. Greg Zoeller came down with me. Most of the top people on the Senate staff came with me, or, in Tom’s case, he became Assistant Secretary of—

**Young:** Where did you get Beckwith?

**Quayle:** I was looking for a press secretary, and the President said, “If you’re looking for a good press secretary, I think David Beckwith might be willing to leave.”

**Young:** And the national security person?

**Quayle:** My national security person I started off with—

**Young:** Cary [Carnes] Lord.

**Quayle:** Cary Lord, yes. I got him from Jeane Kirkpatrick.

**Young:** Yes.

**Quayle:** He was very good, very bright, but there was not a good interface with national security, with Scowcroft’s operation. I realized that, to be able to function in the area of foreign policy, national security, I really needed somebody whom Scowcroft had confidence in.

Scowcroft was the quintessential inside bureaucrat who really knew the game, and if he didn’t have confidence in somebody, he could cut him out real easily. Not that he would do it with the blessing of the President, but he could just cut you out. Since this was really my interest, I finally moved Carrie aside and brought in Karl Jackson, who had worked for Scowcroft, as my National Security Advisor. So in the last two-and-a-half years, he was my National Security Advisor. He had great interface with Brent and that whole team and it changed dramatically.

**Jones:** There are many parts of the book where you talk about Congress and working with Congress as Vice President, but I don’t have any sense from the book of proportionality—how much time for that versus all the other things, or of effort or effect. Would you just talk a little bit about your role there as Vice President supporting, fire fighting, whatever, on the Hill?

**Quayle:** A lot of it was in the category of just showing up. When I was in town and the Congress was in session, almost on a weekly basis I would be up there. I would go sometimes to the policy lunches of the Republicans in the Senate. On the House side, I would go and talk to their caucuses or go to the Chowder and Marching Society meeting. I was a member of Chowder and Marching.

I was, in a way, the eyes and the ears of the administration because members would tell me things that they wouldn’t necessarily tell the President’s Congressional folks. In the Senate, many times, they called and said, “It looks like it’s going to be a tie vote,” so I had to show up. I
was most involved in close vote situations like Tower, Clarence Thomas, Desert Storm, and budget matters.

John Sununu and I had had the good cop-bad cop routine going. He was really heavy with members of Congress, pretty tough, and I’d go in and I would say, “John’s right.” He was so direct that a lot of times they just didn’t like it. I would come in and try to get the same message across, but since I had been one of them, it was just a different type of style and acceptance.

Proportionality? It just depended on when I was in town. Sometimes, from the road, I had to make calls. I remember calling from Germany—it was the space shuttle vote. And, of course, members of Congress, when they got my call from Germany for a vote, they knew that it was important. Almost invariably, on some foreign trip I was making a call to Congress for some vote or something that was going on. It was more of an ordeal because when it was the White House operator, calling from Tokyo or calling from Bonn or whatever the case may be, they said, “This must be important.”

Jones: And this would be your guy calling or the White House Congressional Liaison’s Office more generally?

Quayle: Usually, the Congressional Relations Office would ask me to do this or—

Jones: Fred McClure?

Quayle: Fred McClure.

Young: Later Nick Calio?

Quayle: Yes, Nick. Or, more probably it would be Sununu’s office, because he wanted to make sure—he and I actually became very good friends and still are good friends. It was sort of that corner axis right there because our offices were together. He used me a lot of times almost to double-check the information he was getting. So more often than not, the request came from Sununu’s office. Either John or Andy Card would contact our people to make a phone call to double-check what was going on.

Knott: Was Sununu’s bad-cop routine effective—as someone who served up on the Hill yourself?

Quayle: First of all, it was just his personality, so you weren’t going to change it. It was just the way he dealt with the New Hampshire legislature and it was the way he dealt with Congress. He was quite effective until he ran into all that trouble about his plane, which was really leaked from the White House staff. Howard Baker was the one who set up that plane for the Chief of Staff, for the Chief of Staff to be in the loop at all times. You can argue one way or another whether he should have gone to New York or done whatever he did, but the fact of the matter is, having a plane was stated policy. The President had signed off on it. Everybody in the White House knew that it was policy, and yet they leaked this stuff to embarrass him and it eventually got him.
Young: Scowcroft had the same deal, didn’t he?

Quayle: Sure, absolutely. But, the press said, “Of course the National Security Advisor, but why the Chief of Staff?”

Howard Baker established that under Reagan. And George Shultz was the one who wanted it that way. Reagan had seven National Security Advisors.

Knott: You mentioned leaks in terms of destroying or damaging John’s Sununu’s career. Did you see a place for leaks in Washington? President Bush had a very strong attitude toward leaking. He wanted loyalty from his people and so forth. Did you share his view about leaks?

Quayle: Yes. Leaks could be very, very damaging. Now, if you had what I call controlled leaks, that was something different. If you had a particular reporter and you wanted to leak to him, he was more inclined to give your take on the thing rather than be too critical, because the next time you’d just give it to somebody else—and they were fighting for turf, or for stories.

But most leaks were not helpful. The press played this game so well. They just called someone up who should be in the know and started asking questions, and if the person clammed up, they said, “Obviously, you’re not in the loop on this.”

Not being in the loop was like being exiled or excommunicated from the church. “What do you mean I’m not in the loop?” “I’ll just call someone else.” And so when someone else called, they said, “Oh yes, I’m in the loop,” and they spilled their guts and all of a sudden it was out. The next time they called this guy back, he was a little more forthcoming and he’d try to give this information. The press just played these people off one another—“You’re just not important, why do I even call you. You don’t know.” It finally got to them and they ended up leaking the stuff, which was usually very detrimental.

But we did control leaks sometimes. Once in a while, we’d have a meeting and we’d sit there and say, “What do we want the story to be like tomorrow?” and sort of roll our eyes. We’d think if we could get it out to the right reporters and have them write this . . . So there were leaks that were intentional, but not very many. By and large, if you have a choice between no leaks and controlled leaks, you choose no leaks. But we didn’t have that luxury, so therefore we got far more than controlled leaks.

Young: Briefing on background, weren’t they sometimes helpful?

Quayle: What, briefing to the press?

Young: Speaking on background to a selected press person.

Quayle: Oh yes, but those weren’t leaks.

Young: No.
Quayle: Leaks were, “Here’s a piece of paper that you ought to really take a look at.” Or, “Did you know that so-and-so came down to the White House to meet with the President on this particular topic, and the next day the President is meeting on environmental things?” How did this get out? There were only three of us in that meeting. The thing was, the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] administrator went back, briefed his staff and they leaked it. I mean, that’s what went on. It used to drive the President nuts. Finally, we just gave up trying to figure out where these leaks came from.

The most recent one is this whole nuclear posture statement. But they gave it to Congress, so they surely knew this was going to come out. They should have. Now, that’s one where they should have had a controlled leak beforehand, just so they could have gotten their spin on it, rather than there being some cloak-and-dagger thing going on, and retargeting—it’s not retargeting. It’s just a whole new try at a new way of thinking with all these countries that are going to get the weapons of mass destruction. But those are the kinds of leaks that really cause a great deal of problems.

Young: Can I go back a little bit to Congress again? Some following up on Chuck’s question and your response—Tower, Clarence Thomas. How would you describe with the Thomas nomination what it was you were doing, as against what Boyden Gray and others were doing on these nominations?

Quayle: With Clarence Thomas, I worked directly with the Senators, especially with Senator [Alan] Dixon, who kept his word and voted for him. It probably cost him the election. Sam Nunn, Wyche Fowler, who was from Georgia, as was Thomas, and folks like that. Boyden, unless he had a personal relationship with a Senator, he didn’t necessarily go directly to the Senators—more to the staff. I always dealt with the Senators. You just got different information.

I remember a lot of times at meetings, they wanted to know what a Senator was thinking and they said, “Fred McClure met with so-and-so the other day and we think he’s this way.” I said, “Did anyone talk to the Senator?” “No.” It was all staff and that. If they wanted to find out, I just picked up the phone and called directly.

The same way with Tower. With Clarence, as well as with Tower, we had strategy sessions in the White House. We’d go through Senators who we were trying to convince to vote for us. I remember one time, sitting in Fred McClure’s office at lunch with Tower and Jim McGovern, who was his former Chief of Staff. Fred McClure was also a Tower employee at one time, and I said, “John, just give me five Democrat Senators that you’ve got this relationship with, and we’ll just lean on them.” He couldn’t give me any.

Young: Yes.

Quayle: He said, “There’s Glenn, but Glenn’s changed his mind.” I said, “That’s great.” “And [Ernest] Hollings said at one time that he was going to, but he’s fencing now.” So I said, “Who else are your relationships with?”
I was really very surprised. He’d been out of the Senate for a couple of years, but he didn’t have anybody that he could really walk across the aisle to and say, “I need your help.” It was rather surprising to me. I didn’t realize that. He was a tough guy, sort of a loner in the Senate. But this idea that he was a drunk was just ridiculous. I mean, did he drink? Yes, he drank. I always asked these guys, “Did you ever see John Tower drunk on the Senate floor? At a committee meeting? At any of the all-night sessions that we had in conference committee?” The answers were no, but they “had heard this.”

Sam Nunn got—he came out early against this for a lot of personal reasons and staff reasons and he got boxed. He came out against it way too soon and he got trapped, and then he leaned on his colleagues to vote against him and they deep-sixed him.

**Young:** But were you helping to prepare the candidate for the Senate, or did that job fall to others for the confirmation hearing?

**Quayle:** I would meet with them on the tough ones like Tower and Thomas. I would go through and—with Fred, I said, “Just make sure they get those courtesy calls as soon as possible.” I gave my insights on committee members. I’d go through and say, “Here’s what these guys are all about. Here are their soft points, here’s what they’ll respond to.” I just gave them that kind of information.

**Young:** Okay. I want to talk a bit about the budget battles and your role in the budget in 1990.

**Quayle:** Oh that was a disaster.

**Young:** You said in your book when you thought—the pre-plummet Summit—and also about your work on the Republicans who were “kicking the traces” and the—

**Quayle:** Yes. This thing first came out when I was in California and the person I was with had on CNN [Cable News Network]. This was like six o’clock in the morning, so it would have been nine o’clock back there. I was getting up, taking a shower. CNN said, “The President has agreed to raise taxes.” I said, “He’s not raising taxes. We just had that meeting yesterday.” It was on television.

I said, “Just give me the phone.” I called Sununu and I said, “What is all this stuff?” He said, “The President didn’t really say that he’s raising taxes.” I said, “Well you better walk him back, because the press out here is going out and telling everybody that he’s raising taxes.” He said, “Here’s what happened. Brady mentioned it and the President said that he would consider it.”

**Young:** Put it on the table.

**Quayle:** And the President said he would consider it if you put it on the table. Brady wanted to get the tax thing going because he thought the President was going to have to raise taxes. Brady was always of that opinion, that the President was going to have to raise taxes, even though he had made the pledge during the campaign of “no new taxes.”
Sununu said, “No, it’s just he said he’d consider it. It’s just a way to get the process moving.” I said, “For God’s sake, you need to get out there and just tell the press what it is.” He said, “Don’t worry, I’m going to have my own press conference.” This is Sununu. I said, “Let’s just say, John, hypothetically, that you want to give on taxes. You don’t give on it in June.” I said, “This thing’s not going to get resolved until October. You can’t negotiate this way.” He said, “We didn’t.”

So anyway, the whole thing got blown out—for the next three weeks, Sununu was saying, “No, no, it really wasn’t a tax.”

**Young:** This was before the deal was actually struck? This was when they were preparing—

**Quayle:** This was a meeting in June, I believe.

**Riley:** At the summit?

**Quayle:** No, this was before the summit. This was a Congressional meeting in the Cabinet Room with members of Congress. Brady is the one who said, “To get things going, if we put taxes on the table, would that help?” And [Thomas] Foley said, “If you put taxes on the table, we could probably get the process going.” The President said, “Well, I would consider that.” That was a big step, and the Democrats went out and said, “The President is going to consider tax increases. Since he is going to consider it, that would be part of the mix and obviously we will rejoin the process, or we’ll negotiate with him.”

Then they had the two summits out at Andrews Air Force Base. After the bill went down the first time—the Republicans killed it—I said, “Just let this dog die. It wasn’t good to begin with and just leave it alone. It’s dead.” “No, no, we can’t do that.” [Richard] Darman and Sununu, too, had to get this thing through, and Brady. I was opposed to it. Interestingly, Bob Teeter, for whatever reason, was opposed to it. He must have had some polling information. I was surprised. He was usually not on my side on these things.

The President was focused on the Persian Gulf War, as he should be. He was elsewhere. He just wanted to get this off his plate. He just wanted to get this resolved, get it over with, and he did. It passed and we lost Congressional seats. Then they used it against him in ’92.

**Young:** We know something about who was out there at Andrews Air Force Base on the administration side. Sununu was. But my impression was that Darman was the genius or whatever behind this.

**Quayle:** Yes, that’s true. Darman was there, too. He was at these meetings, too.

**Young:** Yes. He was very much for this, wasn’t he?

**Quayle:** Yes. Darman was, very much. Darman and Sununu were very much for it. Darman drove these things because he always knew more than anybody in the room. He had that kind of a mind. It was a classic example—even though you know more than everybody else does, it
doesn’t mean your judgment is all that good. It came down to what was the judgment. He could control these meetings because he just was smarter than everybody else, including Sununu, who was pretty smart in these things, but judgment’s another thing.

**Jones:** But who was there to talk about the probable effect on the 1990 elections?

**Quayle:** The ’90 elections?

**Jones:** It was a mid-term election. Typically, in any sort of—

**Quayle:** The President was convinced early on that he had to do this. He felt that this was ultimately right for the country and so he was just going to do it. He was just fixated on getting this thing done. Primarily, Darman was the engineer of the budget.

**Young:** But it is kind of extraordinary, just looking at it from the outside, that the speech for which Bush was probably best known at that point, the acceptance speech and the “read my lips” that was written all over the picture of George Bush in the minds of—and what is so surprising or interesting, from the outside, and I think it will be to a number of people way into the future as they try to figure out this administration, is the fact that once that possibly defensible stand from a fiscal standpoint was taken, there was so little apparent political work done in preparation for it, or so little public work done to explain why this was done. Can you cast any light on that?

A number of the people, for example, in the White House, have told us that they were surprised. They weren’t prepared for what was going to happen.

**Quayle:** They were or were not prepared?

**Young:** Were not.

**Quayle:** Were not prepared.

**Young:** These are people more concerned with the public and the communications side.

**Quayle:** You had a split in the White House on this. Since you had a split, I suppose those who should have been more prepared for this thought, *This isn’t really going to happen*, and, *Why would you want to prepare somebody, the Congress or the American people, for something you don’t want to have happen?* They didn’t want this to happen so they basically—and Sununu, for a while, was somewhat of that ilk, but then he got turned around and he figured that the President’s credibility was on the line. He had the war with Saddam [Hussein] approaching, so we just had to get this behind us. If we didn’t come to some agreement, it would have been a divided government without a budget.

The fact of the matter is, some of the people in the Bush administration, from the get-go, were talking about raising taxes. We had a meeting at the Vice President’s residence during the transition and I said, “What campaign were you guys in?” [laughter] Finally, I think Darman or someone said, “Look guys, it’s too early to make that recommendation.”
I just couldn’t believe what I was hearing. Baker was there, Darman and Brady. This was before the President came in. I told him later on, “You know your people are going to try to get you to raise taxes.” This was early on, before he even became President. He said, “I know. But I can’t do that.”

**Young:** Can’t do it now.

**Quayle:** Well, we didn’t pursue it when he said, “I can’t do that.” I just assumed—my interpretation of that was, “I won’t do it.” But as time went on, the Democrats became much more difficult to deal with. You can make the case that this was the only way to break the logjam and that was their demand, but that’s the way you’ve got to finesse it.

I remember Reagan went back on one of his pledges not to raise taxes and he tapped the microphone and said, “You can hear the cement cracking around my feet,” because he had been in cement against raising taxes. It was portrayed that this was the only way he could do it. He had to give in to their demands. That’s the way to do it. You don’t concede this thing in June.

**Jones:** Sure.

**Quayle:** Again, the administration was so divided on this issue that the leakers, the spinners, those who wanted it played up— “Yes, the President is going to consider it. Yes, it is the right thing to do. Yes, he did make this pledge, but for the sake of the country he’s got to just do what’s right” —that was their viewpoint.

**Young:** I wonder what the calculation was about how this would impact the Republican Party and the right hand of the party. Because this is something that’s got to get through Congress and I guess you can say that while there were so many people representing—Newt Gingrich was at these meetings, wasn’t he, out at Andrews?

**Quayle:** At Andrews, yes.

**Young:** It fell flat on its face, on both sides—

**Quayle:** Yes, it went down. Newt in ’90 had a—and I told the President this—he had a particularly tough race in Georgia in 1990. I forget what happened, whether he was redistricted or what, but I knew that he was having a really tough race. I said, “Look, you have to realize that you might have to let Newt just vote against this thing because he’s got a race down there. Just let him vote, don’t even work on him.” I remember telling Sununu that. Sununu said, “He has to vote for it.” I said, “No, he doesn’t have to and he probably won’t. But don’t lose any sleep over it.”

So the President knew that this was not a political plus for him, but he was convinced that it was right. That’s one of the things with this President, compared to others. Once he viewed it as right, he didn’t really care that much about the politics.
Riley: I wonder if you would comment generally, then, on his communications team and the administration’s ability to take a case public. I picked out when you made the comment about Reagan—I underlined it in your book—”Reagan had always been able to make it seem as if he had been left with no other choice but raising taxes,” which suggests that there was a better kind of communications—

Quayle: It would have been a better strategy. When I left that meeting, the pre-meeting with the Cabinet, it was Friday afternoon—no, I don’t know if it was a Monday afternoon or Tuesday afternoon. I was going to California that night. We had a meeting at four o’clock.

Young: This was the June.

Quayle: This was June and Darman was there, Brady was there, Sununu was there, I was there. That’s it. It was a fairly small meeting. We spent about an hour going over this stuff. I said, “Are we going to—we’re not going to raise taxes, are we? We’re not going to put—” I don’t know if I used the words “put taxes on the table” or what—and everybody said, “No, we’re not going to do that. We’re just going to listen to these guys.” I said, “Okay, that’s fine. That’s all the Democrats want. We cannot talk about this.”

That’s why I was just floored. What happened, according to Sununu and Darman and the President, was that they were going around and Brady—who was just trying to get the process moving, because that’s what you have to do sometimes—he said, “What if we put taxes on the table? Can we get you guys back to the bargaining table, can we talk?”

Foley very quickly said—like this, the cat that swallowed the canary— “If you want to put taxes on the table, we’d be obligated. It would be irresponsible for us not to consider that.” So he took it, went out there, and said, “The President’s put taxes on the table, very courageous of him. Of course, he knows he’s got to do this and we’re willing to sit down and talk as long as taxes are on, as long as we can basically talk about raising taxes.”

That’s when I said, “God Almighty. Even if you want to do that at the end of the process, you don’t do it in June. You don’t do it now.” I said, “They have to talk. You realize Congress has to pass appropriation bills. Congress has to pass budgets. We don’t.” We sign them. They’ve got to pass them. They could never quite get that.

Clinton was quite good at that, vetoing things and putting it back on Congress—”Congress is shutting down government.” Wait a second. The President shuts down the government when he vetoes the appropriation bill. “It’s the Congress”—but in the budget, the Congress has got to pass these things, otherwise the government doesn’t go on. Now we can veto, then it goes back to Congress. Yes. Reagan got blamed for shutting down the government as President, and Republicans in Congress get blamed for shutting down the government. Now, that doesn’t work. It is either one or the other, it can’t be—

Jones: I was at Brookings at the time and I knew you were in trouble when some of the Brookings folks were saying, “My, but the President is a real statesman.” [laughter]
Quayle: Very courageous. You go back to communications. We just had this split going on, so people thought, *Well, it’s probably not going to happen and the President didn’t really put taxes on the table*—though he really did put taxes on the table. Even in his own mind, he was thinking, *I had to get the process going. That doesn’t mean I’m going to agree to it.* I said, “Fine, but that’s not what Congress thinks, and that’s clearly not what the American people think. They’re going to think that you’ve already capitulated on the campaign promise.”

Riley: And the communications people, evidently, were not in the loop on this. The names that you mentioned there didn’t include anybody who would have had responsibility for polling or press or—

Quayle: [Marlin] Fitzwater was around. Fitzwater knew what was going on. I think Marlin realized it was going to be a political hit, but I think he accepted the fact that we had to do it. I think that was his position. He knew what was going on. But the strategy was faulty when they put it on the table in June.

Knott: Secretary Brady blurted this out without anyone else being aware that this was coming?

Quayle: I wasn’t at the meeting. I was in California. But he was at that pre-meeting. I asked Nick about it and he said, “It was just to get the process going. You can argue either side on this tax thing, but we just had to somehow get it going.” He said, “How can you not have taxes on the table when you talk about a budget? We don’t have to accept it. I just put it out there to get them going.” I can see his point of view. If everybody was in line, you could sit there in agreement the day before, saying, “Okay, you can put taxes on the table, but we’re still opposed to it. We can just sit down and talk, but we’re opposed to it.” That would draw the line.

The Democrats in that case probably wouldn’t have come back and negotiated, but you never know. The spin would have been, “Yes, we’re putting it on the table but we’re opposed to it, so if you guys want to talk about it, it’s on the table, fine, but we’re still opposed to it.” Foley would probably have said, “You can’t put something on the table and say you’re opposed to it.” Of course you can.

In June, it wasn’t even the Persian Gulf—let’s see, the Persian Gulf War was not until January 1991. He looked at this thing and said, “Just get me out of this. Get this off my desk.”

Young: As far as the longer-term political fallout, I’ve heard it said that this would be forgotten, or it would die down by the time—what do you think of that theory?

Quayle: That was part of it. I don’t think most of us thought it would be a huge political liability. On the other hand, most of us thought that he wouldn’t have a real serious reelection effort, either. Reagan didn’t have one. Why would George Bush have one?

Knott: Yes.

Quayle: That was sort of the feeling. Who’s going to run against him? We were looking at the field and Clinton’s name was there and he was clearly the one that Sununu—and I picked out.
But he was not perceived as being—this was before Gennifer Flowers and all the other stuff—he was not perceived as being a real threat. He would probably run this time to position himself for a future run, but he would probably be the one. You had other people—Jesse Jackson. The field was really pretty anemic. It turned out to be Clinton and [Jerry] Brown.

**Riley:** When you came back to Washington, part of your responsibilities included trying to staunch the hemorrhage?

**Quayle:** Sununu and I together, I think we went up and had a meeting and said, “Look, we’ve got to negotiate. We’re not saying we’re going to go along with a tax increase.” I sat there talking to my folks before we actually came to an agreement. I said, “So it’s on the table, big deal. It’s just talk. I’m not convinced he’s going to accept any kind of a tax increase.” “Will he veto it?” I said, “Let’s see what it is. I can’t tell you what he’s going to do.”

It was June, July. And then in August, of course, Saddam came into the picture. Congress took a break and we came back in September and that’s when you had Andrews one, and then Andrews two. We were out there because the first one, the first budget, failed.

**Young:** But after Andrews, when the package was put together, then you went up to try to staunch?

**Quayle:** I went up to try to sell it the first time and was unsuccessful. I remember they were all there and asking questions and all of this.

**Young:** They were pretty rough on the President, weren’t they—some of them?

**Quayle:** Oh yes. They said it was a betrayal, and “don’t you know we’re going to lose seats?”

**Young:** And Paul Weyrich.

**Quayle:** Oh yes.

**Knott:** Ed Rollins.

**Young:** Ed Rollins was very critical of the President.

**Quayle:** Yes, they all—

**Young:** And there wasn’t much publicity for the White House.

**Quayle:** At that time, once the deal was agreed to, they had to sell it. That’s when they half-heartedly tried to sell this thing, but it failed because the Republicans deep-sixed it. Then they went back again to Andrews and came up with almost a worse package, because it wasn’t as tough on spending cuts, which the President was for.
That’s how he got sold on this. He basically got sold that this was the most dramatic, the largest spending-restraint budget in history. I said, “Tell him what years these spending cuts really take place.” “They’re the so-called out years because there wasn’t much cut in the current year.” I said, “The out years are meaningless. They don’t mean anything.” “Yes they do. We’ve got caps here, we’ve got this,” said Darman.

I said, “We finally violated the Gramm-Rudman [Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Deficit Reduction Act]. So, if Gramm-Rudman doesn’t stick, how is this going to stick?” It doesn’t stick. Future Congresses can always undo it. It’s just the current year that counts. But that was the big pitch—“most significant, most dramatic spending-restraint budget ever.”

So, there you go.

**Jones:** Could you shift forward some now to talk about following the Gulf War? You talk about drift on the domestic side following the Gulf War, and lots of people speculated about seeking to capitalize on the President’s popularity during the war domestically. Could you talk some about it?

**Quayle:** Actually, this was one time when I thought Darman had it about right, when he suggested that we have a domestic Desert Storm—take advantage of the President’s popularity, delve right into budget restraint, regulatory reform, education. I was promoting some sort of a market-oriented health care program because I thought it would be a good time to deal with the health care issue, which was really bubbling to the surface. I could see, just talking to people, that health care costs had just been going through the roof.

Basically, we talked about it and it was right after Desert Storm. There was a sense that, “Okay, I guess I have to refocus on the domestic agenda,” but at just about that time we also had the Berlin Wall coming down, we had the Soviet Union coming unhinged. We had apartheid that we were dealing with in South Africa.

Clearly, his priorities were not necessarily domestic. His focus was domestic, but his primary concern, his primary achievements were in foreign policy. That’s where his experiences were and that’s where he wanted to spend his time.

He was a big believer in the market, that you just leave things alone and the markets take care of it. The “invisible hand” that Adam Smith wrote about was very much alive and well in the Oval Office in those days. It was discussed, but in a way, this domestic Desert Storm was almost too comprehensive to get our arms around. It was going to take a lot of work with the Cabinet, and could we really achieve something? What could we really achieve?

First of all, we could set the debate—we could achieve something. You’re never going to get everything from Congress, but it would give us an agenda. The Democrats were in control of the Congress and we had an election coming up, and obviously they were going to come in for their share of blame.
He never really got into that, which Clinton was very effective in doing in 1996. For one, the President didn’t think it was good governance to always be pounding the Congress, even though they wouldn’t give him what he wanted. Secondly, he instinctively just didn’t like that part of it, that blaming someone else. He said, “I’m the President and these things are all good, but I know I can’t get them passed and we can’t just blame everything on the Democrats. Maybe some of our guys will pick this up on the Hill and do it, and I’ll be glad to sign it.” He believed he had more important things to do.

Unfortunately, he went from a 90 percent approval rating to—on election day—37 percent, which is a rather dramatic decline. The whole communication, that’s where the thing really failed during the campaign, just to communicate what George Bush had done for the American people and, more importantly, what he would do for them in the future.

**Jones:** Another way to say drift, I suppose, was that you lost an opportunity for identity, some kind of identity of record on the domestic side that was coherent.

**Quayle:** Even if we couldn’t get it through—and we probably couldn’t—at least we would be standing for something. We’d be fighting for something, and here was our agenda that we could take to the American people. Even though we couldn’t get it through, we could blame the Democrats. As I said, intuitively, he didn’t like that. That was not his makeup. I would have. That’s the way to fight these things. But he was much more conciliatory, much more “Let’s try to work these things out without all the partisan squabbling.” It takes partisan squabbling to get these things worked out, to get people’s attention, and he just let it go.

**Jones:** Was there any discussion that you recall, during the Gulf War but also immediately after, that there was some poll evidence that even though his popularity, his job approval was in the high 80s, the job approval on the economy at that time was in the high 30s, low 40s? It would seem, then, that if the economy came to be the principal, salient issue over the Gulf War, with its ending, that there was very strong evidence that one ought to be really doing the Darman kind of thing.

**Quayle:** Yes. The other thing I think is worth mentioning on this, because with hindsight it’s quite obvious—and even at the time it was somewhat obvious—we had quite a bit of turmoil in the White House because Sununu had left. I think he left in December of ’91.

**Young:** We have the date.

**Quayle:** When did Sununu leave?

**Riley:** I think in late ’91, wasn’t it?

**Knott:** Late ’91.

**Quayle:** So it was late ’91 when Sununu left. It wasn’t ’90. We were starting to have some turmoil in the White House, but during that time Sununu was still very much in control. He started to lose it in the fall of ’91.
Riley: And he wasn’t in favor of the development of a domestic agenda, is that correct?

Quayle: I think that’s partially true. It was Darman’s idea. They discussed it. It just never materialized, because all these other important issues would start breaking, and that’s what he would focus on. The domestic agenda was never really something that he focused on.

He was basically, in a way, Nixonian, because Nixon didn’t really care that much about the economy. He thought it would take care of itself. But Nixon always had some program out there and it was usually very moderate, or much more centrist than Bush. He had that family assistance plan that came up, and he had price controls. He was always fiddling around on the domestic side. He didn’t really care that much about it, but he always felt he had to tinker with it.

George Bush was not a tinkerer. I remember the Maternity Leave Bill, in which there was going to be mandated benefits—60 days, I think, of maternity leave. He said, “Government shouldn’t be doing this.” I said, “You’re right, the government shouldn’t, but you’re going to have to sign this.” “This is bad governance.” I said, “It’s not going to make that big a deal and it’s just one of those things you can’t get over. I mean, it’s not fightable.”

That’s how pure he was when it came to the market. He really believed in it. He didn’t feel that there was a huge role for government and that was a big part of it. He just felt that the less the government did, the better. He really got that a little bit from Reagan, who was so successful. Reagan cut taxes and that was about it.

Remember after the ’84 election? They kept saying, “You need to come up with something. You have to have some agenda.” They finally backed into it. [Robert] Packwood basically wrote the legislation on that whole tax simplification program. “You’ve got to do something. You’ve got to give something.” That’s when Reagan came up with that huge Social Security and Medicare deal, which we ended up repealing. I forget why. It added cost to the program—medical costs, for catastrophic health insurance. And then we ended up turning around and repealing it. But Reagan said, “The economy—you don’t have to do anything. It will take care of itself.”

Riley: Looking at the White House from the outside, some people would say that some of this would naturally turn up from certain shops. I mean, in Nixon’s case, there were fairly strong domestic interests represented in the White House. Roger Porter’s name hasn’t come up yet, and if you were looking at a place where you might theoretically see domestic policy cranked out, that would be it. Was he just not—

Quayle: The dominant figures were Darman and Sununu. They ran the show. They had the intellect, they had the personality. Nobody else really had much of a voice.

Young: Darman had the budget, too.

Quayle: Yes, he was in on all the meetings. I remember Jim Pinkerton came up with some new paradigm, and Darman started mocking it, “Spare a dime” type thing. Those two really ran it.
The point I was getting around to—later on, when Skinner came in, there was just a total implosion because of Darman. Skinner was trying to contain Darman or control Darman.

Sununu, at first, clashed with Darman. Then he became an ally of his in most things, which was a little bit surprising. I think it was because Darman was just so good at the internal debate that he just tended to dominate all these meetings. But it was strictly—we need not even show up. Whatever Sununu and Darman decided—and the two of them met a lot—that was it.

**Riley:** Could you elaborate a little more on that relationship? Because it does seem peculiar, two really strong-willed people, you would—

**Quayle:** Yes. I think it is peculiar. But you have to understand that the Chief of Staff is there to serve the President’s best interests. The budget director is there to come up with budgets and also to serve the President’s best interests, but get budgets through.

Sununu was a Governor and he was elected. Darman was not. But Darman was really a Washington insider. Sununu never was. Sununu, time and time again, would see that Darman had the angle on where to go get somebody, and both of them were interested in getting people. They were good at it. When the two of them teamed up, they were very, very effective. I was always trying to figure out who really had the upper hand in these budget battles, and I always felt that Darman did. At first, Sununu resisted it, but then he more or less went along with him.

I think it was because both Darman and Sununu had just, not contempt, but disdain for a lot of the other White House staff. They just felt they were so much above the other people. I remember asking them once, “Do you guys ever listen to these others?” They ran the show. That 7:30 meeting Sununu had—I mean, they might as well not even have had it.

I am actually very good friends with John and good friends with Darman, as well, but they did not suffer fools gladly. People who couldn’t keep up with them, they just didn’t want to have anything to do with them. It was just part of their personalities.

**Jones:** Was their power—just an observation on your part—related to the President’s lesser interest in the domestic area? If a President, say, like Clinton, who was very interested in domestic—it would have been a different—

**Quayle:** Yes. They had power in the White House just because of their strong personalities and their keen intellect. They just dominated when they wanted to.

The President’s priorities, being more in foreign policy, took away some power of theirs because they didn’t really have his ear all that much. It was harder to get in to have these domestic agenda meetings because he was really consumed with other things—on the phone with [Mikhail] Gorbachev and later [Boris] Yeltsin, and of course [Helmut] Kohl and [Margaret] Thatcher were always calling him on something, and Saddam and Noriega. There was a lot that happened in those four years, an incredible amount that happened. So even though they were powerful within the White House bureaucracy, they were never terribly—particularly Darman,
who was not able to convince the President to go along with this so-called domestic agenda, domestic Desert Storm. In that way, they didn’t really have the real power.

**Jones:** Outside, in a sense. That is, within the White House, but not inside.

**Quayle:** Just because there was never that domestic agenda submitted to the Congress. If you look back, their victory—and it was really a Pyrrhic victory—was the budget of ’90. What else are you going to look to? That’s really about it. But if you look at successes in foreign policy, Bush was just incredible.

**Riley:** Do you recall any instances where they were trying to have their views felt in the foreign policy area, or did they understand well enough that there was a sort of wall there, that those experts—

**Quayle:** There was a little bit of a wall, but in the National Security Council meetings they would speak up, and of course Sununu had access to the President all the time. He had access to the briefings. He had as much access to the President as I did. Darman didn’t. He was across the way in the OEOB [Old Executive Office Building]. Sununu knew everything that was going on. But John knew that the President paid attention to Brent on national security matters and Brent knew how to work the bureaucracy, so Sununu, to his credit, realized that there was no use in tangling with Scowcroft because he wasn’t going to prevail. But John would contribute, particularly during Desert Storm, because he was Lebanese and he always had a little different viewpoint than some in the administration. He seemed to have a little closer connection with King Fahd and Prince Abdullah and folks like them, whom he had known just because of his Lebanese ancestry.

**Young:** He must have given Jim Baker offense.

**Quayle:** What? Oh, Sununu? Yes. They clashed some, but not as much—Kemp was the one who drove Baker nuts.

**Young: [Laughing]** We’ve heard—

**Quayle:** I’m sure you’re aware of that.

**Riley:** But please elaborate.

**Young:** There was a report somewhere that, after some Cabinet meeting, Kemp gave everybody a lesson or something?

**Quayle:** It was on his Israeli policy—Israeli housing. He was Secretary of Housing, so he said he was Secretary of Housing for Israel, too, and he works it well. [laughter] Pretty interesting.

[BREAK]
Quayle: ... It’s just the idea that every day you’re going to have a new challenge, a new opportunity. Public life is very fulfilling. Someone asked me one time, “Is it fun being Vice President?” I wouldn’t say it was fun but it was very rewarding, because there were a lot of things that weren’t fun. It was hard work, there was a lot of pressure, a lot of scrutiny, a lot of things that went on that I look back on and say, “Could I have done this thing a little bit differently?” I didn’t have time to go back and second-guess myself. But I think, every day, the public service, particularly the Vice Presidency, was very fulfilling. George Bush made it easy.

Young: How was that?

Quayle: Part of it was that he was a former Vice President himself. He knew that the office was quite awkward, quite constraining, yet it was very important. He made sure that we were in the loop, and in the information flow on everything. He encouraged dissent when it was appropriate. He obviously expected loyalty, which I gave to him completely. His personality was one of—he’s a very comfortable person, he’s easy to get along with, particularly having served as Reagan’s Vice President. He knew some of the pitfalls and some of the pounding you take from the press. I wrote in Standing Firm that one of the times I was getting hit as Vice President, he said, “Don’t worry about it. I got a whole drawerful of bad press when I was Vice President. It goes with the territory.”

Jones: But it was as much personality, probably, as his having been Vice President, because if you think of Nixon and [Spiro] Agnew or Johnson and Humphrey, both of whom had served as Vice President, I don’t think you would have gotten the same response.

Quayle: No, that’s true. It was the personality of George Bush, because Johnson clearly cut out Humphrey.

As a matter of fact, the Vice Presidential desk that was signed by every Vice President since [Harry] Truman was not signed by Humphrey because Johnson kept the desk. He said he liked the desk and he took it, so Humphrey didn’t sign it. I asked the Vice Presidential archivist, “Where’s Humphrey’s signature?” He told me the story.

And Nixon and Agnew had an on-again, off-again relationship. When Nixon wanted to use Agnew, he’d go out there and use him—he was a good friend. When he didn’t want to use him, he wouldn’t. They didn’t have very much of a relationship. I think a lot of it was—and you’re right—that they had been Vice Presidents, but Johnson was so power-centric and control-centric and he really didn’t trust people. Of course, Nixon didn’t trust people either that much, but Johnson cut out Humphrey. They really didn’t get along that well.

Young: Kennedy didn’t give him too much of a free hand, either.

Quayle: Correct.

Young: In fact, he gave him the Space Council, didn’t he?

Quayle: I guess he did, yes. Johnson had the Space Council, coming from Houston.
Young: Let me ask the other side of the question. What did you like least?

Quayle: I suppose the pressure on the family. I knew it was hard on the kids. I knew it was hard on Marilyn, to some extent, although she enjoyed a lot of it. She did a lot of work in disaster relief, disaster preparedness. She traveled to Bangladesh, Russia, and other places. She had a very interesting interview with Raisa Gorbachev during the difficult times of the Gorbachevs. As a matter of fact, I remember the President showing me the overnight traffic that he had gotten from—I think it was Lawrence Eagleburger or Baker, maybe it was the Ambassador from Moscow at that time—reporting on Marilyn’s visit with Raisa. It was the first indication we had that the Gorbachevs were in trouble, because of Raisa confessing to Marilyn.

Young: You mentioned that in the book.

Quayle: They had about a three-hour conversation. So, it was stressful on the family side and that’s the part I had to adjust to.

Jones: Just following up on that, would your experience suggest to you, or did you think about how you might have used a Vice President?

Quayle: I have thought about that and I would probably do it very similarly. What you want is to have a Vice President who will do a lot of things that you can’t do, but in your capacity. You want him to be able to go to a lot of the political events that you don’t want to as President. You want him to be able to go up to Capitol Hill as much as possible, because it’s so important to have good relations up there. You want someone who is going to be able to travel around the world, who will go to places that the Secretary of State might not be able to get to, that you might not be able to get to.

You pick up interesting information and insights by having your Vice President out there. It’s not the President but it is the Vice President, the number two person in the United States, and you want somebody who you can feel comfortable working with on a day-to-day basis, because you’re with him a lot. If you don’t have that comfort level, it makes it difficult because you’re stuck—you’re attached at the hip.

I think that comfort level is very important, particularly in a modern-day Vice Presidency, where you’re so close. You’re in the West Wing and your office is 40 feet from the Oval Office, so you have to feel fairly good about the person.

Jones: Inevitably, too, associated with all those functions, is the fact that this is the person who is going to speak in your name. So that comfort level comes to be important, and that suggests also a real need to be able to communicate clearly to the Vice President, to have an interchange that is honest and clear. Because he—or she, someday—will always inevitably be looked upon as speaking for the administration, for the President.

Quayle: Also, you can take messages to the President that Cabinet members might not want to bring up directly. I became a conduit for that, periodically. Someone would come in, whether it
was Nick Brady or even Bill Reilly. Darman, every once in a while, would stop by and say, “I wish you’d bring this up to the President. I’ve tried, but I wish you’d bring it up.”

People always used that because on the schedule they knew when I was having lunch with him. Invariably, I’d get some calls, “Would you mention this,” and either they had mentioned it and failed, didn’t want to mention it, or didn’t have access to the President. One of those three things was the reason that they were calling me to be their carrier, if you will, for their particular pet project or the issue of the day.

Young: Did you discourage the requests for that? Were you at all a filter or just a transmission belt?

Quayle: I didn’t do either. I didn’t encourage it or discourage it. I always got back to them and I would always preface my remarks to him. I said, “I just want to tell you that Secretary Brady stopped by this morning. He’s really concerned with the turf battle that is going on between State and Treasury on various issues”—which happened all the time. They were two good friends of his. To try to adjudicate that, it was not in his nature to interfere—which I think is a prerogative of the President, not to interfere. Sometimes you have to, but when you have two good friends, he always said, “You guys work it out yourselves.”

So, they’d come in and say, “This is what I think.” I didn’t really encourage it. I never called someone beforehand to say, “Hey, I’m going in to have lunch with the President. What do you want me to say, or you have any messages?” They knew. Even Sununu sometimes said, “Emphasize this at your lunch.” It was basically something that we’d probably talked about in the morning.

Young: Would you get any of the complaints from or dissatisfaction expressed about the White House staff itself? Sununu or Darman? Was that from within the White House or from the Cabinet people?

Quayle: Oh yes. As Vice President, I got it from all directions. They all felt comfortable coming to talk to me, particularly when they had a viewpoint, because they knew of the relationship I had with the President. If they could win me over, they hoped in turn that I was going to try to persuade the President. They would come by and emphasize this or that— “Why don’t you see if you can get him to do this?”—these types of things. When it came to personnel, if they complained of somebody, they always asked, “Do you think the President knows this?” That was sort of the way. I would say, “I think he knows what’s going on.”

In the closing months, when Sununu was Chief of Staff—and then when Skinner took over—there was turmoil almost from day one. I was very good friends with Sam. As a matter of fact, I was the one who recommended Sam. There was concern about whether Sam would have support from the conservatives and I said, “I think I can take care of that.” The conservatives were happy with Skinner because he was sort of non-ideological. I said, “Look, the Chief of Staff is to sit there and carry messages. He’s not going to weigh that heavily, particularly somebody coming in new,” but it just didn’t work out as I had hoped.
Young: Let’s talk about that a little later, because it’s part of the story of the final months or the final year of the Presidency. When I read in your book about the Space Council and about the Competitiveness Council, it seemed to me that you were assuming here a kind of chief executive role for that area, that you were an executive who was doing the hands-on work of giving direction to these organizations. Is that a fair—

Quayle: What I had there was real line-item authority—

Young: Yes.

Quayle: —and decision-making authority, particularly with the Space Council, which negotiated with Gorbachev directly for the hookup of the Russian space station with one of our orbiters. In the Space Council, we brought NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] together with the Department of Defense, with Commerce, with OMB [Office of Management and Budget]—they were the chief people. There was a science advisor and we had some people who were part of it but not major players.

NASA, in the beginning, was always very skeptical of me because I came from the defense community and they thought that I would not be supportive. Of course, we had to get rid of [Richard] Truly because he just wasn’t doing the job, which became quite messy. Once we put Dan Golden in there, who was my guy, he took over and calmed the fears of the bureaucrats who thought they didn’t have a voice, as far as NASA was concerned. It was usually turf battles, money battles, things like that, which they didn’t think I had the priority to finance. I said, “I really do.” I think space is very important, it’s the next frontier to be pioneered, but there was always that concern.

With the Competitiveness Council, I also had line-item authority. Congress refused to confirm the Assistant Secretary of Regulatory Affairs for OMB, which normally does a lot of this stuff. They didn’t do it so I did it all, and it was really quite gratifying. I think the House of Representatives finally passed a bill that abolished the Competitiveness Council, which they didn’t have any authority to do, but they put it in one of their bills. They didn’t have any authority to do this. The Office of the Vice President was doing it. It was my staff. There was nothing statutory, it was all executive order. So I’m not sure if it passed the Senate. I guess they said, “No funds could be appropriated.” That’s the way it read. It was ridiculous.

It was one of those things in the Competitiveness Council—we had a lot of disagreements, particularly with the EPA, sometimes with Agriculture. The Cabinet Secretary always had the right to take it to the President, but anytime it was going to go to the President, I made sure that I was going to prevail. I only had two—I think Reilly did it twice and then finally gave up—Bill Reilly, with the EPA. There was one other guy, but I think he backed off in the end. He was going to take it to the President. I said, “That’s your prerogative. You can do that.” But they knew they weren’t going to win because it had been tried before.

Young: What would have been the issue in these cases, that they were resistant?
Quayle: With Reilly, it was wetlands. With Agriculture, I forget what it was. It was some subsidy which we weren’t going to support, I think. I said, “Go ahead,” but they didn’t take me up on that. They could do it—they were Cabinet. Reilly took it to the President a couple of times but he never prevailed, because I could always go to the President and talk to him before they came in. I said, “Here’s the issue. Here’s my position and here’s his position,” and he said, “You’re right.”

Now, if he had once said I was wrong, guess what? I went back to the Cabinet Secretary and worked that out. I wasn’t ever going to lose. But they couldn’t figure that out. I mean, why would I let some Cabinet Secretary go see the President when I knew I was going to lose? Reilly finally did figure it out. He saw that it was worthless appealing it because he knew that I would be in there working it out. If I wasn’t going to get my way, then I worked it out with him.

Riley: How did matters routinely get on the agenda of the Council? Can you take a couple of examples or one example?

Quayle: We did a big thing on biotechnology and reducing regulations within the various departments. I had an executive director, David McIntosh, who later ran for Congress back in Indiana. He was responsible for running the Competitiveness Council. It was a little take-off, somewhat, on what George Bush did on regulatory reform or whatever he did for Reagan, but we expanded it greatly and said, “Not just regulations, we want the whole thing that impacts competitiveness.”

We did a lot of work on the Disabilities Act, trying to figure out the costs associated with it. Same way with the environmental legislation that was passed—what was the economic impact, what could we do to keep it at $25 billion—I think that was what we were trying to come up with.

With the FDA [Food and Drug Administration], one of the big issues there was trying to speed up the drug approval process. We sort of flipped it on the FDA because they were always talking about how you couldn’t put these drugs out because they were going to kill people. We said, “Okay, if you delay putting out a safe drug by five years, how many people are you killing?” And they said, “What do you mean?” I said, “You just approved this drug, which took you 15 years. How many lives were lost, say, between 10 years and 15 years because you delayed it?” And they just went nuts. They said, “We can’t.” I said, “Sure you can. How many people died a year by not having this thing?” They’d never heard a question like that.

Jones: Retrospective impact, sort of.

Quayle: That’s what I said. I said, “You’re out there making all these arguments that hasty approval of drugs kills people. Okay, fine. I want to know, by procrastinating, how many people lose their lives because you don’t approve a drug in a reasonable period of time—and I think 10 years is reasonable, not 15. So how many people died between the 10-year period and the 15-year period of this disease that is now treatable by this drug?” You see how that went over—not very well.
Riley: Was your staff proactively searching for issues, or were matters appealed to you from people in the business community? Or, were there dissenters within the various agencies who felt that their regulations hadn’t been properly issued who would bring appeals to you?

Quayle: Some of it was that. Basically, it was just basic things that the government has to do, like the FDA approval process. Why does it take these drugs that treat life-threatening diseases so long to be approved? That’s just an overall macro issue. It has nothing to do with any particular business, although it is the drug sector, but no specific business.

The wetlands policy and the environmental regulation—these are laws that just go through the meat grinder every day. Biotech was something that was new and we wanted to see what we could do to get the growth of that industry off the ground. We had, contrary to popular belief, a very small staff. I think we had seven people. When you have seven people, you really rely on people within the government to help you out. Boyden Gray was fairly helpful in the beginning because he ran that regulatory group for Bush. But then he got consumed with his job of being counsel to the President, and he was unable to do too much. But since there was not a lot of activity on the domestic side within the White House, the Competitiveness Council was able to sort of leapfrog that and got quite a bit of attention because we did things. We actually made decisions.

That’s why [Henry] Waxman and all those guys just hated this thing. [Carl] Levin and others hated the Competitiveness Council because they couldn’t call me up there to testify about it because I was the Vice President and we were doing all these things. I said, “Why don’t you guys just go ahead and approve the Assistant Secretary for Regulatory Affairs and then you can call that person up?” But they didn’t want to do that, so they were stuck.

Riley: You mentioned that one of the issues you worked on was the Americans with Disabilities Act. You did some cost benefits, if I understood correctly.

Quayle: Yes.

Riley: This was as the legislation—

Quayle: Was going through, yes.

Riley: Were you working with Gray and others?

Quayle: Yes. We looked at some of the costs that were associated with the Disabilities Act. We were all for it as an administration initiative. On the other hand, some of the things that the Congress was doing had us concerned about what the cost impact was going to be. We let the White House know. We got some modification in the end, but it was pretty hard to fight it at that particular time. But we’ve been somewhat vindicated because the costs just really spiraled and the courts have rolled back some of what is required by that act.

Two other things that we were very involved in were the property rights issue in the West—the takings issue, where they just take property without eminent domain and just compensation—and
the issue of privatization of government assets. One of the issues we tried to get after that Rodney King incident in L.A., was to get [Peter] Ueberroth and [Thomas] Bradley, who was the mayor of L.A.—Ueberroth was head of the committee that was looking at it—to privatize the LAX [Los Angeles International Airport]. They didn’t want to do it—too many union fights and all that. But we were trying to get them to move in that direction.

Since then, there’s been a huge privatization movement. Municipalities have privatized a lot of things, the federal government has privatized a lot of things. That’s one of the things that the Competitiveness Council was way out in front on.

**Young:** Was this one of the things that you identified as an area you wanted to work in as the Vice President, or was it just handed to you?

**Quayle:** Actually, he had done the regulatory reform and I said, “Obviously, I don’t want to repeat that.” On the other hand, I didn’t want to let go of it entirely because I knew that it was the only real line-item thing that he had as Vice President as well. So what we did, we took it and Bob Guttman and I expanded it. I used to be the head of the Competitiveness Subcommittee and the Labor Human Resources Committee and Guttman was the counsel of that committee. We said, “Let’s just take what we did in the Senate on competitiveness and make it the Competitiveness Committee in the executive branch.” It was basically the Competitiveness Committee that we had in the Senate.

**Young:** And John Glenn bought that? Glenn in the Senate?

**Quayle:** Yes, he was chairman of government operations. But the Competitiveness Committee was my appointment subcommittee.

**Young:** I meant when you did it on the executive side.

**Quayle:** They couldn’t do anything about it. It was by executive order. What they had jurisdiction over was approving the nomination of the regulatory affairs guy, which they didn’t do. That’s why I thought it was rather ludicrous that the House denied funding to my committee. I said, “These are all Vice Presidential staff members. I can really tell them what to do. You can’t stop that.” Anyway, it never passed the Senate.

**Riley:** Were there any perceived additions to your portfolio that you thought about and floated and didn’t work?

**Quayle:** The thing about the Competitiveness Council—the first act of Clinton’s administration was to abolish that, did you know that?

**Young:** Yes.

**Quayle:** He abolished it.
I always wanted to get more into arms control, stuff like that. It was very difficult because I got into the whole bureaucracy of the State Department, so therefore I basically did it directly with the President and in the national security meetings.

The Vice President, if he does anything—unless it’s really laid out—he gets in somebody’s way who has jurisdiction, no matter what he does. With the Competitiveness Council, Bill Reilly thought, Why am I interfering there? The NASA people thought, Why do we have to get consent from the Vice President for the Space Council? Anything I did, there was always somebody complaining about it.

When Cheney assumed that task force on energy at the very beginning of the administration, I said, “That’s not normally what the Vice President does. You have a Secretary of Energy who does these things, and I think they’re going to regret that they did that.” That’s what this whole flap is about, trying to find out who he met with and who he didn’t—but it’s very unusual for a Vice President to really get in there.

Gore had that reinventing government. That was a big thing. It was a little bit like the Competitiveness Council, but there was no real decision-making there, just recommendations.

As Vice President, I had to figure out what the role was, but the role was always what the President wanted it to be. Since George Bush had a pretty good view of what the Vice President should be, because he had been one, it didn’t change that much throughout the four years. Now if you look at this Presidency, the Vice Presidency has changed. What Dick Cheney is doing, from the first six months to what he is doing now, has changed. The reason is that George W. Bush has a different viewpoint of what that office should and should not be. It always stems from the President, whatever the President wants.

Knott: You were a strong supporter—not to change the subject, but to go back a bit here to space—the manned mission to Mars, and you do talk about it quite a bit in your book. Do you have any further reflections on that and what happened? Why did that not quite take off, or did it? Is there still anything left—

Quayle: I think there is. I still think we’ll have a manned mission to Mars. We put down 50 years after we landed on the moon—

Knott: 2019?

Quayle: Yes.

Knott: That’s what you said.

Quayle: Fifty years after the landing on the moon—’69? Then 2019, yes. I don’t know if we’ll make it by 2019. But, as I said, it’s the next frontier to be explored. We could go back to the moon if we wanted to, but what are we going to get out of it? Landing on Mars, we’d actually learn something. I think we’ll eventually get there—whether it will be 2019, I don’t really know.
NASA, under Golden’s leadership—and Clinton kept him on, to Clinton’s credit—he really was very innovative, pretty tough. He was not an easy person to deal with. He had to have it his way and he did get it his way. He was very interested in the faster, cheaper, smarter technology and smaller technology to achieve our objectives in space.

I’ve always been a supporter of space exploration. Many don’t realize how we rely on space for communications, for national security.

I think they probably know a little bit more now because they’re all familiar with GPS [Global Positioning Systems]. I was actually the sponsor of that in the Senate because my old Congressional district in Fort Wayne was one of the prime contractors for it. So people have a little sense of that, but they really don’t appreciate the utilization of space. If you’re up there and go to Mars with a manned mission—you talk to these young people today and they all think we’ll do it. Talk to people under 35, they think we’ll do it. Talk to people over 55, and it’s probably doubtful. So, the next generation will do it.

Jones: One thing that surprises me a little—reflected both in the book and in your discussion here—is the rather steady interest in foreign affairs and national security policy. You were on the Armed Services Committee, Foreign Affairs in the House, but when you came to be Vice President, this interest was more complementary than supplementary of the President’s. Is that the way you saw it?

Quayle: Clearly, for the President I worked for, it was more complementary than supplementary. I would think in Clinton’s case, certainly starting out, Gore knew more about foreign policy than Clinton did.

Jones: And with Cheney—

Quayle: And with Cheney and Bush. It would be the same thing.

Jones: It surprises me a little bit, because you were a Senator and, I suppose, you did more domestic policy kinds of things as a Senator than foreign policy, maybe? I don’t know. That’s my ignorance of your Senate career.

Quayle: No, I think I did on the Education and Labor Committee, as I said—the JTPA [Job Training Partnership Act], adult education initiatives, training initiatives—but most of my time was spent in the Armed Services Committee. As an allocation of time, I spent far more in the Armed Services Committee and those subcommittees in briefings, in going over to the Pentagon, working with Cap [Caspar Weinberger] and all of his people over there, going to the Wehrkunde conference in Germany on an annual basis, dealing with the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] issues. That’s what really consumed my time.

But the domestic stuff was really what you put out all the press releases about. That’s what helped you to get reelected. After a while, you can talk about all the work you do in foreign policy, but the constituency is really much more interested in pocketbook issues. When I went home, I talked about the pocketbook issues, but I always spent at least half or two-thirds of my
speeches on national defense. I found that the audience was always much more interested in what I was talking about on national defense than they were on the basic, gut issues. The reason is that they hadn’t heard it before. It was new to them. They were interested in history. They were interested in the geopolitical situation and things of that sort.

So I think it was the allocation of time. I spent an inordinate amount of time on those issues and that’s really what I think captured the attention of George Bush. He has referred to it a couple of times, the national security matters. He knew I was on the Armed Services Committee. He watched C-SPAN a lot and he could follow the debate on the floor—not so much in committee, because it was usually closed session and C-SPAN didn’t follow the committees that much in those days. But he could follow the debate on the floor.

When he called from time to time, or his people called, it was always on a defense matter. It was never an education matter. It was always on defense. So, in his mind, he had me pegged as the next generation of leadership on national defense matters. That was clearly his interest. That’s what he viewed the Presidency to be—much more working on international issues rather than some of the domestic issues. That was his concept, I think, and rightfully so. It’s where the President should spend most of his time.

Jones: That is a nice lead-in, it seems to me, for you to discuss that role as Vice President—in relationship to the President, obviously, but also in relationship to the other pretty strong components of foreign policy and national security policy in the Bush administration, as well as the trips that you took. It’s a big subject, but if you could just start it.

Young: You’ve got Scowcroft. You’ve got some heavy hitters in there.

Jones: Very heavy hitters.


Jones: Powell.

Young: You’ve got Powell, and you have a President who is fairly hands-on in a number of these issues. So, you referred a moment ago to the fact that whatever you did, you got in the way of others. How did that work, especially in the national security-related matters?

Quayle: There were two sets of forums—actually, three sets of forums where foreign policy was seriously discussed. One was obviously in the National Security Council meetings. The OMB guy was there, the Attorney General was there, the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] director was there. That was one set of meetings.

Then there was another set of meetings that took place in the Oval Office during Panama, Noriega, and during Desert Storm, which the press affectionately referred to as the “gang of eight.” It was myself, the President, Scowcroft, Gates, Sununu, Baker, Cheney, Powell. The CIA was not there. The Attorney General wasn’t there, or the others. It was just the eight of us. That was another format for serious discussion of foreign policy matters. And every time an issue was
discussed there, there was never, ever a leak—when we had it down to eight. If you expanded it from eight, sometimes that national security thing would leak. Something would come out because there were just too many people in the pipeline of information.

The other serious meeting was in the morning, when he had his intelligence briefings and his meeting with Scowcroft, Gates, myself and Sununu. That was the other format. That’s where we had real serious discussions of foreign policy. Then, obviously, I had lunch with him and private time when I talked about these issues, or when he returned from a trip.

But those cases—it’s very interesting, because you talked about complementary or supplementary. All of his advisors, though very strong, were always complementary, almost always. I mean, he was the one who was in charge of this. He knew the people around the world more. He may not have had all the in-depth stuff on some of the arms control nuances that we were talking about at the time, but he knew what he wanted to do and very, very seldom did someone make a recommendation to him that he had not already thought of. He may not have decided to do that, but he knew all the options just because he was so well-versed in all these things.

Even more importantly—it was quite striking—he knew all the personalities very well.

It wasn’t just the head of state. He knew the Foreign Minister, he knew Finance Ministers. He knew the Ambassadors because of his days at the United Nations. He knew all these people and he knew how to massage their egos, to work around them, and he was always, always in control. That was not the case when it came to domestic policy. He was always listening and ideas would come up and he’d say, “I hadn’t really thought about that.” I never heard him say that in foreign policy. He always knew.

Young: So how did you fit in, then, with this?

Quayle: I argued back and forth. Issues came up—I took Noriega on the planning of the rescue mission in Panama. I discussed whether Saddam was really going to withdraw or not. How far forward should we lean? These questions came up and there were always different nuances, but he clearly had a sense. He always wanted to listen but there was never really—in foreign policy, most of us were pretty much on the same wavelength. There were not any real big differences.

The State Department is normally more diplomatic and much more cautious about these things. The Defense Department, once they’re given an assignment, they’ll just go to the mat. Brent came down sometimes with Defense, sometimes with State, but they were more cultural and institutional differences. At the top, there really wasn’t that much difference between Baker and Bush or Baker and Cheney, Baker and myself. There really wasn’t.

The differences that came up sometimes were just on jurisdiction. I remember when we were negotiating what the President was going to do with space with Gorbachev, the State Department got all bent out of shape because we were doing the negotiating and they thought they should do the negotiating. That just goes with the territory. But I think there was never any real serious
division of thought like there clearly was in the Carter administration, where you had [Zbigniew] Brzezinski on one side and Cy [Cyrus] Vance on the other.

**Young:** Also with Reagan, there were some pretty—

**Quayle:** Yes. With Reagan you had—with Weinberger and Shultz, I think it was really more personality than anything. They seemed to be going in different directions but it was really a personality thing. But they did have those differences.

**Young:** And then they had so many different National Security Advisors—

**Quayle:** Yes, seven of them.

**Young:** Bush didn’t have any change.

**Quayle:** He didn’t have any change. He knew what he wanted and he kept it going. He didn’t have to—and Scowcroft was a long-time friend. Scowcroft was, as I said, a very good bureaucratic infighter and he never—I saw him back down a few times, but when he really put his foot down, he almost always prevailed when there were these tug-of-wars. A lot of it was about jurisdiction, who was going to lead the delegation—not real substantive philosophical or ideological breaches. It was usually about personalities, appointments, things like that.

**Riley:** There was some division, I detect in your account, about Russia and the Soviet Union and Gorbachev. I wonder if you would talk on that a little bit, because you seem to have been—

**Quayle:** Yes. I was much more skeptical. It was interesting—Bush was much more skeptical during the Reagan years. Once he became President, he became more forward-leaning towards Russia. He knew these folks and he was able to lean forward. I was always very skeptical of the Russians, the Russian motivation, whether they were really willing to significantly change their behavior. It was only when the whole system collapsed that they changed their behavior. I think I’m still correct in hindsight. I think that was part of the role for me, to be viewed as skeptical to make sure that serious discussion was held before moving forward on some of these initiatives that were put out there.

Thatcher was the first one who said, “We can do business with this person.” We all looked around—weren’t we talking about Gorbachev? We said, “What does she know that we don’t?” She was fairly clairvoyant on that, because Gorbachev was a different leader in the way that he wanted to be accepted in the international arena—desperately. So did Russia, but he in particular. He was very glib and very good but we found out, much to our consternation, that he couldn’t deliver once he got home. He had this great big persona and the media over here was just fawning all over themselves—it was just pathetic. But he got home and he was viewed as sort of a screw-up. He had no coalitions. He couldn’t work the politburo and he couldn’t get things done. Then he ended up running for President. He got 2 percent of the vote.

**Jones:** Right.
Quayle: Two percent. That’s in the margin of error. Maybe nobody voted for him. [laughter]

Jones: Got two people stumbling in, “What’s going on here?”

These different venues that you talk about—the National Security Council, the gang of eight and the briefings—was there a pretty consistent function, a different function obviously for the three, but was each on policy?

Quayle: The National Security Council was statutory, so we had to meet periodically. There were certain things that had to go through the National Security Council, but everything—we had interesting discussions there, but there were never any real decisions made. The decisions were all made in the Oval Office before we went in there. They were made in the morning meeting or there was a pre-meeting in which we knew what was going to come out. We never put anything to a vote not knowing what the vote was going to be. Every once in a while, there were differences of opinion, like on defense spending or things like that. He would go in and just listen. He’d say, “I’m here to listen today,” and he would sit back and they’d all state their case. Then he’d leave and we’d talk it over in the Oval Office and make a decision the way we wanted.

Jones: But this was true of the gang of eight, too. The decision was really made in advance.

Quayle: Yes. Now, with the gang of eight there were real decisions, but it was usually a consensus. Sometimes he said, “Look, I’m not going to be able to decide this issue today, but let’s get it on the table.” But not very often. Usually, he listened. People reported and he had a pretty good idea. He knew pretty much where the meeting was going to go, and if it went in a different direction and he couldn’t steer it where he wanted it, then he just said, “Well, I have to think about this.” That’s when Scowcroft weighed in.

Knott: You mentioned earlier today that you were always a good friend of Taiwan. After Tiananmen Square, did you have concerns about the administration’s approach in terms of staying engaged with Beijing? Some of your allies on the Hill, I think, were concerned that the administration was too engaged—

Quayle: Too soft?

Knott: Too engaged.

Quayle: No. Scowcroft took that secret trip over there—just popped up in China with Eagleburger. The thing is, we had to be engaged. Even with the Soviet Union, I always said we should have these summits. We ought to talk. Not that I agreed with them or trusted them, but we ought to talk. I think it’s better to talk than not talk. You always learn something from a meeting. So I was always for engagement. I thought it was good.

Barbara Franklin took a trip to China after the election. We kept the sanctions on for four years. I was very encouraging that we talk with China. But I received a couple of the Taiwanese folks at
my residence, which the PRC [Peoples Republic of China] Ambassador did not like, though it was basically to show them, “Hey look, we’re going to deal with Taiwan on our own basis.”

Now it’s a real precarious situation over there because it’s really a democracy. They have this transfer of power. They’ve got 23 million people. Democracy is becoming much more mature, much more developed. I just read in the paper this morning, in the business section of the *New York Times*, that two Taiwanese banks are going to be allowed to do business in the PRC. Hopefully, we can just kick this thing down the road for 15 or 20 years and the PRC will change and they will figure out some sort of quasi-autonomous situation, quasi-statehood status for Taiwan. But they’re not ready to deal with that now.

They’ve changed a great deal. With Clinton, they were just very uncertain where Clinton would be. With Bush, they know exactly where he’s going to be.

**Riley:** There were few issues more controversial during the Reagan administration than Latin American politics, and it’s rather striking when I read your accounts of your many travels down there and your attention to it, the extent to which that had ceased to be a hotbed of national controversy inside the United States. I wonder if you’ve got observations about the transition from that being a controversial issue to a non-controversial issue, the extent to which the Bush administration played a part in that, the extent to which it merely reflected a kind of maturation over time of various tendencies. You had a front row seat to all of these things.

**Quayle:** I think the biggest change is that we’ve seen a form of democracy spread in Latin America in an unprecedented way. I always made an attempt to go to all the inaugurations of the Latin American leaders, just to show support for elections. I remember when we went to Carlos Andres Perez’s election or inauguration in Venezuela, in January or early February of ’89, I think. That was the first time—I intentionally did not meet him, but we were in the same room a couple of times—Fidel Castro. I commented to the press, “That’s nice that he’s down here to honor Carlos Andres Perez’s election. Let’s hope he has an election in Cuba some day. It’d be nice.”

I went to eight or nine different inaugurations. If you look at the place we had trouble with—Nicaragua—one they had an election there, [Violetta] Chamorro was victorious and now they have elections all the time. Honduras was just getting established and so was El Salvador. Once [José] Duarte decided to leave, or he got elected, they were very concerned about [Alfredo] Christiani, who was of the conservative ARENA [Alianza Republicana Nacionalista] party there, that somehow, since [Roberto] D’Aubuisson was part of that, we couldn’t deal with Christiani. But Christiani was a businessman, a coffee producer, he loved democracy and was very, very helpful to us.

We went there and we tried to stop the fighting, and I really think it’s the elections and having democracy. That’s basically what happened in Panama. They had this election and Noriega basically said he wasn’t going to acknowledge it. He killed that Marine and abused an American woman and declared war on the United States and we said, “That’s it. This guy has got to be dealt with.” But I think it’s really the elections that advanced—and that’s why I went to all these inaugurations, including the one in Colombia.
Young: Was this an area in which you didn’t get in anybody’s way?

Quayle: It was an area that I deemed to be very important, but it was really probably an area where the Secretary of State should have gone. He was much more interested in the Middle East and Russia. Another area that Baker didn’t go to and didn’t particularly enjoy was Asia. I finally told him after one trip, “You have got to go to this Asian meeting.” He had missed it two years in a row or something like that. I was over there and they were just livid that he wouldn’t come—but he finally went.

I found myself going to Asia quite a bit, Latin America a lot. I went to Japan five times, I think, when I was Vice President. I was in London five times. Those were the two anchors, if you will, Great Britain and Japan. I went to places where they couldn’t go. Now, they had Assistant Secretaries and all that, but they’re important parts of the world and he didn’t really care about it that much, so that was fine.

Young: Maybe there isn’t any generalization you can make, but did the President give you a fairly free hand in deciding where you would go to do what? How would you get clearance? Was it an assignment or what?

Quayle: Heads of state came over and met with the President and Ambassadors met with the President, and they always wanted a Presidential visit. “When are you going to come?” Well, he couldn’t make it, and all that. Then they said, “Can you send the Vice President?” They just started compiling this list—we really haven’t had a high-level delegation go to Australia or go to Japan or go to the Latin American countries.

In Latin America, we carved out a niche. All of these countries were encouraging democracy and we basically said, “Wherever there is an inauguration, we’ll go.” We also had to do some of the funeral stuff that we just had to do, no matter what. A lot of it was that these countries all wanted Americans to come there, and if not the President, then the Vice President. That’s the way a lot of these trips got going.

Scowcroft would say, “It would be helpful if you’d put together a trip to Asia.” Sometimes our staff would say, “How about if we take this trip to the Baltics?” for example, in 1992. They said, “We think you should do that.” We also ordered the initiators to go to the Eastern European countries to show the flag because he couldn’t very well get there. The Secretary of State could go and he would, but the visits that we had—talking to the troops and doing the political things—that was necessary. The Secretary of State is political but he’s more diplomatic. I mean, there are things that a Vice President can attract attention about, in a political sense, that a Secretary of State shouldn’t and couldn’t. So that’s how a lot of these trips got created.

Young: The briefing for these trips was done by whom? Your National Security Advisor working with Brent’s people?

Quayle: We had Brent’s people, then the CIA would come over and the State Department people would come, and Defense. We almost invariably took a State Department person with us, usually
at the Assistant Secretary level. It wasn’t the Secretary of State or the Deputy Secretary of State, but the next level down because they knew a lot about the area. Also, it was an easy way to interface with the State Department because they were always interested in treaties and negotiations and things like that. A lot of times we took the trade representative because there were always trade issues. So we always had a fairly—

Young: Sometimes people from Commerce?

Quayle: Commerce would go. In Latin America one time, we took a big Commerce delegation including folks from the private sector with Mosbacher. We tried to get the other departments to come because there was always official business to do and it was easy for them to get in to see these people when I was with them.

Knott: Could we switch to some domestic issues or do we want to stay—

Young: Sure.

Knott: You became the administration’s spokesman, in a sense, for the whole family values issue, and of course you talk in fair length in your book about the Murphy Brown speech and how the press just pulled that one sentence from a much larger speech. Was there some discomfort at all within the administration in terms of you dealing with this, you pushing this issue?

Quayle: There was discomfort after the Murphy Brown speech, to say the least, because the media made it so controversial. It really didn’t deserve the controversy that it generated. The values thing—this was really a reflection of what George Bush was all about. Talk about the quintessential family man—that’s George Bush. He places values like integrity and loyalty and things like that very high on his list. That’s what he’s all about. So I had felt very comfortable speaking on his behalf about these issues. The Murphy Brown speech, I kept toying with that, putting it in or not putting it in. I put it in the first draft and then a couple of the speechwriters somewhere along the way knocked it out. Finally, I put it back in at the very end. I said, “This thing might get a little bit of attention. Take this thing over to the White House but don’t give it to them until I’m about ready to give the speech, because I really want to give this.”

So they delivered it over there, before the speech. People read through it and they said, “What’s this?” and “It’s in there, oh well.” It just sort of went by. Once everything got out there and we had the controversy—what’s interesting about this is that it started with the electronic media, not the print media. It was a front-page story in both the New York Times and the Washington Post, but the Murphy Brown reference was down at about the eighth paragraph because it was on values and they could see that we were going to put values front and center in the campaign. This was in May of ’92.

The electronic media were the ones that just went ballistic. I think they felt that somehow I was attacking television journalists and they’re so sensitive that they would make that stretch, that somehow this is an attack on them. They’re the ones who just blew this thing way out of proportion and the print media caught up in the next couple of days.
The White House, at first—Marlin—they tried to dismiss it. Then they got off on, “Oh well, at least she chose to have the child, not have an abortion.” I said, “This has absolutely nothing to do with abortion. This is not a pro-life, pro-choice issue. This is a values issue. Look at the sound bite. I’m saying that fathers are relevant in raising their children and that’s the bottom line.”

Then they got off on this thing—the White House couldn’t back me up because Doro Bush, at the time, was a single mother. I said, “This has nothing to do with Doro Bush.” They said, “She’s a single mother.” I said, “Great. I have a sister who’s a single mother. She’s been divorced. Guess what? Divorce happens.” My grandmother was a single mother. This is not what the issue is about. It’s an issue of whether fathers should be involved or whether fathers are just irrelevant. Fathers should be involved in raising their children unless there’s an abusive situation.

The Democrats and the media did a stellar job of having our campaign back down on this issue because I think in the first 48 hours they really sensed that we were onto something, and they said, “Hmm. Values.” They hadn’t really given it much thought. When your opponent brings something up and is trying to put an issue on the table, you’ve got to attack. So they attacked me and attacked the speech for allegedly attacking single mothers, which was just total nonsense. The White House got all jittery about it and tried to pull back but didn’t pull back its support. As a result, we in essence ran away from the values issue. Whether that turned the campaign, I don’t know—probably not—but we’ll never know. It was a very important issue and I was very interested when Clinton, at his reelection in 1996, basically gave the speech that I had given on the importance of values. Why we didn’t use that for our reelection in 1992 is still of great consternation to me. But they made it so controversial that the campaign got nervous—they’re a bunch of hand wringers anyway—and they just ran away from sticking to it.

It could have been a huge plus if it had been played right. It probably turned out to be, at best, a wash, maybe even a little bit of a negative, because it infuriated some of our base—“Why aren’t you standing up more for this?” When it became controversial, the Houston Convention got a little bit out of control in trying to reassert it. They did it in, I thought, a sloppy, heavy-handed way, trying to reassert the values issue, whereas if they had just stuck on the message and used that speech with the exception of the Murphy Brown reference, they would have been home free. From the get-go it was all messed up.

**Jones:** Did you campaign very much in 1990 for—

**Quayle:** Congressional campaigns?

**Jones:** Yes.

**Quayle:** Oh yes. I was all over the country. I was raising money for the party, raising money for candidates. I went out for Senators, Governors. I went out for John Engler four different times. My Deputy Chief of Staff, Spence Abraham, was from Michigan, so that’s why I was back there like four times. I said, “Why am I back in Michigan? Oh, Spence, that’s right. You’re from Michigan. You used to be the state director here, the Republican Party state director. That’s why
I’m back in Michigan.” We campaigned for the Governors, for the Senators, for the Congressional folks.

Jones: Did you like that?

Quayle: Yes.

Jones: That kind of campaigning?

Quayle: I wouldn’t want to do it all the time, but it was a good change of pace because you’d get out there and you were around people who loved you rather than in Washington, where half the people hated you. [laughter] They loved me and I went to all these rallies and everything was perfect. I needed a little bit of a dose of that. But to do it day in and day out for a sustained period of time becomes a lot of hard work. I enjoyed the crowds, enjoyed people.

Riley: Do you think you enjoyed it more than George Bush enjoyed it?

Quayle: He enjoyed what I just described, going out campaigning for people and that, but he just didn’t like the partisan part of politics. I enjoyed that part of it. Not that I’m overly partisan, but I know that that’s the way you have to be to get things done. I think part of it was his upbringing—“everyone’s got to get along.” You can build consensus, but you have to start from a pretty hard position and then move. If you start with a consensus and move, then you’ve got nothing and you lose.

He did not like going out and attacking the opponents. I said, “Just attack them on the philosophy.” Even that—During the ’92 campaign, he got frustrated when he ended up saying, “Who are these clowns” or what—

Jones: Bozos.

Quayle: Bozos, yes. “Who are these bozos out there?” He’d gotten frustrated because they were attacking him all the time and he just didn’t like that part of it. So the partisan part of it—as I said, it was partly his background. His mother, in particular, had a great influence on him. He said, “This is not proper. This is not the right way to do things,” but politics can use pretty bare-knuckled tactics. If he had to, he would really hunker down and do it, but he didn’t like it.

He liked campaigning for people. He wasn’t crazy about giving speeches. He liked to work in the office and take care of his inbox. He was a problem solver. He liked solving problems. If you gave him the choice between sitting in his office and solving problems all day or going out and making speeches, he’d solve the problems, because that’s what he thought he was hired to do. Speechifying was different—it was just like during Desert Storm. He didn’t give major speeches. He just said, “Look, I want to be judged according to the outcome.” It’s pretty hard to argue with that. I was the one who was out making the speeches during Desert Storm, out there on the west coast and then to Seton Hall about the moral justification of war. He just said, “People are going to judge me by the results.” It was hard to argue with.
Young: Can we talk a little bit about the Gulf War and the series of decisions that were reached? I was quite struck, in reading your book, by your account of how Bush began to take a very firm stand—it began well before the invasion. As I understand it from your book, there was some hesitancy about how we should deal with Saddam. In fact, there’s an excerpt from Bush’s own personal diary in Herbert Parmet’s biography in which Bush’s entry—it’s just a snippet, you can’t see the context, but it was a part of the diary that the President had apparently shared with Herbert—the President says to himself, “I see that I am getting much more morally involved in this.” It’s a very interesting kind of comment. This is really becoming extremely important—“I am becoming, I think, very deeply morally committed to it.”

As that is happening, what is being heard on the outside are a lot of different messages about why we are in this. You say in your book that the basic principle is swallowing up another country—you can’t stand for that, as I understood your message—and I think you were probably the first to say that, weren’t you?

Quayle: Yes.

Young: Then you hear another message in the early phase of the war—“This is about oil. This is about this, this is about that,” until there began to be some speculation about the administration and what it was there for. Why are they speaking with so many different voices? I’d like to hear about your role in the decision and in the development of the principle, the conflict. Maybe I’ve got it all wrong.

Quayle: The principle was that this was the first major crisis in the post-Cold War. It was a sovereignty issue, where one nation invaded and gobbled up another nation. Saddam and his people said, “Kuwait was created in 1962 illegally and therefore it’s been up for grabs.” I always thought that Saddam, if he was smart, would have just retreated to that area 19 where all the oil is and said, “This is what I’m claiming is Iraq’s”—and forget about the rest of it. That would have put us in a difficult position because it has been in some historical dispute and he would have been, at least in the international community, much stronger. But he didn’t do that. I thought that he would, and I thought that it would cause us a lot of problems.

In this particular case, George Bush was always ahead of his staff, including myself, in many respects. He’d just come back from Camp David and we all met on a Monday morning, and that’s when he gave his famous—drew the line in the sand and said, “This shall not stand,” and we all sort of said, “Okay.” That’s not really what we discussed over the weekend, but he just said it. We didn’t really know, until Saddam had invaded—there were all sorts of reports about whether he was going to withdraw. We didn’t know whether we could deploy troops to Saudi Arabia. This was before Cheney and Colin Powell went over there, and the President was out there saying, “This will not stand.”

He came into the National Security Council and—I guess he came into the Oval Office first, and I was there. Scowcroft was there. He said, “How’d I do?” and we said, “Oh, good.” Brent said, “Where’d you get that ‘this will not stand’?” He said, “That’s mine.” “Well, yes, but where did you get it?” He said, “Well, that’s what I feel.” Brent said, “Okay, we’ll make sure that this happens.” It was a very, very definitive line. Not that he was wrong in doing it, but he just caught
everybody off guard a little bit because it was so definite and so dramatic. But I’m not sure the passage you refer to—

Young: I don’t know exactly when it came.

Quayle: He didn’t like a lot of this partisanship. He had this great sense of what was right and what was wrong, and when he realized that he was right and somebody else was wrong and it was very clear, then he went to the wall. He went to the mat and there was no compromise. He was very quick to get there when he saw a moral issue out there. He saw a moral issue—these Kuwaitis were very good at coming in and showing pictures of the brutality going on in Kuwait and really pulling at the heart strings to make him even more committed. But he was committed no matter what.

As I said in my book, everyone thought that Thatcher was the one who was leading Bush around. It was really the other way around. Bush was way out ahead of Thatcher on this thing. She was in trouble back home and she couldn’t get too far forward because she had to get her Cabinet in line and all sorts of things like that. He was the one who was really leading the band on this, and the principle was sovereignty. The reason, I think, that there was this press consternation about whether it was jobs—Baker sat down and somewhere he said, “It’s nothing but jobs, jobs, jobs,” and we all sort of cringed—I said, “This is why we’ve been fighting this thing.”

Then someone else said it was oil. Since he never gave a real substantive speech on what it was all about, others would fill in and the press would just take a sound bite from Baker and then a sound bite from somebody else and say, “That’s the policy.” That was one of the arguments that I made. I said, “We really need to have this explained.” He said, “I don’t have to explain. They’re going to judge me by the outcome.” As I said, he was right. The outcome was fine. People forget that we only won that vote in the Senate 52-48. It was a very, very close vote in the Senate. Cheney didn’t even want to take it to the Congress.

Young: I’d like to hear a bit about—

Quayle: He didn’t want to take it. He said, “Don’t take it.” I think he was afraid it was going to be voted down in the Senate. I said, “Look, I’ve served in the Senate. These guys are not going to take responsibility. They will figure out a way to give us 51 votes. They’re not going to want to defeat this. They don’t want responsibility.” We had the majority leader against us, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee against us, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman, also Finance. We had all the Democratic leadership against us, plus we lost four people on our side.

Jones: But you had Al Gore.

Quayle: Yes. I was in the chair when Al Gore gave that speech and I was told that he was going to be supportive of it and all of a sudden he started going—I had a page go get Dole. Dole came and said, “What’s the matter?” I said, “He’s going to vote against this thing.” He said, “He is?” I said, “Listen to him.” Dole said, “Well, he told me just 20 minutes ago he was going to vote for
it.” I said, “Did he tell you to your face?” He said, “Yes.” “Well, if he’s going to vote for it, go listen to that speech.”

He gave this speech—“We can’t do this, this is ridiculous, all these sanctions”—but then he said, “But I’m going to hold my nose and vote in favor of this resolution.” It was a pathetic display. Saddam was watching all of this over there. I think that’s one of the reasons that he really kept hanging in there, because he thought that Congress would come to his rescue, but they didn’t. It was a little disjointed.

Young: Were you a leading proponent of going to Congress? Who else was in the group?

Quayle: I wanted to go to Congress. Cheney was opposed to it. Scowcroft, I think he was more on my side on this. Baker was pretty much with me. The President was inclined not to do it at one time.

Young: Really?

Quayle: He didn’t really say. It was one of those times when he sort of sat back and listened, which said to me he could go either way on this. He basically said, “You know what, we can do this.” I think he was a little reluctant to do it. He said, “We can do this, but I just want everyone to know, if they vote me down I’m still going to do what I have to do.” He told us that point-blank. I said, “That’s fine. We’ll get that message up there, too.” We said, “Look, he’s going to do it—he’s asking.” Then they said, “Why even ask if he’s going to do it?” I said, “Guys, it’s your vote, it’s your call. You can do what you want to.” But he was going to do it—and he could. I mean, constitutionally he could do it.

I just felt, from a political point of view, in garnering public support, that it’s always good to have the Congress behind you if something just goes haywire. You want some sort of statement there.

Young: Yes.

Quayle: He was going to do it. It gets back, as I said, to this issue of right and wrong. Congress didn’t really bother him. He was totally focused on doing what he had to do. I remember him saying that. He said, “I don’t care what they say, you need to know”—to those of us who were advocating going to Congress—“I’m going to do it, whether Congress gives me authority or not.”

Young: Yes, but as I read in your book, the cost of not going to Congress might have been pretty high.

Quayle: It would have just given them more ammunition to carp and whine and complain when we were trying to get as much unanimity and consensus as possible.

Young: You mentioned in your book the difference with the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, which was—
Quayle: Ninety to three or something.

Young: Yes, which was kind of a blank check. And this was very specific to the situation, and there was no debate really for the Gulf of Tonkin. This was a real debate.

Quayle: This was a real debate. They had plenty of time. They had hearings on the thing. It was “any such force as necessary,” and it was in conjunction with the United Nations resolutions. They wanted sanctions only.

Young: I had difficulty understanding why Cheney would be against going to Congress.

Quayle: Because I think he was of the mind of the President, in some sense. We don’t have to, why should we risk losing.

Young: Okay.

Quayle: That’s basically where he was coming from.

Young: He had served in Congress, too.

Quayle: He had served in the House, yes. I was surprised that he was—I think he thought that we had a good chance of losing. His argument, which was an interesting argument, was that if we lost, even though we said we’re going to do this, we’d be in a weaker position and it would make it more difficult for us to do it. How were we going to explain this to the British? How were we going to explain this to the French? How were we going to explain all this to the coalition, if the Congress said we couldn’t do it? He said, “We know we’re going to do it. Why take the risk?” That’s the way the argument went.

Jones: Failure to get Congressional approval may have been overcome by the quick success of the war. However, had it not gone so quickly, the White House would have really taken a hit.

Quayle: Still, I was always convinced that we would win. I just felt that the Congress would never want to assume responsibility for denying the President that option. If we lost, Cheney’s argument was that it would have made it more difficult, but we were going to do it anyway. As it turned out, it was quick, so everybody would have basically forgotten about it. How it would have gone down as far as precedence—I mean, that’s another reason the Senate was going to make sure we had enough votes. They knew he was going to do it and if they voted no, they would look even weaker—Congress would.

Jones: Yes.

Quayle: They said, “Gee, what good is our vote, because he will go ahead and do it anyway?” So there was a dilemma for the Congress. There was a dilemma for them, too.

Jones: Were you involved in lobbying specific people?
Quayle: Oh yes.

Jones: On the Hill?

Quayle: I called [Charles] Robb and [John] Reid. I tried to work on Sam Nunn. I couldn’t get anywhere. Then on our side, [Charles] Grassley, who we ended up losing, [Nancy] Kassebaum. I talked to all of them, the folks that were on the fence. Who else did I talk to at that particular time? [William] Bradley—couldn’t move. Jim Exon—I think we finally got Exon to vote with us.

Jones: Could you shift ahead now a little to the issue that keeps coming up, even now, and that is the failure to go to Baghdad and that whole decision and your perspective on all that?

Quayle: No one in the chain of command, none of his advisors, ever recommended that he go to Baghdad. This idea that [Norman] Schwarzkopf was for going to Baghdad is not true. Schwarzkopf may dicker a little bit on the timing of the end of the war, but he will not disagree that he never made a recommendation that we go to Baghdad. It was really never a serious option that was considered because nobody was recommending it—no one.

So you have to take that off the table. You can look back now and say, “Should we have gone to Baghdad?” I still say no, because to occupy that country at that particular time would have meant too much loss of life and it really was not worth it. Furthermore, we had what we thought was good credible evidence that Saddam Hussein, within six months, would be done away with by his own people. We just believed that. It was one of the reasons they didn’t want to pursue war crimes against him. I remember Scowcroft was always arguing because I was for it and he said, “We’re going to be back in the same position. If you indict him, then you’ve got to go get him.” Sort of like with [Slobodan] Milosevic, but with Milosevic they coughed him up. And Brent had a point. But my argument was, “That’s fine, maybe we have to go get him. Maybe we will go get him, maybe he’ll be dead, maybe we won’t go get him, but at least in the international community he is going to be condemned as an international war criminal.” That’s when the CIA said, “In six months we won’t have to worry about this because he’s going to be gone.” We really thought that he was going to be gone.

So the real Monday morning quarterback was basically what happened, not concluding the war when we did, but immediately after that. When the Republican Guard came back into Iraq, they shifted to the west to wipe out that Shiite rebellion and we were more focused on the north and the Kurds in the north. Turkey had been such an ally of ours during that campaign that we were afraid that Saddam would drive all of the Kurds out of Iraq and into Turkey and create unrest in Turkey. So we were focused on the northern part of the country when we should have been focused on the whole country. We should have put a “no fly” zone on the entire country, when we just did it basically north of Baghdad.

As a result, Saddam was able to suppress an indigenous uprising of primarily the Shiite Muslims who reside in the southwest part of Iraq. There was some thought within the administration—but I don’t think the President ever really bought into it—that it would not necessarily be a good idea
for Saddam to be overthrown, particularly by the Shiites, because you would have a Shiite regime in Baghdad as well as a Shiite regime in Tehran. You’d have an axis between Iraq and Iran rather than them being at each other’s throats, and they would be allies and would cause a lot of problems in the Middle East. I was willing to risk that. I didn’t think it was that big of a risk, but some in the Saudi government and some in our government were really a little concerned about that. I don’t think anybody really bought into that argument.

Young: Of course, if the principle of the war was a sovereignty issue, that doesn’t get you very far if you—after you secured the sovereignty—then it looks like your agenda has changed to a new one—get Saddam. You would had to have a new rationale.

Quayle: That was part of it as well. The stated agenda was to get him out of Kuwait and once he was out of Kuwait, the goal was achieved and we could try to get back to business as usual. Also, if in fact we had said that the goal was to get Saddam or to march on Baghdad, we would never have had the Arabs with us. They would have been opposed—

Young: And you might well have lost some of Europe.

Quayle: We wouldn’t have had the Arabs with us, we couldn’t have repositioned our military in Saudi Arabia, perhaps a whole host of things. That was part of the coalition-building. To this day, a lot of people think that this was really discussed and that we might even have done it, but it really wasn’t discussed that much and it was never a serious option. Nobody ever recommended it.

Young: I would be surprised if it had been seriously recommended, given all those circumstances.

Quayle: No, it wasn’t. That doesn’t mean to say that the son’s not going to go in and try to rectify this, but we’ll see.

Young: But that’s a different Presidency, a different war.

Quayle: Yes, he’s still there.

Young: Okay.

Jones: Should we shift to the ’92 campaign?

Young: I’d like to do the ’92 campaign but also the change in the White House. Sununu goes out, Atwater’s already gone. Skinner comes in and you used the word “implosion” in the White House to refer to this last period and that’s all occurred. Baker is brought in to put it back together or something. I guess that’s what he was doing—

Jones: Howard Baker?

Quayle: No, Jim Baker.
Young: Jim Baker, coming in as Chief of Staff. Basically it was a rescue operation, I guess, wasn’t it?

Quayle: Yes.

Young: Give us your take.

Quayle: Sununu left and then Skinner came in. I don’t know what it is, but it seems that Cabinet Secretaries don’t have whatever it takes to be Chief of Staff, because it just didn’t work out with Skinner. It didn’t work out with Don Regan. There’s something about the work style, the mentality, whatever it is, that makes that transition from a Cabinet Secretary to Chief of Staff just—it hasn’t worked. But there were problems before Skinner arrived, and even though he had been in Washington and he was a good friend of the President and Mrs.[Barbara] Bush and I was strongly in support of him, there was no other real candidate that I know of who was seriously considered.

Young: Why not Andy Card?

Quayle: There was some talk about Andy—I don’t know whether he took himself out—but I think maybe since he had been with Sununu, they wanted a clean break. Andy is now the Chief of Staff, but at that time it just didn’t seem like the right decision because Andy wound up going over to Transportation after Sam left. That was sort of a switch, which was probably the right thing to do because Sam wanted to bring in his people. I’m not sure that Andy wanted it, either, because he did not come to me to ask me to lobby on that. Had he asked, I probably would have considered it. He was a good enough friend that if he really wanted it, he would have said something to me or he would have said something to the President. He could have gotten word to everybody. To my knowledge, he never really asked to be considered for this.

When Sam came in, he had some problems. Basically, he had to figure out how to deal with Darman. He became totally preoccupied with trying to deal with Darman, and that wasn’t even a good fight. I mean, Darman was going to win those fights in those internal battles. But they got into it and then Darman sort of backed off and said, “Okay, fine, we’ll just see how you can do on your own,” and it wasn’t good.

Riley: Can you speculate about how Darman managed to survive the 1990 budget debacle? I mean, there were an awful lot of fingers pointed at him as being one of the responsible parties.

Quayle: I think he was responsible, but you’ve got to realize that the President signed it. So, “Hey, it’s mine now. It’s not Darman’s, it’s mine.”

Riley: But he had become something of a lightning rod. We’ve had testimony from others, especially within the conservative wing of the party—is it just the case that the President felt such a degree of loyalty to him?
Quayle: I think that the President felt that Darman would take a few slings and arrows but that Darman was on the right track. I think he had convinced him of that. He basically supported Darman. I know he was aghast at that article that came out in October of ’92, Bob Woodward’s article about the economic policy or the lack thereof, right before the election. Woodward had promised Darman that he was going to publish it after the election, so Darman spilled his guts and it was awful, just awful.

Young: He could have, you know, not because of the association with the 1990 budget, but there were recommendations to the President, I’m pretty sure, that it was time to lighten the ship as you were approaching the election, and find a way to do something else with Darman.

Quayle: What he did do—at the end, he said it was a mistake. Darman was obviously very much opposed to that. He said, “How can you say this is a mistake?” He said, “The President signed it. He knew what he was doing. I was for it, he was for it. This was not a mistake. You’re just going to complicate your political dilemma on the thing.” I think he probably recognized it was a mistake and by saying it was trying to mitigate the damage as much as possible.

Then Baker came back. The President kept telling me, “Sam wants Baker to come back.” I said, “I think that’s probably the best thing. We have to try to figure something out.” So Baker came back in July, I think.

Young: July or August.

Quayle: August? It might have been. He kept putting it off. I was surprised because the President didn’t really want to ask him directly, for whatever reason. So Skinner asked him. I said something to him and I’m sure Scowcroft said something to him. I mean, it was pretty much concluded that he was going to do it. He came back very reluctantly and let everybody know that he was reluctant to do it, which didn’t help things.

Riley: Do you remember how early Skinner was thinking about bringing Baker back, or when did this first—

Quayle: I think probably around—let’s see, he had the New Hampshire primary in February. I would say it was April or May when he realized that he had to figure something out.

Riley: Right.

Quayle: That he wants out, Sam wants out—“I’ll move aside for Baker.” That would make sense. So that’s what he did.

Young: You referred in your book, later, to this period around the end. Bush made the same mistake or the same thing happened to him that happened to you, in your personal opinion, for the Vice Presidency. He let himself be handled too much, became too dependent on his handlers or allowed them too much latitude, and should have broken free of that. Do you think Bush was capable of that?
Quayle: Breaking free of it? Yes. I think in his heart of hearts he just viewed Clinton as so inferior that somehow, by golly, he was going to pull this thing out. He didn’t really believe the polls. But he didn’t realize what was going on—which George W. saw and which is why he is so adamant on loyalty and no leaks and things like that—which was how disloyal that campaign staff really was. I mean, they were more interested in what their jobs were going to be after the election than they were in getting him reelected.

One of my friends drove by the Democratic headquarters, or the Clinton headquarters, in Washington at six o’clock and there were just tons of cars there, people inside working. He went by the Bush headquarters and nobody was there. It was shut down, everybody gone. No problem. Nothing to do. This guy called me up and said, “You guys are in real trouble.” I said, “What do you mean?” He gave me that example. I said, “Doesn’t surprise me.” So their heart wasn’t in it. The campaign people were just—it was sieve city over there.

Young: Was it Teeter?

Quayle: It was just that whole group over there. They fought amongst themselves, big infighting. All the disagreement and everything, you’d read it on the front page of the Washington Post, internal polls, indecisiveness.

Right after our debate, which was a real shot in the arm for the campaign, we came back and were working on the President’s debate for Richmond, which would have been his second debate. They went through the format and he said, “God, it’s full of question and answer. Why’d I agree to this?” I think Teeter or someone said, “Mr. President, you were very good in this. Don’t you remember in 1988, we had all those ‘meet George Bush’ forums and you did great.” I was thinking to myself, Yes, that was ’88. He hasn’t done that for four years. He’s been President of the United States. He hasn’t done these things in four years. There’s a real gift to being out there on the huskings, anticipating these questions. I said, “This is going nowhere.” This was the day before his debate.

We spent 30 minutes going over this stupid passport issue, as if somebody out there in the hinterlands was going to stand up and ask about this passport issue. This was an inside Washington story. It was not going to come up in a format like that. They were going to be asking about Social Security, Medicare, taking care of their parents, what the schools were like, what we were doing for them, taxes. There probably wouldn’t even be any national defense questions. I said, “This is a town hall meeting. This is what’s discussed out there.” I could see that the campaign, for whatever reason, was just not functioning.

Jones: What explains it, in your judgment? And what, if you had been in charge, would you have done?

Quayle: I think, for one, that it was overconfidence. They just viewed Clinton as this Governor from Arkansas and, by that time, we knew all the personal problems that he had and so—even though the polls showed this—we thought we should be able to beat this guy.

Jones: But Teeter’s a poll guy and the polls—
Quayle: The polls were not that good. But they’d always bring up John Major. They said, “Don’t forget, Mr. President, John Major was behind ten points on election day and won by five.” I said, “That’s wonderful.” [laughter]

Jones: He can get on the ticket in England, it might work.

Quayle: We didn’t have the [Rupert] Murdoch newspaper which—which one does he own over there, the Times? Does he own the London Times? He owns one of the major newspapers in London and the front-page picture of Neil Kinnock on the day of the election read, “If Kinnock wins, will the last one out please turn off the lights?” It was a picture of a light bulb and Kinnock’s picture. I mean, it went to three million homes. We didn’t have that to help us. We had the opposite of that with the Post and the New York Times and the others that all predicted doom and gloom over here.

The [Ross] Perot factor was clearly a huge factor in that ’92 campaign. We never really figured out how to deal with it. He was in the campaign, then he was out of the campaign, then he was back in. The Clinton people talked our people into letting him into the debates, which was a big mistake. You notice he wasn’t in the debates in ’96, but he was in ’92—Perot.

It’s hard. You ask the question, “How do you explain it?” It was overconfidence. I think a little bit of a factor was having been President and Vice President for 12 years. There was probably a little bit of a fatigue factor in getting up for another campaign, because they are very taxing. Combine that with the view of Clinton as such that this was going to be won.

Jones: Was that your view?

Quayle: No. I thought we could win even with all the problems up until—when Weinberger got re-indicted that Friday before the election, I sort of lost hope because then the trust issue flipped. At the end, it looked like these guys were all lying to the grand jury or lying to the American people. As a matter of fact, on election day, believe it or not, the exit polls—if you believe those—showed that Clinton had a higher trust factor than George Bush. Part of it was because of that Weinberger re-indictment.

Now I knew the problem we had was that there was never a communication of what George Bush had done or what George Bush would do. You’ve got to stay on the offensive and if it’s not your agenda, it’s going to be your opponent’s agenda. Our agenda was, “George Bush has been a good President and has been very effective and won Desert Storm, and the economy has turned around, so support him.” But we never went out and campaigned on an agenda for the future. He basically thought, not that it would be handed to him, but that he had deserved reelection, but nobody bothered to tell the American people why.

Young: There was none of the footage—you had some good footage, I understand, of the triumph in the Gulf War—

Quayle: These ad guys, I don’t know—
Young: They didn’t use a single bit of it, as far as I understand.

Quayle: It got so bad that the campaign people said the President couldn’t meet with foreign dignitaries or foreign heads of state anymore in the Oval Office with the cameras there. He said, “You don’t understand. I’m President of the United States, I’ve got to meet with these folks.” They were just on the offensive. They were paranoid, they were leaking. They had no clue about what to do.

Young: And for some reason the President couldn’t bang on the table and say, “Enough is enough here”?

Quayle: See, when he was Vice President, he didn’t have the responsibility of being President so he was fully engaged, out there all the time. This time, he was the President and he was President first and then a campaigner. That’s the way he viewed it. He spent a lot of his time still discharging his duties, being President of the United States, so he was never totally, fully engaged in that campaign.

Young: All the more reason—

Quayle: To have a good campaign staff, which he didn’t.

Young: All the more reason to say, “I’m not engaged in this much, so I’ve got to have super good people to do this.”

Jones: In that connection, would you make some comparisons, say, back to ’84, which was a re-election year, ahead to ’96, as a way of sharpening more of what was lacking in ’92?

Quayle: In ’84, we’d just come out of a fairly serious recession. The economy was moving along very well. Mondale was the candidate, but I’d say that Mondale wasn’t any Clinton, and Clinton was a very, very good candidate. I think Mondale’s selection of Ferraro, which they thought was a big plus, turned out to be a negative, but not that much of one, because in the scheme of things they still vote for the top of the ticket. But Mondale was doomed when he said that he was going to raise taxes and was proud of it. Everyone just said, “Oh my gosh.”

Jones: But even early in ’84, Mondale’s numbers were not that bad, when he cinched the nomination, in a sense, in the primaries. A lot of what you’re describing is that even early in ’92, it wasn’t being put together.

Quayle: The Reagan team had Lee Atwater. He had other professionals who were really quite good. But Reagan ran the Rose Garden campaign. He was above it. That second debate with Mondale was exceedingly good from Reagan’s perspective. Mondale sort of withered away.

Jones: No Perot.
Quayle: Yes. We didn’t have the Perot factor and things were going well for Reagan. Then in ’92, we had a recession, we had Perot. We had Clinton, who was much tougher, savvier than Mondale and it just never clicked. For an incumbent President with the record that George Bush had to get only 37 percent is rather perplexing—how could that happen? But it did.

Knott: You had a problem with your base—would that be an accurate—at least it was said at the time—

Quayle: [Patrick] Buchanan showed that to some extent, but the Perot factor was huge. Did a lot of the base go to Perot? I don’t know. It’s hard to say. Would we have won if Perot hadn’t been in the race? I tend to think so, because it was a pretty close race otherwise. But he was there and you had to deal with it, which we didn’t.

Knott: You say in the conclusion of your book that you had tried for four years to inject some ideology into a non-ideological administration. There’s still a question in my mind as to George Bush’s ideological commitment. Was there ever any question in your mind about where President Bush stood? Certainly some of your allies questioned his conservative credentials.

Quayle: Yes. As I said, he really welcomed consensus, particularly on domestic matters. He didn’t like the partisan tug-of-war that goes on with any debate, whether it’s health care, taxes, education, even Persian Gulf resolutions. His instincts and his values were conservative. He didn’t wear it on his sleeve. That’s just the way he was raised and the way he thought. But he was never a movement conservative, somebody who was active in the conservative movement, like Reagan. He was always wary of the right wing of the party. He would always say, “You can’t get too close to them.” I know what he’s saying, to some extent. On the other hand, that’s our natural base. That’s our constituency.

I think a lot of that perception comes from the fact that he moved from being pro-choice to pro-life. The pro-lifers never really believed that he was pro-life and the pro-choicers never forgave him. He had the worst of both worlds in that particular situation. But I think the administration was non-ideological in that, if you look on the domestic front, we ended up raising taxes, we passed a consensus bill on the environment, a consensus bill on disabilities, consensus on education, all this. There wasn’t any real ideological, conservative, domestic agenda, other than markets and free enterprise and things of that sort.

Now, on national security, he was viewed as a traditional conservative, skeptical but able to work with the Soviet Union. He did well in Panama, he did well in Desert Storm, so they give him fairly high marks there. But the speeches that he gave were never filled with a lot of the conservative rhetoric. He used, from time to time, conservative values and things like that. I am one that feels that he was essentially conservative, basically conservative, but others disagree with me on that. I think I know him pretty well and I know what his instincts are. If you look at both sons—they are conservative and their father was conservative as well. Now, the mother is not as conservative as either of the boys or even the President. I feel confident he was conservative.
Knott: Do you feel if you had pushed things like the enterprise zones and some of the other domestic initiatives, that it might have made a difference?

Quayle: What would have made a difference? We just really had to communicate, as I have said, what he had done for America and what he would do for America in the future. The American people have very short memories. They want to be told what you’re doing for me today and what you’re going to do for me tomorrow and thank you very much for the past, but I’m more interested in the future. That was never communicated. They tried to do it in an economic club speech in Detroit in the middle of September and I said, “Woe is me, now we’re getting around to this, putting out our economic agenda? It should have been put out six months ago. And run on it from there.” But they never got it together, for whatever reason.

It still baffles me as to why they were so incapable of putting together a rational, common-sense communication program that would have described to the American people what you were going to get for the next four years if you elected George Bush.

Young: In other interviews—I’m not going to specify who, but historians will be reading this, people will be reading it—there was advice the President was getting, much earlier than the economic club speech in Detroit and with an eye toward the campaign and also with an eye to what Clinton was saying, even writing speeches. These are not speechwriters. These are other people who were close to Bush or had access to him, who were urging him very much to do these things, to get it out earlier and to start acknowledging and having a public message, not necessarily related to what you’re going to be doing next time, but to start going out with messages that addressed the things people were interested in and concerned about. It certainly is a puzzle to me as to why that advice was evidently not followed.

Quayle: Part of it, as I said, was that he was just so engaged in being the President. That’s what he thought he was elected to do and he was thinking about it. He wanted to run a Rose Garden campaign like Reagan did in ’84. But the economy in the first half of ’92 was not in good shape. The second half was in very good shape, but we learned the hard way that the most important economic indicator is where the economy is on the first of June, not where the economy is on election day. With the American people, there’s a lag factor of about six months, particularly when it’s getting better. Even though the numbers show that we’re out of recession, they don’t feel it. The jobs are still uncertain. They haven’t been hired back, even though the economy is starting to grow. It was very robust in the second half of 1992. But just to show you—he was still engaged in foreign policy when he had that trip to Australia and to Singapore and Japan where he got sick—that was during the New Hampshire primary.

I was going up to New Hampshire that day to campaign. Now, he got back from that trip and had basically one day of rest, if that, and they sent him up to New Hampshire because there was panic in the air. They had him give eight speeches in one day and just totally exhausted the guy. I think Barbara, after a while, said, “Guys, you’ve got to slow down here. He can only do so much, he just got back from Japan.” That’s when they had that silly picture with this cow up there. I could never understand what that was all about.

Jones: It violated the silly picture of the silly cow rule, right?
Quayle: I guess. Buchanan got 37 percent of the vote, so—and then we were on the defensive. I’m sure people were making these recommendations, and I think in his mind he probably thought he had given those speeches, but there was nobody who was sitting down and strategically trying to figure this thing out.

In ’88, they had three really tough people who were around. That was Sununu, Atwater and Ailes. Those three people were Bush loyalists and they would go out there and punch and counter-punch. They would fall on their swords for George Bush.

In ’92, he didn’t have any of those three around and no one to take their place. There was no one front and center willing to really lie down in front of that truck and get run over for George Bush. They were just unprepared to do that.

Riley: Was George W. involved at this time in trying to get things remedied? Did he just not cut a large enough path?

Quayle: He was in and out. He’d come in and raise Cain and then go back to Texas. He’d come through the White House and, of course, he’d stay in the residence when he was in town, but he’d come through the West Wing just a little bit. He did spend some time over at the campaign. He’d tell his dad he didn’t like what was going on, so his dad knew.

Jones: Much of what you’re describing appears to support Mary Matalin’s description in that book, All’s Fair, in which she’s writing from the Republican perspective and [James] Carville from the Democratic perspective. She said it was so frustrating because it was almost impossible to get people in the White House to think politics. They would say, “Don’t bother us, we’re doing policy.” In essence, we’re governing. Is that right?

Quayle: As I said, his first priority was running the country. In extra time, he’d campaign, and he felt the people would reward him for that rather than for being seen running all over the country in a frantic way, campaigning. Reagan was very successful in doing that in ’84. You’d have to go back and count the number of days that Reagan was actually on the campaign trail in ’84, from the convention on, but it wasn’t a lot.

Knott: That’s right.

Quayle: He spent some time out there in California and when he got back to the White House, he was signing bills and doing all sorts of things in the Rose Garden. That’s what they were trying to orchestrate, but the Congress sent him basically no legislation to sign during that time. They were really just caught flat-footed. These debates, the way that they got those things all scheduled, was less than professional.

Jones: It’s an interesting feature of that election that Republicans in Congress did quite well, given the fact that Clinton was winning the Presidency.

Quayle: We gained seats in the House.
Jones: You gained seats in the House and ended up more or less even in the Senate, as I recall. The aggregate vote for House Republicans was, I believe, 11 percent greater than the Presidential candidate, which was in many ways quite remarkable. Of course, it’s the Perot factor.

Quayle: Yes. I was going to say it’s the Perot factor. Eleven percent is the Perot factor. It’s just like in 1980, when I had more votes and a higher percentage than Reagan, but it was the Anderson factor. But, what was happening then was just beginning, that the Congress was beginning to change. You could see that.

Jones: That’s correct, and there were plenty of signals there for Clinton for ’94, which were sort of unrecognized by the Clinton people.

Quayle: Also, we had redistricting in ’90, which favored us because the demographics were going from the Northeast to the South and the Southwest, which is going from Democratic states to Republican states. That’s probably why we’ll be all right this time, would be my guess, because that’s the way migration is.

Riley: How might you have dealt with Perot? I know it was frustrating. Did you have ideas about combating Perot’s candidacy that weren’t picked up? In retrospect, are there things that could have been done that might have allowed you to deal with that factor in a way that you didn’t at the time?

Quayle: I think Buchanan doing as well as he did created Perot, even though Perot said a long time ago that he was thinking about running on Larry King. We heard it in the White House the next morning. The President said, “Gee, see what my friend Ross Perot said last night?” I said, “No.” “He said he’s going to run for President.” I said, “Oh well, we won’t have to worry about that.” Little did I know that he was going to spend a fortune and be able to gather all this momentum.

I really think Buchanan doing so well up in New Hampshire created Perot. Now, the question is, how could we have handled him better? I remember I attacked him a couple of times and he couldn’t take it. I called him the temperamental tycoon, which got in a big story in the New York Times and elsewhere: He didn’t like that, but then he dropped out of the race and we said, “God, finally. Now we can just get head to head with Clinton.” Then all of a sudden he got back into the race with a bigger vengeance than before. The game plan, initially, was just to ignore him, that he wasn’t a factor. But he was a factor because he was really getting a lot of votes. They really should have done everything they could have to keep him out of those debates. They really should have and they caved in on that way too soon.

Bush could have just said, “I’m not getting into any third-party deal. We’re going to do it with my primary opponent.” Then he could have had debates with Clinton by himself. I think that’s one thing that we could have done—not have those debates. But the campaign had already signed off on them. I don’t think there’s any substitute. We just failed to put forward our agenda. By failing to put forward our agenda, Perot was there to fill it. There was a huge void,
particularly with a lot of the more conservative folks, and those votes were primarily George Bush votes.

Riley: Did George Bush have conversations with you about his history with Perot? There was noise out there about Perot having a personal vendetta.

Quayle: It was a personal vendetta. It all stemmed from—there’s a long history of it. Perot supported [John] Connelly back in 1980, the Presidential run—that was the beginning of it. But what really did it was when George Bush had to tell Perot that he was no longer going to be this ex officio or whatever it was—special Ambassador—for the MIAs [missing in action] in Vietnam. The conversation was between Reagan, Bush and Jim Baker. For whatever reason, Bush got the assignment. The Chief of Staff is supposed to do things like that, but Baker said, “I think I’ll let the Vice President do that.” So he got to tell Perot that he was no longer really welcome in the White House and that the White House pass would not necessarily be there. That was it. I don’t think they ever spoke after that.

It was a vendetta and Perot ended up endorsing Ann Richards in ’94. That was a strong motivation for Ross Perot to do in his friend, George Bush. There was real antagonism between Connelly and the Bush people. Perot was a Connelly person, so it was deep, really deep.

Young: I want to pick up again on what Steve mentioned a little while ago because I know you’ve got to get out.

Quayle: Yes.

Young: This is again on the question of ideology and politics. At one point in your book, you gave some comments on Margaret Thatcher and said that you admired her as an ideological politician rather than a compromiser. That sort of struck me. In which category did Bush fall, or is that not a fair category?

Quayle: Where he really excelled was in foreign policy and he really wasn’t a big compromiser there. He didn’t compromise with Noriega. He didn’t compromise with Saddam Hussein. He did not compromise on seeing Germany reunited when a lot of people were opposed to that. So in the area that he was focused on, he was not much of a compromiser. Where he didn’t have the ideology was with the domestic agenda. He was basically a free market guy—in government, less interference is better and smaller government is good, and if he had to do something with big government, so be it. That didn’t really sway him too much one way or another.

Margaret Thatcher, particularly in her speeches, was very doctrinaire. George Bush’s speeches were not that way. As a matter of fact, his best speeches were more on world affairs and personalities in the world. He was never really known for strong domestic speeches—why do markets work? Why are tax cuts important? What can you do with enterprise zones? What does competition mean to health care? Why is a voucher system good for education? Those things—he believed in all of them but they just weren’t a priority with him.

Young: So what about Dan Quayle?
Quayle: I view myself much more from an ideological point of view. I mean, that’s why I got into politics. I have a pretty strong ideology. I know you have to compromise to get things done, but I don’t start out there. I know you have to forge consensus from time to time to have success, but I think that ideology really drives me much more—

Young: So you’re referring to the strong stance you take from which to do the politics, the compromise that you have to do?

Quayle: Well, that’s the art of politics. You have to do that. But the question is how you get there. I come from a fairly strong ideological doctrine and belief, to try to move things more in my direction. I don’t think you can move them in your direction if you don’t have those hardcore beliefs.

Young: It looks like the Bush administration, the Bush Presidency, was inattentive to the ideological politics that was involved, and you were the strong person then. As you put it in your book, you tried to give it more of an ideological edge than this administration had. Historically, that’s going to be very interesting.

Quayle: There was never really much of an ideological drive with the domestic agenda. We had Darman, who was the domestic czar, but he was the budget director and it was more important for him to pass budgets with numbers than to infuse a philosophy or an ideology into the debate. Where I came from was a far more ideological point of reference. I tried to get things that did fit my ideology into the budget, into the mix, and passed for legislation.

Young: Sununu?

Quayle: Sununu was ideological but as Chief of Staff, he had to really be careful that he was only carrying the President’s message. Every once in a while he would try to get his viewpoint in there. It never quite worked because that wasn’t really his role. But I know him as a person. He’s quite ideological and very opinionated. He has very strong opinions. He doesn’t see both sides of a lot of issues.

Young: And so where there was an ideological politician in the Vice Presidency—did that really fit? You said Sununu had to carry the President’s message.

Quayle: But Sununu welcomed my ideology because he agreed with it, and he was always encouraging me to speak up on these things.

Young: But in your experience as Vice President, is it difficult to be an ideological politician if you don’t have one in the White House?

Quayle: No. I think it would be the other way around. If you had two strong ideological people and they didn’t necessarily agree, then it would be more difficult. Now, if you have one that sees both sides of the argument, who is basically conservative but just doesn’t have an ideological
agenda, as such, but is open to it, he’s a lot easier to work with than somebody who has a definite ideology because you’re going to clash.

Jones: To clarify what you’re saying, you’re not saying that Bush was anti-ideology?

Quayle: No, he was very open to it. It just wasn’t part of his chemistry. It wasn’t part of his background. That’s not what he got the most satisfaction from. But he was very open to it.

Riley: Sure.

Young: But a number in his administration were not. I think that’s probably fair.

Quayle: I think that’s probably true. A lot of people in his administration were scared of conservatives and were always concerned that the conservatives were manipulating this and that, but that’s where the Republican Party is.

Jones: There was also a period in which a lot of the Christian right was taking a real bashing in the press and there was worry about that and the—

Quayle: And the way that they did that in ’92 was probably the best example. I think Air Force One was in St. Louis and they were supposed to speak at Pat Robertson’s university, Regents. I think that’s where it was. It was something with the Christian coalition and Pat Robertson, and they delayed their departure until after six o’clock and flew in at eight o’clock that night so it wouldn’t be on the nightly news. Those were the kinds of things they did that just infuriated a lot of his natural constituency. The press, they’re biased but they’re not dumb, and they’re going to figure this thing out and they’ll print it. It’s not going to be a huge story, but they’re going to print it and they’re going to say it and people are going to pick this thing up.

Young: How would you help historians of the future assess the Bush Presidency, as you look back on it?

Quayle: I think you’ve got to look at the key things in the Bush Presidency. Obviously, the bookends were the election in ’88 and losing the election in ’92. Those were two major things. Eighty-eight was basically a follow-on with the Reagan years, keeping a good thing going even though it was “kinder and gentler.” It was an extension of Reagan.

Then we had all these interesting success stories that somehow never really got communicated and it ended in a defeat with only 37 percent of the vote. We had the Perot factor. So, how did we get from winning here to losing here with all these wonderful achievements, particularly in foreign policy? My answer would be that the American people don’t really care that much about—when it comes to voting—foreign policy, though they should. Desert Storm was almost two years past tense by the time the election rolled around and therefore pocketbook issues really played much more of a role.

But to assess the Bush administration in historic terms, I think the more I look back on it, the more I sort of marvel at these achievements and the things that happened on his watch. Now, is
he going to take credit for it? Does he deserve all the credit? No. But he certainly managed those situations fairly well when they arose. Bush’s accomplishments were extraordinary: the Berlin Wall came down, Germany was united, Russia had a democratically elected president, we won the Cold War, Eastern and Central Europe was freed from Communism, apartheid eliminated in South Africa, and the economy was growing at 6 percent. A great legacy to give to the American people.

Young: Yes. Well, much has been written about deadlock between the President and Congress when they’re in the hands of different parties. It looks to me like there were substantial Congressional achievements.

Quayle: We had the Americans with Disabilities Act, we had the National Environmental Education Act. We had the budget. It’s interesting because there are certain things government has to do. You have to pass budgets, you have to pass spending bills, you have to address these issues. Sometimes a divided government is the preferable way to do it because you’re going to have to—there you expect compromise. You just try to find large coalitions on either side to get things done.

If you have a united government, as Clinton found out, it’s very difficult to get things through because the opposition party is going to be totally against you. You’re going to try to do everything in a partisan way and you can’t do that. When you try to do it in a bipartisan way, you say, “Wait a second. Why aren’t you dealing with us, we’re the majority?” But when you have the opposite party there, you tell your Republican friends, “We had to be bipartisan because we don’t have the votes,” and they understand that.

To some extent, you could say that things actually move forward a little better when you have a divided government. I think people want a divided government. I don’t think consciously they vote for it, but there is some subconscious thought that goes with the way they vote for a split government. I think it comes down to the fact that they basically don’t trust politicians and it’s better to have them down there fighting, though they say they don’t like the bickering. They do. They figure that’s what they’re supposed to do—fight and not get anything done. And sometimes that’s not all that bad.

Jones: Polls sustain that view. The polls, when we ask voters that, that’s what they say. They like that.

Quayle: They don’t mind it, otherwise they wouldn’t—they keep voting for it.

Knott: That’s right.

Quayle: They keep voting for a divided government. Clinton had a united government for two years. We had a divided government. Reagan had a divided government, basically. The House was always Democratic. Carter had a united government and look what he did. Nixon had a divided government, and Johnson had a divided government.
Jones: The most productive year in the Clinton administration of major legislation was 1996, which would have been when everybody thought there would be total deadlock.

Quayle: Ninety-six—welfare reform and all that, yes. That’s because the Republicans had given up on Dole and they wanted to save themselves. They said, “Look, he’s going to get reelected, let’s deal,” and that’s what they did. Dole just couldn’t believe all the legislation that got passed in the last few days, few weeks of the Clinton administration.

Jones: The third most major pieces of legislation in the post-World-War-II period were passed.

Quayle: In ’96?

Jones: Yes.

Quayle: Sort of incredible.

Lee: I have a question. What’s next for you? Do you see yourself running for public office again?

Quayle: I don’t know. I get that question all the time. I haven’t ruled it out, but I enjoy what I’m doing now.

Lee: What are you doing now? There was a bit of confusion about that with the name of your firm, so it’s something we wanted to know about as well.

Quayle: I am global chairman for Cerberus, which is a private equity fund in New York. I have an office in New York and travel to Asia and Europe frequently.

I don’t know if I will return to public life. I’m still young enough to do it. We’ll have to wait and see. I see Lamar Alexander jumped back into the race for the Senate. I’ve talked to him and he’s all excited. I just turned 55. There’s plenty of time. Right now I enjoy what I’m doing, so we’ll have to wait and see.

Young: I hope you find another chance. You’re so unstuffy about it all.

Quayle: I hope this is helpful.