Richard M. Nixon: Promises of a Shift in Priorities

As the presidential candidate enjoying a comfortable lead in the opinion polls, Richard M. Nixon has generally abstained from a detailed discussion of issues and ideas.

Nixon, for example, is observing a moratorium on discussion of Vietnam while the Paris talks are in progress; he was highly circumspect in talking about Justice Fortas and Mayor Daley while they were at the top of the news. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say Nixon believes that selectivity rather than silence is golden. He has, of course, gone on record on a number of issues, including some of particular interest to scientists and engineers.

His views on government science policy are contained in a full-dress statement issued on 5 October and revealingly titled "The Research Gap: Crisis in American Science and Technology." In the statement Nixon comes out firmly for giving a higher priority to research in general and weapons research in particular. On the campaign trail he has put forward, but so far not really pressed, criticism of the Democratic administration's Pentagon policy reminiscent of the "missile gap" issue raised by John F. Kennedy with considerable effect in the 1960 campaign.

The Nixon statement says, "The American scientific and technological community plays a key role in maintaining our well being and our national security. Science and technology compose a new Atlas that upholds our economic growth, our military defense, our educational system and our bright hopes for the future of man."

Despite his warm opinion of the scientific community Nixon has so far not developed strong links with that community, particularly with its university parishioners. Some academics suggest the reason may be "historical." Nixon established himself as a national political figure with his part in the Alger Hiss case in the late 1940's, and he was subsequently identified with playing variations on the theme that the Democrats were lax in resisting internal subversion and an international Communist conspiracy. When the Eisenhower-Nixon ticket triumphed in 1952, President Eisenhower remained aloof from political infighting, and to Nixon, for example, fell the role of acting as envoy to Senator Joseph McCarthy in the Eisenhower Administration's efforts to moderate the actions of the junior senator from Wisconsin. Nixon bore the main burden of national compaigning in the off-year elections of 1954. He campaigned widely against the Democrats on the formula K_1C_3 (Korea, Communism, Corruption, and Controls). His natural adversary in the campaign was defeated Presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson, the Beau Geste of the intellectuals, and the exchanges between the two men took on a sharp personal quality for which many intellectuals, including Stevenson's admirers in academe, blamed Nixon.

Oppenheimer Case

The Oppenheimer case was a *cause célèbre* for a significant section of the World War II generation of American scientists. Nixon played no direct role, but his name probably suffered from the emotional fallout from the case which soured many scientists on the Eisenhower administration.

Many scientists today feel that the security fever of the early 1950's is long over and should be forgotten. It therefore would seem a little unfair that the reservations about Nixon linger among intellectuals. Nixon on the record has never been "anti-intellectual." He is an intelligent man who was a high achiever from school days through law school at Duke. Perhaps surprisingly, he is known to friends as an admirer of Woodrow Wilson and is, in a modest way, a Wilson scholar.

In part, the coolness of the academics would seem to arise from matters of credentials and style. Nixon is a small-town boy. He grew up in the Quaker settlement of Whittier, now a suburb of Los Angeles, and would, if elected, be the first President born in what is now the nation's most populous state and most experimental culture. Nixon followed the familiar route of moving from a small-town law practice into politics, with a World War II interlude of service as a Navy Corps ground officer in the South Pacific. After 1962, he fared well in a big-league law practice.

Nixon's public manner, particularly his rhetoric and gestures, remind one that he was an accomplished college debater. He lacks the patrician patina which attracted the intellectuals to the two Roosevelts, and the Harvard proofmark and wit and wealth which drew the academics, if belatedly, to Kennedy. It is doubtless significant that in university circles in Cambridge, where the preconvention favorite this year was Senator Eugene McCarthy, there was also activity in behalf of Governor Nelson Rockefeller and very little then or now for Nixon.

Like those very different men Lyndon Johnson and Harry Truman, Nixon doesn't "relate" very well to university intellectuals. As one academic with a strong interest in public policy matters observed, if Nixon won the Presidency "he would have to get his intellectuals somewhere else."

A contributing factor may well be a phenomenon noted by one observer in Cambridge, a major recruiting territory for academic talent for the federal service. "There's a feeling here that we've spent too much time on national and international affairs in recent years. Now we're paying more attention to local and regional problems." Whatever the reasons, if the coolness of the intellectuals, which incidentally extends to the candidacy of Hubert Humphrey, continues, it could pose a serious problem for the talent hunters of the next administration.

In terms of the popular vote, the question of whether scientists and engineers will support Nixon is hardly a decisive one. The question of whether Nixon, if elected, will support science is more to the point.

The short answer would appear to be yes, with emphasis on national security and prestige. The thrust of the Nixon argument is clearly expressed in the science policy statement when he says, "Today, the United States is shortchanging its scientific community. We are risking the opening of a research gap between our efforts and that of the Soviet Union.

This is the second in a series of articles on Presidential candidates.

"Faced with dynamic possibilities for science, the current administration is hobbled by the static philosophy that technological potentialities are limited—that we have reached a technological 'plateau.'"

Nixon goes on to assert that in 1967 the Soviet Union was, for the first time, believed to be spending more on defense research and development than the United States was. The danger, he says, arises not from existing weapons but from "possible breakthroughs by the huge Soviet research and development establishment." We in the United States, he continues, "can afford to be selective in our weapons only if we are resolute in maintaining a comprehensive lead in research and development."

Nixon appears to take his theme here from a report of the Republican Coordinating Committee's task force on national security matters headed by two former secretaries of defense in the Eisenhower administration, Neil H. McElroy and Thomas S. Gates. About half the members of the task force are retired high-ranking military officers, including two former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arthur W. Radford and Air Force General Nathan B. Twining.

The task force criticizes "a failure to acquire and deploy new [weapons] systems on a timely basis. . . . Until the 1960's we sought clear-cut American *superiority*. In contrast current policies appear to accept, if not to seek, *parity* with the USSR."

In a report titled "Decisions in National Security: Patchwork or Policy?" the GOP task force finds much to criticize in the machinery for weapons selection and procurement developed during the tenure of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. The report finds "overcentralization in the Department of Defense—overmanagement of our security structure—over-reliance on cost accounting procedures and computer techniques—and a downgrading of seasoned human judgment."

Selection of the controversial TFX multiservice aircraft is cited as an object lesson in the dangers of civilians overriding weapons-choice recommendations of military professionals. And the report charges that Pentagon civilians have overreached themselves by making tactical decisions which should be made by field commanders.

Nixon is said to agree with many of the points made in the report and, if elected, is expected to turn for advice to members of the task force. If he should make drastic changes at the Pentagon, particularly if he should scrap the McNamara planning and budgeting methodology, Nixon would, of course, risk being accused of falling into the embrace of what Eisenhower called "the military-industrial complex."

Nixon has not expressed himself in detail on arms control and disarmament matters, but in a carefully worded statement in mid-September he said he favors ratification of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty but feels the Senate should defer acting on it because of the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviets. For many American scientists, nuclear weapons policy is of overriding importance. Many of those who backed the test-ban treaty think that the passage of time before the nonproliferation treaty goes into force diminishes the chances of the NPT's being effective. Reportedly Nixon's statement helped propel several well-known scientists into the ranks of avowed Humphrey supporters.

Nixon has repeatedly stressed the importance of the U.S. space effort on the grounds of both scientific progress and world prestige, and last weekend he reaffirmed his intention, if elected President, to make the United States first in space, though he gave no details.

First in Space

Nixon's references in his science policy statement to recent cutbacks in federal science funds are likely to please many scientists. "Scientific activity cannot be turned off and on like a faucet," he says. "The withdrawal of support disperses highly trained research teams, closes vital facilities, loses spinoff benefits, and disrupts development momentum." With a close-range familiarity rare in such documents the statement notes, "Especially hard-hit in the reductions is aid for post-doctoral students, who serve as graduate student instructors."

Indicating what action he would favor as President, Nixon says, "Beyond the need for reasonable increases in subsidies for basic research, there are several specific goals that are of such commanding importance that the government should commit itself to their achievement." Included among these are new methods of treating the mentally ill and developing sources of cheap energy, specifically by fostering the AEC's breeder reactor project.

As is predictable in a Republican candidate, Nixon puts emphasis on cooperation between government and private enterprise. He says that, in the realm of defense and space exploration, government should dominate the effort but that in other areas the federal government should "act as a catalyst sponsoring research and scholarship." He cites the COMSAT space communications cooperation, apparently as a model.

Nixon criticizes the lack of coordination in the federal R & D effort, saying this lack could be attributable to the fact that the President's Science Advisory Committee and the National Science Foundation "limit themselves to broad questions of national science policy." Nixon promises efforts to "cooperate with industry and the academic community in an effort to make maximum use of scientific advance to help solve major national problems. This effort would also seek to assist state and local governments." He opposes creation of a federal "scientific czar."

Nixon's own record in office yields few clues to his attitude on science policy. He became Vice President when that office still meant a term of underemployment for an energetic man. President Eisenhower did, from the beginning, insist that Nixon be fully informed on major policy matters and made him a member of the Cabinet and of the National Security Council. During the second term, Nixon became chairman of the President's Commission on Government Contracts, which combatted racial discrimination in work done under government contract, and he headed the Cabinet Committee on Price Stability, which gave him on-the-job education in federal economic policy. The Vice President in those days, however, did not hold the chairmanships of the Space Council and the Marine Sciences Council, which in the 1960's became ex-officio posts that give Vice Presidents working insight into scientific and technological questions.

Vice President Nixon, as Eisenhower's emissary, played a more important role in foreign affairs than his predecessors. As a regular at National Security Council meetings he was fully informed on disarmament and arms control issues. One official who was a veteran of the meetings recalls that Nixon "soaked up a good deal" but expressed no sharply defined personal views on nuclear arms policy. He did support the test-ban treaty in 1963. Nixon's critics note that prominent scientists and engineers in the group

(organized by former AEC chairman Admiral Lewis Strauss and including Edward Teller and Nobel prize winner Willard Libby) that recently announced support of Nixon (*Science*, 4 October) tend to be "hawks" on nuclear arms questions, but there would appear to be inadequate evidence to indicate what position the Nixon administration would take, for example, on a total nuclear test ban.

On health and education policy, the Nixon camp has prepared, but, at this writing, still had not released, full-scale statements. The next administration will face a number of questions about financing and possible extension of Medicare and Medicaid legislation. The Republican platform includes the most liberal plank on health care in GOP history, and Nixon's responses to questions on health care indicate that a Republican administration would accept the Medicare-Medicaid revolution but seek to restrict costs and shift control where possible to local authorities and, in particular, the medical profession. A Nixon administration might be expected to be friendlier than any preceding Republican administration to federal programs for training physicians and other medical personnel. On other education programs, the prospects are simply not clear.

In social legislation Nixon could be expected to favor a more limited involvement of the federal government. It is thought unlikely that any administration would dismantle the Poverty program, but Nixon would probably stress incentives to private initiative and the enlistment of private enterprise. He has taken a stiff attitude toward campus protest. In May he called the Columbia riots "the first major skirmish in a revolutionary struggle to seize the universities of this country and transform them into sanctuaries for radicals and vehicles for revolutionary political and social goals." Nixon's definition of a university is "a community of scholars seeking truth. It is a place where reason reigns and the right of dissent is safeguarded and cherished. Force and coercion are wholly alien to that community and those who employ it have no place there. . . ."

Legislatively, if Nixon were elected, much would depend on the composition of Congress. Polls now predict that the Democrats are likely to control the House of Representatives by a very narrow margin and the Senate by a reduced majority. The prospect is for domination by a conservative majority drawn from both parties.

Democratic majorities in Congress worked reasonably well with the White House in the last 6 years of the Eisenhower administration, but Democratic party discipline was considerably firmer in the days of Speaker Sam Rayburn and Majority leader Lyndon Johnson than it has been recently in the House and Senate. And Eisenhower as President had a uniquely unpartisan aura.

Whether the Democrats would be willing to bury partisan resentment of the "old" Nixon remains a question. Certainly there is a "new" Nixon, to judge by the tone and technique of his well-organized and relaxed campaign. The man many people thought wrote his own political epitaph with his farewell address to the press after his defeat in the California gubernatorial race in 1962 has made perhaps the most remarkable of all political comebacks. He is not a charismatic leader and does not seem to need the mass admiration to which some politicians become addicted. What makes Nixon run is a question that neither his friends nor his foes have really been able to answer. But he managed to unify his party, largely, it seems, because of his traits of energy and perseverance. He hopes to unify the country the same way. And, it is perhaps those qualities which help most to explain the political rise and fall and rise of Richard Nixon.

—JOHN WALSH

Defense Funds: Congress Worries about Costs of R & D and ABM

Congress's growing concern about the size of the federal R & D budget was manifested in an unusually vivid manner on 3 October when the Senate, by a decisive 47 to 19 vote, passed a restricting amendment offered by Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D–Mont.). Mansfield's amendment to the 1969 Defense Appropriations Act would have limited indirect expenses on Department of Defense research grants or contracts to 25 percent of the direct costs.

Fortunately, in the opinion of many research administrators, this amendment was deleted when the representatives of the Senate and House appropriations committees met in conference on 10 October. The conferees (and the Congress) did agree, however, to adopt language on the subject of indirect research costs. Congress agreed "that new and comprehensive studies should be made of this entire area" by the General Accounting Office and by the appropriate congressional committees, studies which "should be directed toward achieving a uniform formula for the ascertaining of indirect costs on research grants *throughout the entire Government*" (italics added). According to the language adopted, indirect costs should be "based upon sound accounting principles"; "it appears," the statement continues, "that the proper proportion of indirect costs to direct costs should not exceed 25 percent." (It should be noted that research *contracts* were eliminated from this expression of congressional concern.)

The Mansfield amendment was a subject of "some considerable controversy" in the House-Senate conference, according to Senator Richard B. Russell. Representative Emilio Q. Daddario (D–Conn.), chairman of the House subcommittee on science, research and development, had urged the House Appropriations Committee Chairman not to accept the amendment limiting indirect costs because his subcommittee "has carefully investigated the matter in the past, concluding that such restrictions are generally undesirable." On 11 October, Daddario told the House that he realized that the indirect costs issue might be raised again in the future. He said his subcommittee would look into this matter and determine whether the Bureau of the Budget Circular A-74, setting guidelines for cost sharing by universities receiving Federal Research grants, had been properly implemented since it was issued in 1965. (The subject of the allocation of indirect costs for federal