

## Vice Presidential Influence/Presidential Needs

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*The expanded role of the vice presidency has been studied extensively, but its use as a lens to understand the presidency itself has been less frequent. For the past four decades, “outsider” presidents with little experience holding office in Washington, DC have dominated the presidency. Over that same period, the role of the vice presidents, who have been Washington insiders, has expanded dramatically. Examining instances of vice-presidential influence could shed important light on the nature of “insider” knowledge and on the kinds of skills and information presidents need to make and implement decisions.*

For the vast majority of American history the idea of the vice president at the commander-in-chief's side when making critical decisions would have been ridiculous. The archetypal vice president was the fictional Alexander Throttlebottom from the 1932 musical “Of Thee I Sing,” who took the job because no one else wanted it. He had to buy tickets for the tour to get into the White House.<sup>1</sup>

But over the past four decades vice presidents have joined the president's inner circle. This change has occurred alongside a trend of electing “outsider” presidents who have little or no time in national political office. The trend started with the 1976 election of Georgia governor Jimmy Carter. Presidents Reagan, Clinton, and George W. Bush had also been governors. President Obama had served less than a full term in the U.S. Senate. All of these presidents had campaigned on a platform of changing Washington. Each of these outsider candidates chose seasoned Washington “insiders” who had extensive experience in Congress and in some cases the Executive branch as their running mate. This experience was often a factor in the selection process. In office, each of these outsider presidents turned to their vice presidents for advice. The presidency of George H.W. Bush, very much a DC “insider” and his less influential vice president Dan

Quayle is the exception that proves the rule.

Several excellent studies have analyzed the expansion of vice-presidential influence and activity. The findings note several sources of change including changes to the presidency as an institution since the New Deal and more recent institutional changes to the vice presidency, and the trend of electing “outsider” candidates to the White House. The institutional changes to the vice presidency include the vice president’s regular access to the president, the expansion of vice presidential staff, the vice president’s West Wing office, and incorporation of the Office of the Vice President into the White House policy process.<sup>2</sup> My own research found support for these factors but emphasized the importance of outsider presidents coming to rely on their insider vice presidents for advice.<sup>3</sup>

Vice presidential influence requires one thing above all else, the president’s interest and support. This opens the question of what the president gains from the vice president’s input? What “outsider” presidential needs require the “insider” vice president’s input? Given that the president is already served by a vast array of advisors. What makes the vice president a unique resource as an advisor?

Every president has different decision-making needs<sup>4</sup> so the specific role of vice presidents (and other advisors)<sup>5</sup> has varied under different presidents. This paper hopes to try a different approach and identify broader patterns of vice-presidential influence that are consistent across administrations. In short, this paper hopes to begin the process of better defining the nature of this “insider knowledge” that outsider president’s need to be effective.

### Methodological Issues

Paul Light noted that outsider presidencies have “policy vacuums” that create opportunities for vice presidential influence. These vacuums occur in areas where an administration has little experience and no other players are occupying the space, allowing the vice president to play a role without coming into conflict. The question is whether or not there is any consistency to the types of these vacuums that appear across

administrations? Vice presidents frequently advise on areas in which they have particular expertise (Mondale on civil rights, Gore on the environment and telecommunications). But because vice presidents bring different substantive expertise with them and critical issues and presidential interest varies, it is unlikely that specific issues continue to re-emerge. The challenge is to identify broader issue areas where there may be some ongoing patterns.

The entire universe of vice-presidential influence is not readily available and we cannot know if what is available is in any way a representative sample. Much of the advice given by vice presidents to presidents is in strict confidence. Further, it is not always clear what shaped an ultimate decision. The relationship between the president and vice president is complex and influence is often subtle – and very much a two-way street. Thus this paper is an exploratory endeavor in which several instances of a type of influence is taken as an indicator of a broader pattern (in cases where the broader pattern is well-established that is explicated), while one instance of vice presidential influence in an area can be taken as a potential indicator.

For the purposes of this paper, the focus is on the vice-presidential role as an advisor, rather than as a surrogate. Vice-presidential roles as lobbyists, diplomats, and task force chiefs are primarily seen through the lens of how they advanced the advisory role rather than in their own – often very important – right. These roles, however, can be difficult to disambiguate. It is while conducting foreign diplomacy that vice presidents often acquire the information used to advise presidents. Gore's role chairing bilateral commissions was intimately tied to his role providing policy advice.

To give an example of what precisely we are looking to consider, most modern vice presidents have played an active role in filling administration positions. But the vice president's contacts and interests – and the president's needs determine the specific positions they advise on. Gore, for example recommended several people for positions dealing with environmental issues. Predicting that an insider vice president will provide staffers for positions to an outsider president is hardly an earth-shattering finding. A more narrow finding that would be relevant would be if certain cabinet, sub-cabinet, or

White House positions, were consistently going to vice presidential allies across administrations. Similarly, finding that vice presidents tend to chair committees that coordinate bureaucracies would not be terribly notable. Finding that vice presidents across administrations continually engage with specific bureaucracies would be.

In considering vice presidential influence and advice, the role of vice-presidential staffers or close allies is also included. Vice presidents fill policy vacuums, if vice presidential staffers are consistently filling certain kinds of policy vacuums across administrations that too would be an indicator.

Finally, because the author's dissertation focused on the vice president's national security role, this paper is skewed towards those issues. Other issues are included and future work could expand to incorporate domestic affairs.

#### Theories of Vice-Presidential Influence

Surveying observations from my dissertation and from other discussions about the presidency and the vice presidency proposes several potential hypotheses about the vice-presidential role as an advisor. This section is a sort of inverted pyramid, beginning with broad pictures of vice presidential advice and then seeking to narrow it to more specific arenas.

Since this analysis is very much in the bureaucratic politics paradigm, it makes sense to begin with Richard Neustadt. He observes that to be effective, a president "must become his own director of his own central intelligence," obtaining not only policy information, but political intelligence, "every scrap of fact, opinion, gossip, bearing on his interests and relationships as president." The presidents need to be able to place this information in context with a detailed knowledge of the organizational stakes and processes within which individuals act. Finally, Neustadt argues, the president needs choices and the time to consider them.<sup>6</sup> This suggests that an outsider president may not know, and might seek vice presidential counsel on the other players, the organizational processes, and the options for engaging with these processes and players, but still lacks some specificity about the nature of this advice.

One oft-stated observation is that in bureaucratic politics, “Where you sit is where you stand.” Vice presidents, however, have no institutional affiliation and can thus provide advice unfiltered by any organizational perspective that is only in the service of the president. While Paul Kengor disputes this theory, noting vice presidents often are protecting their own political interests, particularly their future prospects,<sup>7</sup> if true one would expect presidents to rely on vice presidents for independent information on options and organizational behavior.

Anthony Lake, Clinton’s first National Security Advisor observed that state governors rarely face issues of life and death and may turn to their vice presidents. He also observed that only the chief of staff and the vice president can bring politics and national security together.<sup>8</sup>

When I interviewed him for my dissertation, Stephen Hadley, George W. Bush’s second National Security Advisor, echoed and expanded on part of Lake’s observation:

VPs have run for office; they are political animals. The President hears from policy people and political people and has to make decisions to balance both. The one person who has the combination of policy experience and political experience is the vice president. This is especially true if the VP also comes from Congress, and the president is a former governor. Then the VP can bring that unique kind of Congressional experience as well. So I think it is very logical he would be a unique advisor to the president.<sup>9</sup>

Lake’s observation suggests the vice presidents will be important sources of support to outsider presidents on issues surrounding the use of force. Balancing politics and policy is an important framework, but it is too general for a hypothesis. The specific policies and the types of politics (public support, Congressional approval) tend to vary.

Chase Untermeyer, who served under George H.W. Bush during both his vice presidency and presidency, observed that Hill experience should be a requirement for

the vice presidency "...because the vice president can be the most impactful, most important lobbyist that the White House has in the Congress.... And if you've been there, you know the secret handshakes and you know the power of certain things... ways of working the system that the most intelligent, best equipped governor of a distant state will not bring necessarily to Washington."<sup>10</sup> Untermeyer's observation aligns with Neustadt's observation about gathering "political intelligence" but with the added specificity of Capitol Hill.

Congress is not the only Washington institution that can be a challenge for presidents. Federal bureaucracies are highly specialized and complex. Lake's successor, Clinton's second National Security Advisor, the late Sandy Berger, observed, "Using the intelligence community is a two-way street. You have to pose the right questions and bring the right people in. Very few can do this. People get elected and bring in former CEOs or deans as cabinet members who have never dealt with the intelligence community. I always thought there should be some kind of training program. We only get 20 percent out of the intelligence community. It took me years to get it right, then you are frustrated, but how can you know what they need and what they can do?"<sup>11</sup>

No doubt a similar statement could be made about many of the agencies of the federal government. Vice presidents who have served in Congress overseeing Washington bureaucracies, or actually worked in them, can help overcome this gap.

Berger's observation, combined with the vice president's lack of bureaucratic links, suggests that vice presidents can play an important role understanding the intelligence community's operations specifically. One important question will be if there are other bureaucracies that consistently receive vice presidential attention.

This expertise balancing policy with politics also applies to dealing with foreign governments. One vice presidential national security staffer explained how insider vice presidents can help outsider presidents in international affairs, "Things don't automatically occur to you on a Chinese menu, you have to understand each instrument.

Very few people walk into office understanding the economic, political, and military instruments.”<sup>12</sup>

An additional component to this formulation would be Neustadt’s political intelligence, that is a careful understanding of the personalities of the foreign leaders involved. Just as vice presidents are well-placed to collect political intelligence about Congress, they are also well placed to collect that kind of information on foreign counterparts.

A final issue to consider in searching for patterns in vice presidential expertise. The first issue is the nature of the vice president’s help. Advice can be about “what” to do: that is, what policy option to pursue. But advice can also be about “how,” that is the communications, strategy, and implementation of a chosen policy. Because, as Stephen Hadley observed, vice presidents help balance political and policy concerns, the “what” and the “how” may be closely intertwined and not easily separated.

Having reviewed this discussion of vice-presidential advisory roles, several tentative hypotheses suggest themselves:

**H1 Insider vice presidents will advise outsider presidents on Congressional affairs.**

**H2 Insider vice presidents will advise outsider presidents on use of force**

**H3a Insider vice presidents will advise outsider presidents on intelligence affairs**

**H3b Insider vice presidents will advise outsider presidents on the operations of other bureaucracies**

**H4a Insider vice presidents will advise outsider presidents on foreign political leaders**

**H4b Insider vice presidents will advise outsider presidents on options for influencing other countries**

## Congress

Reviewing recent history confirms that every modern vice president has played a significant role in congressional relations. One of the vice president's few institutional prerogatives is presiding over the Senate and the attendant office and staff on Capitol Hill. Vice presidents who have sought to rule, rather than merely preside, over the Senate have not been successful. However, the role provides convenient access to the Senate and to the House. In addition, each of the modern vice presidents has had at least some experience on Capitol Hill and were thus "members of the club" who knew the "secret handshake."

<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Years in Senate</b>	<b>Years in House</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Mondale</b>	12	0	12
<b>Bush</b>	0	4	4
<b>Quayle</b>	8	4	12
<b>Gore</b>	8	8	16
<b>Cheney</b>	0	10	10
<b>Biden</b>	36	0	36

Carter explicitly chose Mondale for his experience in the Senate,<sup>13</sup> and that experience that proved invaluable. Mondale became a sort of lobbyist-in-chief helping ensure the passage of some of the administration's top legislative priorities.<sup>14</sup> Although Bush was not nearly as experienced on Capitol Hill, he had maintained contacts on the Hill. Early in the administration he oversaw efforts to obtain congressional approval for the sale of sophisticated AWACS to Saudi Arabia.<sup>15</sup> He continued to be a point of contact on Capitol Hill for the administration, using the perquisites of the vice presidency (such as rides on Air Force 2 or access to White House events) to win over legislators. In the process, he collected political intelligence.<sup>16</sup>

Quayle faced significant challenges playing a substantive role in the Bush 41 administration. One area where he had significant, and unique, expertise among the president's top advisors was on the Senate. Quayle was the only member of Bush's inner circle who had served in the Senate, where he had been well-regarded and effective.<sup>17</sup>



The accuracy of Quayle's vote counts on the ultimately unsuccessful nomination of John Tower as Secretary of Defense established his expertise and throughout the administration Quayle was a key lobbyist for the administration whose advice on legislative affairs was taken into full consideration.<sup>18</sup>

Despite his lengthy service on Capitol Hill, Gore played a smaller role in Clinton administration legislative affairs than vice presidents did in previous or subsequent administrations. In Congress Gore had focused on policy and had not cultivated friends in the House or Senate.<sup>19</sup> Stuart Eizenstat observed:

Gore's political antennae were not as sensitive as Clinton's, so he did not play the same role in the Clinton administration. Clinton had no Washington experience. Even though Clinton had enormous political capabilities, he needed Gore's advice. Gore advised on the Senate, but he was more of a substantive guy who didn't make lots of friends in the Senate.<sup>20</sup>

Gore, by all accounts, was engaged in administration decision-making and Clinton regularly sought Gore's input. But on Capitol Hill, Gore may not have provided "political intelligence" on the state of play in Congress so much as institutional knowledge.

Cheney had served in the House of Representatives for a decade and rose to Minority Whip; he was a key administration liaison to Capitol Hill, joining the weekly Senate Republican Policy lunch and obtaining space on the House side (a first) to facilitate his liaison role. Cheney was not only a lobbyist, but also a strategist. In the case of Senator Jeffords' defection to the Democrats, Cheney – against most of Bush's political team – advised against efforts to entice him to remain on the Republican side. Cheney argued that if successful, the gambit would create incentives for many Senators to threaten to leave the party and with such a thin majority the Democrats were unlikely to be effective.<sup>21</sup>

Vice President Biden has also played a central role as the White House facilitator on Capitol Hill and was nicknamed “the McConnell Whisperer” for his good working relationship with the Senate Majority Leader.<sup>22</sup>

Mondale is perhaps the quintessential example of the vice president as an advisor on Capitol Hill. His advice was not merely based in his personal contacts in the Senate, it was also based in his institutional knowledge. This knowledge could be tactical. On one bill, when the White House sought changes, staffers briefed Mondale and showed him a written memo they intended to take to the Hill. Mondale agreed with the substance of the briefing but instructed them *not* take the memo to the Hill because it would be likely to leak and be on the front-page of the newspapers the next day.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, Mondale offered strategic counsel, urging the president not to push certain initiatives because Congress already had too much on its agenda. Mondale oversaw the White House administration committee that set priorities for the upcoming legislative agenda.

Mondale’s role in Carter’s 1978 veto of a Defense Authorization bill highlights the multiple aspects of political intelligence in dealing with Capitol Hill. First, on policy both Carter and Mondale opposed the bill because it included funds for a nuclear aircraft carrier, which they felt the Navy did not need.<sup>24</sup> For Mondale there were broader issues, the President was seen as weak on Capitol Hill and Mondale felt that the White House needed to exercise their veto power. Most of the president’s political advisors were concerned that a Defense Authorization had not been vetoed since the Polk administration and if Congress over-rode the veto the President would look even weaker. Mondale’s knowledge of the Senate gave him a strong sense that the veto could be sustained. But he also recognized that the administration needed to establish its credibility with Capitol Hill. Mondale told Carter, “If you don’t do it now, you’ll never get control.”<sup>25</sup> Finally, on the tactical level, Mondale’s chief of staff, Richard Moe, oversaw the task force lobbying against a veto over-ride.

### Life & Death

This section looks at the vice-presidential role in decision-making involving the national security bureaucracies, including the use of force. Former NSA Anthony Lake

suggested that deciding these life and death issues may be a challenge for a former governor who had not previously dealt with these issues, and that vice presidents can help. That appears to have been the case in the Clinton-Gore administration in which Lake served. Months into the new administration, the president wrestled with whether or not to respond to a reported assassination attempt on former President Bush. The Vice President had no doubts on the proper course of action and urged the president to respond with force, which he ultimately did.<sup>26</sup> On several other cases of use of force that faced the Clinton White House, Gore was a strong advocate.

Similarly, early in the Bush administration U.S. military aircraft, enforcing the no-fly zone over Iraq, engaged in a skirmish with Iraqi air defenses. That night, President Bush, who was only informed of the skirmish after the fact, said, “I’m going to call Dick.” NSA Condoleezza Rice observed that the president was “seeking reassurance from an old foreign policy hand.”<sup>27</sup> Cheney, of course, was engaged with the president on the use of the U.S. military throughout his term in office.

There do not appear to have been other cases in which presidents, wrestling with questions engaged with the vice president for this kind of fundamental, emotional support. Vice presidents were engaged in these issues. Mondale supported the Iran hostage rescue, Bush coordinated the invasion of Grenada from the situation room, and Biden played a central role in the review of U.S. policy in Afghanistan. But in none of these cases, or that of Quayle (who was included in the deliberations around the Gulf War) did the president turn to the vice president for this deeper type of support.

### The Bureaucracy

Of the past six vice presidents, five have played a significant role as an interlocutor with the intelligence community. Mondale, who had served on the Church committee investigating the intelligence community, spearheaded Carter administration intelligence reform efforts.<sup>28</sup> George H.W. Bush, a former Director of Central Intelligence, led a task force on countering terrorism in which intelligence community operations were a central component.<sup>29</sup> Gore pressed the intelligence community to incorporate environmental and public health issues into their analysis.<sup>30</sup> Gore (as

discussed above) working with his VPNSA Leon Fuerth, investigated an attempted assassination of former President George H.W. Bush in Kuwait, determined the intelligence was sound and urged the president to launch retaliatory strikes. Fuerth helped build and oversaw the sanctions on Serbia. Sandy Berger explained:

In 1994-5 the UN adopted economic sanctions on Serbia, which had been pretty ineffective generally. Leon was put in charge of enforcing sanctions. He put together the skunk works from various agencies, met every day and refined the sanctions in such a way that they really had an impact. He was able to identify people close to Milosevic, business leaders, and identify industries that underpinned Milosevic's influence. He was like the puppet master pulling these strings. His work made a very important contribution to bringing down Milosevic. The Clinton library declassified documents on Bosnia and did a program on it. The CIA guys were full of praise for how Fuerth managed the process calling it the best, most sophisticated relationship they had had with policymakers.<sup>31</sup>

Gore and Fuerth also encouraged the use of intelligence operations. When the president was undecided on ordering an extraordinary rendition, hearing arguments from his counter-terrorism advisor Richard Clarke and the White House Counsel Lloyd Cutler, Gore weighed in, "That's a no-brainer. Of course it's a violation of international law, that's why it's a covert action. The guy is a terrorist. Go grab his ass."<sup>32</sup> Later, after Iranian-backed terrorists bombed Khobar Towers, a U.S. military outpost in Saudi Arabia, Fuerth strongly encouraged the initiation of Operation Sapphire, which exposed Iranian intelligence officers around the world.<sup>33</sup>

Cheney was also heavily involved with intelligence issues. He was famously a consumer of raw intelligence and questioned the intelligence community's analysis.<sup>34</sup> Cheney, and his counsel David Addington, crafted the authorities for the Terrorist Surveillance Program. Another aspect of Cheney's influence in the context of this program was keeping it outside of the standard national security process to protect the program's security.<sup>35</sup>

Biden has also been involved in intelligence issues, most notably brokering a dispute between the Director of National Intelligence and the Director of Central Intelligence over which of them would be responsible for appointing station chiefs in foreign capitals.<sup>36</sup>

The intelligence community is not the only complex bureaucracy with which the president needs to wrestle and vice presidents have been helpful. The task force on terrorism chaired by Vice President George H.W. Bush helped prepare options for the president across multiple agencies, including the circumstances under which a military response would be appropriate.

After the 9/11 attacks, the military assured the president that they were prepared to commence operations at his orders. Cheney observed:

But I knew from my time at the Pentagon that various factors play into selecting an optimal start date. I also thought that sitting with the president in a room where Abraham Lincoln had held cabinet meetings might not be the situation most likely to elicit that kind of information, so I tried to help out.<sup>37</sup>

Cheney played a similar role in preparing for the surge, discussing the politics of obtaining support from the Joint Chiefs of Staff with the President.<sup>38</sup>

Biden may have played a similar role with the military in discussing the Afghanistan surge (described below.)

But Cheney's role grew out of his specific experience as Secretary of Defense and the president's needs as the nation went to war. While every vice president engages with the bureaucracy on the president's behalf, the differences both with specific bureaucracy and in the means of engagement appear significant so that the findings are not as clear. There is little question that vice presidential engagement can be useful to break bureaucratic logjams, but beyond that there is little specificity, and it is difficult to come to any definite conclusions.

There is one bureaucracy in which vice presidents have consistently played a role. The White House is a highly specialized bureaucracy designed to serve the needs of the president. Many presidents have struggled to establish a White House process that serves their needs. Mondale oversaw the agenda setting process, and in the early days, when Carter's White House Counsel was an attorney from Atlanta, Mondale's Counsel (who had been his long-time Senate staffer) provided support.<sup>39</sup> As Vice President, Bush made a critical contribution to White House staffing through his close friend James Baker who became White House chief of staff and is generally given significant credit for the Reagan administration's early achievements. Reagan's National Security staff was in disarray and Bush also helped fill this gap by serving as the vice chair of the crisis management group.

Quayle, serving a former vice president, had much more limited input into White House process, although he did propose his friend Samuel Skinner as chief of staff after Sununu resigned.

In its early days the Clinton administration had a great deal of difficulty establishing an orderly decision-making process. Senior advisor George Stephanopoulos, who often opposed the vice president on policies and had a tense relationship with Gore, wrote, "Clinton relied on Gore's disciplined intelligence."<sup>40</sup> In establishing the administration's first budget Gore played an active role getting and keeping the process on track.<sup>41</sup> Gore's first chief of staff, Roy Neel joined the President's staff to oversee the president's schedule.<sup>42</sup> When that failed to stabilize operations, Gore lobbied for Leon Panetta to become chief of staff.<sup>43</sup>

George W. Bush, the first MBA president, established an orderly White House process with strict deadlines. Cheney, a former White House chief of staff, may have played a role in establishing this process. More broadly Cheney focused on a lesson he had learned as White House chief of staff: "the president's most precious commodity is his time" and his role was to "get off the president's plate everything that you can."<sup>44</sup>

Obama also established a strong White House staff, led initially by Rahm Emmanuel. While Biden's staff was more closely integrated with the White House staff than any previous administration, it is not clear that Biden played a particular role in establishing White House processes.

There is modest support for the argument that vice presidents play a role in stabilizing White House processes. There were three definite cases and Cheney may represent a fourth case of an insider vice president's helping outsider presidents manage the White House. It is worth noting that a vice president cannot fix dysfunctional White House processes. Despite Mondale's efforts, Carter White House remained chaotic. Bush plugged a critical hole in the Reagan administration national security process, but the vice president was no substitute for a strong National Security Advisor, which remained problematic until the Iran-Contra affair forced a major re-organization. Ultimately, the Clinton White House overcame its management issues when (at least in part at the vice president's recommendation), a strong chief of staff was appointed.

### Foreign Governments

Vice presidents can help advise presidents both by obtaining political intelligence about foreign leaders and by understanding the utility of various foreign policy options to influence other nations.

In the Carter administration, Mondale made critical contributions to the administration's signature achievement – the Egypt-Israeli Peace Treaty. One component of his contribution was helping manage the domestic political aspects of the peace process, by reassuring the American Jewish community about Carter. In his 1978 trip to Israel, Mondale and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin had a private discussion in which Begin indicated that he was willing to go much farther his public rhetoric indicated.<sup>45</sup> Following an equally successful meeting with Sadat, Mondale advised Carter that peace might be achievable.<sup>46</sup> The importance of Mondale's role as an interlocutor with the Israelis continued. Initially assigned to stay in Washington in Carter's place during the Camp David summit, when talks faltered Mondale joined them until the successful conclusion of the talks. Mondale's knowledge of domestic politics

was also useful in identifying specific points to pressure Israel and other points to downplay.

George H.W. Bush, who had been a diplomat, also helped the president with political intelligence on foreign leaders and in identifying policy options. Bush met with many foreign leaders, but one episode is particularly remarkable. Bush's VPNSA, Don Gregg had become close to the Finnish Embassy in Washington. Gregg, a former CIA officer, was impressed with the Finns' insight into Soviet affairs. He urged the vice president to visit Finland, where Bush established a friendship with the Finnish President. The Finns told Bush that Gorbachev was a rising star and that when he came to power there would be a "different Soviet Union."<sup>47</sup> Bush shared his finding with President Reagan and tried to arrange a private meeting with Gorbachev. The meeting could not be arranged and the Soviet ambassador was unsure what to make this request by the American vice president to meet the little known Politburo chief of ideology and former head of agriculture.<sup>48</sup>

Bush also played a central role in organizing administration foreign policy options. In the response to the 1981 Soviet backed crackdown in Poland, Bush helped organize sanctions. He was also a strong proponent of immediate rhetorical support, stating in an NSC meeting:

I agree with Don [Regan] and Al [Haig]. We should take the time to consult, but giving a speech now is essential. What is missing is moral leadership. You state how strongly you feel about Walesa—about Solidarity—about the Polish Ambassador and the Polish people. You can speak in generalities without spelling out details. We don't want to delay. We are at an emotional turning point. We can do the speech but leave our options open. Identify with the turn in freedom.<sup>49</sup>

On Christmas Eve 1981, President Reagan gave a strongly worded speech supporting the Polish people and warning the Soviet Union not to interfere in Poland, while placing sanctions on the Polish government. A few days later the U.S. placed sanctions on the Soviet Union.



Quayle, unsurprisingly, played a less significant role in shaping foreign policy in the Bush 41 White House. While he undertook some significant and useful travel on the administration's behalf, it is not clear that he brought back useful political intelligence on critical issues faced by the Bush administration. There was one interesting exception in November 1990 when Quayle's wife, Marilyn, met Raisa Gorbachev in Moscow. Instead of a brief, diplomatic "tea," Gorbachev spoke at length about how difficult things were in the Soviet Union. Quayle reported the conversation, which was discussed at the White House the next morning in the daily security meeting as an early warning that the situation in the Soviet Union was more unstable than previously recognized.<sup>50</sup>

According to Karl Jackson, Quayle's second VPNSA (who had previously been the senior director for Asia on the NSC), "There were lots of things having to do with Japan policy. [Quayle] was in some ways the real ambassador to Japan."<sup>51</sup>

Gore, as chair of several bilateral commissions played a crucial role in collecting political intelligence from foreign leaders and shaping policies to influence other nations. The case of overseeing sanctions on Serbia is another instance of Gore helping the president leverage U.S. power. In a revealing report, Elaine Kamarck, an aide to Vice President Gore, mentioned that Gore helped Clinton with diplomatic communications, which require precision different from Clinton's emotive political communications style.<sup>52</sup>

Cheney travelled less than many of his recent predecessors, focusing on his role in the White House as an advisor.<sup>53</sup> Although there are fewer instances of diplomatic engagement by this vice president, Cheney was active in national security decision-making and usually advocated a strong line for sanctions. He also opposed the U.S. effort to obtain a UN resolution for action against Iraq.<sup>54</sup> While the president relied heavily on Cheney for national security decisions, on issues of diplomacy he seemed more inclined to take other counsel or split the difference between his advisors.<sup>55</sup>

Biden's most notable case of gathering political intelligence on the leadership of another nation was probably on Afghanistan and Pakistan, discussed below. Information on Biden's role in the Obama White House is less complete. Given his extensive international travel and previous foreign policy experience, it is likely that he continued to play an active role – not only as a surrogate, but also as an advisor on the politics of foreign nations and on how to best use U.S. tools to influence them.

Biden's role in the Afghanistan review process highlights an array of vice-presidential roles. Only weeks prior to his inauguration as vice president, Biden – at Obama's request – travelled to Afghanistan and Pakistan where he met with the presidents of those nations and top U.S. commanders. As the new president carried out an exhaustive review of U.S. strategy in Afghanistan, Biden played a central role. The U.S. military had developed plans for a full counter-insurgency strategy that would have required 40,000 additional troops. At Obama's request, Biden questioned the military extensively and developed an alternative strategy that required fewer troops.

In playing this role, Biden carried out several functions simultaneously. He helped to query the military about its plans for Afghanistan by questioning its goals and working assumptions. He had acquired information on the leadership of Pakistan and Afghanistan that led him to be deeply skeptical of those leaders' commitment to supporting U.S. goals. Biden's function was also political. He questioned whether the American people had the patience to support the military's proposed strategy. His participation in the process and willingness to challenge the military bought the president time and space to make his decision.

Based on this survey we can tentatively conclude that four of the six vice presidents provided political intelligence about critical nations to the presidents (five if Quayle is included) and three (and possibly five including Biden and Cheney) counseled the president on how best to leverage U.S. power.

## Conclusions

The table below summarizes the results of this survey. There were strong findings that vice presidents served as advisors to outsider presidents on Congress, the Intelligence Community, foreign politics and foreign policy options, and White House process.

There was only modest support for the finding that insider vice presidents provided important support on life and death issues or engagement with the Department of Defense.

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Strong Pattern</b>	<b>Some Indication</b>	<b>Insider VP / Outsider President</b>
<b>Congress H1</b>	5/6*	1/6	5/5
<b>White House Process H3b</b>	3/6	1/6	4/5
<b>Life &amp; Death Decisions H2</b>	2/6	0/6	2/5
<b>Intelligence Community H3a</b>	4/6	1/6	5/5
<b>DOD Operations H3b</b>	3/6	0/6	3/5
<b>Political Intelligence on Foreign Leaders H4a</b>	4/6	1/6*	4/5
<b>Foreign Policy Options H4b</b>	4/6	1/6	5/5

\*Includes Quayle, insider VP to an insider President.

The vice-presidential role with Congress comes as little surprise. As Untermeyer suggested it is a club and every vice president over the past four decades has been a member in good standing. Collecting political intelligence on foreign leaders is a similar issue, since there too both the foreign leaders and the vice president are working politicians. The findings regarding the intelligence community and White House processes are more interesting. Extensive presidential engagement with DOD operations may depend on whether or not the U.S. is at war. But the intelligence community and the White House engage with every president. Getting the most out of these institutions is essential for an effective presidency.

Analyzing the vice presidential role is typically done as a study in bureaucratic politics, the third take in the Graham Allison classic *Essence of Decision*. This paper suggests that

the vice president plays an important role in helping the president understand the organizational processes underpinning bureaucratic politics, Allison's second take.<sup>56</sup>

It will be interesting to see the role the new vice president plays in the new administration. Given Donald Trump's lack of political experience, as well as Mike Pence's extensive experience with Congress, a role for him liaising with Capitol Hill seems almost certain. Will the new vice president work with the president on the intelligence community (which the president has kept at arm's length)? The incoming team has limited political experience, which could lead to a chaotic White House, will the vice president play a role in this space. Finally, on foreign relations the incoming chief executive has extensive experience as a negotiator. Will he find the vice president's counsel on foreign leaders and the tools of foreign policy useful? The incoming administration could prove to be important confirmation of the mooted hypotheses or raise questions as to their validity. Time will tell.

Future work could take several directions. One would be to collect more data and include domestic affairs to see if further patterns emerged in terms of type of bureaucratic and political engagement. Case studies into specific areas of influence could help identify specific roles that vice presidents play. Another path could be to investigate more fully the vice president's relationship with the intelligence community. This is the most unique finding and could shed some light on patterns in the cognitive decision-making needs of presidents.

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<sup>1</sup> George S. Kaufman, *Of Thee I Sing*, 1931

<sup>2</sup> Joel Goldstein, *The White House Vice Presidency: The Path to Significance* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2016); Joel Goldstein, *The Modern Vice Presidency: The Transformation of a Political Institution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982); Paul Light, *Vice Presidential Power: Advice and Influence in the White House* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984); Jack Lechelt, *The Vice Presidency in Foreign Policy: From Mondale to Cheney*. El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Pub, 2009; Paul Kengor *Wreath Layer or Policy Player? The Vice President's Role in Foreign Policy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> <http://warontherocks.com/2016/10/vice-presidents-and-foreign-policy-a-forward-looking-review-of-the-record/>

<sup>4</sup> Alexander George and Juliette George, *Presidential Personality & Performance* (Boulder CO, Westview Press: 1998) 199-250.

<sup>5</sup> Ivo Daalder and I. M. Destler, *In the Shadow of the Oval Office: Profiles of the National Security Advisers and the Presidents they Served-From JFK to George W. Bush* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

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- <sup>6</sup> Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (New York: The Free Press, 1990) 129-131.
- <sup>7</sup> Paul Kengor's *Wrath Layer or Policy Player? The Vice President's Role in Foreign Policy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000), 301.
- <sup>8</sup> Lake, interview by author.
- <sup>9</sup> Hadley, interview by author.
- <sup>10</sup> [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/201205802\\_presidential\\_transition.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/201205802_presidential_transition.pdf)
- <sup>11</sup> Berger, interview by author.
- <sup>12</sup> Name withheld, interview by author.
- <sup>13</sup> Carter, *Keeping the Faith*, 35.
- <sup>14</sup> Gillon, *The Democrats Dilemma*, 223-25.
- <sup>15</sup> John Goshko, "Bush Pushes AWACS Sale to Saudis—'Another Friend' in Mideast," *Washington Post*, October 10, 1981; Stephanie Mansfield, "Susan Alvarado and the Best Job in Washington," *Washington Post*, December 15, 1981.
- <sup>16</sup> *National Journal* June 20, 1981
- <sup>17</sup> Richard Fenno, *The Making of a Senator: Dan Quayle* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1989) 167-68.
- <sup>18</sup> Broder and Woodward, *The Man Who Would Be President*, 100.
- <sup>19</sup> <http://millercenter.org/oralhistory/interview/leon-panetta>
- <sup>20</sup> Stuart E. Eizenstat, interview by author, November 2, 2012.
- <sup>21</sup> Gellman, *Angler*, 77-78.
- <sup>22</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/congress-waits-to-see-if-mcconnell-will-join-fiscal-cliff-debate/2012/12/22/e4449f56-4c65-11e2-a6a6-aabac85e8036\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/congress-waits-to-see-if-mcconnell-will-join-fiscal-cliff-debate/2012/12/22/e4449f56-4c65-11e2-a6a6-aabac85e8036_story.html)
- <sup>23</sup> Correspondence I.M Destler.
- <sup>24</sup> Jimmy Carter, *White House Diaries*, 179.
- <sup>25</sup> Lewis, *Mondale: Portrait of an American Politician*, 247-48.
- <sup>26</sup> Kenneth Walsh, "A Vice President Who Counts: Al Gore is quietly expanding the power and influence of his office," *U.S. News & World Report*, July 11, 1993.
- <sup>27</sup> Rice *No Higher Honor*, 27-28.
- <sup>28</sup> George Lardner Jr., "Intelligence Charter: Time May Run Out as Spies Argue," *The Washington Post*, February 14, 1979.
- <sup>29</sup> <http://veepcritique.blogspot.com/2010/10/terrorism-bush-i-assessing-vice.html>
- <sup>30</sup> Berger, interview by author.
- <sup>31</sup> Berger, interview by author.
- <sup>32</sup> Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 143-44.
- <sup>33</sup> Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 117-20.
- <sup>34</sup> Stephen Hadley stated that Cheney's activities were not outside the process, but rather his exercising his prerogative to query the intelligence community. William Nolte, who was the assistant Director for Central Intelligence in the run-up to the Iraq War insists that Cheney was not forcing intelligence analysts to shape their finding to conform with administration policy, but that it was legitimate pressure for policy-makers to exert. Interviews by author.
- <sup>35</sup> Cheney, *In My Time*, 348-50.
- <sup>36</sup> Leon Panetta, *Worthy Fights* (New York: Penguin Press 2015), 229-230.
- <sup>37</sup> Cheney, *In My Time*, 336.
- <sup>38</sup> Cheney, *In My Time*, 450-53.
- <sup>39</sup> When he was replaced by a more experienced DC attorney, Mondale's Counsel's role decreased.
- <sup>40</sup> Stephanopoulos, *All Too Human*, 149.
- <sup>41</sup> Elizabeth Drew, *On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 67-68.

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- <sup>42</sup> Drew, *On the Edge*, 290. Neel found his time as Clinton's Deputy Chief of Staff frustrating and only served in the position for five and a half months. Drew, *On the Edge*, 347.
- <sup>43</sup> Drew, *On the Edge*, 420.
- <sup>44</sup> Gellman, *Angler*, 165.
- <sup>45</sup> According to some reports, Begin himself stated that it was his conversations with Mondale that convinced him to move forward with the peace process. See Clift p. 159
- <sup>46</sup> Mondale however advised the president not to get involved personally because of the high probability it would not work out. Interview with Walter Mondale
- <sup>47</sup> Donald P. Gregg, interview by author, Armonk, NY, February 19, 2013.
- <sup>48</sup> Victor L. Israelyan, "1. George Bush: Influence of the Family on his Values, Discussant," in *A Noble Calling: Character and the George H. W. Bush Presidency*, eds. William Levantrosser and Rosanna Perotti (New York: Praeger, 2004), 17-19.
- <sup>49</sup> Saltoun-Ebin, *The Reagan Files, Volume 1*, 113.
- <sup>50</sup> Quayle and Carney, *Standing Firm*, 169.
- <sup>51</sup> Jackson, interview by author.
- <sup>52</sup> Kamarck also notes that Clinton helped the more reticent Gore with his political communications as well. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/modern-vp-final.pdf>
- <sup>53</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/modern-vp-final.pdf>
- <sup>54</sup> Baker, *Days of Fire*, loc. 4334-4360.
- <sup>55</sup> Rodman, *Presidential Command*, 254.
- <sup>56</sup> Allison, Graham and Philip Zelikow. *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 1999.