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IMPROVING THE PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION PROCESS

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PARTICIPANTS:

Panelists:

DARRELL WEST, Moderator
Vice President and Director, Governance Studies
Director, Center for Technology Innovation
The Brookings Institution

MACK McLARTY
Former White House Chief of Staff, Clinton Administration
President, McLarty Associates
Chief Executive Officer, McLarty Companies

CHASE UNTERMEYER
Former Director of Presidential Personnel, George H.W. Bush Administration
Managing Partner, Qatus Advisors

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WEST: Good morning. I'm Darrell West, vice president of Governance Studies and director of our Center for Technology Innovation at The Brookings Institution. And I'd like to welcome you to our forum on improving presidential transitions.

And I have to start by saying today is a really good day. And I say that because every new president must fill over a thousand positions in the federal government, and in recent administrations this has been a real problem. It's become difficult to navigate the transition. It often puts the government in a weak position to execute its vision because of the difficulty of getting people confirmed. There are various problems in terms of the appointments process, confirmation, and the general transition process.

And with all these problems there have been several reports and analyses of ways to improve the process. The Aspen Institute and The Rockefeller Foundation organized a bipartisan commission that put out a detailed report. And my Brookings colleagues Bill Galston and E.J. Dionne wrote a report last year entitled, "A Half-Empty Government Can't Govern." I love that title.

And the reason I say that today is a great day is that this week we actually have made progress on addressing some of these issues. Last year, the Senate on a big bipartisan vote had approved legislation to address some of these issues and just on Tuesday night the House unanimously approved that Senate bill. And the bill reduces the number of administration officials subject to confirmation by 169 officials, mainly people in the communications area and in some of the operational areas no longer will have to go through this very difficult confirmation process. Obviously all of the major policy figures and the major advisors still have to do so, as is appropriate. But the

bill also will streamline the process and make it easier for our next president, whoever it turns out to be, to get his team on the field.

But even with the passage, there still are broader transition issues to discuss. So to help us understand these issues we've recruited two very distinguished leaders with experience in the very topic of navigating a presidential transition and staffing a new administration.

We're pleased to welcome Mack McLarty to Brookings. He is the president of McLarty Associates, but more relevant for our topic he served as chief of staff and counselor in the Clinton administration. He also has worked with the transition teams of the Bush and Obama administrations. He's the recipient of the Secretary of State's Distinguished Service Medal, the highest civilian honors of a number of different governments around the world: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Venezuela. And he also has received the Center for the Study of the Presidency Distinguished Service Award.

Chase Untermeyer is managing director of Qatus Advisors. He's probably more famous in D.C. circles for serving as director of presidential personnel and assistant to the president in the administration of George Herbert Walker Bush. He also served as the U.S. ambassador to Qatar. He's been director of the Voice of America. He's served on a number of different boards, of different commissions: National Public Radio, the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico, and otherwise.

So both of these individuals bring a tremendous amount of experience to this topic of the presidential transition. So I want to start with the big picture and ask each of you: what are the general problems that any new president faces? And, Mack, we'll start with you.

MR. McLARTY: Well, I think coming from the private sector, as a

generational participant in our family business endeavors -- third generation, now fourth generation business with our two sons -- and coming from the corporate sector it's pretty obvious, just common sense, you've got to get a team on the field in order to play the game and have a chance to play it successfully and move, in this case, your agenda, as Professor West noted, forward. So the real challenge is a pretty massive undertaking. In our case, where we were a Democratic administration coming in after the Republicans having the White House for 12 years, of simply getting a government in place beginning at the cabinet level and the White House level, but then filling that out with all of the appointments and staffing that needs to be made within each cabinet level and other agencies to simply have the government operate. Quite crucial. And it has taken an inordinate amount of time with each administration to get a government in place.

And I think, also, Darrell, it is increasingly concerning that someone is vetted, nominated, announced, and then is left hanging there in the process. And that inevitably discourages, you know, our best and brightest from serving in government. So there are a lot of challenges that take place. They eventually can be overcome, but I think the real essence of the Senate bill that was now passed by the House -- our timing is perfect; we'll run under that victory and maybe even deserve a small measure of credit for it -- but I think there has been a shift in the mood about transitions and a recognition that you must get a government in place.

And I think, Darrell, the final point I would make about that is I do think after 9-11 that there was a palpable understanding that national security was paramount, of course. That's the most sacred trust of any president as commander-in-chief is to protect the safety of the American people. And I think that gave impetus to changing this dynamic on discussions of transition. We can't have that period of vulnerability between administrations.

MR. WEST: Chase, your sense of the general problems facing any new president.

MR. UNTERMEYER: Yes. Well, first of all, thank you, Darrell and Brookings, for the opportunity to come talk on this subject. I've always said that anybody who's done presidential personnel never wants to do it again, but can never stop talking about it. (Laughter) And as a result, we jump at any opportunity to do that.

Over the past dozen years or shall we say 25 years, since I helped plan the transition of the first President Bush, there have been enumerable studies looking into the structural problems that underlie exactly what Mack was just saying. This has been a great benefit to subsequent administrations. And I must admit a degree of envy for those people who have had the job I held in subsequent administrations because when things go wrong and the process is clogged and it takes forever, people now blame the system. In my time, they blamed me. (Laughter) And so I'm most grateful for the benefit of that change.

But more specifically, to echo what Mack had just said, the process of filling a new administration has gotten ever longer and ever more tangled. It is no relation whatsoever to partisanship or to ideology, even to the intense scrutiny that the press puts on these things, that never was the case before. You can start with the Kennedy administration. It took about two or three months for him to put together his team of Senate-confirmed presidential appointees. And run that through Barack Obama, which was 12+ months and like stair steps in between. It took ever longer one administration after the other. This is due to a number of things.

It's due to, yes, the tangles of the confirmation process, but it's also due to the amount of time it has taken to, on the Executive Branch side, to select people and then to get them cleared: cleared by the FBI or the CIA or by the Office of Government

Ethics. It is, in fact, because of the intense politicization of this process that White Houses of both parties are very hesitant to announce anyone, much less send the name of that person to the Senate, before that person is thoroughly vetted. Now, that has led to the lengthening of the forms that they have to fill out and it's led to the lengthening of the amount of time to process those forms by either the FBI or the Office of Government Ethics.

I've often thought that if I wanted to be a counterfeiter, I would do it in a presidential election year in which the Secret Service is all tied up with protecting candidates. And if I wanted to be a bank robber, I'd do it in the first year of an administration when the FBI was all consumed with background checking all the appointees of the administration. I'm not recommending this.

MR. WEST: I can tell you've given a lot of thought to this. (Laughter)

MR. UNTERMEYER: These are business opportunities that come at no extra charge to the audience today, but.

MR. WEST: The advantages of government service.

MR. UNTERMEYER: But not to take too much longer on this to mention that as a result of the concern that administrations have about the release of a name which has not been thoroughly vetted is that it takes ever longer to get that information.

And a final point is, is that we open up the pages of the newspaper and we find a new scandal, a new type of political crime that has been committed allegedly by someone chosen by the president-elect. And when that happens there are all sorts of reactions. One of them is that someone will call for the strengthening of the ethics laws. Well, what happens, in fact, is not that the ethics laws are strengthened so much as they are lengthened. And knowledgeable readers of the forms can go and say, ah, that's the nanny issue question or that's the pot-smoking judge question or that's the randy senator

question, and know the scandals that underlie each of those. And I predict that there will be new questions added because new crimes, new sins will be discovered in the course of the next few months.

MR. WEST: Yeah, there are all sorts of digital crimes that are waiting on the horizon. (Laughter) So we're going to lengthen that questionnaire even longer.

I'd like to focus a little bit on the situations of a potential Romney presidency and then a second term Obama situation. And obviously, it's different a president going into a second term versus someone coming for the first. So I was wondering if each of you could address that.

Mack, I know in 1996, Clinton was facing a second term, so I don't know if you want to focus on that aspect, but I'd like to hear from each of you on Obama and Romney.

MR. McLARTY: Well, I think the Aspen Institute efforts that we put forward, which was a bipartisan effort with Senators Frist and Robb from the Republican and Democratic side of the aisle, and then Clay Johnson -- who was head of the Office of Presidential Personnel for President Bush 43, whom Chase knows well; probably helped train Clay in his abilities -- but our recommendations were put forward on a purely nonpartisan basis for either Governor Romney if he should be elected or President Obama if he is reelected. There is clearly a difference.

Our challenge in 1992 was to get a government in place, as I noted. There's great enthusiasm coming off a campaign and I think: Chase, one of the real challenges in a new administration, particularly where there's a change of party in the White House, is how do you shift from campaign mode to governing mode? That is clearly not the case in a second term. You already have four years of governing, so the real challenge in a second term, at least, Darrell, it was my sense, is how do you renew

the president's agenda? And how do you invigorate that effort, but also have a measure of continuity building on the first term?

Because inevitably, as you see with President Obama's cabinet, just starting with Secretary Clinton, with Secretary Geithner, among others, that have said, you know, I've served my country to be the best of my ability and I'm going to be leaving at the end of the first term. So you're going to have major changes in these critical positions at the cabinet level.

So, Darrell, I go back to really I think a central point here is you have to have a seamless transition or at least as seamless a transition as possible, whether it's a new administration coming in or whether it's a second term. Because what's really happened, as the ambassador underscored, is the transition process, the confirmation process has gotten more cumbersome, more difficult, slower paced at the same time that our world has speeded up enormously. And the vulnerability, both from a security standpoint and from an economic standpoint, have dramatically increased in terms of the depth and the speed of these types of events, all of which goes to you must get a government, a functioning government, in place to deal with those problems.

Smaller government, whether you're an advocate or not for that, is not the same as stalled government. You have to have the basic functions of government at the defense level, the Treasury level, and so forth. So those are kind of the differences as I see it and some of the real priorities and criteria.

MR. WEST: Okay. Chase, what should a possible President Romney be thinking about?

MR. UNTERMEYER: Yes, well, I will answer your question making note of the fact that I'm not involved in the Romney campaign. I intend to vote for him. I'm not involved in his transition effort, so I'm going to speak generically if I do talk about a

Romney administration just for the purpose of answering the question of what does the happen if the candidate of the out party is elected.

Well, what he needs to do is what's happening right now, and I think it has been made widely known that there is a formal transition planning effort by the Romney campaign led by the former government of Utah, Mike Leavitt. That is, I think, a sign of progress that these efforts are known and are not subject to attack by the other party as being presumptuous or arrogant or measuring the drapes or whatever other kind of allegations might have been done. When I planned the transition for then Vice President Bush in 1988, it was a secret just so that it wouldn't become the subject of political ballyhoo and, frankly, so it wouldn't draw to my efforts all those people who were looking for jobs rather than those who were going to be put to more productive work getting the man elected in the first place.

So we can be grateful that we as a country have advanced to the point that now these efforts are not only known and well-publicized, but they're also funded. I don't know the details of the current law, but as I understand it there is a quite generous federal appropriation and office space made available to the official transition planning effort that will kick in at least officially after the nomination of Governor Romney, and that's all to the good. You cannot plan too much. And the lesson, certainly from my experience, is that there must be some form of personnel work before the election.

Now, the president for whom I worked and probably many others do not like personnel work. They shrink in horror of the idea of having to pick and choose among people, and to try to do that before they're even elected is asking too much. In fact, as I indicated, they think it works against their interest because it draws attention to what is not uppermost in their mind, which is winning the votes in November.

Nevertheless, prior work on personnel must be done in order to do, as

Mack has said, get that government in place. Let's not forget that as a result of the amendment to the Constitution passed in 1935/'36, there are only 10 or 11 weeks between the election and the inauguration. And those are 11 busy weeks for anybody in any walk of American life because that includes the holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's. For people who've just come out of an election there's a great desire, a great need for relaxation, some way of catching a breath, just at the time, of course, that the rest of the world is insistent on knowing everything and pushing them along toward making decisions that they may not be physically or mentally prepared to do.

In such a time, it is absolutely essential for the office of the new president to be ready to go with names for the various cabinet departments and agencies, not necessarily all of them. But when you think about it, there are seven key positions in any department or agency that are going to be filled and the transition planning people should be thinking about them. That's the head of the agency, be it a cabinet Secretary or an agency administrator; the deputy; then there is the person in charge of policy, person in charge of budget, person in charge of legislative affairs, person in charge of press, and a person in charge of the budget.

Now, some of those positions in certain departments of government can very capably be held by career people who in the best traditions of the Civil Service will not show any partisan bias and will give a new administration the same degree of intelligence and loyal service as they did the incumbent administration. But most of those positions will be held by non-career people in our system, and those need to be thought about in advance.

A very practical matter, and excuse me if I run with your question a little bit longer here, Darrell --

MR. WEST: It was a good question, so I understand. (Laughter)

MR. UNTERMEYER: -- is it's also absolutely critical before the election for the Romney transition effort to give to the people who are in senior positions in the campaign and senior positions on the outside who are advising them the two horrendous forms that have to be filled out by prospective nominees. There is the SF-86, which is the personal background form, and then there is the SF-278, which is the financial disclosure form. Many of you who have been in government know these very well. But if you've never been in government, this is a major time-taker to gather the information necessary to answer those forms.

If, for example, you've never been background checked, the forms will want to know every place you have lived in your entire life. Now, why where you lived when you were two years old matters as to your fitness and loyalty to the country 30, 40 years later, I don't know, but they do want that. They want to know every job you've ever held. They want the name of your supervisor and a telephone number for that supervisor. They want to know every country in which you have traveled because they will then go check through contacts in those countries to see that you behaved yourself well when you were overseas.

MR. WEST: And how many years of tax returns do you have to file? (Laughter)

MR. UNTERMEYER: Oh, no tax returns because the financial disclosure form is a disclosure of sources of income. And for some of us, that's an easier job. For the Mack McLarty's of the world, that may require hiring a CPA to put together all the many holdings and sources of income, not just for the prospective appointee, but for members of the immediate family and any independent children whose wealth is under the control of the appointee.

This -- I will not speak any longer, but it does take a massive amount of

time. And yes, people are terribly busy now trying to win a campaign, but, believe, me, given that 10- or 11-week period when everything else is going to hit, now is a better time to at least gather the information and, ideally, fill out those forms so that they can be handed in promptly after the election so that clearances can begin.

So those are, I'd say, headline items that they need to be working on.

MR. WEST: Mack?

MR. McLARTY: Professor, there's just one grace note to follow up Ambassador Untermeyer's comments. We have an appropriate emphasis on what has not worked well in the appointments process, the transition process, and there's a lot to talk about there. And I think -- I honestly believe there has been a discernible shift, incrementally, over the past several years. And I really think the passage of the bill, which the President will sign, it was a bipartisan effort, really will add momentum to that shift.

But one place the transition has worked very well and has served our democracy well is there has been, I think, virtually flawless and certainly purposeful cooperation between an outgoing administration and an incoming administration. We talked a bit about it this morning before we came in. In our case, Jim Baker and Bob Zoellick had been in the key White House positions. It had been a hotly contested campaign between Governor Clinton and President Bush, so coming right off the campaign. But even with that, those individuals -- Andy Card was also involved -- we couldn't have asked for better cooperation.

I think President Obama and his team -- John Podesta, who later served as chief of staff to President Clinton who worked with and for me in the White House, led that effort -- will say the same thing about the Bush 43 administration. I was privileged to work with Josh Bolten and other members of the Bush 43 White House in that transition,

so I think there is kind of a code of honor, if you will, and a real concern, care, commitment to the country to have a seamless, a constructive, as much as possible flawless transition. And that part of the transition process has worked well. Where it's broken down is then getting the next phase of the government in place, which requires Senate confirmation and presidential appointments and all the things that Chase noted. But I wanted to kind of underscore the important positive point.

And the only other quick comment I would make, when I had the privilege to serve in government we had a number of requests from governments around the world in their presidential elections, as democracy took root around the world -- in Mexico, where you had a historic election of another party being elected the first time in the history of Mexico; a major transition in Brazil, big democracy; Eastern Europe, elections were somewhat the first time -- so we had requests from those governments how do you handle your transition? So the White House transition, the Executive Branch transition, I think, has gone really pretty well. It's the confirmation process and the entire political process, appointments process that needs work.

MR. WEST: Yeah, I want to focus on that part of it. Because it's interesting that when you kind of look at administration to administration and you do see examples of cooperation, but when you add in the congressional side of things, then there are various problems. So, for example, in terms of issues that have been raised, some of which have already been mentioned: speeding up the vetting process by simplifying the questionnaires, speeding up the background checks, having uniform forms across all committees.

And then another thing that has popped up, it's kind of an insidious practice that seems to be growing in popularity in the Senate is individual senators putting a hold on a particular confirmation and thereby preventing the entire chamber

from voting on that. And oftentimes, this now is becoming unrelated to the person's qualifications. Like there have been examples of senators who want, you know, an administration office located in their state and they're basically holding the appointee hostage to that. They may have a policy dispute with the incoming administration. So I'm just wondering if each of you could comment on some of these more granular types of obstacles that have come up.

MR. McLARTY: Go ahead, Chase. Go ahead and I'll follow you.

MR. UNTERMEYER: I will be happy to talk about the confirmation process, but let me say that that's harder to change. I think The Brookings Institution report by Messrs. Galston and Dionne spoke to that. And where we are now three months out from the election, I doubt those changes are going to be made.

Where significant savings of time in presenting a name to the Senate can be made are in the Executive Branch side. We've already spoken to some of these, and that's where a new president or the incumbent president can make up a lot of this ever-lengthening amount of time that it takes to get a team in place.

Let me mention one thing that the Romney effort should be doing, I think, suggested by this law that you've told us has just passed and that is that right now the Romney effort should have people detailed to look through the law books to determine of the, you name it, 400, 500 full-time presidential appointees appointments requiring the confirmation of the Senate, which of those must be filled by law and by title, and which are just authorized. In the department that I'm most familiar with, the Defense Department, there are only a few positions mentioned by law that have to be filled. The rest are authorized positions at the undersecretary or assistant secretary level.

Right now, what needs to be done is for people to look through those in all the departments and to consider combining positions or abolishing other positions so

that certain things happen. One is, of course, the fewer appointments there are to be made, the quicker it takes to get the administration in place. Secondly, I think that by combining positions and by enhancing thereby the responsibilities of those jobs, it will make them more appealing to people whom you want to recruit into administration, those with certain executive skills, especially if they've come out of the private sector or been elected officials at the state level.

And another thing it will do is eliminate that great bane of anybody who's been in the bureaucracy, such as the Defense Department, and that is turf wars, where there are too many people scrapping for the same rough amount of work to be done and, in the case of the Pentagon, real estate. You know, the corridor, the E ring corridor, the outside power corridor of the Pentagon used to be a fairly broad thoroughfare. Now it's rather narrow. And the reason it's narrowed is they took half of the E ring and made new offices, so that this new generation of panjandrums in the Pentagon could say that they had E ring offices. Now, they don't have E ring offices like the old days where you could actually look out and see Arlington Cemetery or the Lincoln Memorial from your window, but you're on the E ring.

So this growth or what Professor Paul Light has called the thickening of government is reflected in the fact that new administrations get this much talked about and, I think, over-advertised publication called the Plum Book and feel like they have to proceed with filling every box that's in the Plum Book. Not true. That's why I think there needs to be this inventory. In fact, I would encourage Brookings to undertake this study to see just truly what positions must be filled by names and which others are available for the new administration to reorganize.

Frankly, I was surprised that the new Bush administration in 2000/2001, and specifically in the Defense Department, did not do this because, of course, the new

Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, had been Secretary of Defense, had been a corporate CEO. You'd think he would have been the very first to recognize the value of having a more restricted span of control and strengthening the positions for those kind of people he wanted to put there. But what I think happened was they got the Plum Book, they got the organization chart, and the team was told to go fill those boxes, which they proceeded to do and, as a result, missed the opportunity to consolidate positions. And I think that is what these next three months could very profitably be spent doing.

MR. WEST: Mack, you want to respond to this? And then we'll open the floor to questions.

MR. McLARTY: I will, Professor West. Let me begin with just a bit of history and then I'll respond a bit more broadly, but hopefully do it in a succinct manner.

When Alexander Hamilton wrote The Federalist Papers, it was discussed advice and consent. And he made a very specific point that the only reason you would withhold consent was for a unique and special concern. I don't think that comports, Darrell, with your description of the hold that you so eloquently outlined. So these people that cite the Constitution and the history and so forth, I think that's a fact worth underscoring.

Secondly, George Washington put forward 102 nominations and received within 24 hours 101 confirmations and was supposedly grumpy that 1 was held up. (Laughter) I think any president would now take that and be joyful with that kind of movement in the Senator Confirmation process.

What I think we really have here is every constituency, stakeholder is really going to have to do their part, make their contribution to making this process much more workable to serve the American people and to make our government work the way it is intended to and the way it needs to and must if we're to function in this world we're

living. And by that I mean the president, whether it is Governor Romney or President Obama, needs, first of all, to be very serious and concrete and purposeful in saying I'm committed to getting my government in place. I want to up the number of appointments that are confirmed from 35 to 100 in the first tranche there, March 15th to June confirmation. I want to move that to 400 of the lesser appointees by the August recess. And to do that, exactly what Ambassador Untermeyer who's been there, been on the front line, talked about, I'm going to devote -- first I'm going to set a goal, then I'm going to devote more resources in my presidential personnel to do that. I'm going to authorize and ask for cooperation from the Office of Government Ethics, the FBI to allocate additional resources to push that through, just like you would do in any other endeavor of this type. So the president's got to start there.

I think then, secondly, we've got to recognize that, you know, the world's changed dramatically in terms of electronic ability, duplicative reports, and so forth. There's been a number of just streamlining procedures and processes that can be put in place now that were not available 10 years ago.

I think, thirdly, from the Senate standpoint, the bill does suggest, Professor West, that there are a number of confirmations that are made without the full confirmation process number of approval. So that kind of helps on the lower end. That should give more time on the upper end to focus on these important appointments. And I think the Senate has to agree, and I think have shown a willingness to do it and it's actually in the bill, to devote more resources from their standpoint in terms of their committees to push the appointments through. And there must be much better, much more proactive communication between the White House and the vetting agencies with the Senate staffs. Right now you've got just a hodgepodge of information, forms and everything else, all of which just slow the process down and clog the process.

And finally, I think there really is an increasing recognition of these holds that have really slowed down key positions. I think the tolerance for that has grown less and less, and I think that's helpful.

So my point is -- and from the general public standpoint, I think we're going to have to be very careful, including the press, not to be inappropriately critical of a very serious transition process that Governor Romney is undertaking -- Candidate Obama, Senator Obama undertook it when he was running for office -- about measuring the drapes and so forth. So it's just a situation where everybody needs to get very focused on this, you know, critical, fundamental part of getting a government in place and serving the people of our country. It's not quite as exciting as a big policy development, but it's absolutely essential to do the blocking and tackling. You cannot manage the government and keep our country moving forward and safe without it.

MR. WEST: Okay. Why don't we open the floor to questions? So we have a question here in the front row. If you could give you name and your organization, please. And we'd ask you to keep your question brief just so we can get to as many people as possible.

MS. WERTHEIM: I'm Mitzi Wertheim. I'm with the Naval Postgraduate School, but in 1976, I did the staffing for the national security cluster for Jimmy Carter and then did the staffing for Harold Brown. It was much easier, then, for a whole slew of reasons, but that's not what I'm going to ask about.

What I'm asking about is explaining the process so the general public can understand what it is and why it is so crazy. Unless you understand -- by the way, we don't teach process in schools. We don't teach context. We don't teach systems. And what's interesting is Congress, if you watch C-SPAN, all their questions are trying to understand the process. If you get to the Pentagon today and you're given a job, all of a

sudden you think you have all sorts of power if you don't understand the process involved in getting something done, and I was involved in something like that that took over a year, because they assume they can do it and there are all these blocks.

So my question, I guess, actually is for you. How do we get -- and I've tried to get people to write about process. And you're quite right, everybody thinks it's boring. But it turns out to be the thing that we need to understand if you want to get something done. And if there are these elements that are crazy, you want to get them pointed out so you can have them basically removed and get political support to remove them.

And my final question is when did the whole process start? What started that?

MR. WEST: Well, as a political scientist I applaud your interest in process. I spent most of my life trying to explain process.

In terms of the question of how you do a better job of explaining the process to the citizenry, I mean, that is the major challenge of our time because a lot of the problems that we're facing now are really governance- and process-related. So we spend a lot of time at Brookings, we put on events, we put out reports, we're trying to --

MS. WERTHEIM: You need to do it visually.

MR. WEST: We're trying to highlight public attention to this, so it's an ongoing thing. I don't know if either of you have suggestions as how we can --

MS. WERTHEIM: No, what I just suggest if you do it visually because it is a process and you can show how it goes, what the timelines are. What are the activities? What are the controls? Words don't explain it because it is so complex. It has to be visualized.

And you also want to look at the flame just to see where -- Alan Alda

asked, what's a flame? I don't know, do you all know this? They organized a contest in '08 with Stony Brook University, worldwide, to explain a flame to 11-year-olds. There were 6,000 kids around the world that evaluated 600 or 800 submissions. It's hard, but these kids understood it afterwards and that's a real loss in our educational system.

MR. WEST: Yeah. So, Chase, you were going to jump in.

MR. UNTERMEYER: Yes, I hope I can paint the visual that you're talking about, but in the business of presidential personnel there actually are three separate, distinct phases, and the first is the selection phase. This is where politics comes really most into play. This is the part that's done entirely at the White House; let's say -- putting us past January 20th -- in identifying the person whom the president wants to nominate to send to the Senate. Once that is done, and there are all kinds of arm wrestling with cabinet secretaries and party leaders and donors and members of the president's family sometimes, once that person is selected, that part of the process ends.

Then we move into the clearance process. This is where people have to fill out the forms and the forms are then farmed out to the FBI and the Office of Government Ethics for their checks. And if there are any problems, those are usually brought to the attention of the White House counsel, the president's lawyer, and those have to be resolved. If there are financial conflicts, people have to divest themselves of holdings or put matters in a blind trust. Or those conflicts are thought not to be a problem, at which point then the counsel gives a memo to the president saying this person is cleared, ready for nomination.

Then we move into the third and final phase, which is the confirmation process, of course, wholly within the hands of the Senate whose prerogatives in this I respect, even though they can be fraught with these particular problems. In my experience as a nominee and also as director of presidential personnel, I would say that

95+ percent of all nominees have no problem whatsoever in getting confirmed. We think of the headline-type of battles for confirmation for Supreme Court justices and occasional cabinet secretaries, and those stick out in our minds, but almost everybody else is eventually confirmed. The real problem is just getting the hearing, just getting to that point where the committee or subcommittee will bring the nominee forward and ask questions. And that's important because nothing can occur until the committee reports to the full floor of the Senate that the person is recommended for confirmation. And then the vote on the floor is so routine that it takes place sometimes with just one or two senators on the floor, and it's just a matter of seconds.

So three separate phases -- selection, clearance, confirmation -- each with their own problems, each lengthening this process. And that's sort of what we've been trying to address this morning.

MR. WEST: So it sounds like there could be a video game here. (Laughter)

Question here on the aisle. There's a microphone coming up from behind you.

MR. HOGUE: Hi. My name is Henry Hogue. I'm with Congressional Research Service. And my question pertains to the governance during this transition process while we're waiting for the permanent political appointees. Is there anything that you guys can think of that needs to be done to improve that governance process?

And relatedly, is there anything that needs to be done with the Vacancies Act in order to facilitate temporary filling of positions at the lower levels while awaiting the confirmation process to reach its conclusion? Thanks.

MR. McLARTY: Well, I think at the lower level the Senate bill, which was approved by the House and will be signed by the President, does help fill in those

positions pretty rapidly, some actually exempting confirmation. So I think that'll be quite helpful at some of the positions that you cite.

I think in terms of governance, I think there's an orderly transfer of power in terms of governance. I think it really comes down to the functioning of the government during these transition periods. That's really the key question.

And I think, to kind of go back to your question and thank you for your service to our country in the Carter administration, but I really think from a public standpoint, while it's important to understand these various processes, it's a little bit like the sausage making. I think what the public really wants is to get a government in place that can represent my interests. That's where my tax dollars are going. So I think it's really incumbent on those of us who are either engaged in the political process or have direct responsibility in government to get this fixed and working better.

And again, I don't want to be too hopeful, Darrell, on this happy day, as you started this on that note, but I think there's been a discernible shift here. I think the trend line of the appointments process has been moving and will continue to move in a better direction and, goodness knows, it needs to.

MR. WEST: If I could just add one question to that because you were noting that, you know, people want the government up and running so we can address problems. The question I have is, you know, there's been a lot of discussion about political polarization and how that has increased over time. And I just wonder if that has changed the dynamic of how people view government, that maybe half of the people don't want the government up and running because they think it's going to do the wrong thing.

MR. McLARTY: Well, that's a fair point and it cuts both ways. You can argue that position, but it's pretty hard, I think, to sustain a position of reasonableness to

say that in a democracy where an election has been held that the president -- be it Republican, Democrat, or Independent -- doesn't deserve to have his or her team in place. That's a pretty hard argument to make that you're not going to give someone the opportunity to govern in a democracy. So I just don't think that kind of withstands serious scrutiny.

Again, I go back to the basic point. You can argue about the size of government -- and I thought the ambassador made some very good points about the thickening of government and so forth -- that's a legitimate debate to have. But you can't really argue, I think, intelligently about the need for national security or economic security or we're going to double our exports over the next five years, the need to have an ambassador in place around the world where we export our products to. You just can't argue that.

So I think I would take it, Professor West, the other way and to say one reason the Congress has such low standing in the public is because they're not getting things done and not working together. This is one of those areas where it's not a policy dispute. It's not a social issue dispute that engenders all of this heat and debates. This is simply a way to make our government -- whatever size, whatever philosophy it may have -- work better to serve the people of our country in critical areas, some of which in terms of security and economic issues I think government's role is pretty undeniable.

So that would be kind of how I would try to deal with that. Is there that cynicism about kind of confusing the size of government, the role of government versus getting a government in place? I think there is that confusion, but I think you can cut through that with a pretty straightforward discussion. I hope so.

MR. WEST: Okay. Other questions? Back in the corner.

MR. MANISS: Hi. Very interesting forum. Aaron Maniss (phonetic),

University of Maryland. I'm studying the evolving national security role of the vice president. And in our lifetimes, even my lifetime, the role of the vice president across the board in administrations has changed dramatically. And I'm wondering, both from personal experience and looking ahead, what useful roles can a vice president play in the transition process?

MR. McLARTY: Well, I'll be glad to comment on that, but I think Ambassador Untermeyer's much more qualified since he worked with and for a vice president during that period. So, Chase, you start and I'll pick up on it.

MR. UNTERMEYER: Thank you. By a bit of shameless advertising I have a contract with Texas A&M Press to do a book on my experiences working for then Vice President Bush, which was 30 years ago, but I think was an important time because Vice President Mondale, working with President Carter, revolutionized the role of the vice president in the sense that today all vice presidents are given all the classified and other sensitive documents that go to a president. Vice presidents are presumed to be participants in all national security and other policy meetings of consequence. In the case of Vice President Mondale, but also many of his successors, they are given the president's schedule and are, in effect, invited to any meeting the president has other than a personal meeting in the Oval Office. And has also an office in the West Wing. Location, location, location was a factor missing in the vice presidencies prior to 1977. And symbolically that was very important.

As a result of that change, which George Bush as vice president to Ronald Reagan first, in effect, got to continue, that we have reached the point, I'm happy to say -- and this is repeating what the professor already knows -- that these changes in the role of the vice presidency are institutionalized. Now, they are not in law. They are strictly a matter of agreement between a president and vice president as to whether

these things will occur. There's absolutely nothing that won't prevent a president from doing unto his vice president what was done to Lyndon Johnson by the Kennedy folks or to Nelson Rockefeller by the Ford administration people, in which all of these privileges and accesses could be withdrawn.

The only valuable commodity a vice president has at his or her disposal is the schedule, how the vice president spends time. Now, the schedule of the president is also very, very valuable, but presidents, we know, do other things. They can send the Marines. They can veto bills. They can appoint justices of the Supreme Court. But vice presidents only have their time. And perhaps the cruelest thing or, more likely, a president's staff can do to a vice president is take control of that schedule and send the vice president off on various missions or receive the National Turkey or whatever other kinds of chores are imagined to keep the vice president otherwise involved than in these national security matters.

Happily, I like to think that we have passed that point and that the current vice president and all future vice presidents will be chosen, first of all, for being an excellent member of the president's team. It's not just a matter of balancing the ticket in an election, but that that person is going to bring to bear in the senior ranks of the administration that collection of skills that the person brings.

I happen to believe that the unofficial job description of a modern vice president should include Hill experience. In fact, pretty much all of our vice presidents, starting with Harry Truman, with the exceptions of Nelson Rockefeller and Spiro Agnew, have served in one or both houses of Congress. This is very important because the vice president can be the most impactful, most important lobbyist that the White House has in the Congress. And that's just because, as we know, the Congress is a club. And if you've been there, if you know the secret handshakes and you know the power of certain

things, like the House gym and the Senate dining room, those are ways of working the system that the most intelligent, best equipped governor of a distant state will not bring necessarily to Washington. That's not to say that a vice president without Hill experience can't be effective as a lobbyist. It's just they won't be immediately effective as somebody who has that background.

And then we can hope that the vice president, such as, for example, George Bush or Joe Biden, will have had national security experience of one form or another so that they can perform immediately in that particular role.

So, as I say, it's a significant development that -- because it isn't in law, it isn't in the Constitution -- is evanescent and can go away, but I hope we've passed that point.

MR. WEST: So with those requirements you've just disqualified me from ever becoming vice president of the United States. (Laughter)

MR. UNTERMEYER: Intelligence is not alone a qualification.

MR. WEST: Thank god for that. Was there anything you wanted to add?

MR. McLARTY: I'll be very quick because we could have another discussion, seminar, focus about the vice presidency, which is kind of what your question suggested. And you noted about national security, I think Chase spoke very thoughtfully about the issue.

One of the things that I'm really honestly proud of is how Vice President Gore became an integrated, integral member of the Clinton administration. It perhaps was the first time that a vice presidential candidate had run truly as a team with the president. You saw that Clinton-Gore ticket, so the campaign reflected that. It was a bit surprising to me, however, when I took partial leave of my senses and joined public

service full time, that President-elect Clinton and at that time Vice President-elect Gore had not truly established as close a working relationship as I anticipated they would have had going through the campaign. No rifts, but not full integration. So that was one of the real priorities that I was given, and I think we achieved that.

And I think what the ambassador noted in terms of sharing of information, that's absolutely key. A once a week luncheon with the president, that's a pivotal interaction.

And there's just no question that Vice President Gore in terms of national security was invaluable to our administration. One, he had had military service in Vietnam. Two, he had congressional experience on national security and foreign policy matters, both in the House and the Senate. He did have the standing and friendships there in the House and the Senate. President Clinton relied on him for his counsel and advice, although he was the final decision maker. And I give enormous amount of credit to Vice President Gore, who, you know, really picked up that charge and made a serious effect, as did his staff, including Roy Neel, who was his chief of staff and worked for Al many years. So I think we did a pretty good job of integrating that office, but you have to work at it because there are a lot of other forces that can get in the way of that.

I would say, and I'm sure you encountered some of this, the last year of any administration, when the vice president's going to run for the presidency, that dynamic starts to change. I think that's inevitable. It's called politics.

MR. WEST: We have a question right here.

MS. OSHEL: My name is Kay Oshel, and I come at this issue as a former civil servant from Nixon to George W. Bush. Mr. McLarty, you had said that the tolerance for the whole is getting less and less. But since the crucial issue is getting the Senate rules to change, how do you think that will ever happen?

MR. McLARTY: Yeah. Well, there's been a number -- that's a great question. There's been a number of recommendations made by people of real standing, including Chairman Paul Volcker, you mentioned Bill Galston from The Brookings Institution -- Darrell, a colleague of yours -- among others who have discussed or put forward a proposal of a 90-day up-or-down vote on a confirmation. And I mentioned the historical aspect of Alexander Hamilton.

We had to tread very skillfully -- I won't say lightly, but skillfully -- in our Aspen efforts with Senators Frist and Robb, who had serious and pretty engaged discussions with Leader Reid and Senator McConnell and their staffs about the confirmation process. And so I don't think I would suggest you're going to get the Senate to change their rules tomorrow morning. I think that's highly unlikely. I think we better take this victory on this bill and celebrate it and build on it.

But what I really was referring to, where I think there has been a modest shift that we do need to build on, is a recognition that the system is not working as it should. It's not a Republican or Democratic issue. There's enough criticism to go around for both parties and both sides of the aisle. So I don't think we'll see a change in the whole process, but I would hope there would become a much more mature, reasonable view of the whole process, and it would not be used for political purposes nearly as much as it has in the past. I think the public is -- well, I think the standing in the Senate; I think that you're seeing that reflected in the country, and not just about the confirmation process. But, you know, I'm kind of tired of this not working. Now, you've got a countervailing view of a more partisan atmosphere in the elections, too, and I concede that, but that's really what I was suggesting. But I don't anticipate a change in the Senate rules in the near term.

MR. WEST: Nobody is that much of an optimist.

MR. McLARTY: Yeah, yeah.

MR. WEST: Okay, right there is a question, this lady.

MS. FITZPATRICK: Hi. My name is Lynn Fitzpatrick and I'm with the Global Unity Network. The next administration will be handicapped by a number of things: the possibility of sequestration, a lame duck session of Congress, a possible government shutdown. How is it -- and a depression. How is it that or how do you think the new administration could come in and implement or effect broad-reaching changes to come out of a depression, like FDR did when he came to office?

MR. WEST: Don't everybody speak at once. (Laughter)

MR. McLARTY: You have to take a deep breath after the question. (Laughter)

MR. UNTERMEYER: I'll take a stab, maybe not quite as sweeping an answer as the question. But I always like to quote Henry Adams, who, while never a politician always had very mordant and incisive views on American politics. He said that politics consists of ignoring facts. And the more I've been involved in government, the more I see the wisdom of what he meant, which was all the horrible things that you've described that can happen, may well happen. And I think the next administration needs to just plow ahead and do what it says and what it told the American people it was going to do, to be consistent, and to try to make some progress.

It seems to me unlikely that the entire fiscal horror that the United States faces is going to be solved in a lame duck session of Congress or by a new administration in the first 100 days. I would love to have that disproven and it is possible, I suppose, that we could see another FDR-style sweep of executive power over the Congress in a short amount of time. It's unlikely in our time, but it could happen.

So I think that what they should try to do is make some kind of progress,

some way of improving the fiscal house of the United States that will set us on the right path toward solvency, get us back to the good days. I'll give credit to the Clinton administration, a time when we actually did have a budget surplus, which people did not predict before that happened and now we look back nostalgically and wonder how it ever did happen. But in the effort to get back to some kind of stability I would say that they need to do something to begin to close gaps and deficits, which will not only serve the purpose addressed, it will also encourage those people watching us from abroad, such as our creditors. And it will also inspire the participants in the process, such as members of Congress, to do more; that having accomplished something, they might actually get encouraged to do a little bit more of the same something in order to help the country.

So when I say Henry Adams recommended that we ignore facts, the facts to be ignored is the catastrophe. I think if we keep our mind on the actual work at hand and the need to accomplish something, and ignore the cataclysm that might happen if you don't do it, is probably the best way forward. But they do have to move forward.

MS. FITZPATRICK: Can I be a little bit more specific on that? If we try to pass a New Deal, how could we affect a New Deal quickly?

MR. UNTERMEYER: Well, first of all, what happened in 1933 is probably unique because of the circumstances of the time, which wasn't just the economic circumstance of the time, but was an era in which the Executive Branch had considerably more, whatever you want to call it, credit in the bank to make those changes and to get a Congress overwhelmingly of the same party of the president to agree to them. The legends are that Congress passed important pieces of New Deal legislation when literally the bills were not written. They were just rolls of paper that the clerk basically waved in front of the body and said was pending before them. Well, that cannot happen in our time. And that assumes even strong control of the Congress by the same

party of the president. It just doesn't happen that way.

And, in fact, it didn't happen for Franklin Roosevelt too much after that period himself. He had great difficulties even with a Congress entirely in his party's control throughout his administration.

Do you want to add to that?

MR. McLARTY: Well, only briefly. I think Winston Churchill -- you quoted Mr. Adams -- you know, Americans will eventually do the right thing, but not until they've tried every other alternative. (Laughter) And that's a rough paraphrase, but it's all too true and we're seeing that. I think the concern I have about that is with the way the world is interconnected and the speed of everything's moving. I'm not sure we quite have that luxury of time as we once did.

I'm a little more optimistic than perhaps you are, but recognizing the seriousness of the problems that you appropriately note and underscore and affirm. I do think there's not going to be much happening before the election. The election, I think, is likely to be very close, so I don't think you're going to have a strong mandate either way, although we will have a new president elected, either President Obama reelected or Governor Romney. That's going to change the dynamic as will the congressional elections. So to really kind of make a forecast about what may happen until the elections occur is really virtually impossible.

What I do think is happening is I think there is likely an increased understanding that the sequestration is just not a route that we can possibly pursue, that those cuts are just too draconian. So I think there are already some pretty quiet discussions going on miraculously with Democrats and Republicans who are pretty serious about this in terms of how to begin to address some of the budget fiscal problems, particularly in terms of the entitlements and the national debt. And I think you

would, hopefully, see some effort of that regardless who is elected president early in the coming term of the new president.

And I think Chase noted it, you're not going to have, in my judgment, kind of the sweeping reform that you suggested in your question. I think that's highly unlikely in the Congress that we have.

But I do think, not unlike what we've just talked about on the presidential process and, frankly, not unlike what we saw in our administration, what you really have to have are kind of small victories, build on those victories, kind of get the public mood and confidence in a positive direction, moving in positive direction, and then the momentum starts to build. And, frankly, you need a little good luck along the way. You need for energy prices to remain at a pretty reasonable level that won't rekindle inflation. It helps to have innovation that creates some economic activity along the way.

So my point would be after the election you're going to have some certainty about who the Congress and Executive Branch are. I think you're going to have to address some of the fiscal issues after the election. And I think the new president will be willing to do that. And I think you may find a Congress that's willing to be, particularly in the Senate, a bit more constructive than we've seen. That would be my best-case scenario, but I think it's one grounded in some measure of realism. I hope I'm right.

MR. WEST: Okay. We have a question right here. There's a microphone coming over to you.

DR. CHAUDRY: Thank you. This is Dr. Nisar Chaudry. I'm with the Pakistan-American League. My question is that since there are no presidents who are the copy of each other, each individual is custom-built as president. And does the virtues and qualities of the president also influence in some way the speed and smoothness of the process of transition?

MR. UNTERMEYER: I'll answer that and the answer is yes.

MR. McLARTY: Yeah, that's right.

MR. UNTERMEYER: When we get down to it what we want out of a president is leadership and presidents can be judged on their backgrounds and their speaking style, but truly it is their ability to make a difference, to move the needle, to make a mark of some sort. And in the case of the various things we're talking about here, if the next president of the United States or the incumbent president reelected puts emphasis on the personnel process to move it along or to encourage the Senate to move changes at its end, then you'll see things happen because you get what you expect. And if the president expects more, he'll get it.

For the most part, recent presidents of the United States, in fact, I'd say all presidents in American history, have hated personnel work. This is not what they like to do. They do not like to make choices. They don't like to pick and choose among supporters. And least of all, they don't like the hail of dead cats that comes at them for having made the final choice. And there are anecdotes throughout American history, even back with the federal establishment was tiny, the same dynamic existed having to make a choice between unpalatable alternatives.

Nevertheless, presidents should be forced to pay attention to this because it is one of the core constitutional responsibilities that they have. And while those of us who have been assistants to presidents might gain in the world of chattering Washington a certain status because we're known as being in charge of a particular process, all that is is purely by direction of the president of the constitutional responsibility of the president. And if the president chooses to get personally and directly involved in the personnel process, particularly vis-à-vis the president's cabinet and involving their role -- we haven't talked about that, but that is a complication more than a benefit in the

personnel process -- then you'll start to see changes.

But to say again, it does depend upon the personality of the president. And I don't know for a fact, but I would suspect that because Mitt Romney was a governor and had to make appointments in an intensely political place like Massachusetts, he has thoughts on this subject. I don't know what those thoughts are, but I am certain he has them and they will inform how he proceeds with filling his administration should he be elected.

MR. WEST: Chase, I was with you until you used that dead cat line. You lost me on that one. (Laughter)

Mack?

MR. McLARTY: Well, I like your characterization or phrase "custom made," each president has his own distinct attributes and abilities and probably liabilities. That's well stated.

No, I think Chase has got it right. I had suggested earlier that every stakeholder has to do their part in this process. So the president's got to be very, I think, intentional and set a goal, I want to get my government in place. That will be a little more imperative for Governor Romney if he's elected than President Obama because of serving a second term. But I think you have to have that stated commitment and purpose.

But I do think, bear in mind, that this bill, while it's a fairly limited bill, but it's a step, it's a meaningful step, was done on a bipartisan basis with Leader Reid, Senator McConnell, Senator Alexander, Senator Schumer. That's a pretty broad bipartisan consensus in the Senate; same in the House with Leader Boehner and others. So I think you've got something to build on here in terms of the political presidential appointment process. That's not to say some of these other sweeping issues we've

discussed a bit, that's a different subject.

MR. WEST: Okay. We have time for a couple more questions. Right here, right behind you.

MR. FEGE: Thank you very much. I'm Arnold Fege with the Public Education Network, and I want to thank both of these gentlemen for giving us great secretaries of education, but this is unrelated question and it has to do with money. Norm Ornstein has written on this, Bill Galston's talked about it, but we haven't talked about it this morning.

With so much money in the campaign, there's been money in the prior campaigns, but with so much money going into these campaigns, with contributions by so few people, what impact does all of this money have? What does this money expect to buy, if anything? Is there a firewall between the money and the personnel decisions that you all have to make? And what kinds of pressures are applied by the people who are giving these dollars? I know there's a little rumble between Mrs. Pritzker and Obama, and all the money she's contributed and not getting access. Can you talk about that?

MR. WEST: Yeah, we're estimating this is going to be the first $3 billion election.

MR. McLARTY: Well, again, I think, Darrell, you've had a couple of questions that would suggest follow-up forums on just that subject because this is a big and serious and important topic that you raise. And I can easily get on a soapbox about it, but I will refrain from doing that in this session because I have been a part of the political process since my early 20s. I've been a campaign treasurer for two governors in Arkansas, and I have felt a responsibility to make campaign contributions to various candidates. I think President-elect Clinton was somewhat concern as it became evident I had given to the Republican side as well as the Democratic side, although much more

Democratic because I'm a lifelong Democrat. But I think there's too much money in the system. Just far too much money in the system. There was way too much money before the Supreme Court and with the Super PACs, and that's just put it on steroids, and it's not good.

Now, I think, you know, both sides are so heavily armed it's like a nuclear war. They both have so many nuclear warheads that it kind of offsets each other, so I don't think either candidate's going to be disadvantaged from lack of money.

I think in this transparent environment, particularly with the investigative press, the 24/7 news cycle, YouTube, all of this that any political official has to be exceedingly careful about a campaign contribution and any political appointment. And I can almost make the case that it could well disadvantage you by contributing to a campaign for an appointment. And I think there's some truth in that.

Is there an expectation? I don't necessarily think it is in linked in that crass of way, but certainly there is an expectation if someone has supported a candidate -- either with time, energy, reputation, or money -- and he or she has a desire to serve in that administration, that, you know, there's certainly an understanding I share a belief and I'd like to serve. And we kidded earlier, you're right; I've heard a former governor of our state said this is just great. I get to call 11 of my good friends who supported me and tell them they're not going to get this appointment. I get to call one person to tell them they got it, and he's only happy for six months and then he's mad, too. (Laughter) So, you know, that's part of the decision process that Chase was noting that any political figures kind of shirk from.

But I feel like we need to have reform and we have just not been successful in that regard. Again, it's a much longer subject, serious subject, but those are my kind of opening thoughts.

MR. UNTERMEYER: To which I add that we have to consider what kind of money we're talking about. The Super PAC money, it seems to me, is entirely directed toward electing or defeating candidates, so put that aside. That's, if you will, generic money.

Then at the other end are the, well, contributions that are bundled, gathered together by people who may well want to have an appointment. Typically these people do not want to be assistant secretaries of agriculture. They would like to be ambassador to Luxembourg. And in any administration --

MR. McLARTY: Or the court of St. James (phonetic). (Laughter)

MR. UNTERMEYER: Oh, yes. And in any administration those people will be heard not just because they gave money, but because they're also personally known, if not to the president, then to key people in the president's circle. So those people will be heard. And it does seem to me in this administration that pretty much all, if not the largest part, of the non-career ambassadorial appointments have gone to bundlers, people who did raise money. So you might say there is cause and effect in the Obama administration with regard to ambassadorships and that amount of money.

The more difficult category which has been with us for many years and I think it's what you allude to are the campaign contributions by interest groups of one sort or another, who in Washington, not unlike Austin, where I once served as a state legislator, hope that their contribution will at least get the favorable attention, the inclination, a friendliness on the part of the recipient. This is often talked about as getting access. Any good elected official, let's say legislator, is going to have the door open to anybody who comes in on a particular public issue. It's just that they may well receive people with a friendlier attitude and a smile playing upon their lips if that person had supported them during the campaign. That is why people give money in campaigns. No

surprise and no shock to that.

But when that comes to the personnel process, then things become much more pointed. And we're not talking here about cabinet matters. Let us, by way of example, zero in on something that my esteemed and able former deputy, Ross Starek, will remember and that is the assistant secretary of energy for fossil energy -- that may be still today a position by that title, it may have changed -- but the key thing there is here is where the coal interest, the oil and gas interests, the environmentalists all came to play over an assistant secretaryship. It was a very critical assistant secretaryship from the point of view of energy policy, but in the particular worlds of oil and gas, coal, natural resources in general, that was the most important appointment to be made by the administration. And I seem to remember that it took many, many months to make that appointment just because of having to pick and choose amongst friends because they had all donated to George Bush, who, after all, was an oilman and not disinclined to support the energy industry. And that often is what happens.

And, in fact, maybe I should make that point. Often what happens in appointments is not that you get somebody named who is biased for or against a particular interest or industry. You get no appointment at all. That is the process coagulates because of the extreme difficulty of having to pick and choose. And that's even before it gets to the Hill where those same interests come into play in the confirmation process.

MR. WEST: Okay, we have time for one last question. Back there, there's a microphone coming around.

MR. MICHELI: Hi. My name's Mark Micheli. I'm with Government Executive Media Group. I had a question related to federal managers who are trying to lead during this transitional time. What perspective do you have or advice for career

federal managers who are trying to stay on mission and get things done during this time?

MR. McLARTY: Well, I can speak from my experience. My experience and conclusion was to have a quite favorable impression of career public servants. I had had an opportunity to deal with many of them in my private sector experience, but certainly not to the extent that I did when I became a member of the White House. I think there is a receptivity born some out of desperation and need by any new administration when you see a capable, dedicated, experienced public servant who's already there, a federal employee, assuming -- assuming -- there is a professional and willingness on their part to be supportive of, in our case, a new president coming in of a different party with some different views on the issues. I think there is an understandable wariness or at least recognition that some of the career people, particularly in key positions, may reflect the prior administration and that's kind of the last thing you need is somebody either openly opposing or being a problem or even, maybe worse, kind of cleverly opposing and being a problem.

But in our case, I'd say probably at least, you know, 75 percent of the, if not more, those sitting federal officials of longstanding that were capable and dedicated, they were an integral part of our transition and proved to be a continuing contributing force, even after the appointments were made, if they were political appointees to be made in position. So my overall impression was quite positive. There are some exceptions, but that's how they were viewed.

MR. UNTERMEYER: I would say amen to Brother Mack for his comments on that. One of the great lessons for me as a member of the Reagan administration, and I like to think for many, many other members, was the reality of dealing with career people, having been at many a Rotary Club lunch in the years preceding our coming to power and making speeches or hearing speeches about

shiftless, lazy bureaucrats who nevertheless manage to relentlessly pursue an agenda. I'm not sure how you could do both, but that was pretty much the oratory over the luncheon circuit. (Laughter) And once I got to the Pentagon and got to meet the career civilian individuals as well as the Navy and Marine Corps officers with whom I worked, I was encouraged that they are truly loyal to the administration of the day.

But what they really need, just as we said earlier, at the Oval Office level is leadership. It's not that they are, or least not in every case, going to pursue one of those private agendas so much as they want to be told what to do. And that may even present another challenge, which is encouraging people and inspiring them and pointing out the way ahead.

And it's also, I might add, a smart thing for the new appointee, let's say at an assistant secretary level, which is very close to where national policy of the administration meets the reality of the bureaucracy, it's very incumbent upon those people to go find people in the career force who are of like mind. There are millions of people in the career force and some of them may actually agree wholeheartedly with the new administration, and those are the people you want to go find and empower them or cleverly encourage them to come up with new ideas that just happen to be the administration's ideas. Applaud those, champion those, and encourage those people to go forth and carry them out.

So to sum up, I have great respect for the career force that I got to know in different departments of the government. And what they want and what they expect out of the new administration is that sense of direction.

MR. WEST: Well, this has been a fascinating session. Chase, Mack, thank you very much for sharing your wisdom and your insights. We really appreciate it. (Applause)

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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