

Presidential Choice

The Christian Science Monitor is an independent newspaper. But we do not equate independence with neutrality. Over the years we have supported certain basic concepts of government. And so in 1960 we have concluded that Vice-President Nixon is best fitted to fulfill the grave demands of the presidency during the next four years. Certainly readers must always do their own thinking and reach their own decisions. But we feel the factors determining our choice are very compelling.

We shall discuss the major issues in detail in later editorials. Here it will suffice to affirm our conviction that the one overriding question is how the next President will uphold freedom at home and abroad.

Americans are united in wanting their country to exert vigorous—and wise—leadership both in the world struggle against communism and in the search for peace with justice. Foreign policy, in its basic aims, is bipartisan. But its day-to-day conduct lies primarily in the White House and depends particularly on the ability and experience of the President.

Both presidential candidates are vigorous, imaginative, and politically skilled. But one clearly surpasses the other in his preparation for coping with world affairs.

Vice-President Nixon has had an unparalleled opportunity to participate in the actual conduct of American relations with the world. He has been sent by President Eisenhower on missions to scores of countries, including Russia. He has sat in or presided over sessions of the National Security Council—where diplomacy is coordinated with planning for the nation's military and economic strength. On the record of words and deeds Mr. Nixon has a decisive superiority for the crucial task of pursuing peace while successfully waging the cold war.

This struggle against communism abroad must be won without losing freedom at home. In domestic affairs the totalitarian threats are less obvious but real. They appear in repeated suggestions that a free society cannot compete with a totalitarian state without adopting totalitarian ways. And the drive for statism appears wherever government seeks to do for the people what they can do better for themselves, or wherever federal government seeks to do what can be better done at the state or local level.

The framers of the Constitution distrusted governmental power. They limited and divided it to protect the individual. Today too often the fashion is to distrust and restrict the individual while building up official functions and powers. Federal spending programs are proposed which scorn to place any responsibility on the citizen or to provide any incentive for individual or local effort.

Moreover, the pressures for paternalistic government are prompted by the tendency to grant favors to special-interest blocs. The Roman Em-

pire became corrupt and weak when successive emperors bought public support by distribution of food. Political philosophers are concerned lest America be similarly weakened by politicians bidding for support from voting blocs.

The Democratic platform promises economic favors to group after group in a gigantic spending program. This, it is asserted, will not cause inflation because it can be financed by increased revenues obtained through national growth in turn produced by the spending and by lowering interest rates. We believe this is a delusive assumption lacking any reasonable hope of fulfillment.

Mr. Kennedy has made a particular effort to identify himself with and obtain endorsement by labor unions. He has gone so far as to say that organized labor's aims are America's aims. Mr. Nixon has frankly told union workers that he could not be for them in every situation because a President must put the interests of all the people first. And in his acceptance speech he bluntly warned the special-interest blocs that he would not try "to outpromise the Democrats."

Here is a fundamental difference between the two candidates and their platforms. It is imperative, it seems to us, to halt the trend toward centralized government and the effort to buy votes with federal taxes.

It appears almost certain that if Mr. Nixon is elected he will—in the beginning at least—have to deal with a Democratic Senate. But the record of Congress for 20 years—accented by the recent short session—shows it to be controlled by a bipartisan moderate majority rather than by Democrats or Republicans. And that majority has been—and appears likely to be—nearer the moderate Nixon than the extreme Kennedy position on major domestic issues. So Mr. Nixon should be able to exert more effective legislative leadership.

But it is in world affairs—where a President constitutionally has virtually a free hand—that we see the greatest challenge to leadership. Not only must the danger of nuclear war be dealt with; not only must the set purpose but shifting tactics of Communist dictators be resolutely but deftly outmatched; not only must the tremendous problem of the emerging nations be coped with wisely—there must be the vision to see unprecedented opportunities for betterment opening to all mankind in this space age. There must be the skill to lead, not drive, men forward.

To sum up, there are two main imperatives for Americans in the days ahead: First is to push outward the frontiers of freedom in the world while maintaining peace. Second is to enlarge individual freedoms at home while strengthening the general welfare as against grab-bag politics. For success in these tasks Americans will require positive, progressive, and skilled leadership. As we see it, Richard M. Nixon is best prepared to supply that leadership.