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MADISON, WISC.—Three years ago, just two days after Lyndon Johnson narrowly avoided losing the primary here by withdrawing from the race, the voters of Madison turned down an anti-war referendum. It declared it to be the policy of this city that the United States should withdraw its troops immediately and "permit the people of Vietnam to settle their own problems."

Students at the University of Wisconsin worked hard canvassing for the referendum, older peace groups joined in, but the anti-war side received only 44 per cent of the vote. It was strongly opposed by organized labor and business and carried only the five "university" wards.

This month, the issue was on the municipal ballot again, without the drawing power of a "peace" presidential candidate. It was reworded, to refer to the people of "Southeast Asia" instead of Vietnam. This time it was not even opposed strongly by veterans' groups—the West Madison VFW endorsed the anti-war campaign—and the referendum carried with 66 per cent of the vote.

What happened here should be of some interest to those political analysts who have spent most of the past year telling us that Mr. Nixon has "defused" the war as an issue and that something called the "social issue"—a collection of



William F. Buckley, Jr.

# Nixon and the editors

Three years ago, just before the national political conventions, the American Society of Newspaper Editors invited Candidate Richard Nixon to appear before it, and to answer questions put to him by prominent newspaper editors. I was there, and saw Mr. Nixon in action, answering the questions put to him and his principal mission—endeavoring to persuade this community of tough-minded men that, notwithstanding the weaknesses so greatly celebrated, he was presidential material. I remember that Mr. Nixon insisted that the podium be removed before he approached the microphone. His point was that unlike other presidential candidates, he didn't need notes, or set-paragraphs. He wanted the editors to see him there standing directly in front of a gaunt microphone. Even when he delivered the so-called Checkers speech, he did not use a prepared text. It is natural to desire to exhibit one's strength.

Last Friday, it was almost exactly the same audience: the newspaper editors of America. But it was after dinner, rather than after lunch. The audience was dressed in black tie. The principal speaker was not seated at the dais throughout the meal. The president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors delivered short, graceful, witty remarks, compressing business and just a hint of the antic, into a brief

address which was hard to listen to because the amplification wasn't quite right.

Then at about one minute to nine, the chairman began calling the audience to attention. Obviously he had supposed it would take a minute or so to quiet the audience. Instead, he found himself confronted with total silence: and that, children, will not do. Because when the President of the United States is scheduled to come into the room at 2100 hours, that does not mean that, because the room is ready for him at 2059 hours, you can just push the button and say, come on in, Mr. President. Those who are patient in these matters will say to themselves: there is a reason for clockworkolatry, and we must not permit our normal impulses for spontaneity to get in the way of our recognition that reasons of state come first, and if it has been arranged for the President to come in at 2100 hours, you may not, must not, usher him in thirty seconds earlier, let alone a minute earlier. Suppose it was Cape Kennedy, would you expect Apollo 11 to blast off at 0731, when it was set for 1732, merely on the grounds that Walter Cronkite had run out of steam a minute before the scheduled time?

It isn't only the formalities, it is the Secret Service. The Secret Service is permanently traumatized as the result of its indifferent performance in Dallas, in 1963. I am among

those who did not affix the blame for that tragedy on the Secret Service, believing, as Mr. Kennedy himself once resignedly put it, that anyone who is willing to sacrifice his own life, can probably succeed in taking the life of the President. On the other hand Dallas was one of those situations where the taking of the President's life was one operation, and the surrender of one's own life was an entirely different operation, i.e., it was altogether providential that the killer was caught. That, really, was the blow to the pride of the Secret Service, who had nothing whatever to do with the apprehension of Lee Harvey Oswald.

One supposes that the Dallas experience, and the subsequent tragedies at Memphis and Los Angeles (for which the S/S had not direct responsibility), were responsible for the precautions they take. Anyway, what obtains nowadays is: The Rule. And the Rule was an appearance at 9 p. m.

This was effected well, with the United States Marine Band playing "Hail to the Chief". The United States Marine Band is not yet a target of Senator William Fulbright. He has not even suggested that it is the secret intention of Henry Kissinger and Melvin Laird to send the United States Marine Band to Laos, so it performs serenely. The President came on, with Mrs. Nixon, who was also there three years ago, and looks more and more like a

Dresden doll, fine, ornamental, indestructible, alluring. Mr. Nixon, as President, didn't need notes, any more than he needed notes before he became President.

The questioners circled him, and the questions were direct, intelligent, probing: the questions you and I would have wanted put to the President. One interrogator smoked a cigarette while he asked his question, and that didn't seem quite right—on the other hand, that was the same day that the Rock Group,

Warm Dust, was received by the Pope, the female members allegedly dressed in Hot Pants. So, why can't a guy puff smoke into the face of the President, while asking him whether he intends to recognize Red China? The Secret Service is not mobilized to object. Though who knows. Perhaps, in the future, the Secret Service will instruct newspaper editors when they may smoke. After all, in Russia they also instruct the President what he can say.

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