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Developing Political Concepts -

Introduction - McManis.

Political Science Seminar - Elon College - Winston Salem, N.C.
April 25, 1966

CHANGING POLITICAL PATTERNS

There is a new politics in this country today. We are experiencing a political revolution with its genesis in Washington and an impact felt throughout the land.

This political revolution has as its main forward thrusters the civil rights upheaval, the unparalleled use of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government to reelect members of the majority party to the U. S. House of Representatives, the Supreme Court's one-man, one-vote ruling, and something which is being called "creative federalism."

The civil rights upheaval as a force upsetting old political patterns is making itself felt in the South as Negro voter registration swells. This is a new element which is causing some old-line politicians to alter their approach and to welcome Negro support.

The growing presence of the Negro voter will make itself increasingly felt in the South as the passage of time brings heavier and heavier Negro registration. It is a new fact of political life which will produce adjustments in the campaign techniques of politicians in both

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Last year in Virginia, for example, the entrenched political machine of former Senator Harry Byrd opened its party meetings to Negroes and ardently wooed the Negro vote.

As a result of that shift in basic strategy, the Democrats elected Mills Godwin as governor while a majority of the white vote split between Linwood Holton, Republican, and a third-party candidate on the Conservative Ticket, William J. Storey, Jr.

The old rules are going out the window in American politics.

There has always been an advantage for the incumbent in a congressional race because he has been able to do things for people for two years or more.

But the present administration is engaged in an unprecedented public relations effort aimed at upsetting the tradition that the party out of power makes big gains in an off-year election.

It is a hitherto untried program under which the Executive Branch in close collaboration with the majority party's national campaign

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committee is providing special assistance and guidance to the party's freshmen congressmen.

These fledgling congressmen have been supplied with expert advice on administration programs by Executive Branch officials and have been handed large amounts of speech material for use back in their districts.

Scores of so-called community development meetings have been arranged by these freshmen congressmen, with large numbers of Federal officials serving as "consultants" to small-town and rural office-holders from back home.

While it is true that these visitors to Washington pay their own transportation and meal expenses--that is, their communities pay these costs--these seminars also demand the time of top or second-echelon Federal officials who are drawn away from their customary duties.

The ostensible purpose of the seminars is to inform local officials about federal aid programs and how to obtain assistance in solving local problems.

There admittedly is also the purpose of advertising the freshman congressman among local officials and all his other constituents and

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giving him the appearance of a man of influence in Washington.

Put more bluntly, the aim is to make the freshman congressman look good and help him in his bid for reelection.

Republicans are going to have to rely on the issues and the common sense of the American people. They do not have available to them a new-style campaign apparatus operating under the guise of a public information service.

Nobody knows how well the majority party's new campaign weapon will work, of course. It has never been tried before.

One of the new angles the majority party is exploring is that of cultivating village and rural officials by offering them sewer and water pollution control money for the first time. This is being done under a new \$50 million federal aid program which seeks to bring rural folk under the federal aid umbrella for the first time and bind them to Washington.

Typical comments I have heard from rural officials who have attended the majority party's community development seminars and learned about the new \$50 million aid program is that they might just as well climb into

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the federal money tree, too. But they feel a bit as though somebody is making a monkey out of them.

One official remarked privately that his village delegation would never have found itself in Washington hat in hand at the seminar if the village fathers had only gone to work on local problems many years before.

"It would have cost a lot less to solve our problems then," he said.

Political scientists--you fellows--tell us that the farm vote is diminishing in importance. But as I have just noted, the majority party is focusing new attention on it.

Republicans have always worked hard to win the farm vote and will continue to do so. This is an area where we have good reason for optimism this year.

There will, of course, be new and heavier emphasis on the city and suburban vote by both parties. The suburbs have increased greatly in political importance because of the Supreme Court's one-man, one-vote decision.

As a result of that decision and subsequent redistricting, a member of the House may find himself running in a district that has shifted

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from heavily Republican to marginally Republican or even marginally Democratic--and vice versa.

More than 20 states have rearranged the boundary lines of their congressional districts in accordance with the Supreme Court's ruling and others will have completed the redistricting job before the November 8 election.

The elections this fall will be a whole new breed of cat in many districts. The old rules just won't hold good because the pendulum of voting power has swung even more toward the cities and suburbs.

Political patterns were thrown into complete confusion in the 1964 congressional elections when Democratic candidates won in districts where they ordinarily wouldn't have entertained any hope of victory. The GOP suffered a net loss of 37 seats.

This will be a very special election this fall because it will decide the balance of power in the House of Representatives for the next two years even though my party does not have a real chance to win a majority of the seats.

As you know, the present lineup in the House is 293 Democrats and 140 Republicans, with two vacancies.

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Fifty-one of the Democrats are freshmen. These are the men getting all the special help I mentioned previously in an unprecedented aid-to-freshmen program engineered by the administration and the majority party's national campaign committee.

Many of the 51 Democratic freshmen won their seats by the slenderest of margins. These seats will be special GOP targets.

The House elections will be of greatest importance in 1966. It is in these elections that the will of the electorate will be most clearly reflected and will have the greatest potential for change.

There will not be much change in the makeup of the Senate. Senate seats on the line this year do not offer enough of a possibility for GOP gains.

But the makeup of the House may be sharply altered as a result of this fall's balloting.

Political observers are predicting Republican gains of anywhere from 50 to 80 seats.

If they are right, the outcome will greatly influence the conduct of our domestic affairs over the next two years.

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For the past two years the President has talked of what he calls "creative federalism." This is directed toward accomplishing a gradual and longrange change in our political patterns.

The President speaks of creative federalism in terms of working with the states and local communities to solve various problems and of developing new fiscal arrangements to promote that so-called partnership.

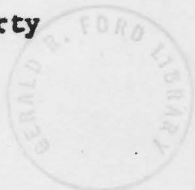
From a philosophic standpoint, creative federalism might more accurately be called destructive federalism. It would promote not so much a partnership between the federal government and the states and localities as it would a dependence on the federal bureaucracy.

This so-called creative federalism is marked by a shift away from the old, across-the-board federal grants-in-aid toward specifically targeted programs that carry with them greater federal restrictions.

So-called creative federalism means less of a role for the nation's governors.

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The multi-state Appalachia program is another example of what the President calls "creative federalism." It provides a special extra infusion of federal dollars into a group of states which are not sharing in the general progress of the nation.

Rep. Jamie Whitten, Mississippi Democrat who's on the House Appropriations Committee, recently remarked that if he had known what the Appalachia program involved in terms of federal spending he never would have voted for it.

There is another political pattern emerging with bipartisan support, and it may counter the so-called creative federalism which I contend is destructive of state and local initiative.

This is the proposal for sharing federal revenue with the states once the Vietnam war ends and such income tax diversion becomes feasible.

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Political Science Seminar
Elon College, Winston-Salem, N.C.
April 25, 1966 (afternoon)

Office Copy

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