

# The Harvard Brain Trust: Eating Lunch At Henry's

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by Michael E. Kinsley

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Perhaps the most remarkable of anti-war activities involving Harvard people was an odyssey to Washington in May by 13 senior Harvard faculty members, most with long-established ties to the government, to lobby for the first time against the war, and particularly against the invasion of Cambodia.

At their rooms in the Hay-Adams, on Lafayette Park directly across from the White House, the early arrivals spent Thursday evening, May 7, planning strategy for the following day, mainly for their meeting with "Henry"—Henry

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Kissinger, who used to be at Harvard himself. It was a highly intense discussion among some of the most noted intellectuals of the country, and they consumed two bottles of Cutty Sark scotch in the process.

The group included Thomas Schelling (professor of economics, author of *The Strategy of Conflict*, and organizer of the group), Richard Neustadt (author of *Presidential Power*), Francis Bator (former Deputy Special Assistant to President Johnson for National Security Affairs), Ernest May (professor of history and former military historian for the Department of Defense), Seymour Martin Lipset (professor of government

and social relations), George Kistia-kowsky (professor of chemistry and chief science advisor to President Eisenhower), William Capron (associate dean of the Kennedy School of Public Affairs, former assistant director of the Bureau of the Budget), Adam Yarmolinsky (professor of law, advisor to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson), Paul Doty (biochemistry), Konrad Bloch (biochemistry, Nobel laureate), Frank Westheimer (chemistry), Gerald Holton (physics), and Michael Walzer (government).

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### The Monster Speech

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According to the participants, the meeting with Kissinger was one of intense emotions painfully suppressed. "We made it clear to Henry from the beginning," Schelling said, "that we weren't here lunching with him as old friends, but were talking to him solely in his capacity to communicate to the President that we regard the invasion of Cambodia as a disastrously bad foreign policy decision, even on its own terms."

As reported by one member of the group, Schelling then turned to Ernest May for comment. "Ernest told Henry, 'You're tearing the country apart domestically.' He said this would have long-time consequences for foreign policy, as tomorrow's foreign policy is based on today's domestic situation.

"Then Bator and Westheimer chimed in with an explanation of how difficult it was for us to have Henry read in the newspapers beforehand of our coming. Bator said it was especially painful for him since he had held part of the same portfolio Kissinger now handles. But we felt that the only way we could shock him into realizing how we felt was not to just give him marginal advice. We wanted to shock him into realizing that this latest decision was appallingly bad foreign policy in the short run.

"At this point Henry got called out to see the President. He asked to have someone explain to him when he returned what short-term mistake the

Nixon policy made. We decided to let Tom do it, as he was the one who organized us and he was Henry's closest academic colleague in the group. So when Henry returned after a few minutes, Schelling gave him the Monster Speech."

Schelling's Monster Speech was one he used frequently during that day. It's a metaphorical analysis similar to those he uses frequently in his undergraduate course on game theory and decision-making. The speech went something like this: "It's one of those problems where you look out the window, and you see a monster. And you turn to the guy standing next to you at the very same window, and say, 'Look, there's a monster.' He then looks out the window—and doesn't see a monster at all. How do you explain to him that there really is a monster?"

Then Schelling continued, "As we see it, there are two possibilities: Either, one, the President didn't understand when he went into Cambodia that he was invading another country; or, two, he did understand. We just don't know which one is scarier. And he seems to have done this without consultation with the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of State, or with leaders of the Senate and House. We are deeply worried about the scale of the operation, as compared with the process of decision."

Richard Neustadt then added, "What this is going to signal to American senior military officers—and the Saigon government—is that, if you put enough pressure on Nixon by emphasizing that 'American boys are dying,' you can get the President to do very discontinuous things. And this makes his whole promise of withdrawal open to question."

"Each of us spoke to Henry at least once," a participant reported. "Michael Walzer told him that, as an old dove, he was impressed by the intensity of the concern of us old government boys. Gerry Holton talked generally about the lack of restraint in Nixon's policies.

"When we were all through, Henry asked if he could go off the record. We

said no. Schelling said one reason we had brought non-ex-government types like Walzer was to keep us honest. Henry replied that the nature of his job as an advisor to the President was such that he never spoke on the record.”

Kissinger did tell his former colleagues three things.

“First, he told us that he understood what we were saying, and the gravity of our concern,” Schelling reported. “Second, he said that if he could go off the record he could explain the President’s action to our satisfaction. And third, he said that since we wouldn’t let him go off the record, all he could do was assure us that the President had not lost sight of his original objective or gone off his timetable for withdrawal.

“Bator muttered something about the interaction of means and ends and how he doubted whether with even the best of intentions Nixon and Kissinger could control the process when Johnson and Bundy couldn’t. Schelling told him to be quiet and let Henry go on. But there wasn’t much else to say.

“So afterwards we all got up and shook hands, with a sense of sadness. It was painful for us, but it wasn’t a personal thing. It was an impersonal visit—to try to save the country. I think Henry fully understood the gravity of what we were talking about.”

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#### “Nobody Can Call Us Radicals”

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Back in their headquarters at the Hay-Adams, the professors discussed their confrontation lunch with Kissinger. Holton said, “It was not exactly what I would call a love feast. He said that he was moved by our visit, that he felt that it’s all a tragic situation. But he refused to speak on the record, and we refused to go off, so we had an hour and a half of presenting views.”

Bloch said, “Kissinger told us ‘When you come back a year from now, you will find your concerns were unwarranted.’ But he doesn’t understand that the end-justifies-the-means philosophy is exactly the problem and what is antag-

onizing the large part of the population. Kissinger just did not realize that we’d crossed the threshold.” Schelling said, “We had a very painful hour and a half with Henry, persuading him we were all horrified not just about the Cambodia decision, but what it implied about the way the President makes up his mind. It was a small gain to be had at enormous political risk. He refused to reply on the record, therefore he had our sentiments heaped upon him, sat in pained silence, and just listened.” Lipset said, “I think we have a very unhappy colleague-on-leave.” Schelling added, “I hope so.” Then, as with a flushing of toilets and a straightening of ties the professors swirled out of the room to catch cabs for the Pentagon and a meeting with Undersecretary of Defense David Packard, Schelling turned back into the room and perspired, “You know, this is hard work.”

The professors returned to the Hay-Adams from their meeting with Packard—barely an hour after they’d left—in a highly agitated state. William Capron complained, “He gave us the straight-forward party line—he sounded just like John Foster Dulles. It was nothing like Henry in terms of emotional content. We gave it to him very hard and he said to please wait six weeks and we’d see that everything will turn out all right. He said he understood our concern, but asked for our *forebearance!* In six weeks, he said, we’ll be out and it will be a great victory! We were just talking past each other.”

Neustadt agreed: “Mr. Packard heard us out, then responded in a perfectly canned way that we should be patient. His explanation was irrelevant to our concern. It was a matter of our reporting our feelings to him and hearing no attempt to exchange. Perhaps we underestimated the credibility gap. Ghastly. The President’s credibility is hopeless. And nobody can call us radicals, either. The purpose of giving our views was precisely that. We’re not voicing our concern because of Harvard or the domestic impact. We were offering our

professional judgment as former advisors to Presidents that it was a horrendous act of foreign policy.

"We said to Henry, we said to Mr. Packard, that the military-civilian imbalance today is the greatest threat to the Presidency since MacArthur's challenge to Truman. I myself don't see anything that can restore the military's credibility."

Bator said, "From Packard we got a canned speech—a casual pat speech about his Administration and Vietnamization and wiping out a few bases. He said it would all please us in just another six weeks! He seemed very aware of our campus origins. We reacted quite strongly."

Konrad Bloch said, "It was the straightforward drivel. He coldly misinterpreted what we had to say. It was hard to know how to explain our position, although Schelling put on a great performance with his Monster Speech when Packard was finally through. Later Packard started talking about Stanford—he said it is infiltrated by a hard core that will have to be eliminated. He said tension in this country will have to come to a head some day, and it might as well be now."

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### "That Was Averell"

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A bellhop brought Pepsi and Michelob for the overheated professors. The phone rang. Bator answered it.

"Hello. Averell!" He smiled. "Well hello governor! Yes governor, I'm here. This is Francis." As Bator talked to Harriman, Yarmolinsky dashed to the extension phone in the bathroom to listen. "Yes governor, well Scotty said. . . ." When Bator finished, Yarmolinsky started talking on the bathroom extension. Neustadt quickly established possession of the bedroom phone. Alarmed to discover the conversation wasn't over, Bator scurried to the bathroom to listen in when Yarmolinsky was finished. Finally they all said goodbye and hung up. "That was Averell," Bator explained.

After a long but uninspiring meeting with then Undersecretary of State Elliott Richardson (now Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare), the professors reassembled in the dining room of the Hay-Adams. Over double martinis and Caesar salads, they evaluated the day.

Bator summarized, "In the executive branch we've shot the bolt today. From now on we just have to work with Congress. If these guys get us all out of Vietnam in 90 days, we'll have the biggest crowd dinner in our lives—and we'll all vote for Richard Nixon in 1972." There was nervous laughter around the table; for if the professors disliked anything more than cutting themselves off from their councils of government, it was the prospect of looking foolish—of the war ending routinely with their making unbecomingly alarmist statements on the outside.

Bator flew out the door with a cheery "Goodby, gentlemen." Others followed, including Schelling, who instructed Neustadt to take care of the bill, saying they would straighten out the finances back at Cambridge.

Neustadt and Lipset relaxed briefly over strawberries and cream. "You know," Neustadt said, "this is the first time in years that I've come to Washington and stayed at the Hay-Adams and had to pay for it out of my own pocket. Many of us will now have to decide whether we will resign from all our consulting positions with the government. It's sort of silly. I have some contracts on which I haven't been consulted for years. But it's hard after a thing like today to keep operating in the executive branch. People whose advice was being asked on a number of issues have now cut themselves off by announcing that they're going to the Hill to lobby. But there's so much disaffection within government that us academics resigning will be no big deal. That's why we put so much emphasis today on those of us who were ex-officials of government. We were trying to distinguish ourselves—today at least—from those who are merely professors."

Lipset said, "Packard today dismissed us as 'professors' and 'liberals'—same thing." He shrugged.

The professors filtered back to Harvard over the weekend. Having reluctantly and, they hoped, temporarily, exiled themselves from power, they were

lowered to the ranks of ordinary academics. They can still scramble to consult with Averell Harriman or other exiled powers, but they would have much preferred to stay in or near the government, hanging on like everyone else. ■

## Eating Crow at Mike's

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by John Averill

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One week after President Nixon sent U.S. troops into Cambodia, a group of card-carrying advocates of a strong presidency took the first step toward joining forces with an old adversary, Congress. On May 8, in the spacious, old-fashioned office of Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, a delegation of Harvard's most distinguished presidential defenders embraced Mansfield's crusade to recover a measure of the war-making powers Congress has let slip from its hands in the past three decades. Until then Mansfield's efforts had largely been met with indifference, if not hostility, from the many liberal academicians who have long regarded the White House as their spiritual home.

There are varying accounts of just what was said in Mansfield's office. Richard E. Neustadt, professor of government at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, later recalled that he and his colleagues had visited the majority leader to express their appreciation for his unrelenting opposition to the Vietnam war. But a Mansfield associate who was present said the meeting resembled a confessional. "Neustadt was really humble," he said. "He admitted that he had been wrong and that Mansfield had been right." Neustadt for years had been a model liberal scholar and adviser to

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Presidents, while devoting much of his career to enhancement of the presidency.

Neustadt and 12 of his Harvard colleagues came to Washington to protest what they viewed as a frightening misuse of presidential power. Turning to Congress would have seemed heresy to them before Cambodia, despite the mistrust or even dislike many of them had long held for President Nixon. Their shift to Capitol Hill dramatized the immense trauma the Cambodian invasion had visited on many of the nation's liberal intellectuals whose entire adult convictions were suddenly pierced by doubt. Since the days of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the White House has been the mecca of academicians and lawyers dedicated to reforming and transforming the American nation, if not the world. They have volunteered their brains, their talents, and even their careers to strengthening the presidency, in the belief that only the President could realize their objectives. To many of them, Congress was the constant enemy, an enemy that not only resisted reform but constantly contrived to hamstring the President.

But the Cambodian invasion produced the gnawing fear that perhaps they had helped fashion a Frankenstein's monster of presidential power. And Mansfield, according to his aide, couldn't suppress a slight grin at the remarkable conversion of the Harvard group as he

listened while drawing placidly on his ever-present pipe.

"Some of us have regarded the executive branch as our home for 20 or 30 years," Neustadt said later. "This is a hard turn to come to—to be here urging Congressional intervention which two or three weeks ago we would have regarded as unacceptable." One of his colleagues, Francis M. Bator, Harvard professor of political economy and Deputy Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs in the Johnson Administration, said, "I had always thought of Congress as at best a nuisance, sometimes an adversary, often the enemy." Still another member of the Harvard delegation, Thomas C. Schelling, professor of economics and a frequent government adviser, said: "Ever since FDR there has been the feeling that the presidency was where enlightenment was."

In a letter to Senator Frank Church, William M. Capron, associate dean of Harvard's Kennedy School, managed to capture some of the group's emotional turmoil despite his customarily dignified prose. His letter says in part: "The present Administration's actions in Cambodia and the grave implications those actions hold for this country's future involvement in Southeast Asia have led me to a dramatic shift in views I have held long and deeply with regard to the efficacy of Congressional action designed to restrain presidential discretion in national security affairs."

"I think a demonstration is called for to sober up the other side," Neustadt concluded at the end of his Washington visit. By the "other side" Neustadt said he was referring to the White House. The fact that the author of *Presidential Power* now refers to the White House as the "other side" suggests a rather profound shifting in philosophical gears.

Yet as the shock of Cambodia has worn off, it seems evident that many in the liberal academic community are unsure of how far Congress should go in limiting a President's flexibility in foreign affairs. They are haunted by the fear that the bipartisan liberal coalition

that presently controls the Senate may give way before long to a conservative, if not a reactionary, majority. They recall with immense distaste the period of the early-to-mid 1950's when conservatives controlled the Senate and came close to adopting the Bricker amendment, which would have inhibited the President's foreign policy powers.

"I'm all for the anti-war Senators doing what they are doing as a signal to the President not to go into Cambodia again," Neustadt said in a recent interview. "But when you look beyond that there is no simple solution. There is a real dilemma. There is a need for new devices and it's very damn difficult to say just what. I have no real solution. . . ."

There is still a decided residue of nostalgia for the concept of a strong presidency within the Harvard group. The sentiment is shared by former government officials like Nicholas deB. Katzenbach. "I think liberals have turned to Congress out of the desperation of the moment," he said in a recent interview. "If Jack Kennedy were still in the White House, they would have no doubts, and when we get another liberal President they will be with him."

In the meantime, we may anticipate theoretical discoveries at Harvard and elsewhere, impelling the scholarly investigator toward the conclusion that Congress must have a greater portion of the power in the United States, especially in matters of peace and war. We will have a new flip-flop on where the balance of power should lie. The focus on abstract influence—arguing that power should flow this way or that—will be one comfortable step removed from both the real issues: what political power should be used for, and how the Congress and the executive can be reformed to make them informed, participating, intelligent institutions.

The timely emergence of new frameworks of analysis may suggest that theory follows the heart, or the ego. This would be amusing if the power to make war were not so deadly serious. ■

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# The Kids Will Be Mo

by Michael Rappeport

As the Supreme Court prepares to rule on the constitutionality of the 18-year-old vote, a conventional wisdom grows among politicians that the new voting bloc will not exercise great influence at the polls. The June 28 *New York Times* announced **EXPERTS DISCOUNT 18 YEAR OLD VOTE—FORESEE LITTLE IMPACT SOON IF NEW LAW IS UPHELD**. The March 20 *Congressional Quarterly* ran a story headlined **THE ELECTORAL IMPACT OF THE LOWERED VOTING AGE IS LIKELY TO BE LESS THAN GENERALLY ASSUMED**. Election expert Richard Scammon has stated similar views. This expert opinion is also supported by such major survey researchers as the Michigan Survey Research Center and the Gallup Poll. The consensus is based on three, generally implicit, assumptions:

1. The voting behavior of those who will be 18-21 in 1972 can be predicted on the basis of the voting behavior of those 21-29 in 1968.
2. The younger the eligible voter, the less likely he is to vote, regardless of his political views.
3. The impact of young voters on 1972 politics can be predicted from a knowledge of the national average of their voting behavior.

All three assumptions are seriously open to question. Each, at least to some degree, is clearly wrong.

On common-sense grounds alone, it does not appear reasonable to assume that the voting behavior of those who will be 18-21 years old in

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1972 can be extrapolated from that of those 21-29 in 1968. The latter group is the last of those born before or during World War II. The 18-21 group of 1972 moves the age spectrum past the big war, and even past the Korean War. The older group was the last whose childhood, at least, was pre-affluence. The younger was raised in affluence and exposed to television from birth. Moreover, they were directly affected by the Vietnam war at the earliest formative stages of their political thought.

There is also direct numerical evidence that this age difference is reflected politically. In November-December, 1968, Opinion Research Corporation took a nationwide poll asking voters what kind of candidate they would like to see in 1972; 13 per cent of those 22-29 preferred candidates similar to Ronald Reagan or George Wallace, and 56 per cent preferred a Kennedy-McCarthy-McGovern type. The comparable figures for those 18-21 were 7 per cent and 65 per cent. These results showed a marked left preference among the younger group, and they did not include the 14, 15, 16, and 17-year-olds of 1968, all of whom would have the ballot in 1972 under the new law.

Thus, from both common sense and survey results, there are many weaknesses in the assumption that one can predict the new votes of 1972 from the 21 to 29-year-olds of 1968. In 1972, if the new law stands up, fully one potential voter in five (about 19 per cent) will have been too young to have voted in 1968. Even a relatively minor difference