

Title:

President Bush - Contrasting The Decision Making Skills Of Jfk And George W. Bush

Word Count:

1119

Summary:

Presidents of the United States can only make decisions based on the information they are getting from the people and other sources that are available to them. Different Presidents obtain that data flow in different ways. This is particularly important because the events we are dealing with are so much more crucial than other Presidents may be dealing with. Iraq, North Korea, high gasoline prices, competitive position versus China, long-term deficits are all huge problems tha...

Keywords:

bush,dogma,politics,nixon,richard nixon,thomas jerrerson, abraham lincoln,george washington,teddy ro

Article Body:

Presidents of the United States can only make decisions based on the information they are getting from the people and other sources that are available to them. Different Presidents obtain that data flow in different ways. This is particularly important because the events we are dealing with are so much more crucial than other Presidents may be dealing with. Iraq, North Korea, high gasoline prices, competitive position versus China, long-term deficits are all huge problems that must be solved one way or another.

President Kennedy had an open door policy. He functioned as his own chief of staff, a center of the spokes strategy if you will. It was highly successful. Unlike this President, Kennedy asked incisive questions, and followed up with more incisive questions. JFK developed his decision making skills very quickly. He was not like this on day one, but he certainly was at the top of his game by year two of his Administration. In year one, Kennedy learned not to trust the CIA, or the military. Both organizations had failed him at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba.

When JFK came into office, he was presented with a CIA plan created during the Eisenhower Administration to land 1500 expatriate Cubans in Cuba to unseat Fidel Castro. The CIA pushed the plan hard, and the military sat it out when it came

time to speak. The disastrous invasion which took place in April 1961, four months after the inauguration was a wakeup call for JFK. To his dying days, JFK said, "I asked the wrong questions."

He said that if he had it to do over, he would have told the Joint Chiefs, "I want to make this an American operation, forget the 1500 Cubans, let's do it with our military. How many Marines do we have to send in to do this right?" The answer the Joint Chiefs would have given was 250,000 marines. JFK had he known this would have immediately cancelled the invasion. He would have said to himself how can 1500 poorly trained Cubans do the job that we would need 250,000 Marines to do? The president picked up ten years of experience in those first few months.

The next major tool we can learn from JFK is the use of an executive committee (ExComm) in times of national crisis. When the Cuban Missile Crisis took place, JFK did not round up the usual suspects to deal with the crisis. He brought together the best minds he knew, put them in a room and let them deal with the crisis alone. He would periodically enter the room, find out what was going on, and leave again. He knew that people react differently when the President is in the room. His presence completely jaded the conversation and advice that would come out of such a meeting.

This brings us to President Bush. I do not know if you have ever been in the Oval Office or at a meeting with a sitting President of the United States. Let me tell you what it's like. Everybody speaks with a soft voice in his presence. It's like they are whispering. Grown men who command corporations with hundreds of thousands of employees turn to mush in his presence. It doesn't matter who the President is, the reaction is always the same. It's cultural; we are brought up to respect the office and the sacredness of the office. After all, this is the office that George Washington held, and Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, both Roosevelt's, Teddy, and Franklin. Those thoughts and heritages never leave your mind when you are in the room with that man regardless of who he is.

Now let's take a look at President Bush. Contrary to some people's thoughts this is not a dumb man. He has degrees from both Yale, and Harvard Business. A lot was handed to him in life, but he also knew how to play a pretty good hand. He has to his detriment in my opinion surrounded himself with arrogant, ideological, one-dimensional minds with limited capacity for growth.

Dick Cheney is brilliant. He is also arrogant, secretive, and ideological. Cheney has hurt this President by not growing his own thinking over the last six years. The way he thought in the early 1990's, is the same way he is thinking today. The VP's secretiveness as opposed to openness has cost the President

dearly in our need to safeguard the people's constitutional rights regarding privacy.

Donald Rumsfeld is the worst Secretary of Defense since Robert McNamara. Both McNamara and Rumsfeld seem to be almost identical in their arrogance. He is sad to watch Rumsfeld repeat the same pattern of arrogance that caused McNamara to lead this country down the path of suicide during the Viet Nam debacle. Rumsfeld inability to entertain new ideas is costing us dearly in Iraq. His bullying of the generals who are charged with the responsibility to wage the war is inexcusable, and history will not treat this man kindly.

Now what do you think happens when the President has men like Cheney and Rumsfeld around him? The problem is that everybody else is speaking in that low voice, afraid to utter what they perceive is the truth to the President. This would all be okay except the President hasn't figured out the game yet. He doesn't understand how to get the information he needs to make good, solid decisions that WORK.

In his press conference today, the President said that "I feel confident when General Casey (4 star general-Vice Chief of Staff-US Army, and Commander of Multi-National Force-Iraq) tells me what's on his mind." General Casey could never tell the President what's on his mind, and that's the problem with this whole Administration. The President is not getting the information he needs to deal with the problem whatever it might be.

In being spoon fed the equivalent of ideological dogma, the President is finding himself in a position that JFK would say is unacceptable. Even Richard Nixon a very strong conservative thinker had Daniel Patrick Moynihan a very liberal Harvard Professor right next to him giving the President the other side of the story. If Mr. Bush is to succeed in the remaining two years of this Presidency, he has to start hearing the other side of the story. I do not have much hope that this is going to happen, and our biggest problem which is the quagmire in Iraq will continue until new leadership is elected with the mandate to change. Of course the ideologues will say, we should have stayed the course. History will show them wrong.

Goodbye and Good Luck

Richard Stoyeck