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FRIDAY, AUGUST 8, 1958

## —THREE PORTRAITS OF A PRESIDENT—

## The 'Magical Power' of His Personality Has Dimmed

By JOSEPH ALSOP

WASHINGTON  
 Press conference in Washington, including presidential press conferences, commonly produce headlines without solid news under them. News that matters facts that count, generally have to be dug for or fought for; and for these reasons this reporter almost never goes to press conferences.

The President's last press conference—the first in over a month—was no exception to the foregoing rule. But I went all the same, mainly because I had not seen one of these performances in some years. The impressions left by the experience were sad and negative, but perhaps they are worth recording all the same.

## FAMILIAR IMAGE

Beginning, then, at the beginning, any one whose private Eisenhower image is the vigorous, striding, easily smiling, richly self-confident Eisenhower of the past is bound to be a little shocked by the Eisenhower of the present. I had seen him recently only at the NATO meeting in Paris, where he so bravely played his part after his stroke. I had heard that he was altogether different now from the Eisenhower of the past. I was not wrong. When one wanted to cheer his every sentence as a courageous act of will.

Certainly he is different. He seems an altogether well man, who is a little tired. The extraordinary mobility of that extraordinary face has been partly lost. The smile is more mechanical. The eyes are less vividly blue. And especially when one sees the face in profile, you are suddenly struck by the way all the lines seem to be set in stone.

Since the President is nearing



Dwight D. Eisenhower At This Week's News Conference

65 and holds the most taxing job in the world, this change in his appearance would not be very surprising, even if he had not suffered the severe illness from which he has recovered so well. But there is another thing that strikes you, too—something more intangible, less easy to pin down, but perhaps more important than the inevitable signs of age and the inevitable signs of age.

This strange Eisenhower power, it has always seemed to me, was best summed up by a trifling expression of my own. It happened just after he had been named NATO supreme command-

er. I had an errand in the Pentagon and I was walking along the corridor when the general in his glory burst out of the secretary of defense's office, at the head of a hurrying retinue of aides and escort officers. We were friends in those days. I congratulated him on his post, and he all but pined me in the corridor wall, and gave me a five-minute answering lecture while the aides and escort officers tapped impatient feet.

## CHOKEY FEELING

The theme of the lecture was simply America's role in the free world, and his own deep satisfaction, to have been asked to

serve as a principal embodiment of America's leadership in the cause of freedom. The syntax, as usual, was tangled. What he said was platitudinous enough, although the sentiments were virtuous. But for a moment he made those copybook platitudes sound like great truths, eternal and profound, worthy to be inscribed in letters of fire on the arch of heaven itself. When he set off again on his tour of the Pentagon I must confess I was left with a rather chokey feeling.

## WELL-BRIEFED

I kept thinking of that long-past experience at this press conference. The President had plainly

been well-briefed. Jim Hagerly must have been pleased. Even the question about Sherman Adams and the White House secretaries who took Goldfinger's checks evoked no more than a short, bright flash of anger. The question that could be answered factually were as aptly answered as ever. The essential goodness of the man's intentions was just as apparent as ever. The plaudits of today were not really different from the plaudits of the past. On the bitter question of school integration in the South, for example:

"I keep preaching that there must be some wisdom, some sense of civic duty in accordance with the principles which have been laid out for a citizen of this country."

## PAINFUL CHANGE

But now—unhappily—the subject did not sound as though they ought to be inscribed in letters of fire. They did not sound, either, like prefaces to fruitful, positive action. They sounded, rather, like the words a man speaks about great and painful problems which he is not sure how to tackle.

At the end of the conference, the President admitted that the problems were pressing in upon him much more heavily nowadays than they ever did in the past. "I think there are more of them," he said, "and I don't know whether it is just because I notice them more, or because there actually are more." But of course it is true there are many more problems now. For this deeply good man has been wonderfully busy all his life; but now, his luck has turned; and so, alas, has the luck of the United States.

## He Dispenses The Same Old Sermons And Platitudes

By DORIS FLEESON

WASHINGTON  
 A fact-hungry reporter usually emerges from an Eisenhower press conference feeling that he has been swimming under water for half an hour. This was true of the President's first meeting with reporters since July 2.

It was felt that the opportunity to comment on most of the major events of that critical five-week period. His answers had little more than his normal generalities and statements of good intentions.

## 'NO PLANS'

The technique was applied alike to questions of foreign and domestic

policy. He will do what is "necessary or desirable" without participating in a meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations but he "has no plans," no particular intention regarding it. A summit meeting is not necessarily barred now; he is ready to "anything constructive" about it.

He was reminded that in a few weeks the nation's schools will be in session, and he said he would be ready to "anything constructive" about it.

At this point he offered, and very earnestly, the poignantly self-descriptive defense: "I keep preaching that there must be some wisdom, some sense of civic duty in accordance with the principles which have been laid out for citizens in this country."

He has preached against inflation; he did so again. He has preached a balanced budget; he did so again.

## FACT OF LIFE

This Eisenhower habit of preaching—in which Secretary of State John Foster Dulles enthusiastically joins him—may infuriate his critics, alarm serious observers of the dynamic scene and cause United States allies to

question the quality of U.S. leadership. But it is a fact of American political life today.

There was one sticky moment in the press conference when the Eisenhower blandness failed.

## COLD REPLY

A reporter read to him his own words to a conference of Republican women in Washington March 25, 1956. The President's grin froze as he quoted his pledge that "the standard of official conduct must be the highest standard known to human behavior." How then, he was challenged, could he keep Sherman Adams and the White House secretaries who had accepted gifts from Bernard Goldfinger?

He replied coldly that he had made his statement about that subject. He also indicated that he felt he was working very hard.

## WORKING HARD

In other answers to questions about his health and British criticism of his capacity to lead, the President seemed cheerful and busy all his life; but now, his luck has turned; and so, alas, has the luck of the United States.

There are two schools of thought here. One is that the public reaction to all this. One thinks the public reacts both its liking and confidence in the President regardless of what is happening. The other concedes the liking but denies the confidence.

## He Faces A Changing World With Changeless Pose

By MARQUIS CHILDS

WASHINGTON  
 TO SEE President Eisenhower after an interval of more than three months is to be impressed above all by how little he has changed. This is not merely in the physical appearance of the man but in his whole approach to his responsibilities and to the crisis that follow one upon another.

He looks perhaps a little older. His face is somewhat more lined and his eyebrows are either bleached by the sun or they are whiter. But he has the same rugged, vigorous look that he has almost invariably worn in public.

## GOOD NATURE

Asked about his health and the recurring reports in the British press that he is enfeebled and unfit to cope at first hand with Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev at a summit meeting, the President replied with his customary good nature. He said that his press secretary, James Hagerly, had told him about these reports and he did not know why the London papers printed them.

Then, with characteristic nonchalance, he said that the only reason he could think of was because his last two golf scores had been perfectly terrible. This revealed what he has so often revealed before—that the President has no understanding of the chief sources of criticism of him both abroad and at home is that he spends far too much time on the golf course.

This is a standing joke in Europe. The House of Representatives now has an entire hotel on its hands and doesn't know what to do with it. It would like to sell the back to the owners but the owners don't want it. Result: some very red faces among the leaders of Congress.

The hotel is The Congressional, a stone's throw from the House Office Buildings. Capitol architect George Stearns had recommended that The Congressional serve as temporary offices for 79 congressmen until their sumptuous new office building is completed in 1962.

## Too Weak

Accordingly, The Congressional was purchased for \$1,500,000 and Stewart was planning to tear down in a few years anyhow, after the new House Office Building is completed.

Summer session: Dick Rover's brilliant piece in Esquire on the late Joe McCarthy. . . Frontier Magazine's penetrating diagnosis of Stewart Alsop's piece on Nixon in the Saturday Evening Post. . . It doesn't leave much of Alsop—or of Nixon. . . Pentagon officials have bought up most of Time Magazine on Washington newstands this month because of its expose on how we could have beat Russia into outer space.

Unfriendly critics abroad assume the President takes it golf because he is indifferent to his job, whereas it irritates him. The most strident London criticism came from the Daily Mirror, a newspaper with 4,000,000 Sunday circulation, in an open letter to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles when he arrived for the Bagdad Pact meeting.

"Who do you think you're fooling?" was the front-page caption on the letter which called on Dulles to admit the President's incapacity and initiate a move to depose Vice President Richard M. Nixon to come to a summit conference in his place. If the President does not know how widespread this attitude is, except through a second-hand report by his press secretary, then he is indeed uninformed.

But the familiarity of the press conference today, as though time had stood still, was not so much in the President's physical appearance as in his outlook as he answered questions on the Middle East, integration and the opening of the schools, inflation, Lebanon and the forthcoming meeting of the General Assembly. He was still the man of goodwill and good intentions.

## LAW IS NOT ENOUGH

He believes, as he has said so often before, that law is not enough and that you have to change men's hearts. He had no plans to ease the course of integration, but he would have no objection to meeting Gov. J. Lindsay Almond of Virginia—it was the first time he had heard of such a meeting—if it would do any good.

He was in favor of help for the Arab states and of their nationalism, but he would not say that his administration had any plan in the works to carry out the broad principles he enunciated.

## CHANGING WORLD

Pressed about his health, Mr. Eisenhower was frank to admit that it might be his advancing years but the stress of the job was more insistent. He said that his doctors reported him to be in good shape.

He was the Eisenhower of '52 and '56, the Ike who responded to that prolonged chant of "We like Ike" with the unfolding grin of goodwill. But whether the President is wholly aware of it or not, the world has changed, and perhaps some degree of the attitude of people, both at home and abroad, to him has also changed.

May we of Charlotte be of sufficient courage to meet this challenge. Let's bring to an end this false portrayal of the Real Charlotte. — CHARLES MANCHESTER

Let each family know that this is Operation Charlotte and that each of the some 40,000 families living in Charlotte are urged to participate as a family in removing this blot that so unjustly reflects on Charlotte's civic pride.

Let each family as a whole contribute \$7.50 towards the fund with each member of each family contributing an equal share of their family assessment.

The children can collect old newspapers to sell; mother and father can pass up a simple luxury; big sister can baby sit for her share; big brother can cut grass or run errands.

Let the mayor proclaim Liberty Park Week during which EVERYONE in Charlotte working

through their family meets a pledge.

But, that the experience of ALL families working together on a community project may be preserved, that ALL families may forever have a living symbol of family unity, let every member of every family contribute through their own efforts in meeting the family pledge. Then truly, the library will be in its rightful beauty and will belong to the families of Charlotte. The families that sacrificed to preserve its beauty.

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