

A Slightly Different Vice President

MONDALE, From Page C1

Then there is the collegiality. It was at Carter's urging that Mondale made his office in the west wing of the White House, between those of Hamilton Jordan and Jim Jones. Jordan, below the congressional liaison quarters of Frank Moore and the domestic affairs office of Stuart Eizenstat, and just around the corner from the Oval Office. And to hear the Carter upper echelons tell it, there must be days, perhaps in the cold quiet of winter, when the first floor west wing of the White House assumes all the salient characteristics of a Hamlet beach over pepper.

"Fritz will pop into my office a couple of times a day," says Jordan. "He'll pop into his... you know, to discuss a problem or just to bid."

"Fritz is always popping into my office, or I into his," says Eizenstat.

"Him or Zig or Frank or Jody are always popping into the office," says Mondale.

"To pop into Fritz's office a couple of times a day," says Frank Moore.

"We're all just kind of popping in and out of each other's offices all the time," says Jody Powell.

All of that is on the inside, where Mondale is now presiding over the drafting of the 1979 Carter legislative agenda, and the like.

On the outside, where the inner spinning is not seen and the collegial popping is not heard, there is little evidence that Fritz Mondale is much different from all the other vice presidents. When there is an announcement or presentation to be made that the president does not have the time or inclination for, Mondale is trotted out to do the honors. For the election season, Mondale was dispatched to the hustings, just as all the Byrns Agnew had been before him. (This fall, Mondale distinguished himself more in total mileage than in results: the Republican sweep of his own Humphrey-Democrat Minnesota could only be viewed as a stunning Mondale defeat, even though in fact he was not as responsible personally as was the entire Democratic Farmer Labor Party, which translated politics to like the firing squad which marches into a circus and commences to shoot.)

And there is the cheerleading. In 1972, Nathan Perlmutter decided that the official vice presidential seal did not reflect the true significance of the office and so he gave new medals to the seals by smacking 18 arrows in its chest. And he forgot the exceptions and put them, because vice presidents traditionally fall all over themselves to lead the cheerleading for the president.

Byrns Agnew did it literally. Remember him, back in the days when subterfuge was artifice, sitting on the Andrews Air Force Base tarmac, but then returning to his feet and issuing an edicting — in full armor — a morning, full-blown salute to Richard Nixon, just back from overseas.

Robert Humphrey did it always.

And, especially in the first year, so did Fritz Mondale. Disfranchisement and sometimes exuberantly, he resorted to fulsome phrases to describe scenes of accomplishment. "I think this has been one of the most successful congressional sessions in a long, long time," he blurted to reporters at the end of a first year that produced only scattered victories at best.

"... The session responded to presidential leadership."



By Frank J. Sotelo — The Washington Post

It was well into the 1968 campaign. Abba Eban, the ever proper Jewish foreign minister, was in the Oval Office and he asked Johnson about the differences between the candidates, Hubert Humphrey and Richard Nixon. To Eban's surprise, Johnson did not say:

"Well, Nixon's got it here," Johnson said, tapping his head. "But he doesn't have it here," and he thumped himself over the heart.

"Now, Hubert has it here," Johnson continued, again tapping his head. "And Richard has it here," saying his heart. "But he doesn't have it here" — and Johnson suddenly started Eban by lunging forward and making a presidential grab for the lower portion of the Jewish diplomat's waist.

There are those, over the years, who have made a similar though less flamboyant assessment of Humphrey's protégé, Mondale. For the fact is that Fritz Mondale is a cautious man. His whole career has been played that way. He got to be attorney general in Minnesota by first being appointed to it, and he got to be a U.S. senator by first being appointed to it. And when it came time to decide about running for president in 1972, he took some early soundings and opted out, saying he just didn't want it had enough to spend a year living in Holiday Inn. Mondale was at a point in the Galaxy at that time in 1971, which was just as high as some, but which was higher than an ex-Governor named Jimmy Carter, who was so low he was off the charts.

So Fritz Mondale is a cautious man. And in fact, some have said it more graphically. In 1974, some journalist wrote, even that Mondale had his appendix removed "caused some [Minnesota] Democrats to say they hoped the surgeon inserted some pins before sewing him up." The author of that piece was Albert Rizzo, then highly respected as a Washington correspondent and now highly respected as Mondale's press secretary. Mondale likes to explain that he had an ulcerative motive in having Rizzo: "I just wanted to take him out of journalism."

THE NATURE of the man and the nature of the job assured that Mondale would start slowly, cautiously, as vice president. Consider the beginning. The Carter White House, populated by people new to Washington, was flourishing. It was operating, at Carter's insistence, without a chief of staff. Hamilton Jordan and Jody Powell and Frank Moore were stretched in all directions at once, trying to learn the conventions of the company town and meet every peril, with staffs that were only of mid-culter and little experience. The assembly line was often breaking down and Eban was falling through the cracks. It was not all dead-end.

But Mondale was careful not to offend.

"He was cautious," says a Mondale assistant. "He did not want to push himself into the business of others. He did not want to tick them off."

"Fritz was cautious," says another Mondale assistant. "I don't think he thought it was his role to weigh in on matters of staff and structure. That was up to the president."

"At the outset, he was cautious about criticizing Eban or

Jody or Frank...," says a third. "I mean, he knew well that no reason vice presidents got chopped off at the knees was that they were looked on as a threat to the president's top staff people. Look at how Rockefeller fought with Don Lundberg, Eban's first chief of staff, and look where it got him. Nobody over there — not Eban or Jody or the rest — as ever felt threatened by Fritz."

In harmony with the others is the view of Mondale on himself. There's always a shakedown period," Mondale says. "I would say, frankly, I was reluctant to draw quick assessments anyone... I mean, a president's staff can be deceiving. Look at Rockefeller. I liked him and, I mean, he was Eban... and I remember Eban's saying, 'The Johnson staff really worked him over. (There were stories about how Johnson would refuse Humphrey's requests for the use of a government airplane, and how Johnson also would keep Humphrey waiting in three outer offices, even far as long as 45 hours.)' But I just said about it, 'He was very likable.'"

Gradually, naturally, Fritz Mondale drew into the fray. There were the early from senators who were complaining. Fritz Rockefeller, Democrat of South Carolina, did not like the way Eban Thompson, Republican of South Carolina, was getting to make the announcements of federal grants he did not even know were being awarded and the way Eban's power when Eban's officials were going down to the state to spend. Jim Stoen of Tennessee did not like being the last to know about HUD grants in his state, and job appointments for Thompson. And so on. So Mondale talked with Frank Moore and others, and then at the urging of Carter, he assumed the role of Mister Tough Guy at a couple of Cabinet meetings warning the department secretaries to get their act together. Carter asked Mondale to be more forthcoming — more critical — in his advice.

ONE EARLY Mondale role involved the oversight of Africa policies. In the course of that, he met with South Africa's Prime Minister Vorster to lay out the U.S. policy line. And in the course of that, in answer to the last question in a press conference in Vienna, Mondale stated that the U.S. policy was that South Africa should maintain its principle of one man, one vote.

The South African government exploded in anger. It said it would go no more business with Mondale, and the vice president has in fact not gotten involved in African policy since then. Mondale says he had planned to answer on a rather crumbly strategy, but he added, "I think I did speak to the point."

Mondale later played a ground role in urging Carter to begin his first-year crusade against water projects and to begin with the angry senators and congressmen. Humphrey told several people that he now views that first-year compromise as a mistake. But there are others on his staff who say that if there had been no compromise, the administration's legislative program would have wound up in shambles, something that was just narrowly avoided, as it is.

There are other examples of where Fritz Mondale made a prudent difference in administration policy — and again, the source on this is President Carter.

"The most notable example — which might be surprising — was on the vote of the defense authorization bill," Carter says in his telephone interview. "Almost every one of my closest advisers recommended strongly against the vote of the earlier carrier... All of my advisers were coming in to advise me not to take on Congress on this... But, Sir (Eizenstat), Frank Jody and others were opposed."

But, Carter says, Fritz Mondale dissented, strongly, but, as always, privately. Unlike past presidents, Carter is anxious to promote the importance of his vice president. It is almost as if he is padding the part. At one point, Carter's act, controversial telephone became even wider, as he says with deacon-like reverence:

"Fritz's courageous, almost lonely stance was very persuasive. He said it was the right thing to do, to vote the carrier. And he said that because of that it would be politically advantageous in the long run, even if we did suffer an example of the veto. His confidence was based on facts and principles."

When the White House recruited its campaign to overturn the public and the Congress that the unusual veto of a military authorization bill was right, the entire White House staff was mobilized into a task force — and the chairman of it was Mondale's chief aide, Richard Moe. A vice presidential aide presiding over the efforts of top presidential aides — it is something that has not happened in 1976 White House. The next happens at the thought off an Agnew aide driving R.R. Hallman, John Ehrlichman, and Henry Kissinger of a Humphrey aide going within to Martin Wilton, Jack Valenti and Joe Callahan.

The examples of Mondale's impact that Carter has provided — in the Middle East and the defense veto — will no doubt prove helpful to the vice president in influencing his image with the Jews and the liberals, groups that once considered him their ally but who have known periods

of disenchantment with Mondale in the first half of the Carter-Mondale term.

But there is little that Carter or anyone else can do to mend the growing rift that has developed between Mondale and his longtime close friends and allies in organized labor.

MONDALE ASSISTANTS are fond of telling reporters how one of the vice president's greatest assets is that he serves as an administrative pipeline to old labor friends. They all like, for example, Lane Kirkland of the AFL-CIO. When they say Mondale was all the time, but even all the gray-stuff pulchre of the AFL, Kirkland says this is news to him. Haven't even heard from Mondale since Sept. 13, Kirkland says, and that was just when Mondale gave a speech to a labor group. It is Washington's week-day secret that Jimmy Carter and George Shultz have no ear for each other: the thing has gotten down to something in the press. So Mondale has not even Kirkland, Carter.

The labor men are unhappy that Mondale has shovels no visible means of support for their efforts to influence the Carter economic policies and that he has not been fervent in the name of such shelled promises as national health insurance.

One of Washington's most influential labor officials in such low union leaders walked out of a meeting with Mondale about a year ago — "literally shouting my words in frustration." They had just heard their old friend give them all the arguments why health insurance had to be delayed. "He's like all the rest of the vice presidents," says one of the labor officials. "He thought with Fritz it might be different. But it's not. We thought at first that he would be able to go to Mondale and get his help in getting our case on the inside. But instead of being an advocate inside for his old friends, he's turned into an advocate for the administration as his old friends."

But not all labor officials are disenchanted with Mondale's role as a power within. That is because some of them did not expect much in the first place. "I was never enchanted with the post of vice president as a locus of influence," says one of the town's big name labor officials. "If a vice president wants to have duties, he's got to please the president — and that's just what Fritz has done. The vice president is just a good soldier, once again."

Mondale is aware of the rap. When the latest labor lobby is roused to him, in fact, it touches off the only defensive speech of what was otherwise a relaxed interview in his office on interview. By the way, that was interrupted seven times when Eizenstat popped in. "I have not abandoned my beliefs," he says, and he sits back upright in his chair and the beginnings of wailing commence to quiver, and one can almost see and hear Robert Humphrey, wailing of himself as he so often did in his third-person singular way, "Robert Humphrey has not abandoned his beliefs..."

BELIEFS. It is one of those things that a vice president just cannot go around exposing too often in public. "Fritz is very cautious not to project himself to the public as being in contention with me," says the president. "And I think that's appropriate. My wife has the same basic attitude toward the public. She believes that it's better for her and me to discuss our differences privately, even on political matters, than it is for her to go to the news media and say, 'Jimmy and I disagree on this.'"

Carter has eliminated one role of the vice presidency that past presidents have frequently put to use. He has decided not to dangle his vice president as a foil for campaign fodder. So it was that a couple of weeks ago, after a newspaper column speculated that Mondale might be dropped from a Carter ticket in 1980, the president said reporters that Mondale would be his running mate if he himself decided to run. (Remember Eizenstat, in the reelection year 1976, maintaining that it was up to the Republican convention to decide if Nixon should be on the ticket. And Nixon's coyotes shook Agnew in 1972. And the way Fred at Rockefeller first directly, slowly in the wind.)

Carter's announcement on Mondale's fate — a fall two years before the next election — was seen as ironic, including Mondale. The vice president was taking his way through a Virgin Islands vacation when he learned of his fate by reading it in a newspaper. He had never even talked to Carter about 1980.

"When I got back to Washington, I walked into his office and thanked him," Mondale says. He pauses. "It seemed like this to do."

Jimmy Carter and Fritz Mondale have put together a vice presidency that has made this occupied more ready than most and more influential than many. It does not change the basic fact that the vice president is just the vice president, a mixture of presidential understudy and good soldier, but at least now there exists, for the first time in a long time, a junior relationship between the man in the Oval Office and the man in the wings — a least senior colleague, even, to permit a vice president to pull a president away from an evening of Lee Harvey's singing.



Mondale, in 1976, meeting with Vice President Rockefeller.

THE MONDALES: MAKING THE MOST OF BEING NUMBER 2

He wields more power than any other Vice President in recent history. She—avoiding the despair of a politician's wife—has carved an independent role with more power than any Second Lady.

By Martin Tolchin

WASHINGTON.

The old order passes. The nation watched in sympathy as Fritz and Joan Mondale flanked Muriel Humphrey, supported her up the Capitol steps and gently cradled her hands in theirs. The Vice President gave a moving tribute to his old friend and mentor, Hubert H. Humphrey. Joan Mondale listened intently, proudly, as she has so often, during her husband's seemingly inexorable move toward the pinnacle of power. He wields more power now than any other Vice President in recent history, and she, too, has accrued power in the process, more than any other Second Lady in history.

The television cameras showed close-ups of their faces, which displayed grief. But they are usually stolid, unde-

monstrative faces. Pain does not dwell in their eyes, as it seems to in the Carters'; the Mondales have never been truly united by the agony of defeat or the pressures of political struggle. Though she has been at his side, she is a strong woman who has avoided the despair of many political wives by making a life of her own. And he has relied upon that strength.

Less driven than the Carters, the Mondales seem more comfortable with people, less threatened and less threatening. They live with humor, and without pretense. The Vice President displays an intellect as stunning as the President's, but more compassionate. But while Jimmy Carter is tempered steel, forged in the heat of battle, Fritz Mondale has carefully cultivated a far less bruising talent: allying himself with those in power who first appointed him to every office he has ever held, except the Vice Presidency, and in a sense Carter appointed him to that. He has always given his mentors full value, but there has always been a recurrent question of softness at the core. Some have been harsh enough to suggest that Fritz Mondale is a professional protégé. Others argue that it would have been hard, for example, to be truly independent of Hubert Humphrey, his own state's dominant political figure.

Fritz Mondale's public career poses a fundamental question: Does a basically decent man who is not possessed by inner demons have the stamina and drive to make it to the White House and become an effective President?

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It was shortly before 9 o'clock on a crisp December morning when Walter Frederick Mondale, the 42d Vice President of the United States, climbed aboard Air Force II for a journey to Jackson, Miss., billed as a speech to an economic-development conference. The real purpose of the trip was to campaign for the re-election of Senator



Joan and Fritz stepping lively at a state dinner in the White House.

Martin Tolchin, a member of The New York Times Washington bureau, covers the White House.



James O. Eastland, an archconservative and segregationist. Mondale, the Minnesota liberal with a 100 percent A.D.A. rating, a civil-rights activist and champion of school busing? Campaigning for a man whom he had opposed, during his 12 years in the Senate on every major issue?

The word had gone out that President Carter had urged Jim Eastland to seek a seventh term, in an effort to thwart Senator Edward M. Kennedy, the Massachusetts Democrat and heir to a political legend. Kennedy is in line to succeed Eastland as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which controls the appointment of Federal judges. The President was said to fear that the chairmanship would strengthen the hand of Senator Kennedy, whom he still regards as a rival.

Not so, said Jody Powell, the President's press secretary: The President wasn't involved. Of course, Powell added, the President had visited Mississippi earlier in the year, "and the President told Senator Eastland that all over Mississippi people had said how much they hoped he would run again."

So there was Fritz Mondale, walking through Jackson, Miss., with Jim Eastland a permanent fixture at his side. The Vice President addressed the Mississippi Senate, then walked across the hall and addressed the Assembly. And everywhere the Vice President went, he had an arm around Jim Eastland, called him "My dear friend," and talked about how much the President needed him. The Vice President warmed to his task with a characteristically light touch. "Mississippi has the strongest single senatorial delegation of any state of the union," he told the Assembly. "It would be easy, with all their power, for them to abuse that power. It would be easy for them to get everything for their state. They don't do that. They are so just and so fair, they divide everything 50-50: 50 percent for Mississippi and 50 percent for the rest of the country."

It was Senator Eastland, at a Democratic reception later in the day, who injected a touch of reality. If the Vice President and he ever voted alike, he said, "we'd search our own consciences." There was a good representation of blacks at that reception, including Aaron Henry, co-chairman of the state party, and those blacks were the major reason behind Eastland's sending for Mondale. Mississippi had changed since 1972, when Spiro Agnew had campaigned for Jim Eastland.

That evening, when Air Force II was winging home, the Vice President relaxed with a cigar. He recalled that at the Democratic convention in Atlantic City in 1964, Lyndon Johnson had delegated to Hubert Humphrey the task of coping with two Mississippi delegations — one white and one black. Humphrey had turned the problem over to Mondale, who had worked out a settlement that provided two seats for the black group and established an antidiscrimination requirement for delegations to future conventions. "Suppose I was born in Mississippi in 1900, and I was an

Fritz and son, William, leaving Joan at the Vice President's mansion, where they seem as "happy as kids in a candy store."

aspiring young politician," Mondale said, empathizing with the old Southern Democrat. "Where would I go? We're all products of our past."

When he first came to the Senate, he said, his views on civil rights had been shaped by his father's teachings in an all-white community. He had been a little sanctimonious, he said, which had been "an insult to people who had political problems, political imperatives." He had come to Mississippi, he said, because nowhere was the revolution in race relations more dramatic. "I can't tell you how I felt today to see all those people, who used to glower at each other, together. What a day that was for me. I'm a political ecumenist. I believe in healing. I believe in lifting up the tent flaps." Mondale made no mention of the President's political imperatives, or his own.

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The First Lady customarily stakes out a noncontroversial cause, such as beautification, and gains the resulting publicity. The Second Lady, like her husband, is seldom seen or heard.

The leading ladies of the Carter Administration gave every indication, early on, that they would follow this tradition. When Joan Mondale was asked at a press conference, after her husband's nomination, what interest she would take up as Second Lady, she hardly whispered "child care" before Rosalynn stepped forward, took over the microphone, and announced how pleased she would be to have Mrs. Mondale help her in this endeavor.

Since then, Joan Mondale has, in fact, eclipsed Rosalynn Carter in carving out a distinct role for herself, one that has given her the mantle of power and engulfed her in controversy. Dubbed "Joan of Art," Joan Mondale has emerged as the Administration's leading spokesman for the arts. It is a role for which she is well prepared, having worked for four years at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, given tours at the National Gallery, and written a book, "Politics in Art." She is also a potter.

It is a career that began almost the day her husband first took office, in 1960, when she realized that she would have to lead her own life. "He was always gone, he was never at home," she recalled in an airplane interview en route to Brandeis University, to dedicate an art exhibit and speak at a dinner meeting of Brandeis volunteers.

Their friends describe the Mondales' relationship with each other as "correct." There is very little display of affection, which some attribute to their strict upbringing as children of Midwestern ministers. There is little mutual kidding. The Vice President, who is usually fast with a quip, seldom chides his wife. At parties, the two seldom spend time with each other, adhering instead to the political tradition of working different sides of a room.

"They have a very private relationship," said a friend of many years. "They don't share much with anybody other than themselves."

They have led separate lives. She always was there when he needed her,

campaigning at his side when he ran to keep the posts to which he had initially been appointed — state Attorney General and U.S. Senator — and accompanying him at social functions. Basically, however, the Mondales had a strict division of labor: She raised the family while he concentrated on his career. It was she who sank the family's roots deep into Washington's Cleveland Park, where she helped organize a still-flourishing food cooperative, although occasionally he would return from the market, in the predawn hours, with crates filled with string beans and tomatoes.

Mostly, however, he worked — nights, weekends and on frequent trips to Minnesota. "I didn't think it was so hard, because I didn't know anything else," Joan Mondale said. "I didn't really resent it."

Her husband even took precious vacation time without her, preferring instead to go fishing and hunting with his old Minnesota buddies, and with Senator Gaylord Nelson, the Wisconsin Democrat whose humane vision and relaxed manner he shares. Two vacation weeks were set aside each year for Joan and the three children, Ted, who is now 20, Eleanor, 18, and William, 16. There was a week of skiing every winter, and a fishing vacation every summer.

Joan Mondale's influence over the expenditure of \$123.5 million in annual funds of the National Endowment for the Arts, and her influence on millions more spent for art by other agencies, has caused some consternation in the art establishment. There have been charges that the arts are becoming "politicized," and that Mrs. Mondale, unlike elected or appointed officials, lack accountability.

"The cancer of political interference has begun to undermine the credibility of the [arts and humanities] endowments," Michael Straight, former acting chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, declared last fall. "The Carter Administration doesn't want senior people interfering with Mrs. Mondale. That's unfortunate, because by the fact of her being the Vice President's wife, she's political. . . ." To some in the Administration, Straight's lament suggested a recurrently popular theme: that political appointments are those affecting others, while one's own appointment and actions invariably reflect merit.

Some critics have suggested that Mrs. Mondale's high visibility in the art world is something of a cynical political maneuver to capture some easy publicity on a turf that nobody else high in government seemed to covet. They have suggested that her interest in the arts exists mainly to advance her husband's political career, an effort to broaden his base of support by creating a link to wealthy art patrons.

"That's putting me down as a woman," Mrs. Mondale said, allowing a suggestion of anger to cross her thin, angular face, illuminated by lively brown eyes. "That's crazy. It has nothing to do with (Continued on Page 54)"



Joan examines floor sculpture by Carl Andre at a Soho gallery.

Less driven than the Carters, the Mondales seem more comfortable with people. They live with humor and without pretense.



Mondale gets a Presidential hug after the Inauguration.

MONDALE'S

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him." She attributes the fear of politicization to her presence as an unknown quantity as well as to her conviction that Federal funds should go

not only to established artists and institutions, but also to those struggling to be seen and heard — not just to the Metropolitan Opera, but also to com-

munity opera groups; not just to the Nevelsons and Oldenburgs, but to local craftsmen.

"Whenever there's a change in any institution, everybody is nervous and worried about it," Mrs. Mondale said. "They started sort of imagining things. The charge was made that the

endowment was going to become too populist, and fund things of poor quality. That isn't so. . . . The arts are like a great pyramid, and the broader the base, the higher the peak. Every garage in this country has a basketball hoop, and all the kids are shooting baskets. Do they lower the level of basketball?"

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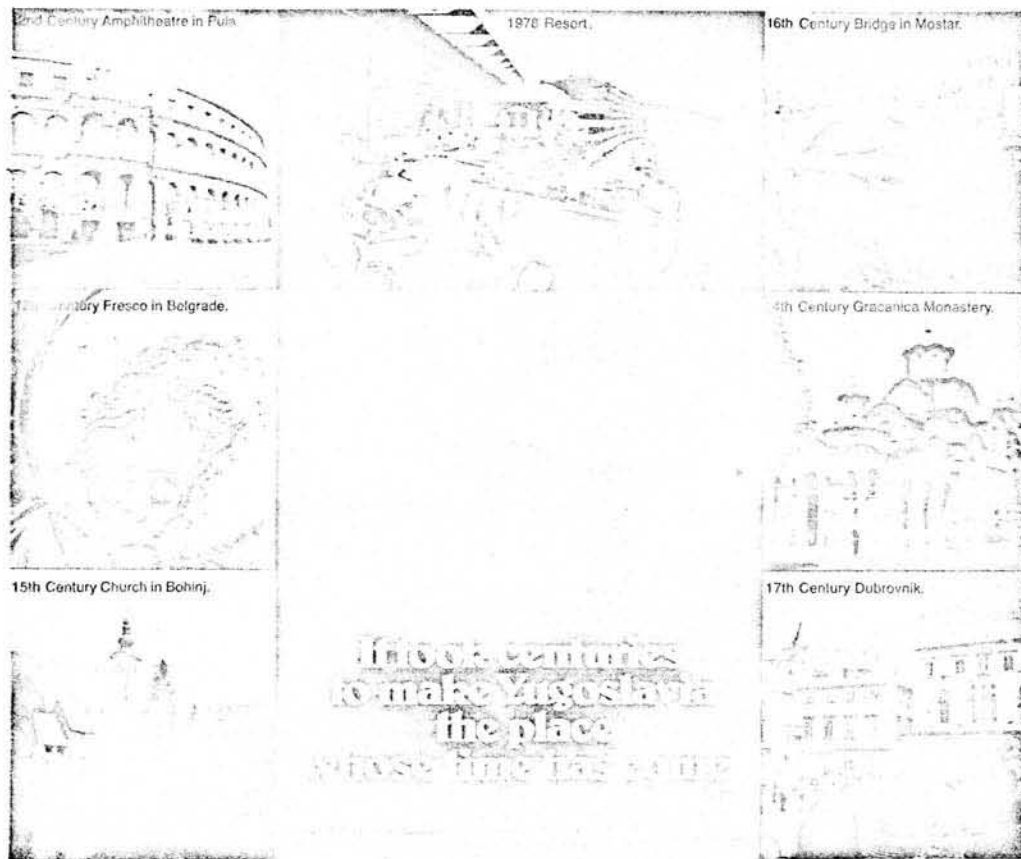
"In the Senate, you have friends; in the executive, you interface," Fritz Mondale said through a blue haze of cigar smoke, relaxing in his White House office, 31 steps from the Oval Office. "There's a wonderful thing about the legislative branch that is missed too much in the executive branch: If someone is pompous or posturing, your colleagues can hardly wait to deflate you. There's no way, if you've got friends, that you can avoid getting blasted if you're making a fool of yourself. I think there's a lot of strength in that. In the executive branch, they tend to be very serious, very dignified, very programmed, 19 points on every argument. It almost gets to be too much."

Without question, this 50-year-old Vice President of stolid Norwegian background interfaces more with a President than any of his predecessors. He attends whatever White House meetings he chooses, and no documents are kept from him. Unlike previous Vice Presidents, who were openly scorned by White House aides, his advice and support are openly solicited.

The Vice President, his aides and the White House are reluctant to discuss his precise role in formulating policy. They say that they fear that such disclosure may undermine the confidential relationship he enjoys with the man he calls "Iron Ass Jimmy" — a reference to the President's fondness for long meetings. Mondale says that, to his surprise, the President and he agree on most issues. The evidence suggests that if the Vice President does disagree, it is sotto voce. "He never takes an up-front position unless he knows that the President agrees with it," said a White House aide who has frequently attended meetings with him.

But that Mondale can really speak out at all reveals a relationship that John Kennedy could never have risked with Lyndon Johnson, who, given the least encouragement, would have taken over the Oval Office. Nor could Johnson have run that risk with Hubert Humphrey, for the same reason. It is a relationship that Carter himself probably could not have sustained with Ed Muskie, Scoop Jackson or most of the other Vice-Presidential aspirants, who had much stronger personalities than Mondale. Joseph A. Califano, the Vice President's old friend whom he pushed for Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, served in the Pentagon when Kennedy was President. "I watched Kennedy trim back all kinds of perks of Johnson's," Califano recalled. "He had to personally request, in writing, the use of a plane. It was another world."

Fritz Mondale is fond of telling audi-



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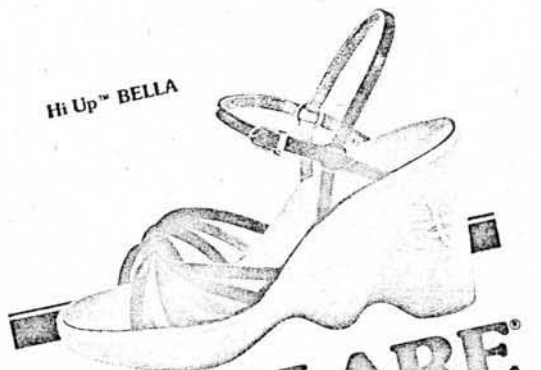
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Humphrey wrest control of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party from extreme left wingers, in 1946-47, while a student at Macalester College, in St. Paul. His father, a Methodist minister, was a D.-F.-L. enthusiast who also believed strongly in the New Deal.

Mondale helped Humphrey campaign for re-election as Mayor of Minneapolis in 1947, and, the following year, managed Humphrey's Senate campaign in the Second District, which he won by 8,500 votes. As a young lawyer, Mondale then attached himself to Orville Freeman, and managed his 1958 campaign for the governorship. When the state Attorney General died two years later, Governor Freeman named Mondale, then 32, in an interim appointment. He had the good fortune to inherit a nearly completed investigation of the Sister Kenny Foundation, and rode it to victory at the polls several months later. As Attorney General, he turned down a request by the Attorney General of Florida to support that state's contention that an accused person was not entitled to the right to counsel, and enlisted 23 other Attorneys General to file an amicus curiae brief on behalf of Clarence Earl Gideon.

Four years later, however, at Senator Humphrey's behest, Attorney General Mondale took an active role in what turned out to be a controversial political campaign. Elmer Andersen, the Republican Governor running for re-election, was a heavy favorite to defeat Karl Rolvaag, the D.-F.-L. candidate. In the closing weeks of the campaign, Senator Humphrey charged that Governor Andersen, in his quest for accomplishments, had speeded construction of Highway 35, and authorized the pouring of concrete in cold weather, leading to defective construction.

Humphrey brought in Federal road inspectors who, amid great publicity, took numerous road samplings up and down the highway. On election eve, Senator Humphrey, Rolvaag and Attorney General Mondale held a joint telecast to deplore the political opportunism that could lead to a defective highway. The tactic worked. Rolvaag won an upset victory by 91 votes out of 1.2 million cast. A few months later, the Federal road inspectors completed their analysis of the road samplings: no defects in Highway 35.

"I want to congratulate you for your prehistoric research," Mondale said, testily, when asked about the scandal.

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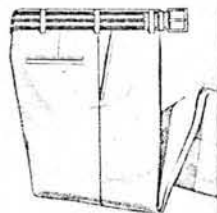
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ences how he got the nomination, jocularly recalling that six senators had journeyed to Plains, Ga., to be interviewed by the President. "The first one to go down was Ed Muskie," Mondale says. "He sidled up to Rosalynn Carter and said, 'I just love green-eyed peas.' John Glenn told Jimmy Carter, 'You know, I've never seen a peanut tree in my life.' Frank Church said, 'I've never been in Georgia, but I had a relative in the Army down there once — General Sherman.' When I arrived in Plains, Jimmy Carter told me, 'You just keep your mouth shut, and the job is yours.'" Fritz Mondale's mouth hasn't exactly been wide-open since.

"Compatibility," a word that Jimmy Carter stressed during the selection process, was given top priority. "There was a feeling on our part that Mondale would be the easiest to work with," said a top White House aide. More than any of the others, Mondale had prepared himself for the interview, having read Carter's autobiography on the flight

down, at the suggestion of journalist Elizabeth Drew. But he had other attributes: intelligence, candor, gentle humor, humaneness. He was also a Northern liberal, familiar with Congress, had strong ties to organized labor and organized Jewry, and was one of the most popular men in the Senate. A man without pretense, he was never a threat to his colleagues, some of whom speculated that it was difficult to be both a man of thought and a man of action, and Fritz Mondale was clearly the former.

His \$77,000 net worth was probably the lowest in the Senate. "I saw where Joe Califano gave up \$500,000 a year to become Secretary of H.E.W.," he told a Washington audience. "Mike Blumenthal gave up \$400,000 a year to become Secretary of the Treasury. Cy Vance gave up \$250,000 a year to become Secretary of State. As far as I can tell, I'm the only one who took the job because I needed the money."

Mondale has always had older political counselors, Humphrey, of course, being the most influential. He helped

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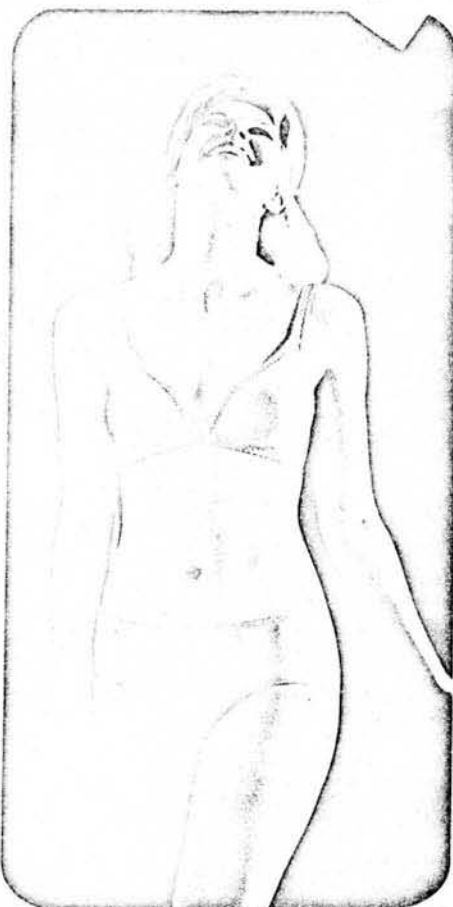
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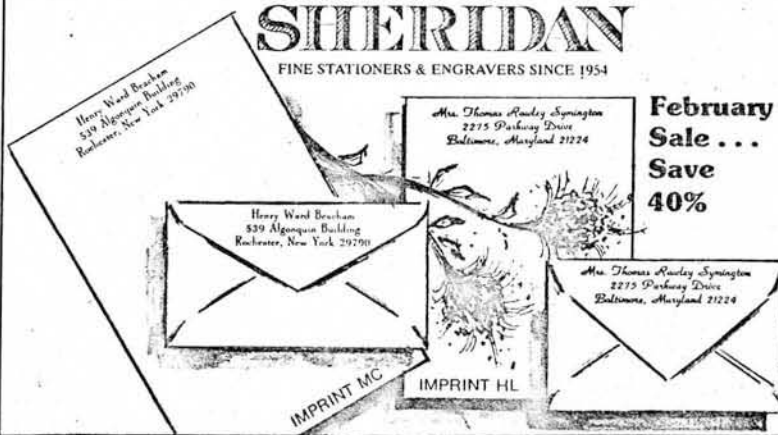
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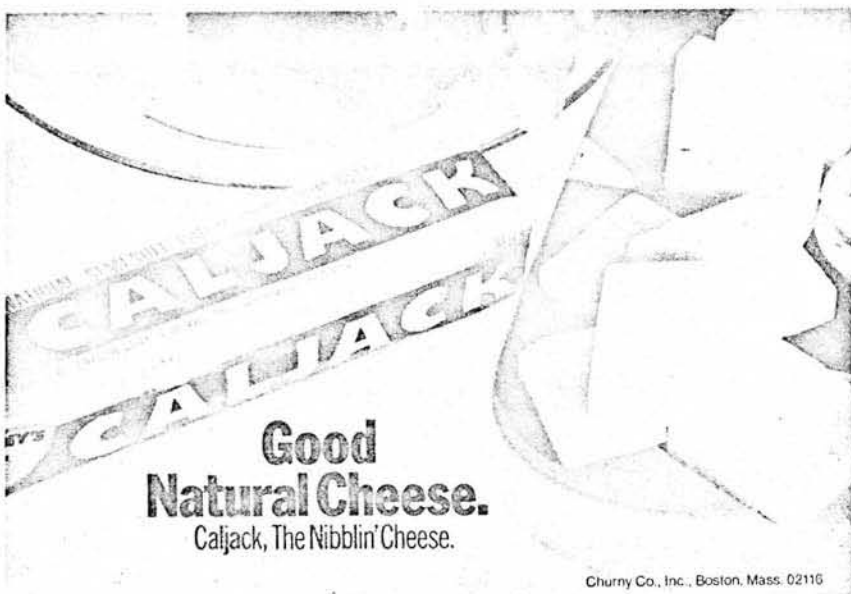
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Joan Mondale speaking at Barnard College last May.

His main concern, he said, was Governor Andersen's dismissal of the bureaucrat who initially made the charge. But Mondale's appearance in the campaign and on the telecast, as Attorney General, lent credence to the false charges. Interestingly, Eugene McCarthy, the state's other Democratic Senator, took no part in the matter.

At Senator Humphrey's behest, Governor Rolvaag returned the favor in 1964, and appointed Mondale to the Senate seat vacated by Humphrey, who had been elected Vice President. In 12 years in the Senate, Mondale amassed a liberal, humane voting record that largely mirrored or at least did not oppose the positions of Senator Humphrey. When Humphrey was a hawk on Vietnam, Mondale was silent. When Humphrey became a dove, so did Mondale.

It was, by most accounts, a modest Senate career. No major legislation bore his name. His major legislative program, the Comprehensive Child Development Act, was vetoed by President Nixon and never became law. He joined with other liberal Senators in advocating school busing and funds for education, and led the fight to curb the filibuster, which he has called the most important thing he did in the Senate.

"I don't think Mondale liked to carry the flag and run down the middle of the road with it," recalled a Democratic Senator who is one of Mondale's close friends. "I don't remember him deeply and emotionally involved on any issue." Senator Mondale's penchant for political caution was so well known in Minnesota, Albert Eisele wrote, in 1974, that when the Senator's appendix was removed some Democrats said "they hoped the surgeon inserted some guts before sewing him up." It says something about the Vice President that

he appointed Eisele his press secretary. "I wanted to take him out of journalism," Mondale quipped.

A less-than-outstanding Senate record is by no means unique among the liberals: Several have served 12 or even 24 years with little to show for it beyond a high A.D.A. rating. Others, such as Edward Kennedy, Jacob Javits of New York and Humphrey himself had made their presence felt almost from the day they took office. In general, however, the Senate liberals display little of the vigor, stamina or resourcefulness of their conservative colleagues. To the disappointment of many Senate liberals, who had cheered Mondale's appointment to the prestigious Finance Committee, the Minnesota Democrat became a supporter, rather than a foe, of chairman Russell Long of Louisiana.

"I think that when a person goes into public life, he should try to be effective," Mondale said in an interview. "He should try to figure out how to make progress, bring people along, unify, calm people, try to keep a rational dialogue. I think you have to ration the number of disputes that you can get involved in. I don't like to shout, and I don't like to lose," he said with some candor.

As for Russell Long: "I was able, on that whole day-care thing, to win on children's issues, maternal and child-health issues. I know that some of the tax reformers thought I should have screamed more. Look, when I'm sitting in the committee with only two votes, I know it's not going anywhere. I'll wait for tomorrow."

Jay Solomon, the new administrator of the General Services Administration, recalled his first encounter with Joan Mondale, in his wood-paneled office that is decorated with perhaps 15 contemporary works of art. "She sat in this room and named every piece



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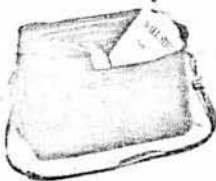
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of sculpture here, the artists, and their history," said Solomon, a Tennessee businessman whose wife is a leading photographer. "We talked for an hour about art, design, environment."

Mrs. Mondale's visit was to persuade Mr. Solomon to increase, from 3% percent to 1 percent, the amount of construction costs earmarked for art in new or renovated Federal buildings, over which his agency has jurisdiction. "In the atmosphere of the Carter Administration, I didn't think we could do it," he said.

A compromise was nevertheless struck—an increase to 1/2 percent of the construction costs. For 1978, this will amount to 42 newly commissioned works of art, at a cost of \$2.5 million. "If a building costs \$10 million, we now earmark \$50,000 for art," Solomon explained. "We take no easel art, no art that's been lying around. The whole program is to commission the art of the time, of the moment, to express the culture of society."

Mrs. Mondale also persuaded Solomon to use more local artists, rather than only the superstars, and this has been one of the sources of the criticism that her approach is "populist." "In our new building in Oklahoma City, we selected 30 pieces of art by local artists," Solomon said. "Over half the artists were women and members of minority groups." There were crafts, weavings, cloths, metalwork, woodwork and a huge collage of photographs of the city's residents.

Cecil Andrus, Secretary of the Interior, said that Joan Mondale had persuaded him to encourage the sale of local crafts in the National Park System. "Early in 1977, very shortly after inauguration, Mrs. Mondale contacted me with reference to local arts and crafts being made available throughout the national park system, at souvenir stands and so forth," recalls Andrus, the former Governor of Idaho. "Her comments made sense. I then set up a meeting with Mrs. Mondale and the Park Service."

"She convinced us that this would be a good outlet for the arts and crafts and pointed out that for her to be able to stimulate the sale and recognition of locally made arts and crafts they had to have an outlet," Andrus continued. "We were the obvious vehicle." An experimental program, begun in nine national parks, will be expanded next summer. "It's difficult to shake the bureaucracy from the old, standard

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way of doing things, without somebody poking the stick," he said. "She did, and we reacted."

Livingston Biddle's appointment as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts was criticized even before he took office. "He was my candidate," Mrs. Mondale acknowledged.

"Her support of my candidacy was extremely important," said Biddle, who also was supported by Senator Claiborne Pell, the Rhode Island Democrat for whom he once worked and whose committee oversees the arts endowment.

"If the appointment of the staff director of the Pell committee isn't 'political,' what is?" Michael Straight, the former National Foundation chairman, asked.

Mrs. Mondale was not fazed. "Politics in the arts?" she asked. "That's human nature. Politics exists when human beings get together in an organized way." White House aides add that expenditures of Federal funds in a democracy must necessarily reflect political forces. These are the facts of life, they argue. They also say that this is the way things should be: Those whose funds are used have a right to have some say in how they are spent.

Biddle said that he agreed with Mrs. Mondale that Federal funds should be evenly divided between established institutions and those struggling for growth. He called Mrs. Mondale "a goodwill ambassador and a kind of collector of information and impressions, and a source of information about the values of the arts in different parts of the country. She is the lightning rod for attracting attention to difficulties concerning artists."

What sort of difficulties? "The other day she told me she had visited New York City and found dancers had been sent to dance on marble floors, as part of an outreach program," Biddle recalled. "That's hazardous to a dancer's welfare. The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act [CETA] employed artists and sent them into different areas. Where artists aren't in charge of a program, there can be mistakes."

"At Mrs. Mondale's level, she can cross lines more easily than department heads," he added. Mrs. Mondale said that her goals included a liberalization of tax laws to encourage artists and craftsmen to donate their works to museums;

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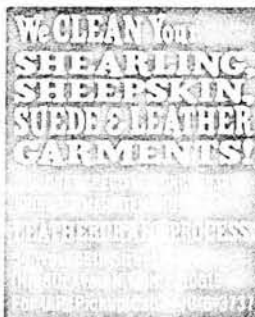
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the expanded use of CETA funds to hire artists and craftsmen, and the broadening of unemployment benefits to those in the arts. She also has pleaded with budget director James McIntyre for more funds for the arts.

"I don't want Washington to become a cultural dictator, like the Soviet Union," she said. "But the Federal Government can do more in supporting the arts."



Mondale chaired a White House meeting of the President's economic advisers last summer until the group sent for the President to tell him that they disagreed with his anti-inflation policy. The policy had to be toughened and reshaped, they agreed. When the President was summoned, however, the Vice President handed the gavel to Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal, and ducked out of the room.

Fritz Mondale's reluctance to confront a difficult situation, or be the bearer of bad tidings, was manifest even before the Administration took office. Campaigning in Philadelphia on Nov. 1, 1976, the day before election day, Mondale told a rally: "One of the first things we would do after the election would be to hold an emergency meeting with the Mayor and the Governor to make sure that the Frankford plant stays open." But on Nov. 24, the Army announced that it would close that facility, an arsenal, and the new Administration upheld the decision.

"I was clearly more categorical than I should have been," the Vice President acknowledged. "I know that it was perceived as a broken promise. . . . I still hope to deliver in good faith on the equivalent of that promise."

By all accounts, Mondale is far less categorical in his dealings in the White House, and especially with the President. He has spoken up, however, gently but with a well-reasoned position, before the President has made a decision, in issues not involving confrontation.

"In general, he's on the progressive side of most, if not all, issues," Stuart Eizenstat, the President's issues adviser, said. "He has a terrific sense of both Congress and Congressional reaction. His views are shaped not only by ideology, but what he thinks is practical and achievable." Hamilton Jordan agreed: "He's a very pragmatic guy. He has the political image of a doctrinaire liberal, but that's not the way I'd describe him. There's

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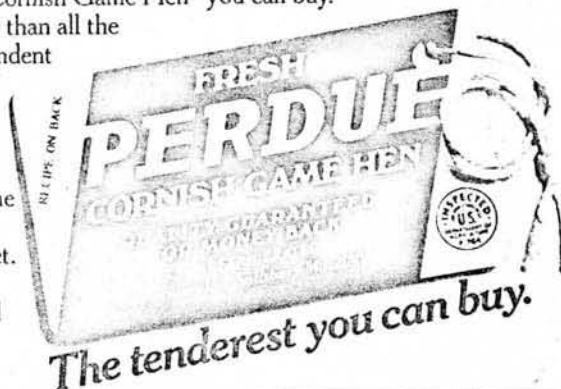
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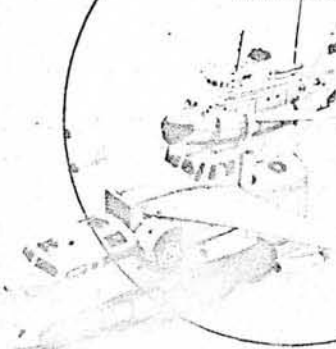
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bate, which was jettisoned by Congress, and public financing of Congressional elections, which has been shelved. He spent much time, late in the year, as chairman of an executive committee to determine the Administration's priorities in 1978.

On the energy bill, his most notable maneuver was breaking a filibuster by two Senators who had supported the Administration's position of Government regulation of natural gas, a position the Administration was willing to abandon to block the filibuster and move the legislation forward. Despite his reverence for procedure, he went along with the request of Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, the majority leader, and refused to recognize Senators conducting the filibuster. The rulings engendered much bitterness. "This is a very sophisticated form of steamroller," charged Senator Gary Hart, the Colorado Democrat. The Vice President made some dedicated enemies, on energy, among Senators who had hitherto supported the Administration.

"It was unfortunate," Mondale said, on reflection. "The rulings were consistent with my earlier Senate record, but if I had it to do over again, I probably would have recognized some of the appeals."

□

The Vice President was chosen, in part, because of his good relations with the Jewish community, but these have become strained since he took office. Moshe Dayan, the Israeli Foreign Minister, confided to aides that he was disappointed that the Vice President had taken a tough line at a meeting last November that also included the President and Na-

tional Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski.

"I spoke up because I was afraid that the point being made was not being understood by Dayan," Mondale said. "I think it's crucial that there not be a misunderstanding on the Palestinian issue. It was on the need to face up to the Palestinian question. All my public career, I've been pro-Israel. I would never do anything, ever, to hurt that country. I don't think I've done anything inconsistent with that. I was trying to clarify a point that I wasn't sure had been clearly put."

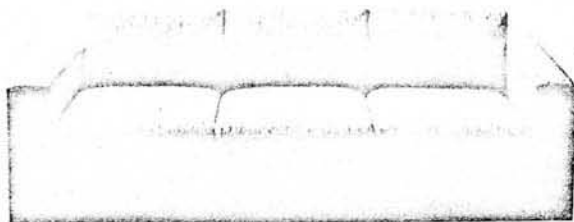
It is in foreign affairs that the Vice President has most consistently done Carter's bidding. One of the major areas has been the Middle East. "He's a person in the Administration who has a longstanding relationship with the Jewish community," said Jody Powell. "We rely on him to try to explain what we're trying to do. It has more credibility than my saying it or Hamilton saying it."

The Vice President's speech in San Francisco last June, which had been widely touted as an important effort to allay anxieties about the Administration's position on Israel, instead heightened them. Mondale used phrases such as a call for "a fair solution to the problem of the Palestinians," and reference to a Palestinian "homeland or entity," that upset many leaders of the American Jewish community. "The speech," said a leader of the Israeli lobby, "was written in the National Security Council, not the Vice President's office."

Mondale acknowledged that he was relaying a message from the White House. But he said, "I like to think I had something to do with it. To get

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peace, you need to be tough in private. Friends have to be candid."

The Vice President denied a report by Marvin Kalb, diplomatic correspondent for CBS, that Mondale had disagreed with Brzezinski with regard to the American response to the Cairo conference. Indeed, disputes are not Mondale's style.

"There was no dispute," he said. "There was no disagreement on the central point, as to what should be our approach to the Cairo conference; that we should support it, try to facilitate it, and make it work. But what had bothered me was that there had been an original kind of 'correct' statement out of the State Department, following the announcement of the Cairo visit, that looked cold — so cold it looked disappointing. Actually, it was a typical State Department we-ned-some-time statement. I don't know where it came from. Nobody knows where it came from. Things just happen in government."

The State Department, for its part, acknowledges that the Vice President has had his diplomatic successes. These have occurred before the President has made a decision, and in line with Carter's general tenets. "He's been a key political guy," said a State Department official who has observed Mondale at close range. "When it's at that point when you're trying to decide what SALT approach to take, when it's down to the wire, Mondale is the guy who makes the decision. He determines the political supportability." Before Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko's visit last September, the Vice President played just that kind of role. He advocated a tough position until the Soviets relented, and, when they gave ground, he urged reciprocity. "I've always been strongly for reduction in the number and restraints on qualitative improvements and testing," he said. "I've never been for an agreement at the price of public accessibility. My criticism of the Vladivostok accords was that the agreement was more apparent than real."

"I supported the President's first offer, which called for a sublimit on the massive ballistic missiles," the Vice President continued. "What he came up with as an alternative was a ceiling on land-based intercontinental missiles that I believe will have the same effect. What he came up with is a more meaningful and significant restraint."

Joan Mondale was at the

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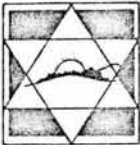
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Brandeis University art museum, dedicating a "living" exhibit of works that would endure only for the length of the show. Television crews followed her as she examined sand sculptures, weavings and other works temporarily assembled. "I like the way you messed up the sand," she told an artist.

"The human presence has made itself felt," she said to assembled newsmen.

That evening she spoke at a formal dinner of Brandeis volunteers. She said beforehand that she was not in the least nervous, but the task seemed difficult for her. Her voice was soft, halting. The speech was a tribute to volunteerism. "Volunteerism kept me alive in the art world, when I had small children and couldn't take a full-time job," she said. How did she happen to come to Brandeis? She was invited by Robert S. Benjamin, a lawyer and a major Democratic fund-raiser who also serves on the Brandeis board. He is a bridge connecting the worlds of art, philanthropy, business and politics.

Joan Mondale stayed over-

night at the Hilton Inn at Logan Airport, and returned to Washington on a 7 o'clock flight the following morning, to attend her pottery course.



It was a nostalgic dinner at 10 Downing Street. The Vice President and Prime Minister James Callaghan, attended by a retinue of aides, reminisced about their idealistic political origins. When they were younger, they recalled, they were to the left of their parties. When he was 20 years old, in 1948, Fritz Mondale worked to unseat a Vice President who had made it to the top. As a college student, he had invited Henry Wallace to speak to the student body, and supported Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas for President. "We were going to get rid of Harry Truman," he said. "We don't talk about that any more."

The Vice President told the Prime Minister that he had spent the summer of 1949 in England, touring the summer schools. He had gone to one sponsored by the Labor Party, another sponsored by the

union movement, a third sponsored by the cooperative movement. Someone who knew him then thought that he was a Fabian socialist, which is not that far removed from the tenets of the old D.-F.-L. Party. Mondale said that he never was a socialist, but if he had any socialist inclinations they were forever abandoned that summer when he observed British socialism in action.

"I just traveled around, and went to those schools," he recalled. "I learned a lot of the workers' songs. The Prime Minister loves to sing. So we started singing." The two politicians spent much of the evening in off-key renditions of songs depicting the plight of the working man. They sang: "It's the same the wide world over, / Ain't it all a bloomin' shame, / It's the rich what gets the pleasure, / And the poor what gets the blame."



Their new life has walled them off from their old friends. "I miss the casual encounters with my neighbors and friends," Mrs. Mondale said. "Now if I want to see them I have to call them up



Family portrait in Minnesota during the mid-60's.

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and say, 'May I come at 12 o'clock and have a sandwich with you? May I come for tea at 3?'

"I don't have any time for myself anymore," Mrs. Mondale said. "So it's more formal. But we've been getting together once every two weeks for lunch, all my pals from Cleveland Park. We like each other's company. One day we went down to the National Gallery and saw the Matisse cutouts, and two other times we had a surprise birthday party and a lovely luncheon."

"I don't miss all the pressure of keeping up the house, raking the leaves, cutting the hedge, putting up the storm windows. All of that. That I'm glad to have left behind." Most important, she said, her husband now comes home for dinner, and is home on weekends.

She and her friends had a lively discussion on what is important in life, Mrs. Mondale said. To her, it was "a chance to serve." "They all jumped on me," she said. "They said, 'No, that's not what's important in life.' They said, 'Understanding yourself is more important.' I thought that came with serving your fellow man. I think that's why

we were put on this earth. That's what I've been taught. I don't think it denigrates me. You find your life giving it to others."

It was the holiday season at the Vice President's mansion, a magnificent, Victorian structure, filled with modern art, and staffed by Filipinos. It is on the grounds of the Naval Observatory, on a hillside in northwest Washington, and the Vice President invites his friends to use the private tennis courts. Fritz and Joan are so happy at the mansion "they're like kids in the middle of a candy store," one Senator said after a recent visit.

Much of the entertaining focuses on writers, reporters and editors, who are among the Mondales' closest friends. They include Barbara Tuchman, the historian, who recommends his reading (which recently included "The Honorable Schoolboy" by John LeCarré and an autobiography of Garibaldi); Mel Elfin, the Washington bureau chief of Newsweek; Elizabeth Drew of New Yorker columnist; columnist Mary McGrory, and

Bonnie Angelo, Time magazine's new London bureau chief, for whom the Mondales threw a farewell party.

Fritz Mondale finds them emotionally and intellectually compatible. He has frequently displayed the writer's ability to be both inside and outside a situation, both a participant and an observer. TV cameramen once caught him, apparently thinking himself off camera, laughing, unconcerned, in the middle of a campaign debate with the Republican Vice-Presidential nominee, Robert Dole, as Dole lashed out at him. Then believing himself to be back on the screen, he was suddenly his old, earnest self. Similarly, on a Senate panel, he once excoriated Roy Ash, Nixon's budget director—then laughed when the TV lights went off.

Much of the discussion at one of those parties, over the hors d'oeuvres and cocktails, centered on whether Fritz Mondale had the stamina to make it to the top. Once, when some of his aides had wondered out loud what would have been the outcome if Mondale had run against Carter and a few ventured the thought that Mondale could have won,

he quickly ended the discussion by stating that Carter would have beaten him badly.

His most famous self-assessment was made on Nov. 21, 1974, when he took himself out of the Presidential campaign by telling a news conference that "I do not have the overwhelming desire to be President which is essential for the kind of campaign that is required." Mondale added that he did not want to spend two years living in Holiday Inns.

He had seen how Presidential fever had ravaged his friend Humphrey, and the disappointment that had afflicted two other ambitious Minnesotans, Harold Stassen and Eugene McCarthy. "Fritz lacks that driving interest, that real need to run for President and be President," his friend Gaylord Nelson told me recently.

"He's comfortable enough with himself as a guy so that it isn't something that he has to have. But he's a guy who would like to be President." In other words, Fritz Mondale might prefer to have the way paved for him. Given this, how much support does he expect from Jimmy Carter? Does Mondale ever think of becoming the 14th Vice President to

become President? Does he think of potential rivals, such as Gov. Jerry Brown of California or Senator Kennedy?

"Not much," Mondale said. "First of all, this job engulfs you. Secondly, I didn't take this job with the idea of being President. I think it may well be the last public job I have. I'm not wasting any time dreaming of other offices. I know you don't believe that, but it happens to be true."

Can he shed the image of softness, the image of a man who has been handed everything, and establish himself as a forceful world leader? Can he do this and at the same time not overstep himself with the President? Those who know him best, whether they are liberals or conservatives, Republicans or Democrats, believe that he can and that he will serve the country well in the process.

Or, could he just walk away from public life? Mondale himself pondered that question, along with the blue haze of smoke from his cigar. The office was still. Finally, this clergyman's son ventured a quiet answer.

"I wouldn't like to," he said. ■

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