

JOURNAL OF DEMOCRACY

April 2010, Volume 21, Number 2 \$12.00



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For decades, the United States has been promoting democracy as the best form of government, and most Americans cannot comprehend why other societies would fail to embrace liberal-democratic political institutions. Yet democracy imposes some difficult demands. Among others, it asks its leaders to risk defeat in elections or (perhaps even more boldly) to retire from office at the end of a limited term. As Seymour Martin Lipset observed, “democratic norms require a willingness to accept political defeat: to leave office upon losing an election, to follow rules even when they work against one’s own interest.”¹

This is not an easy thing to do in the best of circumstances—that is, when two centuries or so of practice have made it routine. In new democracies, it is even harder. In his memoirs, Vicente Fox, the first president of Mexico to be elected in a genuinely competitive contest, declared:

The most important thing the president of a new democracy does is to leave. As Shakespeare writes of the Thane of Cawdor, “nothing in his life so became him like the leaving of it.” So it is with a new democracy—the true test occurs not with the election of the peaceful revolutionary but when that leader has delivered enough results that he or she is able to pass the torch to another freely elected leader.²

President Fox was certainly correct, except in one respect: Unlike the Thane of Cawdor, Fox survived his political demise and could anticipate a long and healthy life thereafter. In doing so, he faced the same dilemma that William Howard Taft spoke about not long after his failure to win

reelection to the U.S. presidency in 1912. Addressing the question of what should be done with former presidents, Taft wryly proposed “a dose of chloroform” as a means to protect his countrymen “from the troublesome fear that the occupant [of the White House] could ever come back.” Moreover, he pointed out, this would also relieve the former president himself of “the burden of thinking [about] how he is to support himself and his family, fix his place in history, and enable the public to pass on to new men and new measures.”³ Indeed, democracy depends on the willingness of its most faithful servants to abandon their roles, and this creates significant dilemmas for both their polities and themselves.

Increasingly, these dilemmas are being confronted around the world; more and more leaders find themselves in the same position as Taft and Fox. Since 1970, about 1,160 individuals have served as head of state or government in the world’s approximately 190 countries. Of these, about 30 have been ruling (as opposed to merely reigning) monarchs, who are neither obliged nor typically expected to leave office; an additional 85 or so died in office; about 115 have been ousted by military action (coups, revolutions, or invasions), and 190 are currently in office.⁴ This suggests that, over the last four decades, at least 700 political leaders at the apex of their careers have confronted the question of whether they should leave office, and if so, how they should occupy themselves afterward.

Despite the centrality of this feature of democracy, there has been a striking neglect—both in the political-science literature and in democracy promoters’ policy prescriptions—of the afterlives of democratically elected officials. Barbara Geddes correctly sums up the “standard theories of politics” with the observation that “politicians are assumed to seek the continuation and enhancement of their political careers.” She adds in a footnote that “some authors add sincere policy preferences to the set of primary goals sought by politicians, but none leave out the goal of continuing in office.”⁵

For a social science born in the study of democratic politics—as opposed to monarchies, theocracies, or autocracies—this is an astonishing assumption. In regimes where incumbents routinely leave office with their health intact—that is, democracies—evidence shows that elected officials’ considerations about their future out of office inform their policy making. Yet most scholars assume that “continuing in office” is the principal motivation of active politicians. Moreover, by ignoring or belittling the personal sacrifices that individual politicians must make on behalf of democratic institutions and principles, democracy’s advocates are failing in their responsibility to those who take risks and often suffer significant losses in choosing to participate in electoral politics.

Drawing on the experiences of the 35 U.S. presidents who left office alive, as well as the increasing number of democratically elected presidents and premiers who face the same quandary elsewhere in the

world, this essay looks at how politicians in democracies think about their careers and examines the opportunities available to those leaders who decide to step down at the appointed hour.

Most former heads of state and government would likely agree with this observation made by Lyndon Johnson's aide Robert Hardesty:

[Former U.S. presidents are] a squandered national resource. . . . One minute they are standing at the pinnacle of power . . . where they lead the nation along the perilous razor's edge between security and holocaust; where they learn to judge the pulse of human needs and human aspirations; where they develop a grasp of international affairs that few men or women ever possess—and then we dump them unceremoniously on the rubbish heap of history. In a single day's time we turn our backs on a lifetime of training and knowledge and experience and public esteem and political know-how.⁶

In fact, however, when confronted with the prospect of political oblivion, many former politicians in democracies have made themselves useful. Yet if most countries do not wholly squander the resource that they have in their former leaders, neither do they provide clear guidelines for how their skills ought to be deployed. Indeed, it is often considered improper or even unethical to discuss such arrangements while the incumbent is still in office. That they are rarely far from the minds of the principals, however, is suggested by George W. Bush's remark nearly a year and a half before he left office that he planned to "replenish the ol' coffers" by going on the lecture circuit when his term ended. After all, he said, "I don't know what my dad gets . . . But it's more than 50, 75 [thousand dollars a speech]."⁷ The question of what former politicians should do will become more pressing as more countries democratize and as life expectancy continues to rise.

The opportunities and incentives for democratic leaders' postpolitical lives have changed over time. Because they are looking at longer periods of retirement than ever before, they use different criteria in choosing how to occupy themselves than did their forbearers. Nonetheless, there are some constants in their preoccupations: how to make a living, to secure one's historical legacy, and to pass the baton to the next generation of leaders. Retired political figures all have material concerns—families to look after or property to manage—but many of them lack the skills needed for ordinary life. When Dwight D. Eisenhower arrived at his Gettysburg, Pennsylvania farm after his presidency, for example, we are told that he did not know how to place a telephone call.⁸ Jimmy Carter's situation was graver; days after his defeat, he was informed that his peanut-warehouse business had gone deeply into debt.

For all their mundane concerns, however, retired politicians are also preoccupied with their historical reputations, and thus they write memoirs, teach at universities, and search out awards and prizes. Many of them

still aim to be influential; the impulses that led them to politics and public service do not vanish with retirement, and the skills that they accumulated in office do not disappear as they grapple with unfamiliar appliances and household debt.

Washington's Monument

This history of mixed motives starts, as does everything else in this story, with George Washington, who was the first political figure in the modern world deliberately to retire from his nation's highest office. Knowing that his decision was extraordinary, he told those who suggested that he become king to "banish these thoughts from your Mind." The historian Joseph Ellis reminds us that "when word of Washington's response leaked out to the world, no less an expert on the subject than George III was heard to say that if Washington resisted the monarchical mantle and retired . . . he would be 'the greatest man in the world.'"⁹

It was not modesty that drove Washington to take this decision, but rather an appreciation of the historic power of what John Adams would call "a government of laws and not of men." Washington rested his role and his reputation on his contribution as a citizen; as he put it:

When we assumed the Soldier, we did not lay aside the Citizen; and we shall most sincerely rejoice with you in that happy hour when the establishment of American Liberty, upon the most firm and solid foundations, shall enable us to return to our Private Stations in the bosom of a free, peaceful and happy Country.¹⁰

Only his orderly departure from office would secure the foundations of the new government—the rules and procedures of democracy—and only that would bring him the greater glory of posterity's favorable judgment.

Although he was clearly interested in the assessment of future generations, Washington's career in retirement also exemplified two other motives that would characterize the activity of many future ex-presidents. He was anxious about his successor's management of the institutions to which he was devoted, and he could not resist meddling in affairs of state from retirement, rashly lending his prestige to policy positions about which he was ill-informed. These were not his finest judgments, and they tarnished an otherwise sterling political record.

Equally serious was his concern about money. Washington was preoccupied with the "lethal chemistry of high expenses and negligible or nonexistent profits" at his Mount Vernon plantation and with the fortunes of his more than three-hundred slaves, "whose very presence constituted a massive contradiction of the principles on which his heroic reputation rested."¹¹ Washington established the precedent that democratically elected politicians are to relinquish office, and his retirement illustrates the ten-

sions that many leaders face after stepping down. Their concern about the dignity of their office, the integrity of their reputation, and the extent of their influence—already a combustible blend—is always mixed with, and sometimes contradicted by, the everyday preoccupations of private life.

How have these factors influenced the postpolitical careers of subsequent democratic leaders? Our sample is biased toward U.S. presidents—in part because, for most of the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth, the practice of voluntary retirement remained exceptional. In his examination of the historical waves of democratization, Samuel P. Huntington counted only ten countries that became and remained democratic in the nineteenth century, adding another twenty or so to that number after World War II. The pace picked up after 1974, particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in 1991. By 2000, about 60 percent of the world's states—more than 115 countries—were governed by democratic regimes.¹² We know less about how today's retired politicians view their circumstances than about how their U.S. forerunners did, but some features of postpresidential careers are likely to be common, if not universal.

Few seem to share Calvin Coolidge's view of his political career, expressed on a club-membership form: For occupation, he wrote "Retired"; under comments, "And glad of it."¹³ More typical was Gerald Ford's perspective:

You cannot help but miss the presidency. I could never understand those who did not like it. I missed the opportunity to make decisions. Betty and I loved the daily challenges in the White House, and we enjoyed the responsibilities. But, once it was over, we found other very productive and interesting things to do.¹⁴

The material conditions of our ex-presidents will play a large role in what counts as "productive." It was not until the Former Presidents Act of 1958 that U.S. presidents drew a pension. The bill was prompted in part by Harry Truman's straitened circumstances—he had had to take out a bank loan for his moving expenses when he left the White House. Within a decade, former presidents were guaranteed an office, mail privileges, security, and staff salaries at taxpayer expense. Bill Clinton's public support would amount to nearly US\$1.25 million annually, not including security. While such emoluments are now the law in the United States, the arrangements elsewhere for retired heads of state and government vary and are rarely as generous. When former Polish president Lech Wałęsa's severance pay ended three months after he left office in 1996, he famously showed up at the Gdansk shipyard asking for his old electrician's job back. The Polish parliament quickly passed a law providing a pension for ex-presidents.

Although Wałęsa's example is extreme, many retired leaders must wrestle with the question of the propriety of gainful employment. With

the growth of the liberal professions in the nineteenth century, a number of U.S. presidents had law firms rather than farms to return to after their terms ended, and wondered whether it would be unseemly to resume their practice. Those who decided that it would, were left unable to practice the only profession that they knew. In recent years, however, especially where the rule of law is well entrenched, ex-leaders have routinely returned to the practice of law—among them several Canadian prime ministers, including Pierre Trudeau.

By the early twentieth century, new opportunities were opening up for former presidents and prime ministers as the rise of mass media turned them into celebrities, which they quickly found could be profitable. According to Lewis Gould,

Theodore Roosevelt had a high degree of responsibility for this development. . . . His flamboyant ex-presidency kept him in the national spotlight. [But it was also] as a result of the emergence of a mass media and the mechanisms of celebrity [that] the president . . . had become famous and familiar to his fellow citizens. Out of office he found that newspapers and journals wanted comments on news events, audiences gathered to hear his reflections, and reporters covered his activities. Former presidents found that they were marketable assets.¹⁵

William Howard Taft traveled around the country giving lectures to such organizations as the National Geographic Society and the Electrical Manufacturers. In 1959, Herbert Hoover, 85 years old and out of office for a quarter century, traveled 14,000 miles, gave 20 speeches, accepted 23 awards, and answered 21,000 letters.¹⁶

The tradition of presidential memoirs, which provide income and guard (or redeem) good names, is longstanding. Many U.S. presidents secured lucrative contracts for their life stories: Ulysses S. Grant ensured his family an income by delivering his manuscript to his publisher barely a week before dying. Presidents and premiers from Charles de Gaulle to Margaret Thatcher to Nelson Mandela, as well as every surviving U.S. president since Chester A. Arthur (d. 1886), have made sure that history has their version of events. It is reported that, after an exhausting day of interviews, Eisenhower responded to an expression of sympathy by saying, “Yes, but it would be worse to be forgotten.”¹⁷

Retirement: From the Farm to the Globe

Once they have secured their financial well-being and rightful place in history, former leaders seem to pursue one of four fairly predictable paths: genuine retirement, work in the private sector, a return to public office, or humanitarian action. Some—but surprisingly few—actually retire to devote themselves to pastimes of little public import. Coolidge served as president of the American Antiquarian Society; Eisenhower golfed, paint-

ed, and played bridge; Robert Muldoon, prime minister of New Zealand from 1975 to 1984, enjoyed a brief career on stage, starring as the narrator in the *Rocky Horror Show*, and on radio and television. By and large, however, the lure of life at the office—any office—remains strong.

Some former leaders move to the private sector after leaving office. While such a course may not be difficult to combine with playing golf, it may well present a challenge to the dignity and probity associated with a lifetime of public service. The same perspective and sagacity that make them sought-after speakers (or is it their celebrity and influential friends?) make ex-leaders attractive to private-sector business. Barely six months after leaving office, former British prime minister Tony Blair announced that he would join J.P. Morgan “in a senior advisory capacity” for what was said to be more than \$1 million a year.¹⁸ Blair was not the first politician to join the world of finance; his predecessor, John Major, advised a private equity firm, the Carlyle Group, as did former U.S. president George H.W. Bush, former Philippine president Fidel Ramos, and former Thai premier Anand Panyarachun.

This is not new: Decades ago, former U.S. presidents Grover Cleveland and Calvin Coolidge served on the boards of life-insurance companies, and, more recently, former Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo served on the boards of Procter and Gamble, Union Pacific, and Alcoa; former Finnish president Martii Ahtisaari, on the board of several Finnish firms; and former Canadian premier Kim Campbell, on the boards of several biotechnology companies. Although Gerald Ford was criticized for offering product endorsements, these kinds of pursuits are not unusual, particularly for politicians on the right of the political spectrum: Margaret Thatcher became a “geopolitical consultant” to tobacco giant Philip Morris (now Altria); Jenny Shipley, former conservative prime minister of New Zealand, joined a financial-services firm; and José María Aznar, erstwhile premier of Spain, served on the board of Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation.

While not all politicians who turn to business represent rightist parties—former Australian prime minister Paul Keating of the Labor Party became chairman of a Sydney-based investment bank—an afterlife in the business sector is definitely an option enjoyed disproportionately by politicians in the West. As Mo Ibrahim observed of Africa, “We don’t have financial institutions for ex-presidents to go and run, or boards of great companies.”¹⁹

Far more retired political figures around the world seem to find positions in public life (particularly political life). Many world leaders lose elections only to sit in parliament, awaiting the opportunity to run again. Countless defeated executives spend their time outside of politics but plotting a return.

Whether or not they anticipate a return to office, most retired political figures expect to enjoy informal roles and relationships, but these are

frequently vexed (as was the case for Washington). Outgoing politicians routinely campaign on behalf of their party's nominee to succeed them but, as Vicente Fox points out, this practice may pose a challenge in new democracies:

Much as I would have loved to roll up my sleeves and wade into the 2006 campaign, I had to stay strictly out of the electoral process . . . Unlike in the United States, where a Ronald Reagan or a Bill Clinton can campaign for George H.W. Bush or Al Gore, Mexican presidents cannot legally play a public role in the campaign to succeed themselves—ironic, I know, in a country where the presidency had always been determined by the behind-the-scenes *dedazo*. But then, it was exactly this culture that we were trying to change.²⁰

Some former leaders have also been willing to serve in positions typically viewed as less august. There are numerous examples of onetime heads of state and government who—unlike Russia's Vladimir Putin, who engineered his being named prime minister after stepping down as president—contentedly assumed lesser roles. Asked whether it was demeaning to consider serving in the House of Representatives after having been president, John Quincy Adams said, "No person could be degraded by serving the people as a representative in Congress. Nor, in my opinion would a former President of the United States be degraded by serving as a selectman of his town, if elected by the people."²¹ Following suit, former Belgian premier Jean-Luc Dehaene served as mayor of Vilroorde after losing a national election; President Nicéphore Soglo of Benin was elected mayor of Cotonou, the country's economic capital, some years after losing his bid for reelection; and President León Febres Cordero of Ecuador subsequently served as mayor of Guayaquil.

Appointed office is more typical. In 1921, former president Taft was finally nominated to the position that he had really wanted, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, where he served happily until shortly before his death in 1930. Herbert Hoover ran major commissions for both Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower. Things do not always go well, of course, with postpresidential appointments. In 2005, Colombian president Alvaro Uribe named his predecessor Andrés Pastrana ambassador to the United States and then announced that Pastrana's predecessor, Ernesto Samper, would be ambassador to France. Both Pastrana and Samper resigned, each apparently offended by the other's appointment.

Opportunities for postpresidential service in international and regional organizations are presenting themselves in increasing numbers, as such institutions themselves proliferate. Former Irish president Mary Robinson became the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; former Norwegian premier Gro Harlem Brundtland served as Director General of the World Health Organization; Mali's two-term president Alpha Oumar Konaré became chairperson of the African Union; and

former Columbian president César Gaviria served as secretary-general of the Organization of American States. These are not honorific positions, nor are they easy to secure. Brundtland, for example, has said that she had to campaign just as hard for the WHO position as for her seat in parliament.²²

Just as formal positions of authority are proliferating globally, informal or short-term international roles that deal with “critical and controversial issues” are also multiplying. Among the former leaders who have served recently as UN “special envoys” are Ricardo Lagos of Chile, Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, and Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique.²³ The team that accompanied Kofi Annan to Kenya to stem the violence occasioned by an electoral stalemate in early 2008 included Chissano, former Tanzanian president Benjamin Mkapa, former Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda, and former Botswana president Ketumire Masire.

These kinds of roles point to the fourth path available to ex-politicians: neither complete retirement nor work in the public or the private sector, but rather engagement in what has come to be known as the “third sector”—the world of not-for-profit and nongovernmental organizations. This approach to life after politics has a distinguished pedigree. Many U.S. ex-presidents have become involved in education, for example. Thomas Jefferson’s postpresidential role as founder and first rector of the University of Virginia was one of his proudest accomplishments. Retired leaders everywhere seem attracted to the prospect of adding “professor” to their titles, with some seriously pursuing it—such as former Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo, who became director of Yale’s Center for the Study of Globalization—and others simply giving the occasional university lecture.

The number of former presidents using their expertise for genuinely humanitarian ends is quickly growing, however. It was Jimmy Carter who created the modern “postpresidency” as an exercise in humanitarian action, establishing the Carter Center at Emory University, an action-oriented public-policy institute devoted to democracy promotion, conflict resolution, election monitoring, and global health. Bill Clinton emulated the Carter model, establishing the New York-based Clinton Foundation, whose mission is to promote “the values of fairness and opportunity for all” through building capacity in the United States and abroad.

It is a model that has become increasingly popular around the world, as Vicente Fox’s account of his postpresidential activity attests:

Since leaving office we have broken ground on the Centro Fox here at Rancho San Cristobal [where] we have built the foundation of a new academic center, presidential library, and think tank. Marta and I have taken a first-hand look at the useful “afterlives” of Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, Nelson Mandela (and soon of Tony Blair). They have proved that retirement is for old people. Instead these ex-leaders are still

people “in a hurry”—fighting poverty and AIDS in Africa, preventing election fraud, raising funds for tsunami relief.²⁴

Fox is not alone in his enthusiasm for this kind of arrangement. In 2006, former Chilean president Ricardo Lagos inaugurated his own foundation called Democracia y Desarrollo (Democracy and Development) in Santiago. Tanzania’s Benjamin Mkapa—with international partners (including the Clinton Foundation) providing financial backing—established the Mkapa HIV Foundation in 2007.

These efforts are expensive. By the time the Harry S. Truman Library opened in 1957, \$1.8 million had been privately contributed for its construction. Forty years later, the costs—and ambitions—were vastly larger. Bill Clinton began raising money for his library well before he left office; the *New York Times* reported that “some \$1 million dollar donors were longtime Clinton friends, [while] others were seeking policy changes from the administration. Two pledged \$1 million each while they or their companies were under investigation by the Justice Department.”²⁵ Over the next decade, Clinton raised more than \$500 million for his foundation and library; when former first lady Hillary Clinton was nominated to serve as secretary of state, it was revealed that many of the largest donors were foreign governments and business interests with continuing stakes in U.S. policy.

Going Forward

What are we to make of these new patterns and practices in the careers of democratic politicians? We might start by returning to Taft’s identification of the concerns of ex-presidents. To the public, Taft reminds us, living ex-leaders raise the “troublesome fear” that they might return. For well over a century, there have been proposals to address this apprehension, often by securing the presidents in honorific positions with adequate pensions—and no powers. William Jennings Bryan—the U.S. congressman, three-time-losing presidential candidate, and secretary of state under Woodrow Wilson—suggested that all former presidents become ex-officio members of the Senate, to which Taft responded directly, “If I must go and disappear into oblivion, I prefer to go by the chloroform . . . method. Its pleasanter and less drawn out.”²⁶

Today in Burundi, former presidents serve in the Senate for life. In Paraguay, ex-presidents may speak, but not vote, in the Senate. Lifetime Senate seats for presidents were revoked in Peru (1993), Venezuela (1999), and Chile (2005), however, as the parliamentary immunity that protects ex-presidents from prosecution has become either less necessary or more unseemly in Latin America. In some East Asian countries, by contrast, concern for neutralizing former presidents has yielded routine corruption investigations. In both Korea and Taiwan, presidents

have left office at the end of their mandated terms only to face prosecution: South Korea's Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo were convicted of corruption in the mid-1990s, and Roh Moo Hyun committed suicide while facing corruption charges in 2009; Taiwan's Chen Shui-bian was tried and convicted of corruption after he left office in 2008.

Increasingly, however, the fear that former executives might return to national politics is allayed through the new sets of incentives and opportunities for political afterlives in a globalized policy world. As Gerald Ford once observed:

Media and technology, and the nature of public issues, afford the modern president unprecedented opportunities to be innovative in his role and to remain in the public eye. The relative ease of travel, the ability of people to communicate quickly, and the almost instantaneous exposure of issues make conferences and symposia, for example, excellent forums for former presidents. Former presidents before me did not have these manifold chances to contribute to the timely discussion and resolution of policy issues.²⁷

The proliferation of former elected heads of state and government—as well as the opportunities for visibility and influence—is recognized by the members of the group themselves. They even have their own professional association, the Club of Madrid. Under the leadership of Ricardo Lagos and flying the banner “Leadership for Democracy That Delivers,” the Club of Madrid “addresses issues of global concern and provides peer to peer counsel, strategic support and technical advice to leaders and institutions working to further democratic development,” offering “today’s leaders an unequalled body of knowledge and political leadership.”²⁸ Just as the new communications technologies of the early twentieth century transformed the opportunities of former U.S. presidents by making them celebrities, the new technologies of the twenty-first century are transforming opportunities for former leaders around the world. Global Internet-based media are creating new markets for expertise and influence, and this is reshaping the prospects of those with ample stores of both.

What effect does this have on the behavior of leaders while they are in office? As long as they must face Taft’s three main concerns—having to support themselves, to secure their legacies, and to assure a steady political transition—the market for their skills and expertise will shape their behavior in office. In other words, officeholders behave in ways that anticipate the market for their services after they leave office. Studies of members of the U.S. House of Representatives bear this out, suggesting that a reputation for trustworthiness is an asset in the search for postpolitical employment and therefore a big incentive for honesty while in office.²⁹ This same dynamic is at work on an international scale too, although since these markets are not as well-regulated or transparent, they are not always as powerful an incentive for honesty.

Indeed, the puzzlement over the propriety of Bill Clinton's fundraising for his foundation reflected complications brought by globalization: Senate Republican Richard Lugar, who supported the nomination of Hillary Clinton for secretary of state despite what he called "legitimate questions" about her husband's international connections, said, "I don't know how given all of our ethics standards now, anyone quite measures up to this who has such cosmic ties."³⁰ Yet such "cosmic ties" are becoming ever more common—indeed, unavoidable—as global policy issues increasingly impinge on national policy makers. In doing so, they will create mixed and complex incentives for political leaders.

The challenge of balancing the temptations of power in an era of cosmic ties with the dignity and probity expected of those working in the public trust inevitably raises questions about personal emoluments as well as political influence. For Clinton, Carter, Fox, Mkapa, and many others, funding for their various centers or foundations is inextricably linked with their own personal prosperity.

The shadow of the future looms not only in terms of personal gain or political influence. Mary Robinson left the Irish presidency three months before her term expired to become UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Why? The position was vacant, the secretary-general wanted her to start, and she had done most of what she could expect to do in the waning days of her second term. In this instance, the next opportunity not only shaped but shortened the president's final days in office. This very assumption—that the prospects for postpolitical life color the political behavior of sitting leaders—inspired the Mo Ibrahim Foundation's new \$5 million Prize for Achievement in African Leadership, which recognizes former African leaders who have demonstrated a commitment to good governance, including the willingness to relinquish power at the appointed hour. The first recipient was Joaquim Chissano in October 2007. In his acceptance speech, Chissano, echoing George Washington, stated:

Despite the fact that the Mozambican Constitution allowed me to run for a third term during the 2004 presidential elections, I decided not to do so. Consequently, I announced my decision not to seek for a third mandate three years before the elections. This was to allow the country to prepare itself for a peaceful transition. My decision was largely influenced by the understanding that the country was in peace and the economy was steadily growing. Democracy was taking root. I realized the time had come and conditions were right to allow a new leadership to take over and push the country forward.

If these reflections evoked George Washington, then the following, distinctly modern thoughts sounded more like Bill Clinton:

Although I am no longer in the Government, I continue to give my support to the political, social and economic development of the nation, through the Joaquim Chissano Foundation, which was launched in November 2005.³¹

It is no surprise that Chissano is a member of the Club of Madrid, nor that Mary Robinson is on the selection committee of the Ibrahim Prize. The new world of postpresidential activism is interlocking in structure and global in scale.

If we should wonder what effect these kinds of opportunities may have on the behavior of politicians in office, we might also consider whether the politicians themselves have any discernable influence on the international system. This question is complicated, as many career international civil servants dread the arrival of a new political appointee at the head of a mission, a novice who needs briefing while the crisis brews. Moreover, some former presidents can seem quite mischievous to their successors: Clinton and both presidents Bush were said to have been irritated by Carter's "freelance" diplomacy, highlighting the extent to which former presidents are thought, at least by incumbents, to have some formal, if residual, responsibilities to represent their country and perhaps its government.

Yet there is evidence that the "peer to peer counseling" afforded by experienced political figures can be effective in the international arena. In 2007, entrepreneur Richard Branson and singer Peter Gabriel established the Elders, "a powerful group of leaders" including Carter, Mandela, and Robinson, whose purpose is "to ease human suffering [by] offering a catalyst for the peaceful resolution of conflict." The Elders were among the sponsors of the intervention to end the postelection violence in Kenya in 2008; the success of the mission was widely attributed to the ability of the former presidents to talk authoritatively and persuasively about different kinds of institutional arrangements for power sharing.³² In a similar effort to shape regional policy debates, twenty former Latin American presidents, under the auspices of the Global Center for Development and Democracy (founded by former Peruvian president Alejandro Toledo), collaborated in November 2009 to issue a "Social Agenda for Democracy in Latin America."³³

Something intriguing is happening here, as more and more democratic leaders come to find that there is a robust and useful life after public office and, quite possibly, beyond the borders of their own countries. Like George Washington, they did not "lay aside the citizen" when they assumed office, and the incentives for self-denial in anticipation of a life after public office may be growing stronger every day. Students of democratic politics would do well to recognize the rapid expansion of the global market for the skills, expertise, reputations, and authority of former elected heads of state and government. Scholars and their colleagues in the policy community should explore how that market is shaping behavior in office.

The increasing density of the global relationships of national leaders and the proliferation of international roles and responsibilities suited

to the dignity of officeholders at the pinnacle of national governments are reshaping the opportunities to which such officeholders will be responding. This international web of ties and opportunities, though it is not without the potential for abuse, will increasingly make it easier for elected leaders to play by the perverse rules of democratic politics—“to accept political defeat: to leave office upon losing an election, to follow rules even when they work against one’s own interest.”

NOTES

1. Seymour Martin Lipset, “George Washington and the Founding of Democracy,” *Journal of Democracy* 9 (October 1998): 26.

2. Vicente Fox, with Rob Allyn, *Revolution of Hope: The Life, Faith, and Dreams of a Mexican President* (New York: Viking, 2007), 308.

3. Richard Norton Smith and Timothy Walch, *Farewell to the Chief: Former Presidents in American Public Life* (Worland, Wyo.: High Plains, 1990), xi.

4. These figures were compiled with the help of a database constructed by Guy Grossman. The ambiguity in these data is considerable, since some presidencies are largely ceremonial (Israel, Ireland) while some premiers are merely the instruments of presidents or kings (Tunisia, Jordan). Moreover, over the 35 years for which this data was collected, the number of countries and thus the number of executive offices changed, the number of democracies changed, and, in some places, the relative powers of presidents and premiers changed. Thus the conclusions drawn from these data should be treated as suggestive rather than definitive of the universe.

5. Barbara Geddes, “The Great Transformation in the Study of Politics in Developing Countries,” in Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner, eds., *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), 353.

6. Robert L. Hardesty, “With Lyndon Johnson in Texas: A Memoir of the Postpresidential Years,” in Smith and Walch, *Farewell to the Chief*, 95.

7. Katharine Q. Seelye, “And for My Second Act, I’ll Make Some Money,” *The New York Times*, 9 September 2007; available at www.nytimes.com/2007/09/09/weekinreview/09seelye.html?_r=1.

8. Stephen E. Ambrose, “At Ease: Dwight D. Eisenhower in Retirement,” in Smith and Walch, *Farewell to the Chief*, 67.

9. Joseph J. Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 104.

10. Gary Wills, *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 22, 84.

11. Ellis, *His Excellency*, 244.

12. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 14 and passim; Larry Diamond, “The State of Democratization at the Beginning of the Twenty-first Century,” *Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* 6 (Winter–Spring 2005): 13.

13. Smith and Walach, *Farewell to the Chief*, vii.

14. Gerald R. Ford, "Personal Reflections on My Experiences as a Former President," in Smith and Walch, *Farewell to the Chief*, 169–70.

15. Lewis Gould, "'Big Bill' and 'Silent Cal': William Howard Taft and Calvin Coolidge as Former Presidents," in Smith and Walch, *Farewell to the Chief*, 11.

16. Richard Norton Smith, "Outliving the Bastards: Herbert Hoover as a Former President," in Smith and Walch, *Farewell to the Chief*, 33.

17. Ambrose, "At Ease: Dwight D. Eisenhower in Retirement," in Smith and Walch, *Farewell to Chief*, 69.

18. "Tony Blair Joins Investment Bank," BBC News, 10 January 2008; available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7180306.stm>.

19. Quoted in William Wallis, "The Bounty of Africa," *Financial Times Magazine*, 16 February 2008.

20. Fox, *Revolution of Hope*, 316–17.

21. Homer F. Cunningham, *The Presidents' Last Years: George Washington to Lyndon B. Johnson* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1989), 45–46.

22. Gro Harlem Brundtland, *Madam Prime Minister: A Life in Power and Politics* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 437.

23. See www.un.org/Depts/dpko/SRSG/table.htm.

24. Fox, *Revolution of Hope*, 354.

25. Don Van Natta Jr., Jo Becker, and Mike McIntire, "In Charity and Politics, Clinton Donors Overlap," *New York Times*, 20 December 2007; available at www.nytimes.com/2007/12/20/us/politics/20clinton.html.

26. Smith and Walch, *Farewell to the Chief*, xi.

27. Daniel J. Boorstin, "Saving a National Resource: An Address on the Role of Former Presidents in American Public Life," in Smith and Walch, *Farewell to the Chief*, 143; Ford, 149, 173.

28. See www.clubmadrid.org.

29. Glenn Parker, *Self-Policing in Politics: The Political Economy of Reputation Controls on Politicians* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); on U.S. politicians, also see Rebekah Herrick and David L. Nixon, "Is There Life After Congress? Patterns and Determinants of Post-Congressional Careers," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 21 (November 1996), and Joseph Schlesinger, *Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966).

30. George Stephanopoulos, "Lugar: 'There Will Be Questions Raised' About Bill Clinton's Foreign Work," *George's Bottom Line*, 30 November 2008; available at <http://blogs.abcnews.com/george/2008/11/lugar-there-wil.html>.

31. See www.moibrahimfoundation.org.

32. See www.theelders.org.

33. See www.cgdd.org. Note that a number of other presidential foundations and centers—including those of Vicente Fox, Brazil's Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and Bolivia's Carlos D. Mesa—are described as "partners" of the center.