He Sounds Smooth, but Pence Often Evades Question

As a scholar of rhetoric, I believe Vice President Mike Pence is one of the most frustrating, slippery and evasive political communicators I ever have studied. He always has a moderating tone and never attacks the interviewer or his opponents. What I find interesting is how this obscures the rhetorical significance and impact of his discourse. For example, after watching Pence recently on several network Sunday news shows, as well as during the daily coronavirus briefings, it is clear that he will never answer important questions about testing, the lack of
federal coordination and President Donald Trump’s inflammatory messages — all matters of concern to the public.

Hence, while he sounds smooth, which is a pleasing and stark contrast to Trump, every answer he gives consistently turns into little more than praise for the president. He issues misleading and false statements about how all is good, and how the country is making far more progress than what the health experts and governors from both parties say.

In many ways, therefore, Pence’s rhetoric is more insidious and, yes, perhaps more worrisome and dangerous than Trump's. It is something we should carefully consider.

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