Richard Nixon Presidential Library
Contested Materials Collection
Folder List

Box Number	Folder Number	Document Date	No Date	Subject	Document Type	Document Description
7	32	2/14/1972	☐	Campaign	Memo	From Colson to Haldeman RE: a Becker Poll. Handwritten notes added by unknown. 2 pgs.
7	32	2/17/1972	☐	Campaign	Memo	From Haldeman to Colson, Klein, and Ziegler RE: Answer Desk. Handwritten notes added by unknown. 2 pgs.
7	32	2/18/1972	☐	Campaign	Memo	From Colson to Haldeman RE: previous memo involving an Answer Desk. 2 pgs.
7	32	2/17/1972	☐	Campaign	Memo	From Haldeman to Colson, Klein, and Ziegler RE: Answer Desk. 2 pgs.

file Colson says H.R. File

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 14, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: H. R. HALDEMAN

FROM: CHARLES COLSON

SUBJECT: Becker Poll

Because of your comments to me regarding Teeter's evaluation of the Becker poll, I called Becker and, in fact, have talked to him twice since our meeting. The conclusions from my conversations are as follows:

1. Becker did not tell Teeter that this was an unscientific sampling made up of two polls, one of intended Democratic voters and one of intended Republican voters or that he had warned the Globe that this cast any doubt upon the trial heat data. You will recall that this is what Teeter had apparently indicated to you.

2. In this year's primary in particular, about as many New Hampshirites will vote in the Democratic primary as in the Republican. The two turnouts should be about equal.

3. The original sample constructed by Becker was a normal statewide sample. The questioning technique, however, did reject non-primary voters, but Becker does not feel that this affects the validity of the poll as a representative statewide sample, and that including non-primary voters would not change the overall result.

4. Most important, Becker feels that his screening afterwards (his comparing the composition of his respondents with the actual demographic and political data in New Hampshire) corroborates that his polling sample was representative.

In short, he believes his poll is accurate and I am afraid that Teeter did not correctly understand it when they talked or that the report had somehow been garbled.

Attached, if you want to review it, are my conversations with Becker along with a post-poll analysis comparing the composition of his poll respondents with the actual composition of the state. He points out in this context that previous trial heats in New Hampshire resulted in a very similar breakout.

The only reason that I pursue this is that I am very concerned over the fact that our vendors show us much better than Harris, Gallup, Becker, to name three. I fervently hope our vendors are correct and that the other three are in error. On the other hand, this disparity should raise some questions, not the least of which is whether our vendors might be giving a little bias on our side in an effort to keep us happy and keep our accounts. It would be disastrous to us if we were not getting honest poll data or if our vendors were not using good poll techniques.

I would, believe me, rather give them the benefit of the doubt, but I would also want to be doubly sure early in the game, while there is time to do something about it, that we aren't being put in the position of kidding ourselves.

For what it is worth, from the contact I have with people around the country, I tend to think that we are stronger than we have ever been and my gut instinct, therefore, is that our vendors are right. I don't feel comfortable relying on that, however, either. There is just a little warning signal here and I think for a modest investment of some analytical time we could very easily compare, for example, Becker and ORC in New Hampshire to find out why this kind of difference is showing up.

Per our conversation I talked with Teeter - he, too, is concerned, thinks Becker is generally very good and that ORC is showing some bias our way - he is going to really dig into this —

Larry

February 17, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR : *CHUCK COLSON
~~HERB KLEIN~~
RON ZIEGLER

FROM : H.R. HALDEMAN

SUBJECT : Answer Desk

A couple of points to keep in mind in the upcoming months regarding the press:

1. To the extent that they are not attacking us all out now, they are simply building up their credibility for a massive attack later.

2. We need to beef up the operation of our answer desk. The attached article from the New York Times giving the GOP reply to a recent Kennedy speech highlights the problem here. Ford's reply is so oblique that it had to be explained by his press secretary. Scott's talks about a point man .....what is that? Dole calls Kennedy's talk the "usual cacophony of mindless negativism". That's hardly the language of the man in the street!

We get plenty of statements out, but many of them are simply not in the simple, direct, language that will cut deep, make an impression and be carried. We need to do whatever possible to beef up our efforts in this area.

Attachment
cc: Clark MacGregor
Ray Price

Chuck .... One possible approach to Labor that you should consider, we can use Meany's attacks and turn them to our advantage. The situation is comparable in many ways to the Taft campaign in Ohio when Taft separated the rank and file from their "bosses" and carried every Labor district in the state despite a mamouth campaign by Labor leaders. The more the bosses attack, the better it can be skillfully handled.

One principle strategy in taking the offensive would be to organize a labor political organization to spearhead the campaign -- call it something like "Labor's League for Nixon" and let this organization carry the attack to Meany and his "arrogant bosses". Whatever happens, there should be no frontal attack by us against Labor generally, but a ligitimate organization of Union Members could carry the fight against the bosses for us.

Also, of course, we can use our poll information, polling rank and file members and asking if they support specific issues we stand for and specific accomplishments of this Administration. This is something you should be giving some thought to now. It might be a good idea to launch the Labor League some time during the late summer.

(5)

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 18, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: H.R. HALDEMAN

FROM: CHARLES COLSON Cwc by WRH

SUBJECT: Answer Desk

In response to your memo of the 17th regarding the "Answer Desk", Noel Koch is now riding herd on this, recommending counter-attacks and suggesting replies. The mechanism we have established is a hell of a lot better than anything we had in the past in terms of getting the material out. As I think I have indicated to you, at least 50 percent of the battle, maybe more, is effective distribution and timing of press releases. This part of it we have nailed down beautifully.

The other part of the problem is what our people say. You are quite correct that we need to sharpen up the rhetoric considerably. I have had some extensive talks with Koch, Karalekas and Hallett to this end and I think all understand the need for hitting it sharply and directly and in language that people understand.

I might point out with the specific article that you cited from the New York Times that the important objective here is to get our answer out on the record fast and to hit back hard. If you look at that article again, you will see that the headline is superb, "Kennedy Criticized for Attack on Nixon" and that the first paragraph sums it all up, "Republicans struck back today at Kennedy...". Specifically what is said is important, but the key is how the press plays the attack. In this specific instance, the Dole language, while obviously Greek to the man on the street, nonetheless was sufficiently novel to at least get into print. If Dole had called him a political opportunist or one of our other usual phrases, I'll wager you two to one that it wouldn't have been printed. The fact that it was printed gave

rise to the first paragraph of the article which is what we want. Also, with respect to your comment that the Ford reply was so oblique that it had to be explained by his press secretrary, that's what we hoped would happen. The reference was to Chappaquiddick, but it was a little subtle which it had to be. It, nonetheless, suggested Chappaquiddick and caused the press to call Ford's office to ask if that is what he meant. Rather than criticizing that, I think it really was a good technique for building up the Ford statement.

In any event, your point is well taken. We will do our best to sharpen up the rhetoric and now that we do have a machinery that gets the stuff delivered to the press in a way that they will use it, I think we will see more and more of our stuff getting into print.

Your other point about the press getting ready for a massive attack is absolutely accurate. I think they are lining up their forces as the Soviets have on the Chinese border. Fifty divisions is about the right estimate and we are going to have to really be on our toes. As we are set up now, Noel is the go-between for the Members of Congress, the Committee and our writers. Karalekas and Hallett crank most of the stuff out, although Koch does do some writing himself and we hope as time goes on to be able to draw more and more upon Buchanan and Khachigian as their time permits. I think we are well set up for it and we are alert to the problem.

February 17, 1972

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HERB KLEIN
RON ZIEGLER

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