

Richard Nixon Presidential Library  
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1	27	4/17/1972	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	From Buchanan to Colson RE: campaign points from a recent meeting with Harris. 1 pg.
1	27	4/3/1972	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	Copy of a memo from Colson for "The File" RE: campaign suggestions from Harris. 4 pgs.

April 17, 1972

MEMORANDUM TO: CHARLES COLSON

FROM: PAT BUCHANAN

Harris made some interesting points when you spoke with him. The primary one with which I agree fully is that the President at all costs should avoid "stridency" and crass partisanship, and any manner of attack upon his opposition which is seen as inconsistent with his position as leader of all the people. As for the bland campaign, too early to call that one. There may be an issue on which the President can win, by elevating it in the public focus, as he did in November 1969. And should we appear bland and unemotional -- while the Democratic Party has whipped up an emotional anti-establishment campaign -- we could be writing our own death. The stridency point should be kept before us at all times -- but to lock it to a bland campaign now would be unwise -- there are issues which transcend party, on which we are on the majority side -- and heating up these issues, could turn to our advantage.

A final note -- I would not trust Harris so far as one could throw him. He has long been in Teddy White's phrase, a "Kennedy fanatic," and I would not be surprised if Kennedy were not getting cargons of what he sends to you.

Buchanan

MEMORANDUM

[Item 112]

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

EYES ONLY

April 3, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

SUBJECT: Random Thoughts from Lou Harris

Harris believes that the President needs, between now and the election, to continually create "straw men". Meany affords us the best opportunity, but we've got to work at creating others -- deliberate enemies. The President is against those who plunged us into Vietnam but now want to sell out America's honor. The President is against those retailers who over-charge consumers. The middle man example in the food price issue is a perfect illustration. If there isn't a natural villain, create one so that the President can be the defender of the public interest against natural enemies.

*Not*  
Harris believes that the President should be forceful but not strident; that whenever he is strident, the President brings out the hostility of a latent anti-Nixon feeling which still exists with a large body of people, but that when he is deliberate, quiet, rational, forceful, he does not engender this latent hostility.

Harris believes that we should downplay the campaign throughout the year, make it as boring as possible. Harris believes that a bland campaign will help us in that we will benefit greatly from a low turnout. Also, people react better to the President if he does not polarize on gut issues. This does not mean that we should not address the issues; we should defuse as many as possible, but not arouse the passions of the electorate with a very divisive issue that might bring out our opponents (as with anti-labor legislation, for example).

Harris believes the key to our success is in avoiding having the American electorate act emotionally or precipitously with respect to the President's candidacy. He points out that as his pollsters question people, they get a better response after the questioning than at the outset. More people favor the President's re-election after they have been walked through the issues than when they are first confronted with the question cold, "Do you favor the President as against Candidate X?"

One of the President's strong points is that people think he is trying hard. He is beginning to develop a characteristic of sincerity, that he is really working at solving the problems. Harris advises that we should articulate everything we do rationally, calmly, quietly, and forcefully. Make people think, make people thoughtful. Do not provoke instant emotional reactions. The President's style has come through very

well as being deliberate. We should not let him go swinging or overreacting. If our opponent becomes strident, we should take it in stride. The more irresponsible the opposition becomes, the more the President is helped in being looked at as a solid, steady, strong and deliberate statesman. Be the "solid brick in the middle" Harris suggests. Ask people to think of the issues seriously.

In this same vein, we should turn the lack of so-called charisma into an asset, arguing that no one has the right to use the office of Presidency for the development of a personality cult, that personal promotion is not the measure of one's success as President. One cannot run the country through charm, rather through ability. Nixon's style is to be serious and dedicated, that that is more important than personal image.

Harris believes that Nixon's image is now being sharpened as a rational, thoughtful, deliberate leader, all of which can be destroyed if there is a spontaneous reaction or a sharp galvanizing of the opposition in the months ahead. Harris believes that if people are asked calmly and quietly to think through the choice for President, that the President cannot be beaten by any of the present Democratic Presidential candidates. If on the other hand, the election turns into

a heated, highly controversial, emotionally charged campaign,  
we will simply bring out enough anti votes to defeat us; there are just  
more of them than us and if we galvanize them, we (not the Democratic  
candidates) can beat ourselves. The key at the moment is to maintain  
the tone that we have presently achieved and to hold it throughout the  
election year.

  
Charles W. Colson