

Richard Nixon Presidential Library
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Folder List

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>	<u>Document Date</u>	<u>No Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Document Type</u>	<u>Document Description</u>
4	32	11/4/1971	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	Copy of a memo from Colson to Haldeman RE: RN's political stance in the 1972 campaign. Attached is a diagram of White House officials and what parts of the campaign they will handle. 5 pgs.
4	32	11/24/1971	<input type="checkbox"/>	White House Staff	Memo	From Noel Koch to Colson RE: notes from a recent meeting with Bob Dole. 3 pgs.
4	32	11/19/1971	<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic Policy	Memo	From Colson to Strachan RE: a recent "New York" magazine article involving Lou Harris. 1 pg.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 4, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: H. R. HALDEMAN

FROM: CHARLES COLSON

SUBJECT: The President's posture in
the 1972 Campaign

The President should carry into 1972 the ground rules he laid down in 1971 about discussing politics and being involved in obvious political activities only if and when necessary. We have a great opportunity in the first six months of 1972 to portray the President as the world statesman that he is and to bring into very sharp focus the contrast with all of the Democratic candidates who will be cannibalizing one another throughout primary time. The President will be the peace maker -- the Journey for Peace to China, the consummation of SALT, the end of the Vietnam involvement, the progress of the Nixon Doctrine and the Soviet Summit. If the economy is neutralized as an issue, then the major emphasis of the first six months should be on Nixon's world leadership.

(The unfinished agenda in foreign policy is as important as the accomplishments that he brings about next year. Winston Churchill ended World War II and the British people decided they didn't need him any more -- his job was done; hence, all of the things we do in the first six months of next year are but a prelude to the events which lie ahead, which events can create generations of peace. In short, next year should not be the culmination of the successful Nixon foreign policy; it must represent a major half-way point.)

The President probably cannot get away with refusing to answer political questions in press conferences in the coming year but, whatever he does, he should dust them off lightly and quickly. He should show a distinct lack of concern with politics. Whatever McCloskey does in New Hampshire, it is of no consequence -- the President's mind is on bigger things. If McCloskey does badly, let the Republican Party -- not the President -- do the cheering. If McCloskey does relatively well, it is of no concern to the President. There are no visible political strategy sessions at the White House; there is no political crisis involving the President's personal participation; there is no lack of confidence in the inner circle.

The President is on a very high plateau of leadership at the moment. If we are successful in sustaining it and, if the foreign policy initiatives develop as planned, he should be on that same plateau in June of next year.

Those of us within the President's political family should be fastidiously cultivating key voter blocs, promoting politically appealing programs, maximizing favorable media exposure and organizing like hell -- but it should be low profile. We shouldn't talk about it. It shouldn't be evident or in any way visible. The President and the men around him are concerned with the enormous progress that he is making in achieving a more rational, peaceful world order. In this same vein, the President should not reply to critics and should avoid any strident attacks on any one. Let the Vice President and the Cabinet do the hatchet work. We want a picture of a President who is consumed with his quest for peace, restoring a peacetime economy and pursuing vigorously and personally two or three key domestic initiatives.

This is not to suggest that we ignore subtle political opportunities. Speaking forums should be carefully selected for the greatest impact they have on key voting blocs -- veterans, aging, ethnics, Catholics, etc.

The transition next summer should be as gradual as possible. Obviously, the political fat will be in the fire after the Republican Convention at which point the President's rhetoric shifts to the great promise which the future holds for America in terms of peace in the world, a strong and competitive economy, and a government responsive to the needs of the American people (whatever our key domestic thrust is -- the value added tax and school proposal, welfare reform or whatever).

It is nearly impossible to draw a projected Presidential campaign strategy today for the period of September and October 1972. If all goes well and we are riding high, the President must remain very Presidential, self-assured and above the battle. This would be particularly true if Kennedy is the opponent. Kennedy will be strident, sharp, cutting and very divisive. He will have large, enthusiastic youthful audiences and his campaign will seem to have great exuberance but by his rhetoric and his style he will turn off one voter for every voter he turns on. We will be sorely tempted to tangle with him. We must ride above the battle to make the contrast as vivid as possible. The polls next September could well dictate another strategy but if the nominee is Kennedy, I doubt it. Our job will be to assist him in defeating himself.

If the opponent is Muskie or another relatively non-controversial centrist, the President's campaign strategy may well have to be governed by the relative standing in the polls immediately following the Convention. If we maintain the leadership plateau all year, we should try to keep it through the campaign. If we are behind, we may have to fight and meet our opponent head on and if the opponent happens to be Muskie, then unlike the situation with Kennedy, it may be our task to sharpen the issues. We may have to score on him and force him to be fully tested in the eyes of the electorate. Depending again on the standing in the polls, we might even need to come out swinging with a Harry Truman 1948 style campaign.

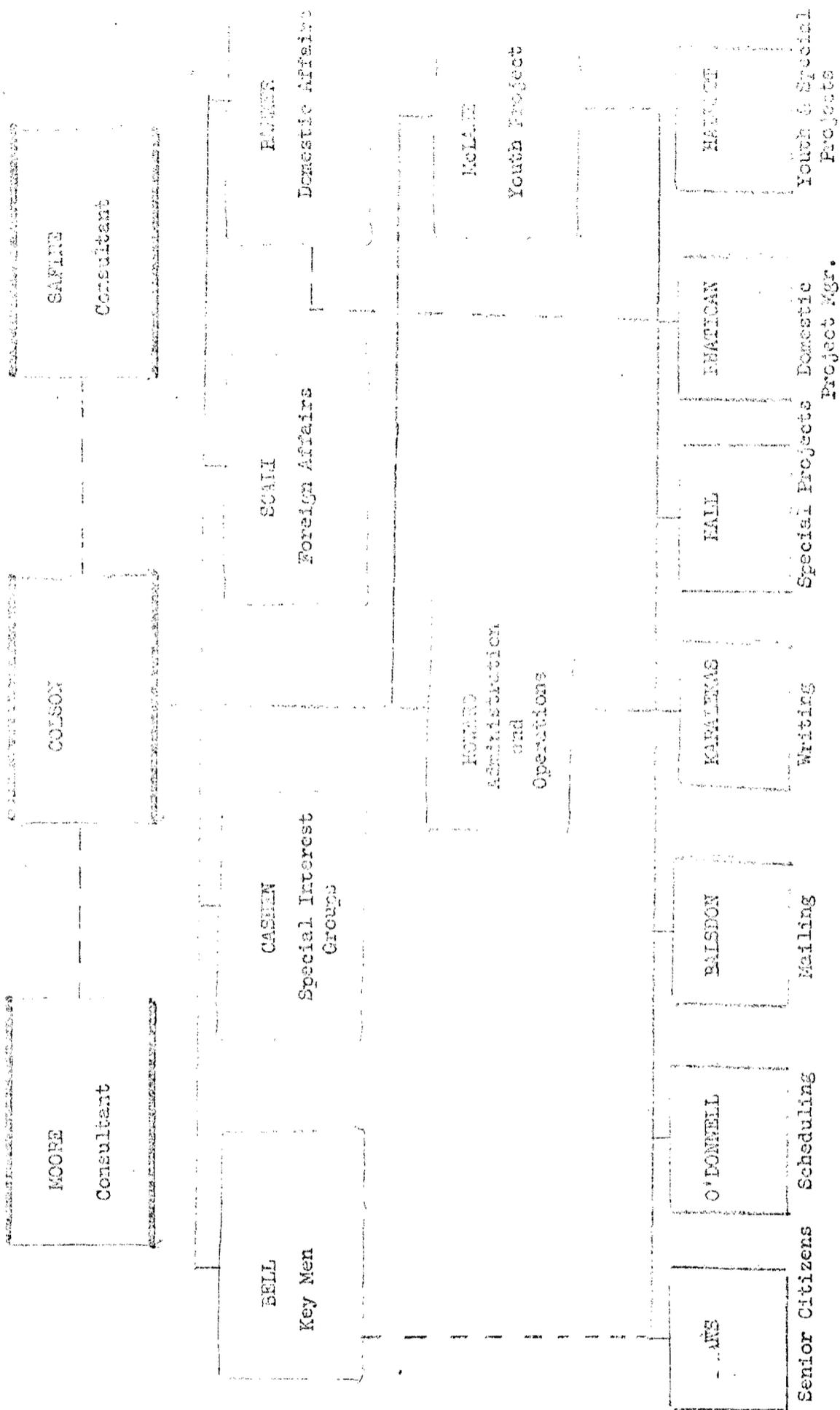
My own guess at this time is that our opponent will be Kennedy. He may start out relatively high in the polls but it will be all downhill for him if we remain "above" him and demonstrate by contrast his immaturity against the President's leadership. If it is Muskie, I believe we will start out well ahead in the polls and our principal concern will be to ensure that he does not slowly creep up on us; that as the campaign ho-hums along, he doesn't gradually rebuild the traditional Democratic coalition. Muskie is the kind of candidate who could gain momentum in a campaign and we might be forced, even if we start out ahead, to take him to the mat and to sharpen the issues.

The foregoing points out how difficult it is to be specific as to Presidential campaign involvement for the months of September and October. Subject to unknown events, I feel relatively clear in my own mind as to the strategy we should pursue up until September 1st; beyond that, it all depends.

Assuming we have it our way, that we are ahead, that the President is on the plateau of leadership, that we have effectively organized, that we have developed the issues and cultivated effectively the key voting blocs then the President should maintain his high Presidential posture throughout the campaign. This would mean very few campaign stump appearances or political rallies, extensive use of radio during which the President talks about leadership, the Presidency and the goals for America in the next four years and, indeed, for the next generation, a few direct television appearances to the American people building our record, and more importantly, our hopes for the future and carefully timed Presidential news events and announcements. The President should do just enough physical campaigning to keep the spirit and enthusiasm of the party workers alive. If he is ahead and riding the leadership plateau, he should not be seen going out to the hustings. He should be seen frequently doing the job of the President and leading the Government.

One point deserves very careful advance planning. We need in the months of September and October to exploit fully the advantages of incumbency but not to be obvious in doing it. We need to carefully plan those news events which we can control, which will be positive, appealing either to the vast majority of people or to key voting blocs and have them ready to go in September and October. In other words, we should store up a bag of "goodies" ready for use during the campaign. Johnson's bombing halt in 1968 was about as subtle as a sledge hammer. Obviously, it helped Humphrey but it is not the kind of thing I am thinking of because we would have trouble with something that big and major in the closing days of the campaign. The liberal press would let one of their own get away with it but they would crucify us and call it political treachery. The kind of thing I am thinking about would be export grain shipments (for example, like the one we have just engineered this week with the Soviets), the release of parks in critical areas, announcements of a major work for welfare requirement, a significant policy decision affecting Indian lands, the release of an Administration study calling for guaranteed annual wages for construction workers, the announcement of increased veterans benefits, perhaps some major defense contract announcements. Some of these could be done without the charge of politics. The selection process will have to be extremely judicious. We also will want to begin saving these up through the summer.

This is, to me, one critically important project that we must undertake regardless of our campaign style. This we can use to our advantage no matter what the Presidential posture is at that time.



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 24, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHUCK COLSON
FROM: NOEL KOCH
SUBJECT: Meeting with Senator Dole

Attached are my brief notes from a meeting I had with Senator Dole today. He appears very anxious to straighten out the communications problem between here and the Hill, and feels much of the problem of his coverage hinges on bad press operation at RNC. He noted extensive coverage by all media this week -- said all arranged out of his own office.

My impression is that the difficulties shouldn't be hard to solve if everybody were talking to everybody else; Dole is obviously prepared to do whatever is necessary to get things straightened out, but there are clearly responsibilities that fall between the cracks because nobody wants to get in anybody else's way. The press operation is one example. Dole apparently doesn't feel that he can prudently go in and clean it up, so he resigns himself to needling Nofziger. I think he might clean it up if he were confident the operation was blessed down here. Obviously, some of the general problem stems from the hydra-headed leadership of RNC -- if more than one man is responsible, then nobody is responsible.

I am generally hopeful something can come out of this sit-down next Thursday.

Speeches --

Dole blames lack of coverage on press operation at the RNC; says no matter how many speeches you give or how good they are, if they don't get to the press, they're useless. I asked him whose fault it was they don't get to the press, and he said the Committee operation is a disaster. Says Nofziger has a bunch of people who can't produce. I asked why not fire them. He said they're Lyn's people and Lyn is the President's man. I said, the consensus at the White House is that you ought to take hold of that operation and make it work. Dole says Nofziger takes three-hour lunches -- 12 to 3, that's when everything happens on the Hill, and you have to be around then. Lyn apparently has no working relationships with the press.

Dole said Committee is falling apart. I said if it falls, it'll fall on you. He disagreed, said he has a letter, either from RN or Mitchell, delineating responsibilities -- Tom Evans is supposed to run the Committee; Evans has big ego problem. He already put two secretaries in hospital; brought in Barry Mountain -- his friend -- now Mountain wasn't speaking to him. RN told Dole not to get involved in penny-ante operations, to concentrate on big stuff and leave the driving to Evans. Evans can't drive.

Dole supposed to meet next week with MacGruder and Fleming; said there is rumor Evans may quit. Dole says MacGruder and Fleming

won't deal with Evans. Morale is rock bottom at Committee.

Dole suggested meeting with communications people at White House. I said it should be with Colson. Dole agreed to this; wants Nofziger there also to get everything on the line. I said I would arrange for Tuesday.

Colson can't make Tuesday. It is presently set up for Thursday at 11:00 a.m.

November 19, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: GORDON STRACHAN
FROM: CHARLES COLSON
SUBJECT: Attached article in New York magazine

Lou Harris is incensed over the New York magazine article suggesting that he wrote a confidential report for Larry O'Brien. New York is printing a retraction.

The report in question was written by a staff member at the DNC and was a poll summary and analysis based on the Harris and Gallup polls. Harris was unaware of its existence until he read the article in New York. He has asked for, however, and been assured that he will receive a copy of it which he will immediately pass on to us. He insisted on a copy to be sure that no one was, in fact, using his name -- so the article has had a beneficial effect in that we will be getting a look at the Democrats strategy plan.

cc: Mort Allin