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<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>
7	20	6/29/1971	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Letter	From Rudyard C. McKee to Moore RE: campaign advice. 4 pgs.

RUDYARD C. MCKEE
420 LEXINGTON AVENUE
NEW YORK

June 29, 1971

Mr. Richard A. Moore
Special Counsel to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dick:

I have been somewhat on dead center over your request for a list of issues to be used in the next campaign.

Last night I realized why!

An issue is something a candidate identifies and develops as a serious problem. Then he tells you as dramatically and persuasively how he's going to fix it.

This can be done by the candidate who has never been President because he has no record of fixing or failing to fix the country's problems. With the President, it's quite different. The record can confirm or refute his ability to solve the problems.

I happen to believe nobody could have done the job better -- or as well as President Nixon. But just selecting the issues and talking about them some more won't do the trick.

Instead, I think performance between now and next fall has to be the answer. In discussing the specifics as I see them, I will, in effect, be giving you a list of issues.

Vietnam

This will probably be the President's biggest handicap if it isn't over -- all over -- by the Fall of 1972. At the same time the war could work for him because only he can manage or control this issue.

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The Economy

Here again, things must be done soon to stimulate the economy with (hopefully) only mild inflation. He can take these steps -- the opposition can't. In this endeavor it is imperative that unemployment drop to 4% or below before the election.

Health Care

Our friend Teddy is churning this issue for all it's worth. His scarce tactics have considerable basis in fact. But if the administration can perform in this area -- soon -- then the opposition has little to view with alarm. (See enclosed clipping on Kennedy.) I think the cost of health care is one of the most gnawing problems in America today. It hits everybody squarely in the pocketbook. I'm somewhat familiar with this problem since I still supervise Blue Cross advertising.

Taxes

Here, in particular, action instead of words. I know this must be under consideration. The average man in the street is going to vote for the man who increases his take home pay by lowering his taxes.

Drugs

The President has a good program underway. Let's hope people generally can see results during the next twelve months.

Our Cities

Specific steps must be taken to turn our cities back to our law abiding citizens. Part and parcel of the problem is the serious financial plight of the large cities. Revenue sharing can be a solid step in the right direction.

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Foreign Relations

I place this last, because I think -- apart from Vietnam which is a semi-domestic issue -- that the domestic issues will decide the next election.

Despite the low profile of this issue in the average man's mind, specific headway in the easing of Red China relations can enhance the President's image as a master strategist in world affairs. This would apply to the Middle East and Russia as well.

* * *

I am sure the foregoing offers nothing new. I would guess if there are fifty Presidential advisors there must be as many different collections of issues.

So, I suggest that some research be taken on this that will nail down the topmost concerns in voters' minds and thus let them tell us what the issues should be.

1. ~~Identify the floaters. The voters who have no lasting loyalty but who will jump on the bandwagon that seems to best serve their personal well-being. It might well be that this group -- if captured -- can swing an election.~~
2. Defectors. Those who were formerly in your camp but have deserted. "What lost them? What will bring them back?"
3. What is top-of-mind with your loyal supporters.

This kind of research is not a one-time shot. New readings should be taken at intervals so that we can accurately track the voter mood. Harriss gives us a great deal of this information, but we only see the high spots that he cares to publish. I have heard that the real qualitative data goes exclusively to the Kennedy camp. If this is true, then Harriss is certainly not the man to do this research, if indeed he could. Someone like Daniel Yankelovich could do this.

If you don't already have this type of project underway, I recommend it for high priority.

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So much for that. Here's a piece of input that may or may not be a new thought. In either case I feel in my bones that it's vital.

I am willing to predict that President Nixon's opponent in the next election will be Kennedy. His well oiled, expensive machinery is already turning over.

This guy is going to be drafted at the Democratic Convention. You forget your Muskies, your Humphries -- all of the known hopefuls on the horizon.

None of them has his charisma. What about the Bridge or cheating at Harvard? We're in a new age of moral values and people have short memories or he has been forgiven. Only the Kennedy name has a chance in the Democratic Party. Call me Nostradamus if you like, but this I believe.

So what do we do?

I suggest the formation, right now, of a team of strategists and tacticians whose sole responsibility will be to spike the guns of our troublesome Senator. If people do have short memories, let's freshen those memories.

I think that this particular man as a candidate is a frightening prospect. The only possibility I would fear more would be Lindsay. He doesn't have the organization or the money, so I don't think he could make it.

However, he has his kind of charisma and might wind up as second man on a ticket.

If the "Negative-Kennedy" task force is put together, it should have some other label and be a covert operation.

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