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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	25	12/13/1971	<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic Policy	Memo	Copy of a memo from Buchanan to Haldeman and the Attorney General RE: the Manhattan Twelve. Handwritten notes on original added by unknown. 3 pgs.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
December 13, 1971

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MEMORANDUM TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
H. R. HALDEMAN

FROM: PAT BUCHANAN
SUBJECT: THE MANHATTAN TWELVE

Sunday, for five hours at the Watergate Apartment, Chuck Colson, Dave Keene, Max Friedersdorf and I met with five members of the Manhattan Dozen; they included Jeff Boil and John Jones of ACU, Wayne Thorburn, one of the two leaders of YAF, and both Tom Winter and Allan Ryskind of Human Events. In our judgment the meeting was a success. Of the conservative "planks" which had been set down, Chuck Colson answered the majority of domestic questions to their satisfaction; and indicated that the "thrust" of the Defense Budget coming up would be clearly in the direction that many of us inside, as well as the Conservatives outside, would like to see.

The President's veto of Child Development, the nature of that veto, clearly established our credibility with the conservatives, and set a positive framework for discussions.

As a consequence of those five hours, the following:

1. The conservatives agreed to talk to Ashbrook and to try to convince the rest of the Twelve that this week Ashbrook --when he makes his promised statement -- should state that he needs far more time to think over the requirements and complexities of a primary run, and will make a final decision at a press conference "before the First of January."
2. The conservatives agreed, after considerable debate, that Ashbrook -- in light of the day care veto -- would not "move his candidacy forward" this week -- if the five conservatives could prevail on the others. They agreed that the best approach would be not to give a "go signal" at this point. They agreed further that Ashbrook's New Hampshire effort should take no public forward steps -- and that the conservatives themselves should make no subrosa efforts, except those currently essential to Ashbrook's running -- should that decision come before the First of January.

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3. What the conservatives are looking for is a) Signals of intention to move in the domestic direction, which we indicated the President was moving and most specifically b) Solid evidence that the new Defense Budget will be what we indicated it would be -- i. e., "thrusting" in the direction of stronger defense posture for U. S., especially in the strategic sector which is their most immediate and direct concern.

4. They will get back to me to indicate whether or not the objective conditions in New Hampshire (i. e., time needed for petitions and lining up delegates) permits them to hold back any public action until the last minute, which as of now we agreed should be as close as possible to the first of the year.

My reading of them is this:

There is a disposition among most of them there (especially the Human Events people) not to run anyone against the President if they can possibly do that. What they are interested in is some policy direction changes -- not in a primary challenge. If we can come through on the Defense side, and can send some public signals, then my view is that Colson, Buchanan and Keene have convinced this group that not to run is the best possible course for the future effectiveness of the conservative movement.

We indicated that the leverage of conservatives within the White House and the Administration would not be enhanced by an Ashbrook candidacy; it could well nigh be terminated; further that any open public moves right now toward candidacy would not lead toward the objectives they want within the Administration. Rather, such a course would induce a "To hell with the Kooks" attitude in the White House, which would militate against the very objectives they pursue. In my judgment, again, we persuaded the majority of those present of the wisdom of this course -- and they will attempt to so persuade the balance of their delegation.

However, if we cannot deliver anything of substance on the Defense Budget -- despite the doubts of some of them about this course of action -- they will gear up a campaign against the President in New Hampshire and elsewhere. Whether or not they want to go against the President, and many of them like Bartleby's Scriver "I would prefer not to," they will have to; indeed they have to go to vindicate their threat, if nothing is forthcoming.

What's To Be Done?

In my judgment we should immediately send out a signal or two to them.

Specific examples would be:

1. Appointment of a strong security man like John Foster to the empty Packard post as Assistant Secretary of Defense.
2. Public announcement by a high Administration official, that, given some of the abuses to which the Legal Services Corporation -- in legislation -- was being opened we intend now to "ask for a Governor's veto" of all legal services programs. We could argue this on the grounds: a) majority of Governors are Democratic; and for Congress to be against this provision implies a lack of trust in their own state leaders b) the possibility of abuses which could injure the program's effectiveness and diminish its support are so rife, that a veto now seems essential.

Finally that, considering the principle of accountability we believe that any such controversial program as Legal Services should win the support of a Governor of a State, as, after all he is the highest elective official of that state, and the one who must necessarily be responsive to the people. This is democratic principle; this is the essence of majority rule.

Last point: Methinks the groundwork, at this point in time, has been ploughed to abort the Ashbrook candidacy. There are "hawks" among the conservatives William Rusher, Stan Evans, Mr. Loeb, and others, who would like to "go" under any conditions. But if we can produce something tangible in the Defense Budget (reportedly Goldwater has already been given such assurances) then we can abort this candidacy before it is born. In my view that is surely in the President's long-term interest. If the Far Right of our party goes charging off in New Hampshire, and is humiliated and routed, a good many people will be embittered; wounds will have been opened within the party which may not have healed in time for November when we need everyone.

On the other hand, if we can provide these assurances on defense, I think perhaps we can program Ashbrook in the end of December to give a ringing endorsement the President, and to call on all conservatives everywhere to maintain his principles, build for the future, and work out their problems within the framework of a Nixon Presidency, which is the most effective vehicle for the kind of changes we want. If Ashbrook used the occasion for a "let's get aboard speech" instead of an announced candidacy, it would truly help us in resolving our difficulties with the Right -- and unite the party for an election where we are going to have to be united.

Buchanan

cc: Colson
Keene
Goodcarle