

Richard Nixon Presidential Library  
Contested Materials Collection  
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>
7	87	1/13/1972	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	From Buchanan to RN RE: learning from 1970 and 1971 poll data. Handwritten notes added by unknown. 6 pgs.
7	87	1/13/1972	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	From Buchanan to RN RE: learning from 1970 and 1971 poll data. Handwritten notes added by unknown. 6 pgs.
7	87	1/13/1972	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	From Buchanan to RN RE: learning from 1970 and 1971 poll data. 6 pgs.
7	87	1/3/1972	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	From Hallett to Colson RE: "The Politicians and the People." 8 pgs.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 13, 1972

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

FROM: PATRICK J. BUCHANAN

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While in the media, and among press and TV types RN may have had a banner year, in fact, during 1971 he suddenly dropped between seven and nine points (10-18%) of his support among the American people -- and had not regained it by December of 1971.

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The opening of the New Year is thus not a time for self-congratulation on our part, but a time for mild alarm and some serious soul-searching.

While these conclusions seem justified, they are surely frustrating as hell. One wonders just what it is the President has to do to nudge himself back up to, say, 60 percent approval with the American people.

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But my own theory is this:

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Perhaps what the President needs to regain lost strength in the polls is not drama (the China trip) not new initiatives (the New American Revolution), not bold decisions (the economic program), and not even "steady solid performance." Perhaps what is needed is an end to the era of calm presidential leadership and success, and the beginning of a "new era of conflict and crisis" for the President of the United States.

One recalls that the President rated highest with the American people when he was fighting for the survival of the Presidency in November of 1969, against media and demonstrators alike. The HEW veto, with the stroke of the pen, did not lose the President's support; the people hailed it. The Vice President was in deep trouble -- until he turned on his critics, and started stomping on them, instead of trying to show them he was not a bad fellow.

#### THE EMBATTLED PRESIDENT

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While I understand that the "Professional President" is being sold to RN as the posture for the campaign, perhaps we ought to consider instead the "Embattled President."

The times when the American people truly sit up and take notice of a President is when he is in a fight, when he is under fire. On such occasions, with a President in full cry, taking after his adversaries, in a great battle, there is the kind of drama and excitement which can stir up the interest and imagination of an American people whose senses are somewhat dulled. I am not talking about a "war against inflation" or a "war against crime" or a "war against red tape or bureaucracy" -- but rather a Presidential duel in the Kennedy versus Big Steel tradition -- a political struggle against a despised enemy, who is flesh and blood opposition.

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This is not to suggest that the President move off the Presidential pedestal, that he engage in partisan combat, or look around for a war to start, political or otherwise.

What I am suggesting is that the avoidance of controversy, and conflict, with our primary adversaries may be politically wrong -- not politically advantageous. Had the High Court disallowed the Amchitka blast, and had the President told them twelve hours later to go to hell and fired off the bomb anyhow, that would have been the kind of dramatic institutional challenge, that would have awakened the country and gotten them on their feet cheering.

In short, while the President as President is the best posture for the coming year; we may very well need to consider Great Issues, contested questions, where the President can, as President, throw down the gauntlet to Foreign Relations, to Congress, to the Court, to some massive powerful institution, so that RN will go into 1972 as a Fighting President, not the Professional Managerial President. We might need to cast the President in a role that not only merits respect and quiet applause, but one that excites people to stand up and cheer, and excites the partisans to go out and fight, bleed and die.

This is not so much an ideological thing, as it is something within the spirit of the American people, who love a good fight. Perhaps we ought to consider the issues, where we can give them that fight, where the President can draw the line, and draw the sword, and charge into battle on behalf of the best interests of the Republic. Better a howling press and high polls, than a quiescent somnolent press and low polls.

Buchanan

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 3, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHARLES W. COLSON

FROM: DOUG HALLETT

Broder's and Johnson's basic points in their series "The Politicians and the People" are the following:

- (1) People are less angry, less passionate, less pessimistic about the future than they were a year ago. What was analyzed last year as fear about the future has now turned to apprehension. While two-thirds of the people surveyed still feel the country is no better off than it was in 1968, there is less immediate concern about short-run disintegration and collapse.
- (2) The President's strength has increased considerably as a by-product of the China trip, the new economic policy, etc. On the other hand, the President's initiatives have also made him seem more unpredictable, more mysterious, more inconsistent than he did before to many Americans. He is the first choice of a minority of the electorate. At a time when people are looking for direction and purpose in their leaders, the President remains a remote and uncertain figure.
- (3) There is considerable confusion and indecision about 1972. Never have political loyalties and allegiances been weaker. Party structures are almost meaningless in most areas of the country. People want to vote for the man, not the party. With the possible exception of the economy, no clear-cut issues are likely to stand out this election year.
- (4) The real issue is the psychological issue of trust and confidence. People are alienated from their government; they feel powerless; they question whether their leaders can respond to their fundamental concerns. 60 percent do not believe their leaders tell them the truth.
- (5) The youth vote is likely to be smaller than the vote of the electorate-at-large and young people are not likely to participate in large numbers in the political process. While young people are hostile to the President, they will not have a significant effect on the election.

(6) Muskie is the only Democratic contender, both known to a majority of the electorate and known positively. Kennedy and Humphrey are better known, but less liked. While he has potential, however, Muskie has not yet developed the broad base of support and respect he would need to defeat the President.

(7) Wallace and Agnew are too controversial to be accepted as leaders. While many people agree with their statements, they sense they are not tolerant enough to be President. Wallace and Agnew are too sure of themselves.

It is important to note that Broder's and Johnson's conclusions are based on a distorted sampling of the electorate. They interviewed only 300 people. All pollsters agree that in-depth interviews with only a small sampling permits the interviewers to reinforce their own preconceived notions. Broder's and Johnson's sample does break down parallel to the 1968 election results, but it is far from representative. Only one Southern state was included in the survey. 26 percent of the sample were new voters -- and half of these were college students. These and other distortions have led to conclusions at variance with more scientific polls. Whereas polls indicate that blacks have gained confidence in the system in recent years, for example, Broder and Johnson assert they are more alienated.

On the other hand, I think the basic theme of the articles -- the alienation issue is accurately portrayed. Nothing else could account for the wide variation between popular support for the President's basic stands and support for his leadership. Nothing else could account for the President's dominance of the issues and his relatively weak showing, both in the trial heats and in the confidence polls.

The following is my point-by-point analysis:

(1) People are less pessimistic about the future -- This is true. The campuses have calmed, The doomsday rhetoric has quieted. People are beginning to believe, for the first time, that the war is ending and that the economy will not fall apart. Such events as the Moscow and Peking trips even show promise of leading the way to a better future.

Unfortunately, however, the President's success in the areas listed above is not necessarily translateable into votes at the polls. The President's support is based on professionalism, not on any personal or psychic or intellectual loyalty. People expect the President to be an effective tactician. Inversely, if he is not -- if his professionalism shows any weakness -- his base of support is likely to decline. While it will be hard for the Democrats to

counter if everything is going alright next fall, it one or more of the above issues have gone bad the President may not receive credit for anything he has done. One weakness in the chain will cast into doubt the long-run viability of every link, leading the way to such questions as: "Why couldn't we have gotten out of Vietnam faster? Why didn't the President impose wage-price controls earlier?"

Indeed, the President's successes may even work against him in a curious sense. In 1968, the President was acceptable to many people to whom he would not normally be acceptable. People such as Walter Lippman were for him because they thought we needed a tough, flexible operator to deal with the kind of problems we had then. Now that the immediate technical problems have been solved, now that the wounds have been healed to some degree, we can afford -- we may need -- other kinds of leadership. The same people who wanted an operational President in 1968 may be looking for a philosophical one in 1972. They are no longer scared about the present; they are concerned about the future -- and they want someone who can help define it for them. As it stands, the President does not fill the bill.

(2) The President's strength has increased as a result of dramatic new initiatives, but these same initiatives have made him a more remote figure to many Americans. I don't think there is any question but that the President has gained as a result of his initiatives and is much better positioned for the campaign than he was six months ago. What is remarkable is that he has gained so little, standing now only 2 or 3 points above where he was six months ago.

In my view, this is our fault. Given the President's public personality when he entered office, given the over-inflated rhetoric of the sixties, it is not surprising that people were suspicious of promise and waiting for performance when the President took office. We recognized this in the first six months to a year of the administration. In the last two years, however, we have done virtually everything imaginable to undermine our own credibility and consistency.

In 1969, we were going "forward together." In 1970, we had a "New Federalism." By 1971, we had hyped it up to a "New American Revolution." Who knows what it will be this year? The Second Coming, perhaps?

We show no consistency of effort and commitment. The welfare program is pronounced the greatest domestic program since the New Deal, but we expend far more effort trying to place G. Harrold Carswell on the Supreme Court. We start off with a very exciting and challenging commitment to

the first five years of life, but denounce day-care (no, middle-class day-care) as committing the government to communal living.

Even our major efforts have a tinsely glow to them. The China trip and the economic policy may be admirable in themselves -- they are certainly incredible as they were ballyhooed by us. And all the time we are doing this, we tell the American people it was the previous administration which is responsible for overheated rhetoric and expectations -- and that we are the ones who are calming things down.

In the short run, of course, there have been benefits from our dodges and turns and from our Junior Chamber of Commerce boosterism. Maybe Agnew has even scored once or twice. But in the long run, I think, we have undermined the seriousness of the President and his Presidency. It is no wonder that today we find the public doubting anything we do, seeing in us instability, when their greatest want -- greater than any special-interest need -- is for just the opposite.

(3) 1972 is uncertain. With the possible exception of the economy, no issue -- concern, no political allegiance, no party-loyalty seems likely to dominate. There is opportunity in the disintegration of the nation's institutions -- church, family, town, university, union. There is opportunity to reach and win over large numbers of newly-independent voters. It is not opportunity of which we have taken the fullest advantage. We have not allowed ourselves to restructure public dialogue, provide new direction and new loyalties. While we have solved short-term problems and may benefit from having done so, we have not added new certainty or direction to the public mood.

Just the reverse, in fact. We have remained committed to all the folderol of the past -- superficial "Presidentialism," Billy Graham home-town religion, We're no. 1, partisanship excess -- at the same time we do everything possible to undermine the past's core. Substantively, we have been by-and-large on track (although we are not dealing seriously with the economy, a problem which is structural not cosmetic). P. R. -- wise, we have behaved as village burghers, testing the wind, dragged into every reform, declining to identify ourselves with our own concerns, failing to recognize the coherency and broader meaning of our own programs.

Take our non-fiscal justification for vetoing day-care, for instance. In the days of farms and small villages, having mothers bring children up at home made sense. Women were intimately involved in the production process of the farm. Children were able to roam and learn in a broadly educational environment. But now? Homes are isolated from places of work; staying

home means staying uninvolved. As for children, staying home means remaining in a sterile, homogenous suburban neighborhood or an even more confining urban apartment. Of course we need day-care -- massive day-care. Far from committing government to communal living, day-care means, instead, committing government to preserving some semblance of the community bringing-up process which we have enjoyed for most of our national history and giving women the same opportunity to feel productive and useful that their grandmothers had.

On many other issues, we exhibit the same kind of narrow provincialism -- even when we are on the right side of the issue. I don't believe people buy it anymore. Even when it is the best they can articulate, I think they expect more from their leaders. We have failed to give it to them -- and are, I think, paying the price.

(4) The real issue is the psychological issue of trust and confidence. I don't think it is quite as dominant as Broder and Johnson do, but I think it is much more important that we generally acknowledge. People don't "feel" the President's leadership -- except for a few brief moments such as the China announcements. The strongest, most memorable statements the President has made while in office have been statements of anger or know-nothingism or blatant politics; i. e. Carswell defeat, Calley conviction, Cambodia, vetoing day-care, pornography, abortion. They have not been devoted to explaining what the President is and what he is trying to do.

This is more than charisma -- at least charisma in the John Lindsay sense. It involves finding words and mediums which express the core of the President's character. Lyndon Johnson is not a superficially charismatic man, yet in his early years, before the war wore him down, his speech and his actions reflected a personal force that we never get from the President. Eisenhower could garble every other sentence, but, when you watched him on television, you knew he was a leader. Even Truman, haberdasher that he is, was able to express to his constituency a raw cussedness which was central to his leadership.

Richard Nixon? Man on the make; ashamed of and constantly running away from his past; manipulator; unsure of his convictions; tactician instead of strategist; Grand Vizier of all Rotarians, substituting pomposity for eloquence. That is the public impression. And that is why he is weak today. By 50 percent to 40 percent, the American people do not think he has any broad conceptual framework, any sense of direction or purpose.

In a sense, the nature of leadership is not nearly so important as its fact. That has been our mistake. We have adopted a pacification strategy, this

for that group, that for this, with deliberable avoidance of controversial intellectual and social stands, trying to reassure the left, which cares everything about words, with substance, trying to reassure the right, which cares everything about substance, with words. We have ended up alienating everyone -- and we will not be able to correct that until we start realizing that tomorrow's headline is not nearly so important as next fall's "impression"; that next week's tactical advantage may come at the expense of next November's strategic victory.

(5) The youth vote is likely to be relatively unimportant in 1972. Broder and Johnson confirm two of our own opinions: young people are going to vote less frequently than the rest of the population and they are not going to work in significant numbers for political candidates. Broder and Johnson are victims of their own distorted sample on their third point. Their analysis that young people are far more hostile to the President than the population-at-large is not born out by the polls. Kennedy has a substantial lead over the President in the trial heats, but he is the only Democrat who has any lead among the youth vote.

On the other hand, once the Democrats nominate one man and he has achieved a visible, stylish identity, he could take the same kind of lead among youth Kennedy now has. The President's support in this group is thin because of Vietnam, unemployment, etc.

(6) Muskie is the only Democrat both known to a majority of the electorate and known positively to it, but does not yet have the strategic advantage over the President. One of the most disturbing factors in our approach as we enter the campaign year is our gross underestimation of Muskie. He has been brilliant, as good as the President was in 1968, and he shows promise of being far more effective than the President has ever been in the public phase of his campaign. If he has not yet emerged as the President's equal, he also does not yet approximate the President's stature as he will as a nominated candidate for President.

People around here counting on a significant fourth party are, I think, crazy. Muskie is going to do so well in the primaries that no one will join McCarthy even if he does do it. Without irreparably damaging his right flank, Muskie has moved far enough left to have the tacit support of somebody like Al Lowenstein. Establishment reformers like Gilligan are already in his corner publicly. The Democrats want to win this year -- I don't think they're going to allow themselves to destroy their chances with suicidal splintering.

Most important of all, Muskie's public image is everything the President's is not: strong, reflective, prudent, even wise. The President could not maintain early leads against Pat Brown and Hubert Humphrey. How in the hell we think he's going to do better against an Ed Muskie with his usual plastic statesman, say-nothing strategy is beyond me.

(7) Wallace and Agnew are too controversial to be accepted as leaders. More evidence for the alienation theory. It is not just that Wallace and Agnew are too strident -- it is also that they are somehow too facile, too quick, too simplistic. People know that what they have traditionally believed -- and what Agnew and Wallace preach -- is not right anymore; that it needs replacement; that the society has changed and that their public leaders must deal with those changes even if they can't.

The lesson of Wallace and Agnew is that people want to be led -- they don't want to see their leaders mouth the same idiocies they do over a Saturday night beer. Yet that is exactly what we try to do -- elevating the idiocies into wordy, billowy speeches, to be sure -- practically every time the President makes a prepared, public statement.

I would caution, however, that Agnew's unsuitability for the Presidency does not mean he should be replaced as Vice-President. This should be decided on the basis of comprehensive polling this spring. There are too many people who say they would vote for the President, but "not that Agnew." On the other hand, I would regret very much having Governor Connally on the ticket, not just because I would hate to seem him close to the White House, but, more importantly, because he would overshadow -- and thus undermine -- the President. The President was right in his original intent with Agnew -- he runs better with nobody.

Conclusion: The same as usual: Not all the foreign trips to all the foreign capitals in the world are going to help the President unless they are coupled with a far more serious effort to deal with his very weak relationship with the American people.

The following steps should be taken:

(1) Get new speechwriters -- this is the most important. This President has the least experienced, least able group of speechwriters in recent history. We need guys with clout, who are involved and know a lot about substance, and who can put stuff together which is coherent, purposeful, and comprehensive -- which will have the same effect as the President's masterful desegregation statement.

Ideally, we would have guys like Daniel Boorstin, Irving Kristol, Edward Banfield, and Nathan Glazer. We probably can't get them, but the President ought to speak to Moynihan about it. We need and want people from that Public Interest -Commentary School and Moynihan would know where to locate good people whom we could get.

(2) Calm the P. R. , stop getting overexcited about each new issue, and instill some consistency and follow-through in our P. R. -- political operation. We should not be aiming at taking advantage of each new issue by itself, but at taking advantage of each new issue as it relates to the President's over-all approach. Above all, avoid the cheap-shot, the head-line hunt, the simple slogan.

(3) Realize that what is important about the President is that he is the first President to realize that the hyper-individualistic -- "We're No. 1" -- frontier American philosophy is bankrupt and outdated. The President is the first President to comprehend that internally and externally this country and its people are part of a community structure -- as such, the President is the first real conservative President the country has ever had. He has readjusted both foreign and domestic policy away from twentieth century liberalism, realizing that an unbridled commitment to individualism in the modern world is enslaving and destructive; that both Vietnam and the war on poverty are symbols of its bankruptcy; that real freedom and real individualism cannot be conferred from above, but must be worked out organically within a community structure by community norms -- hence an incomes-decentralization strategy instead of a services strategy in domestic policy, hence the Nixon Doctrine instead of Wilsonian zealotry in foreign affairs. This should be the basic theme in every utterance made by this Administration.

(4) Stop displaying the President as if he had a stick up his ass. Put him in gutsy, colorful, photographic situations with people. Take him out of airplanes, hotels, and military reservations and put him in hospitals, police cars, outdoors, in urban areas, at local union meetings, on tough university campuses, at Indian reservations, etc. Use the White House more imaginatively.

(5) A more imaginative use of media -- we shouldn't be afraid to put the President in conflict situations -- the Rather thing was good insofar as it went (by far the best of conversations), but we can go farther. Show that the President can handle both his enemies and the people by putting him in situations with them. We should also be hitting much more the prestige mags with prestige pieces. Personally, I thought the President's 1967 Foreign Affairs article was more a travelog than an analysis, but even it has had impact far beyond its immediate readership.