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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Administratively Confidential

October 20, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR:

H.R. HALDEMAN

FROM:

GORDON STRACHAN **G**

SUBJECT:

Presidential Popularity and
Trial Heat Poll

In light of the recent Harris and Gallup popularity figures, it might be valuable to have ORC conduct a popularity and trial heat poll. A trial heat poll has not been conducted since June 5-6, before the China and Moscow trip announcements and the new economic program. The new popularity series that measures "intensity of feeling" and "why disapprove" should be used.

Tom Benham prepared recommendations for a poll to assess the strengths of the Democratic contenders and the effect of third and fourth party candidates. He suggests running two-way and three-way trial heats so that a cross-tabulation could "identify which persons shift to Wallace from RMN or the Democrats in a three-way race". He also urges the use of the "familiarity/favorability" questions as well as fourth party options. If the questionnaire probed the two, three, and four-way trial heats with Muskie, Kennedy, Humphrey and McGovern as the Democrats and Eugene McCarthy and Shirley Chisholm as the fourth party candidates, the polling would take two days and the results would be available on the third day. A suggested questionnaire is attached.

However, there are several other possible areas that could be substituted for the trial heat questions.

You suggested that the public's interest in defense expenditures should be probed by asking whether they would be "willing to maintain a strong defense even if it meant giving up programs for other things, etc.". This area is being explored by the Harris Family Issues--In Depth Poll, the results of which are due this week. These Harris questions are attached should you decide that comparative results would be useful.

Probably a dumb idea. | Larry Higby suggested that we probe ^{Confidentially} the relative strength of

Agnew and Connally as Vice Presidential candidates. However, he made this suggestion before the Harris results of September 27 which indicated that Connally was stronger (52 to 36). Higby also suggested that questions be devised to follow-up on the Roper "right track/wrong track" question. Many issue results will be available from the Harris Family Issues--In Depth Poll this week, but suggested questions are attached nevertheless.

Dwight Chapin noted that although 25% of the people feel guilty about the amount of time spent watching television, he believes that the people expect their President to appear on television and that it is their duty to watch. Suggested questions are attached.

Safire believes it would be valuable to conduct a poll among blacks to assess their reaction "to the Muskie statement and the Nixon riposte".

To obtain results accurate enough to form a press release 300 blacks would have to be questioned. If the standard 1000 interview were expanded to 1200 a full 300 blacks could be questioned resulting in an accuracy level of +7%. The additional blacks would be harder to reach by telephone and so interviewing time would be four days instead of two. The additional cost would be \$3,500 to \$4,000. Suggested questions are attached.

In addition, question areas which were offered for the Wrap-Up Poll but not asked include: Jail terms for drugs, welfare--menial jobs, credibility of polls, government policy and polls, SALT talks, Gallup issues ranking, environment/pollution, revenue sharing, no fault insurance, the U.S. Army, and approval of Vice President Agnew. Questions in these areas with trend data are immediately available but not attached.

Any of these additional question areas can only be added if some of the trial heat combinations are dropped.

Recommendation:

That a Presidential popularity and trial heat poll be conducted on October 23 and 24 so that results will be available October 25.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Comment _____