

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>
55	22	5/21/1971	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	From Charles Colson to H.R. Haldeman RE: Political Strategy. 17pgs.
55	22	5/1/1971	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Newspaper	"1948 Revisited: A Political Lesson," by Henry Owens. Washington Post. 1pg.
55	22	7/12/1972	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	From Charles Colson to RN RE: Democrats for Nixon. 3pgs.
55	22	7/21/1972	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	From John C. Whitaker to H.R.Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman RE: Campaign Strategy. 8pgs.

## DOCUMENT WITHDRAWAL RECORD [NIXON PROJECT]

DOCUMENT NUMBER	DOCUMENT TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE OR CORRESPONDENTS	DATE	RESTRICTION
N-1 [30]	Memo	Colson to HRH, re: "Political Strategy"	5/21/87 71	C(NIXON)
N-2 [31]	Memo	Colson to RN, re: "Democratize for Nixon"	7/12/72	C(NIXON)
N-3 [32]	Memo	Whitacker to HRH, JDE, re: Campaign Strategy	7/21/72	C(NIXON)

FILE GROUP TITLE  
WHSE: WHCF Subj. Files: Confidential Files

BOX NUMBER  
48

FOLDER TITLE  
[CF] PL-Nixon [1 of 2]  
[1971-74]

## RESTRICTION CODES

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| A. Release would violate a Federal statute or Agency Policy.   | E. Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information. |
| B. National security classified information.   | F. Release would disclose investigatory information compiled for law enforcement purposes.   |
| C. Pending or approved claim that release would violate an individual's rights.                      | G. Withdrawn and return private and personal material.                                       |
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Presidential Materials Review Board

Review on Contested Documents

**Collection:** WHSF:WHCF:SubF:[CF]  
**Box Number:** 48

**Folder:** [CF] PL-Nixon [1 of 2] [1971-74]

<u>Document</u>	<u>Disposition</u>
30	Return Private/Political
31	Return Private/Political
32	Return Private/Political

**C. F.** PL/Nixon  
FG 1  
FG 6-11-1/Colson  
FG 6-11-1/Colo, K.

May 21, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: H. R. HALDEMAN  
FROM: CHARLES COLSON  
SUBJECT: Political Strategy

This is in response to the President's request for "some free thinking" on how to make our programs more meaningful to the people. This can only be done effectively in the context of the overall campaign strategy; hence this analysis attempts to broaden the question somewhat -- and to examine several ways in which the President's base of political support can be strengthened for 1972.

The primary emphasis here is on domestic issues; we obviously have the greatest control in this area and there is more certainty in the political effect of what we do. This by no means suggests that international issues may not be decisive -- they very well could be -- but with international conditions as volatile as they are it would be foolhardy to predicate a total strategy on them.

The following is an effort to identify some of the major factors that have proven decisive in prior elections, assess where we stand today in relation to those factors and suggest certain strategic considerations for 1972.

#### A. RECENT PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS

At the risk of oversimplifying history, successful Presidential politics in modern times have been generally built on one (or a combination) of four dominant factors.

1. Personal Image - Charisma: Kennedy is the classic example. Despite a mediocre Administration, an undistinguished record in foreign affairs and a poor legislative tally, he might well have been re-elected

in 1964; if so it would probably have been largely due to the successful mystique he created (with the help of a friendly press). The fact that he was able to maintain a substantial base of political support a year before the election would suggest that even a relatively ineffectual President can support himself on personality alone.

2. Respect for Leadership: Clearly FDR was the master in this category. A large majority of the people were convinced that FDR was the Nation's only salvation; it was irrelevant that most New Deal programs didn't work and that we were so preoccupied at home that we watched the world drift into the most dangerous war in history. Roosevelt's gift was the believable promise -- setting the great goals which he would inspire the Nation ( a very important point which you made in our meeting). The 1941 "Four Freedoms" speech, for example, became the national credo; young and old alike knew what the four freedoms were. (Even though it was 30 years ago I can still remember the Four Freedoms Saturday Evening Post cover.) With a few well chosen phrases he was able to rally enduring support through difficult times.<sup>1</sup>
  
3. Success on the Big Issues: There were at least two elections in modern times decided principally on the grounds that times were good, the President had done a satisfactory job of running the country and there was no great public demand for a change; the big issues of the day were well in hand. The first was Coolidge's election in 1924; the second, Ike's in 1956. The Peace, Progress and Prosperity slogan clearly reflected the public mood in 1956. Ike had the big issues well under control; he had restored the country to a period of normalcy. He was obviously also greatly helped by his powerful "Father image". Ike fit the times and the times fit Ike.

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<sup>1</sup>It was all the more remarkable in that the "Four Freedoms" were enunciated by Roosevelt, after he had been in office for eight years, at the tag end of a speech in which he outlined the dismal state that the world was then in, that we were at war or would be soon, that great sacrifices were necessary, that our defense production program was a disaster, that we weren't equipped to fight the war and that all hell was breaking loose.

3.

4. The Voters' Self Interest: On certain occasions in modern times the people have been moved to vote primarily according to their own economic self-interest. 1948 is the classic example. Certainly President Truman had little charisma (at least at the time); the times were not that good and there was a strong sentiment for change in the country. Although Truman was a strong, tough individual, it can hardly be said that in 1948 there was widespread public respect for his leadership as there had been for Roosevelt's. Yet he won -- largely because he made his own re-election important to the economic interest of large segments of the voting population. In 1964 Lyndon Johnson succeeded in appealing to the economic interests of key groups and in frightening the electorate as to the economic (and international) consequences of electing his opponent.

#### B. WHERE WE STAND

These four categories give us some yardstick -- albeit arbitrary -- to examine where we stand and our opportunities.

1. Image-Charisma: We cannot and should not try to make the President something he isn't. (I gather this is the point of Buchanan's memo, as it was the point made in the Pierson column.) It would be foolish and counterproductive to try to build a Kennedy-type mystique -- there isn't time, the press would never let us get away with it nor is it necessarily a very reliable source of political strength. A President doesn't have to be likeable, have a sense of humor or even love children. It is important only that his personal qualities engender confidence.
2. Respect for Leadership: There is an important distinction between this and the image point above (a distinction we haven't clearly made). We can and we should make people better understand the President -- why he is the strong, determined, disciplined and self-confident leader that he is.

The Connally thesis in this respect is absolutely valid. Those who know the President and work with him as we do, recognize his brilliant, extraordinarily retentive and perceptive mind, his long-range strategic view of problems, his high purpose and we, in turn, come to have enormous confidence in him. We must try to get this across; the electorate can develop some of the same confidence if the story is told correctly. The obvious handicap in developing the Connally thesis is that it will almost invariably be filtered out, discounted and at times ridiculed by a very hostile press. The press have painted so many negative images over the years that even if we do the most superb job in the world, I doubt that we can shift enough opinion in the next 18 months to make this the decisive factor in the election. Whatever we can do, however, will help and is important.

The great goals approach is perhaps the toughest. Roosevelt's speech caught the public imagination at a time when the country was uniting in the face of a common danger. The President has used some truly great phrases -- a "Generation of Peace" etc. Maybe because of the press or because the country has become excessively blase, these haven't become national rallying themes. Between now and next year's State of the Union, we should study in depth those things the people of the Nation most desire and the way in which we can state the goals for the country that will, in fact, inspire and gain confidence. None of us should shoot from the hip in this area. We must know the public mood, not just what the polls report, but by examining it in depth. If there is any one thing peculiar to our times it is the extreme volatility of public attitudes, caused more than anything else by the constant impact of the electronic media which can cause very dramatic almost overnight shifts in attitudes.

5.

What people may want more than anything else is to have their confidence in the future re-established and our constituency at least wants to believe in America and in what they regard as fundamental values. They are tired of constantly being told what is wrong with society and of having their consciences wracked with continuous recrimination. We are on the right side of this issue but the real question is how to lift 200 million people out of their seats.

In short, I believe that this is a terribly important area for us. We must work to develop public confidence in the President personally, to gain respect for him as a leader and to give the nation an uplift; the obstacles are, however, very great and this, therefore, should be but one of several strategies.

3. The Big Issues: Obviously the war (foreign policy generally) and the economy are the two big ones; our domestic program next.

A. The War. Even if we are virtually out of Vietnam the Democrats will cynically argue that we could have ended it much sooner, that we dragged it out to no avail and that we got out only because the Doves in the Congress forced us out. A war weary people are likely to want to turn their attention to other things and forget Southeast Asia. What they will be more concerned with is who can best keep the peace. It is obvious to us that by remaining strong, by getting out of Vietnam on a responsible basis, by preserving the credibility of the United States we are doing a better job of building a lasting peace. On the other hand in an era of growing isolationism, people might well feel that our firmness and our resolve to do those things necessary (Laos and Cambodia) run a greater risk of getting us into another war than the head-in-the-sand Dove line. We can be vulnerable to demagoguery on this issue.

Moreover the war is, in a sense, a negative issue. We are badly hurt if we don't end it but we may not gain a great deal of credit if we do.<sup>2</sup>

Obviously if major events -- SALT, Disarmament, a summit, Vietnam, China -- go our way there could be such an overwhelming positive reaction in the foreign policy area that the President would be unbeatable regardless of anything else. While we are hoping this happens, we should not rely on it since so much of this is beyond our control.

B. The Economy. Even if the economy is back in full swing by next year, as I personally expect it will be, the Democrats will argue that we still have inflation and we had more unemployment through the Nixon years than under the Democrats. The Democrats will traffic heavily on the public's traditional suspicions about economics. In almost every issue poll the Democrats outscore us in public confidence with respect to handling of the economy and thus this is at best always an uphill issue. Whether we win on this will depend on whether we are able to allay fears about the future, convince people that unemployment will not again rise and that prices can remain relatively stable.

C. The Domestic Program. This may well be our biggest problem at the moment but, at the same time, our biggest opportunity. Our domestic programs are "managerial oriented" not "people oriented". In my view this is both a PR and a substantive problem with a much heavier emphasis on the latter. As you pointed out, there is very little "what's in it for me" in our domestic program.

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<sup>2</sup>It is very much like the recent demonstrations. Had there been a disaster, we would have been hurt; we handled it beautifully and gained little -- not because the people don't associate the President with the handling of the demonstrations (because they did) -- but rather because it is a negative issue and there is little profit in what the public regards as something basically unpleasant. Two pollsters have told me that even though the public overwhelmingly agreed with out stand on the demonstrations entirely and even though people associated the President with the demonstrations, that this does not translate into a positive response with respect to the President.

Our domestic program is, on the merits, excellent; the six great goals are strong. Reform, change, local decision making -- these are our strong points but it is hard to make a plausible, understandable case of what they do for the pocketbook. Revenue sharing, for example, could be made appealing as a way to stop rising property taxes but it is not being sold that way, probably now can't be sold that way and is a very indirect and obtuse argument as long as it is structured the way it is in our proposal.

We have a fantastically good record in the area of governmental reform but this too is managerial, not economic, and once again it is what people expect of us; that is, Republicans run the Government better but Democrats do things for people.

A second deficiency in our domestic program has been our apparent vacillation. The public never gets one, clearly perceived consistent image of the Administration. There is no real substance to the allegation that we have been expedient, but from a PR standpoint, we do in fact often give legitimacy to the charge perhaps because we ourselves are still seeking that central thrust that, in fact, will capture the public imagination.

In trying to orient our efforts more to people and economic issues we may be able to develop the thrust that it seems to me we have been groping for.

It is possible -- there is time -- to reorient our domestic efforts and to capture the high ground. This leads directly into the fourth category.

4. The Voters' Self-Interest: It is not hard to draw the profile of what comprises the average individual's economic self-interest today. Obviously jobs and employment rank on the top of the list. High also on the list are taxes -- particularly real property taxes; this is now a nation of homeowners -- 66 million. Moreover, most Americans

work hard in the hopes that they will be able to educate their children. The desire for education is strongest among those adults who did not obtain a higher education themselves; and they represent perhaps our most significant political potential. Most Americans who work resent those who do not and especially resent paying higher taxes for loafers who abuse the welfare system. Finally most middle class Americans fear a catastrophic illness which can wipe out their savings and security. Middle-aged people worry about their retirement; older people worry about their ability to live on their retirement and rising prices. The farmers have a set of economic problems all their own.<sup>3</sup> There are things we can do at this point to position ourselves and our programs on the right side of many of the pocketbook issues that such a profile suggests. For example:

a. Revenue Sharing. Most people today look at general revenue sharing as simply another "hand out" from the Federal Treasury to local politicians. If the public has a poor attitude toward Federal bureaucrats, it has a worse perception of local politicians.

Unfortunately our revenue sharing does not have any tangible, economic meaning to the individual. We haven't made the case that it could mean a reduced property tax burden.

We had the choice originally of proposing what would have been the purest form of revenue sharing, i. e. individual tax credits by individual taxpayers for a portion of local income, sales or real property taxes. After a very extensive study, the Domestic Council and the Treasury concluded that general revenue sharing involving grants from the Federal government to states and local communities was more equitable, more efficient and would

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<sup>3</sup>The social issues are perhaps equally important -- race, crime in the streets and narcotics -- but these aren't economic and are essentially negative. We are also postured correctly on these.

provide the financial assistance needed more quickly. It was clearly a better solution on the merits, but it ran headlong into the opposition of Byrnes and Mills who over the years had favored the credit approach; it also ran counter to the traditional Republican philosophy of revenue sharing, first advanced by Mel Laird in the Fifties and subsequently endorsed by various Republican Policy papers through the Sixties. Most importantly it missed the political mark (a point Clark MacGregor and I vainly tried to make before the final decision was made).

A credit arrangement would give the opportunity (also the burden) to state and local communities to increase their levels of taxation. (The majority of which are now controlled by the Democrats)

It is not too late to do this, although we would need an excuse to shift our position -- perhaps if Mills scuttles our bill or perhaps whenever we propose a value added tax. With a new source of Federal revenue we could couple with it a tax credit revenue sharing arrangement arguing that the value added tax permits a much larger (and different form of) revenue sharing.

It would be ideal if we could find a way to do this in the present Congress -- (it could pass since Byrnes and Mills are committed to this approach) -- so that next April 15 every taxpayer would be able to check a new box on his Form 1040 and receive a federal credit refund -- a direct abatement for local taxes. We could argue that we -- the Nixon Administration -- had brought tax relief to homeowners and taxpayers all across the country.

b. Tax Credits for Education. Perhaps coupled with revenue sharing tax credits we could include some tax credit or deduction for educational expenses. Costs of higher education are becoming nearly prohibitive for middle income families, the group which offers us the greatest opportunity

for political gain. For years there have been proposals in the Congress to provide some tax credit or deduction arrangement. The issue is there for the taking. Indeed it is expensive, but once again, if it were coupled with a substitute tax arrangement we could do it and still be fiscally responsible. This is clearly a prime "what's in it for me" issue.

c. Lifting the Ceiling of Earnings of Social Security Recipients. What is better Republican philosophy than to encourage Social Security recipients to earn more than the current \$1800 ceiling? We worry about all the little things we can do to improve upon HEW's programs to benefit the aging. These get us absolutely nothing politically and really appeal only to the professional senior citizens' lobby. The vast majority of retired citizens couldn't care less about pilot programs for feeding the elderly in Chicago. What they really care about is making ends meet when they retire. Lifting the ceiling, for example to \$3000, would be expensive and would probably also have to be tied to something like the value added tax to give us the fiscal rationale. The fact is, however, that it is a very powerful "what's in it for me" economic issue and particularly potent with a constituency whose support is vital to us (remember too that the retired vote can be decisive in California and probably is decisive in Florida).

d. Medical Program. Our present medical program is so complicated that as you point out few of us ever know what is in it, let alone the vast majority of the American people. We should seize upon one or two salient points like catastrophic health insurance, more doctors, and initiatives like the cancer cure and then demagogue these points to death.

We mainly want to neutralize this issue because we can't win on it; the Democrats can always offer more in the way of national health insurance than we can responsibly accept. The fact remains however that we can talk about it -- and continually should -- the need for curing dread diseases, better medical services and our health insurance program. The key to this one is to keep it simple and understandable and relate it always to the individual's economic (and health) interest.

5. Welfare Reform. We own this issue presently; we must keep on hitting it, constantly. People simply don't like to pay taxes to support loafers. The tougher we are in tightening the work requirements, the more the political gain. It is indirectly, therefore, a "what's in it for me" economic issue.
  
6. Special Interest Cultivation -- 1948 Example. In developing those issues which appeal to the voters' economic self-interest it is particularly instructive to examine the Truman election of 1948. There are some interesting political similarities with our own situation. Truman was derided and scoffed at by the sophisticated opinion makers, as we often are. He faced a hostile Congress, as we do. Based on results of the 1946 election, he could not count on his party being in the majority. He was faced with a third party threat. He had been forced to do unpopular things in the international field and he had inherited the difficult economic problems of converting from war to peace.

While Dewey went into the 1948 campaign talking about national unity, peace and the need to make government more effective, Truman devoted all of his resources to the break and butter gut issues.<sup>4</sup>

A recent column by Henry Owen (attached as Tab A) makes the very perceptive point that Truman won the election because people thought he would better protect their bread and butter interests -- "pocketbook politics had carried the day, dignity and efficiency came in a poor second." The Owen column interestingly enough makes the point that the same issues that elected Truman are perhaps even more important today.

If, indeed, there is a valid lesson from the 1948 election, it is that we can build the same kind of a political base to make the President's re-election important to the economic self-interests of large segments of the voting population -- and we

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<sup>4</sup>According to Truman's biographer, Cabell Phillips, "Dewey and his men believed that the concepts of the managerial revolution, which had so captivated the eastern electorate in the post war years, would captivate the rest of the country as well."

must escape the Republican managerial syndrome. For example -- (these are only examples, a very comprehensive analysis should be prepared to pick our best targets and best issues):

a. Labor and Building Trades: We are on the verge of being irreparably damaged with the "hard hats" even though 6 months ago this represented one of our most fertile fields for political gain. We had to crack them hard on the wage issue and we did. We are not, however, intensifying the minority hiring campaign in the building trades. While most people view this as a racial question it is, plain and simple, a pocketbook issue with the "hard hats"; they interpret our efforts as an attempt to break down the existing union structure, to destroy the apprenticeship program and to eliminate their job security.

There are approximately 3.8 million building tradesmen in the United States; at the moment they feel that we are threatening not only wages but, more important, job security.

As with so many issues, this requires a tough political choice. Do we play to the blacks, which in my opinion will get us nothing, or do we play to the "hard hats", a large percentage of whom we got in 1968 and as to whom we had been making enormous political progress. This is a natural "new" constituency, newly emerging middle-class Americans, most of them homeowners living in the suburbs, becoming increasingly conservative on social, international and racial issues. The combination of wage stabilization, Davis-Bacon and minority hiring will make it impossible for any of their leaders to support us or to make gains with the rank and file.

We have another opportunity with the building trades. Most building tradesmen have discovered that their hourly wage increases have been largely offset by the fact that they are working less and less throughout the course of a year; the

higher their hourly wages, the greater the incentive for labor saving devices and hence the less labor hours available. Many of them are beginning to seek annual contracts, rather than hourly wage increases. It is argued that hourly wages could be significantly reduced by annual contract negotiations, thereby benefiting both the worker and the cost of construction. We don't have to endorse this; we merely have to recognize the problem which we have not done. If we were merely to announce a study of the feasibility of annual contracts in the building trades, asking the Construction Industry Collective Bargaining Council to come up with recommendations, the political impact could be huge.<sup>5</sup>

This is the kind of issue that we need with labor generally. One of the recommendations that the Rosow Report made was that we provide for vesting of pension plans after perhaps 10 or 15 years. Every blue collar employee has a direct economic stake in this. While it is a tough issue with business it is one that could help us make real inroads with the rank and file of labor. All we need are a couple of major items like this, which represent very direct pocketbook benefit to the individual worker and regardless of what Al Barken and Cope do next year we will make important gains with the rank and file.

b. Business Community. While the business community's political clout is minimal it is a source of support we cannot overlook; the attitude of business leaders has an impact on the white collar, professional category as to which Muskie has shown surprising strength in the polls.

This has been the most activist Administration in history in the field of anti-trust, the environment and consumer issues. We can argue that had the Democrats been in power

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<sup>5</sup>Such studies have been conducted over the years in the Department of Labor; merely recognizing them and grabbing the issue is all that is required.

they would have been worse, but that is a tough case to make with politically naive businessmen. All we have to do to help business in the pocketbook is to begin to slow down dramatically in the anti-trust field, gradually in the other two.

c. The Farm Vote. In 1968 we kicked hell out of the Democrats on the issue of parity. It was 74; today it is slightly below 70. Hardin tells us that there is no way between now and next November to get back up to the 1968 level. (This is in the nature of the parity formula). This one fact alone tells us with certainty that this will be a 1972 issue.

We can, however, get farm prices up; farmers have been in a very severe price/cost squeeze. Farm prices have to improve by the Fall of 1972 (regardless of the impact on the wholesale price index) if we are to regain our traditional support in the farm belt. It can be done on a commodity by commodity basis as we know from our experience with milk. We can further aid the farmer by programs such as REA, home ownership loans, etc. As to these, we have been acting as good Republican managers, consistently cutting back on the farm budget; the time is now at hand to begin increasing it.

c. The Retired Vote. In addition to the obvious -- an increase in the earnings' ceiling of social security recipients and cost of living social security increases -- there are special retired groups we can appeal to: for example the 850,000 retired military personnel, a large number of whom live in Florida (62,000) and California (145,000). In 1968 we promised to support recomputation of military pay; we have not. Finally we have underway a study which will lead to some recomputation recommendations; it will be very modest but a step forward, correcting some of the gross inequities in the present military retirement

system. This is a real pocketbook issue. When the recommendations come from the study committee in July (approximate cost \$150 million a year) there will be strong opposition from OMB. If we want to practice pocketbook politics, this is a very good place to start.

e. Veterans Groups: I have had a running battle for months over cuts made by OMB in the VA hospital care budget. The amount cut was slightly in excess of \$100 million. Two months ago a head count of the Veterans Affairs Committees in the House and the Senate revealed that we would be rolled in both committees; it was clear that not only would these funds be restored but the Congress would probably add substantially to our budget requests and would, moreover, attach a mandatory spending clause. Had we been willing to restore the \$100 million cut, we could have gotten the agreement of the veterans organizations to stick with our budget figures; we would have avoided a confrontation with the Congress and we then simply could have withheld funds during FY 1972. As it is now, we will probably be forced to spend the money and will have lost on a gut economic issue with the veterans organization whose membership totals over 6 million. Their recent publications point up the ludicrous situation we find ourselves in: on one page they strongly support us for our foreign policy and on the next tear us apart for cutting health care for the veterans. What's more, we gave Teague, Hartke and Albert a marvelous issue -- you may recall two weeks ago they were all on national TV networks blasting the Administration for being "anti-veteran."

My sole point is that we can do a much better job in appealing to the economic self-interest of large groups of citizens than we have done. We have to be just a little less concerned about managerial efficiency and a little more concerned about "people politics".

In this area we cannot ascribe fault to our public relations effort; nor really can public relations help us. In some cases it is downright dangerous to make a major PR effort when substantively we have serious problems. Salute to

Agriculture is a very good case in point. The public believes that most politicians are phoney and we only give our critics an opportunity to exploit this when we launch major PR efforts in an attempt to cover up a basic economic or political problem.

The other side of this coin is equally valid. If we have made the right political decisions, the public relations effort is relatively painless. For example, if we were to do something in the building trades area, we would have no difficulty in getting our story told and getting the credit. Through mailings, trade journals and speeches every building tradesman would very soon know what we had done.

### C. CONCLUSION

After two and a half years the die is fairly well cast on the big issues. Either we have or we have not done the things necessary for those issues to be working for us next year.

We do have, however, two areas which we can most effectively exploit -- and there is time to do it. Revamping our domestic program to make it more people oriented and making a major effort to cultivate the economic interest of those voting blocs that either have represented our traditional constituency or should be part of our emerging new constituency. These are identifiable. The ways to reach them politically are no mystery and we have all the equipment -- the advantage of incumbency -- with which to exploit them.

I am especially impressed, as you may have gathered, by some of the fascinating parallels with the Truman re-election in 1948. Truman rejected the advice that he try to reform his image or that he mount a major sales effort. What he did instead, based on the Clark Clifford memo of November 1947, was to analyze cynically, coldly and shrewdly the rag-tag assortment of special interest groups and minorities that FDR had welded together into a majority coalition; he determined what political and economic favors were necessary to retain or regain their loyalties and then met them head on. As a result Truman devoted all of his resources to the subject which most Americans cared most about then (and perhaps still do): How to make a living.

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While I have emphasized the similarities with 1948, I, of course, recognize that the circumstances then were quite different than they are now. In April of 1948 Truman had a 36% approval rating in the Gallup Poll and for him, therefore, this was a last ditch desperate effort. We are certainly not in that condition.

Nonetheless in formulating our strategy for 1972, there is the political gain of exploiting the fullest the advantages of incumbency -- which on the issues we have not done as well as we could.

# 1948 Revisited: A Political Lesson

By Henry Owen

GOVERNOR DEWEY'S death brought back memories of the 1948 election. The conventional wisdom is that he lost because of his personality. Maybe so; but a hard look at the voting results suggests an alternative explanation, which brings to mind Philip Guedella's remark that historians spent so much time wondering how Napoleon lost the battle of Waterloo that they forgot to ask how Wellington won it: that the 1948 election wasn't so much lost by Governor Dewey as it was won by President Truman. And that the way in which it was won may have important lessons for the future.

Shortly before the 1948 Democratic convention, Arthur Krock summed up the prevailing view: "A President whose defeat at the next poll is generally prophesied faces difficulties in performing his office that could conceivably bring disaster . . . At this writing, the President's influence is weaker than any President's has been in modern history." Although the country was fairly prosperous, the conversion from war to peace had been a rough one, and Mr. Truman's style in coping with these problems seemed to a good many opinion-shapers—in his own party, in the Congress, and among the press—to be crude, erratic, and bumbling.

A natural pre-election remedy would have been for the President to concentrate on improving the areas where he was criticized most—his style and image: trying to seem more business-like, dignified, and efficient. But shrewdly, he judged that this was not the heart of the matter. Late in November 1947, he had received from Clark Clifford a lengthy and perceptive memorandum outlining a proposed strategy for the coming campaign. It ticked off the major voting blocs—farmers, labor, and Negroes—and the specific issues which concerned them. From then on—in his 1948 State of the Union message, in his proposals to a special post-convention session of the Congress, and in his election campaign—the President zeroed in on these issues. He warned farmers about falling agricultural prices; he spoke to workmen about the need for housing, Social Security, and minimum wage legislation. His oratory and style were crude, but he addressed the subject which most Americans cared most about: how to make a living.

GOVERNOR Dewey did not. He talked in a dignified way about peace, and national unity, and the need to make government more effective. His advisers were not passionately concerned about bread and butter issues; he mistook their high-minded interests for the voice of the country. To quote Truman's biographer, Cabell Phillips, "Dewey and his men believed that the concepts of the managerial revolution, so captivating to the Eastern elite in the postwar years, had captivated the rest of the country as well." As Phillips points out, "intellectually, his campaign was on a higher level than Truman's, just as it was in the matter of taste and decorum."

Soon after the election, the Saturday Evening Post sent Samuel Lubell out to interview voters and find out what had happened. His answer was simple: "People had voted for Truman because they thought he would protect their bread and butter interests. Labor rolled up the traditional Democratic majorities; farmers worried by the 80th Congress' refusal to extend grain storage, were seeking down to earth promises which they didn't find in Dewey speeches." Pocketbook politics had carried the day; dignity and efficiency came in a poor second.

Since 1948, large changes have taken place in the country. Affluence and education have increased; memories of the Great Depression have receded. And so it seems plausible to believe those who now tell us, as they did in 1948, that bread and butter issues no longer dominate American political life. The trouble is that most of this talk takes place between the relatively small number of Americans (less than 20 per cent) who have incomes over \$15,000 a year. Their numbers have grown, as the numbers of the poor have shrunk; but Census reports tell us that almost two-thirds of Americans are still in between, with incomes between \$5,000 and \$15,000 a year. If everything is going well, these blue and white collar workers have the time and inclination to share affluent Americans' concern with other issues; but when inflation or recession threatens, their attention focuses sharply on a few key questions: What's going to happen to overtime pay? Will salary increases outpace inflation? Is the wife's part-time job in jeopardy?

AFFLUENCE HAS, if anything, strengthened the hold of economic issues on these lower middle class voters: The rise in their living standards (and in their borrowing) has made them highly vulnerable to shifts in the economic tides. Fending off these threats is concern number one. This is not only in the U.S. but in other major industrial countries. Former Prime Minister Wilson had it all over Ted Heath on image; but he lost the last British general election because voters associated him with rising prices and unemployment. In Germany, as Flora Lewis pointed out recently in The Washington Post, worries over inflation and other domestic issues have dominated recent elections; the press may be fascinated with Brandt's image as the great practitioner of *Ostpolitik*, but the voters aren't.

President Truman won because he understood the dominance of these economic issues, and spent more time addressing them than worrying about his image. His answers may no longer be relevant, and they were sometimes wrong even in 1948, but he was asking the right questions. If recent elections in the United States and abroad mean anything, they suggest that winning candidates in the industrial world will still be those who give priority to these bread and butter questions, despite the continuing fascination of well heeled political observers with style and related matters. Here is a good reason to review the memories of 1948.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

EYES ONLY

~~1 BK~~  
2 Karen  
**C. F.**

PL / Nixon

July 12, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: CHARLES COLSON  
SUBJECT: <sup>X</sup>Democrats for Nixon

Connally, John  
Hardner, Mickey  
O'Neill, John  
Woroney, Mike Jr.

During your meeting with John Connally, you might wish to get into the question of Democrats for Nixon and Connally's role. Needless to say, he is a virtually unanimous choice to head the organization if he will do so. Clark McGregor and I opened this question yesterday. We didn't conclude anything but we discussed the question thoroughly (separate detailed memo is attached).

We have been moving ahead, as you know, with efforts to recruit a number of prominent Democrats. We have done so because in the immediate aftermath of the Convention the anti-McGovern feelings will be the strongest and we can build momentum during this period, creating the public impression of a wholesale defection from McGovern. We have proceeded in the knowledge, however, that John Connally likes to do things his way and that he might resent some of the efforts we have made since he in effect was not running the show. We have, therefore, been walking a tightrope.

What we would like to come out of your meeting with Connally is his ratification of what we have done to date and his willingness to in effect take over what we have gotten started. Alternatively, we need a green light to go ahead with our next best choices to head at least for now the Democrats' effort.

All of the endorsements that we have sought thus far have been of individuals. Jeno Paulucci went a little further than we had asked and formed a Committee of Concerned Democrats and Independents with 7 other members. We want to fold it into Democrats for Nixon on the assumption that Connally approves; if Connally does object, we can, of course, keep it independent but this will give us some problems with Paulucci, who is sensitive to being in a subordinate position.

Paulucci, like Dwayne Andreas, expects Connally to run a national operation; if, in fact, we ask Paulucci, Andreas and their friends to be part of something other than the National Democrats for Nixon effort. I fear they may feel we are downgrading their importance. Andreas has a list of prominent former Humphrey supporters that he wants to recruit immediately but once again he feels the need to find the mechanism to bring them in. Max Fisher has at least a dozen prominent Jewish Democrats that want to be folded into our organization. Once again, we need a place for them to come.

We have also picked up the endorsement and/or commitment to endorse of several labor leaders. In addition to the Teamsters, we have Calhoon, Gleason, Ken Lyons, Mike May, Brennan, quite likely Rademacher and a series of lesser lights, principally state level leaders.

Rizzo will be announcing soon as will Lausche. Smathers and Jack March are working through the lists of former Members of Congress. We have a bloc of former Jackson supporters headed by John Kenney who will announce, but who would like to talk to Connally first. Balzano has a group of reasonably prominent ethnics who can either be folded into Democrats for Nixon or become part of the ethnic apparatus.

We have done nothing in terms of organization structure because once again, knowing Connally's personality, we have not wanted to jump the gun on him. We would like to get the organization established, set up a national office, have Connally announce its existence and, of course, his chairmanship as soon as possible. This will be the invitation to disaffected Democrats whom we have not sought but who are looking for a place to come.

It is the recommendation of McGregor, Mitchell and I that Connally move as soon as possible so that he can become the catalyst we need. A series of individual endorsements over the next two weeks is fine but none of them will have the national impact of an announcement of a national organization opening followed by a daily announcement of new recruits.

On the organization side, we have hired two young men, temporarily running the effort out of an improvised office. One is a young Washington PR man, former aide to Sargent Shriver by the name of Mickey Gardner. I am very impressed with what I have seen of him so far and would hope he would meet with Connally's approval. He has given up his PR job and is available to us through the campaign. We also have John O'Neill, a first year law student from Texas, for the next two months. (He made something of a national name debating John Kerry.) To run the operation here, it is

my strong recommendation that we bring in Mike Monroney, Jr. as the principal chief, day to day operative. Gardner and O'Neill would work for him. I have known Monroney for many years. Connally knows his father. Monroney is 45, ran for Congress in Maryland and lost, is a life-long Democrat, but conservative and a Jackson supporter. He is prepared to fold up his own business to spend full time, but needless to say, is unwilling to make that move without knowing he has Connally's blessing. Mike also would like for personal reasons to have Connally talk to his father, Former Senator Monroney. Monroney's feeling is that a call from Connally would make his father more understanding of Mike's desire to join the campaign and, more importantly, it will also result in his father joining Democrats for Nixon as well. Monroney, Sr. was very highly regarded by his colleagues and this would be a very significant defection.

I have not attempted in the foregoing to enumerate all of the potential Democratic defections that we believe we have. We believe prominent sitting Democrats in Congress will work for us even if quietly or perhaps will permit their associates to be involved in our effort (as is the case with Rooney and Delaney). We also believe parts of the Daley operation will support us publicly. We have enormous possibilities on Wall Street. We have some Democratic political leaders like Esposito. We have former Democratic office holders like Governor Gary of Oklahoma and Governor McNair of South Carolina.

The problem in a nutshell is that we cannot move out and really do the aggressive job we need to until we staff an operation and give people a committee to join. We cannot set up the committee and staff the operation until we know where we stand with Connally; hence, we are really very much in limbo at the very time when we should be actively and publicly bringing Democrats into the fold.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 21, 1972

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MEMORANDUM FOR: H. R. HALDEMAN  
JOHN D. EHRLICHMAN

FROM: John C. Whitaker 

SUBJECT: Campaign Strategy

This is in response to Ken Cole's request for ideas on what the President might do from now through November,, and Larry Higby's memorandum of July 19 (Tab A) requesting an update of my earlier thoughts on campaign strategy.

First, there are a number of things that the President can do that McGovern can't, capitalizing on the fact of being President. He can sign a bill, with a hoopla signing ceremony (or veto one frowning into the free TV cameras); he can have substantive meetings with international leaders, or their emissaries; he can have substantive meetings with Governors or Mayors (McGovern can meet with the latter group, but only in the stance of being briefed or looking strictly political.)

The idea of speeches only from the Oval Office gives me some problems. Beyond the obvious Presidential ones like veto messages or reports on the status of peace talks on Vietnam, it seems to me that other substantive dissertations, on either domestic or foreign topics such as drugs, busing, crime or international detente, whether on TV or radio, would, I assume, have to be paid for. This is out of my field, but I think that, particularly in the middle of a campaign, even truly national addresses will have to be accompanied by equal time for Democratic rejoinder under the Fairness Doctrine. Thus I am not

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sure how many of our eggs we want to put in the speech-from-the-White House basket. As a partial alternative, it seems to me that the plethora of fairly major Administration announcements which we traditionally handle by a 2,000-word handout from Ziegler accompanied by a Cabinet Officer press briefing might better be handled from now to November by the President himself making a 100-word statement to the TV cameras in Ziegler's shop. This will net us purely news TV coverage -- no opportunity for free reply -- and 30 to 90 seconds on the national evening news which is as much as we could expect from a more exhausting event like an all-day trip to St. Louis.

At the Convention

I feel strongly that we should get the President in and out of Miami Beach as quickly as possible because of the danger of confrontation with demonstrators (assuming that our best intelligence is the same as what I pick up from the papers). The relatively dull predictable show on the inside is bound to drive the TV networks outside the Convention Hall looking for street drama. Even a minor fracas there, dull though it may be, would probably be more photogenic than the business of the convention. Any interplay between the President and the demonstrators is going to be compared by the media and the viewers with the scene of the McGovern confrontation with the hippies in the Doral lobby which got pretty good notices. I think an overnight at Key Biscayne would be running a real risk because, even though you can seal off the causeway, there would probably be a confrontation there or outside the President's compound. Any defensive maneuver like that would just be played as the President ducking these strident types whom McGovern at least had the guts to talk to.

Thus my suggestion for the President's personal involvement with Miami Beach would be for him to leave about eight o'clock on Wednesday night (possibly with live TV from the South Lawn of

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his departure, either consulting with HAK or JDE on pressing State business, or even pouring over papers in his residence). I would fly directly into Homestead Air Force Base (TV but closed arrival and no comment to press), and chopper to the convention site timed for the President to make his acceptance speech about 10:15. (By 9:00 p. m. EDT people are not off the Los Angeles freeways and in front of their TV sets.) Immediately after his acceptance speech, I would have him make an unexpected visit to a separate location where a large, screened youth group would be having a meeting, unwarned that the President would join them. The point would be to have all under 25, and even some screened long-hairs, to drive home the point that everybody under 25 with long hair isn't for McGovern. After about a 30-minute hard-hitting speech to this group (maybe even some Q&A's, if we trust our screening enough), I would have the President get back in his helicopter and get back to Washington so that on Thursday he could be back at his usual stand being President. On Thursday, I would try to get lots of film in the White House (bill signing, National Security Council or Cabinet Meeting) -- in other words, strictly "playing President." **CHICAGO**

If our media types have hard data showing that the Wednesday TV audience will be a bust if we have a dull Tuesday night show, I would like to see a scenario such as I have just outlined moved up to Tuesday night if we can possibly get away with it without ruining the convention to the extent that Wednesday is purely anti-climax. Even a precedent-shattering move like having a two-day convention would be better in my mind than having the President spend two days in Miami Beach. One final thought -- if the problem is to build some drama into Wednesday night to assure a good TV audience, might it be possible to delay announcement of the President's choice of a running mate until then? -- That's "bassackwards" to tradition, but why not - provided the President doesn't plan to announce the V. P. pre-convention.

Particularly if we restrict the President's time in town, the risks of confrontation with hippies apply nearly as strongly to Mrs. Nixon and the rest of the First Family and to the Vice President. I agree that we should do everything we can to avoid their

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being in direct proximity to the demonstrators, but this kind of defensive strategy argues even more strongly for having the President do a youth-oriented event while in town such as the youth forum described above.

General Campaign Strategy

We have become the heir of the old FDR coalition -- almost -- and the South for sure - ethnic groups in the North (Jewish and Catholic in particular) and, to a lesser extent, Labor. We should push Jewish and Catholic events for the President and embrace the tax credit for private schools more visibly -- beyond just endorsing the Mills bill. -- I know some Christian Scientists who don't buy this.

Assuming that the President's lead in the popularity polls is now about 16%, I think that we should run a low-risk campaign unless that gap gets down to 8%, or is dropping toward 8% precipitously. The question, as I see it, is how to run such a low-risk campaign without appearing to be doing so. Here is my list of don'ts:

- Don't do any large political rallies - not one.
- Don't engage in any debates .
- Don't hold any press conferences for only the national press that are advertised in advance. -- East Room format.

The press is vital. The President has won when the press was with him (1968) and lost when the press was not (1960 and 1962).

(1) I think he has to give them some deep-think liberal red meat to pontificate about and give at least the appearance of accessibility. The thought pieces, I think, can be delivered as radio addresses. The theme would be of a thoughtful, forward-looking President winning the peace abroad and of solving our domestic problems, but with the job only half done. Interviews with pundits would be good.

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(2) As for press conferences, on the national level maybe 2 or 3 from now to the election. I would have the President do quickie press conferences in the Oval Office so that the national scribes don't come in loaded for bear.

(3) In addition, I would concentrate on the regional media in places like, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas, St. Louis, Detroit and New York by calling press conferences without warning. While the national press would have to be included in these, and would be primed with their questions in advance, the softer questions from the more numerous regional reps should predominate. In addition, properly chosen regional sessions like these can ensure that the President's message gets to the voters in areas which he needs to win, but can't afford the time to pick his way through personally. For example, we could cover the southern media effectively from Atlanta and New Orleans, and New England by visiting Boston (a town which is tough to get in and out of because of the huge numbers of students, but where the New England impact should be worth the aggravation). -- Denver for the Rocky Mountains and Portland for the Pacific Northwest. We may want to consider paying for campaign air time to televise these in the particular region. The first few we might get away with scheduling without any advance notice on staff time in areas where the local media speaks to a particular constituency without having to pull the reporters out of the boondocks (such as Chicago for the farm belt). The strategy of suddenly-called press conferences in cities could change to announcing press conferences in advance -- buying regional TV time and sucking in reporters from the boondocks if his point spread with McGovern narrows, and he wants to increase the risks.

I recognize that the appearance of large crowds applauding the President is desirable on the nightly TV news. While I think the risk of rallies (hippies and a bore to the press) to produce them is too great to run, I think we can accomplish the same result in the eyes of the TV cameras by doing motorcades on the way to substantive events. The motorcade can stop occasionally and, if the crowd is friendly, the President could step up on his car

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and deliver a short general purpose speech. (By this time we must have something better than the old LBJ bullhorn.) This will require us to develop a pithy five-minute speech, or a series of them -- but not the 25-30 minute "the speech" for rallies that he has used in past campaigns.

One thing that we often talk about but seldom get done is a local color event. This is another easy way to free TV time and can help portray the President as a human being as opposed to the Machiavellian politician that McGovern will seek to make of him. I remember the success of the President's early morning visit to the peace demonstrators at the Lincoln Memorial, and hope that we can be imaginative enough to work in some similar "unplanned" scenes like dropping by a local diner at 7:00 a.m. and sharing a cup of coffee with a couple of truck drivers.

I have a general aversion to telethons, but if we are looking for a television extravaganza, I like the format of the international town meeting. By satellite, we could have the network representatives in a number of international capitols relaying live questions answered by the President here in Washington. This would play to his strength -- international affairs, and even hostile questions, unlike those that come from domestic hecklers, tend to unite our citizens as "us" against "them." A "foreign heckler" will unite the country just like the Jews and Arabs would love each other if attacked by moon men. I like that format so much that I think we should consider paying for it. If we can get it free (and equal time for McGovern), then let him sympathize with the foreign heckler -- a good trap.

Pace of Campaign

Before the convention I think the President should schedule one major domestic event out of town. He should also continue to be visible going about the serious business of Government. Right after the convention, on Friday, August 25 (the day after his return from Miami), I think he should do a substantive domestic

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event in either Philadelphia or Chicago. (I would prefer Chicago because I think we ought to save Philadelphia for Labor Day, although I don't have any specific event in mind for that important date -- I'm just tempted by the Rizzo angle.) The Chicago event could be a meeting with midwestern farm media together with Butz and Peterson highlighting the Russian grain deal. Although I don't know how, it would be nice to get Daley involved. A noon-time motorcade sounds like a natural, but that brings echoes of '68 which is a definite negative. On August 29, I think he should go off to Texas to do screwworms with Escheverria and John Connally (don't laugh, it's really a good regional story), but because that would be a joke as a national newslead, we need another event besides screwworms with a Mexican-American flavor done the same day.

As the campaign progresses, I would attempt to schedule no more than one trip a week -- and always substantive. The only out-of-country trip I can foresee might be one to Mexico, depending on how we read the effect on and need for the Chicano vote. The rest of the newsleads would come from Washington and, with the exception of paid radio talks and paid TV, would be natural outgrowths of being President.

The First Family

I think we should bend every effort to get them out of Washington and keep them on the road. Human interest shots in the Washington papers aren't going to be of any help. The only specific thought I have is that Mrs. Nixon's Legacy of Parks national tour was so successful that we may want to replay it -- if there is one thing that we can find in all of the key states, it's parks.

Theme of Campaign

From the disarray of the Democratic years, the President has made an important start at restructuring international and domestic affairs to bring us peace, stability and progress. But his reforms

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are still in the process of becoming -- his Presidency is only halfway home. We need to put that theme into a catchy phrase to compete with McGovern's (Fauntroy's?) "Come home, America." The major danger, as I see it strategically, is that McGovern will succeed in identifying himself as a general spokesman for discontent and the need for change -- a mood that the polls show is shared by a majority of the people. We have got to avoid being cast as defenders of the status quo. We should try to show, rather, that the President's first term has been one of change -- in restructuring international relationships, in proposing basic governmental reform, in salvaging the American spirit from the divisiveness of 1968 -- but that his type of change builds on the past that has made our country great and does not repudiate it.