

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



ADMINISTRATIVELY ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

November 10, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: H. R. HALDEMAN
FROM: CHARLES COLSON *MC*
SUBJECT: Your Memo of November 7.

This memo is an attempt to comply with your request for a memorandum to the President on my personal plans and preferences for serving in the next Administration. As you well know, I have been devoting every waking hour these past several months to the campaign; in the immediate aftermath of the campaign I do not have my own thought process in order. I really would have appreciated a little more time to think through exactly what my own personal situation is as well as where and how I could best serve should the President want me to stay in the next Administration. I feel a little bit like the "exhausted volcano" the President talked about yesterday; I'm not really sure but that perhaps I haven't burned myself out and need time to recharge the batteries.

Since you have indicated, however, that this must be in by Friday, November 10, I am giving you my rough thoughts; the attached is the only honest thing I can say to the President at this time.

The rational decision for my own future is to return to private life. I needn't bore you with all of the personal considerations. They are both financial and family. I have been here these three years, as you have, at a very large financial sacrifice. I have absolutely no regrets; I have nothing but enormous inner satisfaction. For

the rest of my life I will believe that I made a worthwhile contribution to the man I believe will be remembered as the greatest President in modern times and in turn, therefore, a worthwhile contribution to my country. Nonetheless, the fact is that I was earning a six figure income and living accordingly; I have children to educate and the same problems that everyone else, I am sure, has experienced coming into government from a successful private business. I have also sorely neglected my family during years that they very much need my time and attention.

All of these things make me feel that I should leave at the President's convenience, hopefully taking enough time in the next few months to pass onto others some of my work that I think needs to be continued in the next Administration.

On the other side of the coin, I believe we are on the threshold of one of the most significant realignments in American political history. We have cracked the solid foundation of the Democratic Party; its traditional base of labor, blue-collar, white ethnics have now become part of the Nixon Majority. The Democratic Party will frantically try to reassemble the old Roosevelt coalition. If we sit on our duffs for the next few months and years, the Democrats will take them back into the fold by the millions. Our challenge, it seems to me, is to convert the Nixon personal New Majority into a permanent institutional majority. Whether it is under the banner of Republican or not remains to be seen, but we must use these four years, in my view, to solidify the middle-America constituency that has now rallied behind the Nixon leadership. It is a huge job.

It is no small task to convert a personal triumph into a fundamental political realignment; it can be done, but it requires not only personal attention to individuals, but also a fundamental reorientation of the programs of the Government and a firm, hard commitment making our practices conform to our basic principle such as the work ethic. The legislation we submit to Congress and the executive actions taken by the President in many areas will be very important. What the President says over the next four years and appointments to key positions will be taken as very important signals by our new constituency. The kind of candidates we select for office over the next four years will either say to the members of our new constituency that 'we welcome you and embrace you' or conversely will say 'we merely used you'.

The major reason for my staying in the Administration, despite my better judgment as to my own personal demands, would be to take part in building a permanent new majority. Without being immodest, I think I do have a particular sensitivity to how this must be done. The New Majority is made up of the very people I have worked hardest to cultivate and appeal to over the past three years and are the people with whom I have developed considerable rapport and understanding.

There are only three areas that I think will be significant in solidifying the New Majority:

1. The White House. The shaping of policies, the determination of our legislation program, the management of key government programs, personnel decisions, what the President says and doesn't say, the positions he takes on key issues, will be absolutely critical. The whole game is, of course, played from here. The question of whether the President makes the Nixon Majority a permanent majority depends, by and large, on the direction he gives to the government, and his own personal leadership.

I don't see how that job could be done by me the way the White House is structured. If I were given the separate charter of trying to accomplish this, I would be in everyone's hair -- Ehrlichman's, Weinberger's, Price's and yours. I guess I have been in everyone's hair for the past three years, but I have at least had a certain amount of leverage for my arguments because of the campaign. That leverage won't be there over the next four years and I doubt that any of us could survive my constant harassment.

In short, what I could best do in the White House doesn't fit into a neat organizational niche; I also, of course, have no idea how you intend to structure the new White House staff.

2. The Labor Department is a magnificent vehicle for making the New Majority permanent. Right now the Labor Department is a disaster. Its programs are managed by the bureaucrats. Hodgson doesn't know what is going on, let alone control the place. We need a wholesale housecleaning and a reorientation of about half of the programs of the Department. First and most obviously, we need honest and objective people in the Bureau of Labor Statistics and a strong and articulate head of the BLS who can put our best case forward in the economic/political debate that will undoubtedly continue in the

second Administration. The priorities of the manpower programs need to be totally reordered. We've got to direct more effort into "our" constituents -- the middle class, blue-collar, white ethnic, upwardly mobile worker, not the deadbeat minority worker who cannot be helped by any amount of federal money and who will never be part of the Nixon Majority. Putting it bluntly, a reorientation of many of the manpower programs would be both good politics and good government. Finally, in the enforcement area, the Department is tremendously over-staffed and is frankly interfering in the operations of many local unions in such a way that we are really oppressing the labor movement rather than helping it be effective in serving the working man. Needless to say, the present high level of harassment under the Landrum-Griffin Act is extremely counterproductive politically. There is an outrageous double standard. We indict local labor union officials for spending a few thousand dollars of union funds on what would generally be regarded as a petty cash disbursement for a businessman's expense account.

Finally, the equal employment opportunity efforts of the Department of Labor, if continued at their present pace, will destroy any chance for really cultivating wide political support in the labor movement. Frankly, we are punishing our friends by an overly rigid equal employment opportunity enforcement program -- the "Philadelphia Plan" is an unmitigated disaster, both substantively and politically.

The overzealous bureaucrats have gone beserk in the Labor Department and they need to be brought under control. The Department needs to be tightly administered and its resources used not only to do the things the Department is charged with by statute, but also to develop a network of political allies around the country. This is really a tempting target. The Department reaches into every local union hall. I don't think I need to spell out in this memo the opportunities for political cultivation; just put the right management at the top and good people doing the work, extending right through the regional apparatus of the Department.

I know I could do the job as Secretary of Labor, but the President has indicated that he wants to find a labor man for that job. There are good labor men for that job, none of whom, however, would view it

with the same political eye that I would. A second consideration is that I would probably not be acceptable to George Meany, although I know that Fitzsimmons and Paul Hall would enthusiastically endorse me. If the President had any idea of considering me for this position, Shultz would have to sell me to Meany. I'm not sure it could be done, although I know that what I would do with the Department, Meany would wholeheartedly approve of. The problem with Meany is that he thinks I've been the President's hatchet man and that I've been out to get him. The truth is exactly the reverse and Jay Lovestone, his assistant, knows this.

Third, there would be the obvious confirmation problem. I have been blasted often enough in the press that I am sure some Democrats could not resist the temptation to make my confirmation for any position the subject of a three-ring political circus. On the other hand, I suspect we will have a Watergate investigation on the Hill anyway and maybe this would be just as good a forum as any. The fact is that I am totally clean on the Watergate, totally clean on the Segretti business and about all they could really dredge up would be the Shipley ads which are rather ancient and insignificant by comparison with Watergate/Segretti. So perhaps we would be better to have my nomination the cause for a political brouhaha rather than to have Teddy Kennedy's continuing inquiry. Maybe they would shoot their wad on me. Jennings Randolph is the ranking Democrat on the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee. He and I have a close personal relationship. He sent me a beautiful hand-written note during the recent Watergate publicity saying that he knew I had nothing to do with it, had complete confidence in me and thought I was handling it very skillfully. I know he would support me enthusiastically. Teddy Kennedy is also on the Committee and strange as it may seem, Teddy would not try to block me. The reasons are many. We've known each other for many years, have been fierce political rivals, but I think there's a certain number of old school ties and there is also of course the Massachusetts angle. I just have a funny feeling that I could get more help than hinderance from Teddy Kennedy; at least I know him well enough to be able to find out in advance.

It sounds very presumptuous of me to even be proposing this particular option. I've never known of a case where anyone ever asked for a

Cabinet position and got it. I would think that the President ought to make these decisions and selections without having job applicants. I tried to explain this on the phone to Larry Wednesday night, but he told me that you still insisted upon the memo, so I am calling it as I see it.

3. The other power-center that could be used to consolidate the New Majority would be the Republican National Committee, if its chairman had the total confidence of the President and access to the President and the senior White House staff. The RNC has to be totally re-structured as I know you realize. It has to get control of the House and Senate campaign apparatus. It has to cut out all of the ridiculous duplication that now exists between the Committee and various offices in government (so long as we are in power, we can greatly scale down the research/communications etc. apparatus). It needs to become the focal point for building a new party; it has to concentrate on candidate selection and most important has to open its doors to the Italians, Irish, Poles, labor, etc. This is a mammoth undertaking. I know how to do it and I know what needs to be done. But I'm so tired right now, I'm not sure that I would have the energy to do it. It has to be approached with the same fierceness of a political campaign, but it will be going on for four years nationwide.

As I review the three options above, there are serious problems with each. The intelligent thing to do is to return to private life but I admit to being emotionally drawn to the challenge of building the New Majority; I feel that I have at least been partially its architect and I would like to leave my imprint on the history books as the one who helped make permanent the political realignment I believe can be accomplished in the second Administration.

There is one thing that bothers me about leaving -- the timing. Whoever goes is going to look like the Watergate scapegoat. Maybe there are ways that that can be handled, but it should be a concern of all of us who have been directly or indirectly implicated. Thanks to the well-publicized shake-up, the gossip here in town is this is all an elaborate cover for purging those hideous people around the President who engaged in all of the nefarious activities exposed by the Washington Post. That makes people who want to leave, even for their own reasons, subject to a second round of press indictments.

What it all boils down to is that I should return to private life and frankly, at this point, I will make my plans accordingly unless the President indicates otherwise. I would never say no to this President, however, if he really wanted me to do something and if it was something that would inure to his and the country's benefit.

I would still prefer the opportunity to discuss this rather than leave it to a memo. It is awkward and impersonal to try to express these feelings in writing and I don't believe I have done it very well. I am not looking for a job; I am ready to go back to private life, but I do not want to fail in serving the President if that is what he wants.