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CONFIDENTIAL

TO: RICHARD WIRTHLIN
FROM: ED MEESE
SUBJECT: Carter Strategy

August 13, 1980

This afternoon at 1:55 p.m., I received a call from Jack Mitchell, who is a reporter in Jack Anderson's organization. He wanted our response to the strategy of the Carter campaign as revealed to him in discussions with some of the key Carter staff members. From this discussion I learned the following points about that strategy:

1. The Carter strategists have initiated a program they call "Operation Turn Around" which is their attempt to improve Carter's position in the campaign. They have developed a targeting program as follows:

They will reaffirm their support of the Northeast, where they feel they are very far ahead.

They consider the states of Missouri, Ohio, Michigan and Illinois as four key battlegrounds where they hope to make gains against us.

They plan to campaign heavily in California, Oregon and Washington, which they acknowledge are Reagan states but which they feel they can still save for Carter.

2. Their plan is to try to make RR an issue in the campaign. They have stated "that if Jimmy Carter is the issue, we lose, but if RR becomes the issue, we will win." Mitchell has information that initially Hamilton Jordan et al started to attack RR on the age issue, but then switched off this attack on the advice of other Carter staff members when this issue appeared to become less valuable to them.
3. They intend to keep Carter "Presidential", making full use of the power and prestige of the incumbency. They will have Cabinet members and others mount the attack against RR as was done during the past 10 days by Muskie, Brown, Hufstedler, et al.
4. They intend to attack RR because of Cronkite's reference to the "co-Presidency" proposal, which they are trying to use as an example of RR's failure to understand the constitutional aspects of the Presidency.

As you can see, these points of strategy are not particularly new to us, but this information does confirm what you have predicted will be the thrust of their attack.

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Carter and the eroding presidency

Campaign strategy of personal attack on Reagan could win but lower President in public esteem

8. 18. 80
By Richard J. Cattani

Staff correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Washington

In the 11 weeks to Nov. 4, Jimmy Carter must labor uphill to re-elect himself. He will carry the kind of liabilities of presidential decisionmaking that forced two of his recent predecessors to leave the office prematurely and contributed to Mr. Carter's defeat of Gerald Ford in 1976.

And a negative 1980 Carter campaign strategy — featuring an attack on the competence and judgment of Ronald Reagan — could, in the view of presidential scholars, cost the President the public support he would need for a strong second term.

A mere anti-Reagan vote "wouldn't give Carter the popular support he would need the next four years," says one authority on the White House.

Not since Dwight Eisenhower has a president's high esteem with the people accompanied him out of office, observes Stephen Wayne, George Washington University White House expert. And Ike's high regard was based on his military leadership record during World War II, remembered as a noble period in US history.

The post-Ike presidents who could have faced re-election endured a falloff in approval their last year in office. This was the case, too, for Eisenhower's predecessor, Harry Truman.

"Eisenhower resisted the trend, remaining up on the mountain," Mr. Wayne says. "People continued to like him regardless of what happened."

Although it was widely believed that John Kennedy was headed toward a second term when he was assassinated, his successor, Lyndon Johnson, was harried into forgoing a second term.

Specific causes can be cited for the recent presidential declines. "With Johnson, it was the Vietnam war," says Democratic pollster and strategist Paul Lutzker. "With Nixon, it was Watergate. With Ford, it was the Nixon pardon. And with Carter, it's the economy."

But Wayne and others also see a weakening of the presidency since Vietnam and Watergate that makes it difficult for officeholders to fulfill expectations.

"There's something institutional about the decline," Wayne says. "A president starts with unrealistic expectation when he succeeds to office — fueled by the desires of the people and fuzziness on the part of candidates. Once he starts making decisions, and problems persist, the public sees he's not the hero they'd expected. Thus, there is a steady drop in popularity over time in office, except for momentary achievements."

An incumbent's standing tends to build up

again — for partisan reasons — in the closing campaign weeks if he runs for re-election. "The public judges him against another individual and not as an ideal type," Wayne says. "When Carter is judged against the ideal, he does poorly. Against Reagan he does better."

Carter is deliberately — and laboriously — inviting the man-to-man comparison Wayne describes.

"The Carter acceptance speech was a real strain for him," Wayne says. "Carter strained to make out a precise difference between a Democratic or Republican victory. He strained to portray Reagan as a potential horror. He barely mentioned the difficulties of his own record. He strained with his voice to generate enthusiasm."

In contrast, at the 1976 Democratic convention, Carter could talk softly and be heard.

"In 1976, he offered hope," Wayne says. "In 1980, he played on fears."

President Carter, who did not even win the hearts of his hand-picked delegates at the convention, faces a tough task in courting the nation, says Lutzker.

"At least the right motions were made to put the party together in New York," Lutzker asserts. "But they were motions — not based on deep-seated approval. They were token statements of endorsement at the convention. Little progress was made to broaden his coalition."

Carter is a formidable campaigner, but the electoral arithmetic is not encouraging. "The assets Carter has as President and used against Kennedy, he may not be able to use against Reagan," Lutzker says. "Reagan wins Texas. Florida is a tossup. If Reagan wins Virginia, he in effect neutralizes the South. Carter will not do better in the West than in 1976. He's weak in the Northeast. And the Midwest is hard hit by recession, job loss."

If the Carter campaign focus on Reagan works, the people will be relieved Reagan is not elected, says Wayne. "The one problem is, Carter will be back in the White House on the base of a negative Reagan reaction. And he will be a lame duck."

"This was the way Carter won the nomination — not because the people thought him a great president, but because the people saw no viable alternative," Wayne says.

It is by no means certain, however, that the public will follow the Carter bait and "judge Reagan against Carter or against an ideal type."

"If Carter is re-elected, it will mean the public will have lowered expectations for White House performance," says Wayne. "If Reagan wins, it may mean the public will have maintained its expectations. If the post-Vietnam pattern continues, we can then anticipate a downtrend in approval — unless Reagan can find a secret for sustaining his approval. He is not the national hero Eisenhower was."

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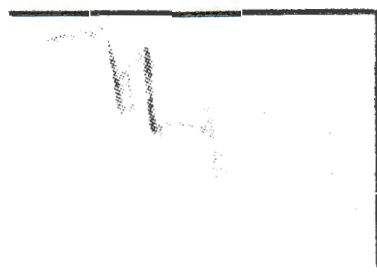
people of our country."
And instead of apologizing for his handling of the White House, an issue that will surely be stressed by Reagan, he attempted to focus attention on the future.

"This election is a stark choice between two men, two parties, two sharply different pictures of America and the world," Carter said. "But it is more than that.

"It is a choice between two futures. The time to shape the world of the year 2000 is now."

To elect Reagan, he said, would mean risk — "the risk of international confrontation; the risk of an uncontrollable, unaffordable, and unwinnable nuclear arms race."

The one point on which political observers agree is that it will be one of the most hard-fought and probably mud-splattered contests in many years.





Kennedy ad

—From Page 1

tion from his limited success at last week's convention and he said that, for the first time in his political life, he had discovered there are things more important than winning.

And he left open, with these words, the chance that he will try again for the presidency:

"My sense is that there is the position that has the greatest opportunity for influence in the world. That perception doesn't alter or change when the convention ends."

He also seemed hopeful that questions about his character, particularly his behavior after the accident 11 years ago at Chappaquiddick, would be muted in a future race.

"As the campaign developed and continued, there was much more attention on the issues (rather than character) than there had been in the early part of the campaign," he said. "I would expect that if I ever run again, hopefully that's where we would start off."

During the convention last week, Kennedy withheld until the last moment his endorsement of Carter in effort to pressure the president for concessions on his economic program. He now appears to be conceding that effort, saying the degree of support for Carter will be determined by concrete steps Carter

new judgment.

"It is not that I have a different view and a different view."

"That's what Ken Kennedy said at the convention. He said that he would not run for the presidency if the economic situation is not better."

He said, "I am not an expert on the economy."

At the Carter convention, if the platform never mentions his name, he will not run.

San Francisco Chronicle

THE VOICE OF THE WEST

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Editorial

Reagan Quotes May Kick Back

JIMMY CARTER IS on his way today into a campaign the style of which he was evidently experimenting with Thursday night in his acceptance speech at the Democratic national convention.

If he and Fritz Mondale intend to continue through September and October in pretty much the same speech format and echo the same taunting themes as those heard on television from Madison Square Garden, they ought to be warned, in all friendliness, that they'll risk running things into the ground.

It's fun the first time to hear Ronald Reagan's one-liners quoted back at him, but that could prove tiresome. Granted that Reagan has said a lot of things in his time that may not make much sense even to him today. Still, the thing about most Reaganisms is that they do come through rapidly; they have their unmistakable, flat-out meaning, and the Republican candidate has a very masterly way of communicating them. Take it or leave it, a lot of people take it, and the polls show that.

SO THE PRESIDENT and his younger, bouncier running mate would be well advised to pay attention to James Reston's prediction. Noting that the Democrats have computerized every statement Ronald Reagan ever made when he was doing public relations for Big Business, the sage columnist warns that "the campaign promises to be, not a definition of what Carter and Reagan think about the coming years, but a controversy about their silliest statements in the past."

Now a slinging match between the two nominees, each trying to mock and belittle the other, would be of no help to the American people in forming their judgment about who's to lead them in the 1980s. What Reagan has said in the '70s are words in the wind. People want to know what he'd do in the opening years of the '80s and what Carter thinks *he* would do better. If the candidates decline to pitch their voices to those notes and themes, they may look back to discover, later on, that a third candidate "making sense to the American people" is overtaking them.

Editor's report

William Randolph Hearst Jr.
Editor-in-chief, The Hearst Newspapers



Carter's campaign of fear

SAN SIMEON — Like most of you I watched some of the political extravaganza — the Democratic National Convention at Madison Square Garden in New York — on television.

The TV coverage was what P.T. Barnum, the great circus entrepreneur, would surely have acknowledged to be the greatest "political" show on earth.

The antics and activities of a political convention are made to order for TV. It was estimated that 53.7 percent of the American television audience watched prime-time coverage of the convention on the two most exciting nights, Monday and Tuesday.

TV doesn't, of course, give you the opportunity to ponder and comprehend what is happening, especially at your leisure, the way your newspaper does, nor does it give you another look if you have to answer the phone or see why the baby is crying in the other room.

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Editor's report / Carter's campaign of fear

—From Page 1

However, with its moving cameras, bright lights, photogenic young newswomen wearing Star Wars-like electronic contraptions on their heads and such likable announcers as Walter Cronkite, John Chancellor, David Brinkley and Frank Reynolds, it does provide instant news and interesting analysis in sound and color.

The most disappointing aspect of the convention to me was the thrust of President Carter's nomination acceptance speech attack on Ronald Reagan. It struck me as more political demagoguery than the statesmanship one would expect of a president of the United States.

It is obvious now that Jimmy Carter is going to try to scare the American people away from voting for Reagan. He all but said that if the Republican nominee is elected, he will get the country into war. He accused Reagan of advocating an all-out "uncontrollable" nuclear arms race which would put "the whole world in peril."

Reagan has not advocated an all-out nuclear arms race, and the president knows it. The Republican leader has said he opposes the SALT II treaty on the ground it gives the Soviets an advantage in nuclear weapons. He would renegotiate the treaty "to genuinely limit strategic nuclear weapons."

To me it is beneath the dignity of the president of the United States to use such war-scare tactics against his political opponent. I can only assume the president is so doubtful he can win on his record in November that he has decided to run a campaign of fear. He sought to create the impression that if Reagan is elected there will be "the risk of international confrontation."

President Carter doesn't know whether there will or will not be four more years of peace if he is elected. Nor does he know whether there will be no risk of international confrontation under his continued leadership.

I remember distinctly Franklin D. Roosevelt, running for his third term in 1940, promising he wouldn't get us into the war.

President Carter knows that Ronald Reagan is just as much a man of peace as he is.

President Carter also blamed the Republican administration during eight of the last 11 years for allowing America to become militarily weak, failing to mention that there was a Democratic majority in Congress all that time.

The man who stole the show at Madison Square Garden was, of course, Teddy Kennedy. While he is not my favorite politician — he has given me good reason to question his judgment — his delivery of the words written for him by his two principal speechwriters, Bob Shrum and Carey Parker, stopped the show Tuesday night.

With more rhetoric than rationality, his oratory had all the rabble-rousing appeal of the huckster hawking his cure-all remedy at a county fair.

Dr. Kennedy's prescription for our ailing economy is the now-familiar balm of spending the country into a quick-fix, short-lived recovery with make-work and other welfare programs financed, of course, by your and my taxes plus the printing of any additional dollars needed.

However, it enabled the last of the Kennedy brothers to snatch a heroic moment of personal triumph out of the resounding defeat he suffered at the hands of President Carter on the "open convention" issue. Kennedy literally sought to steal the nomination from the president by inciting delegates to violate their primaries' commitment to their constituencies and vote for him instead of the president.

So, now it will be Jimmy Carter against Ronald Reagan in November.

Since I am taking it easy here on our ranch, mostly riding over its brown hills washed by the blue Pacific, I asked my friend and cohort, Joe Kingsbury Smith, at the convention, to send me a brief summary of his ringside impressions.

Here is his report:

"If President Carter is elected and succeeds in getting Congress to authorize even a less costly version of the job spending program Sen. Kennedy spurred the convention into adopting, it will mean continued high inflation for the American people — probably double-digit inflation through 1981 and perhaps well beyond. It will mean the dollar will buy less than it buys even now — and the grocery bills will keep on rising.

"Kennedy, erroneously in the opinion of many economic experts, thinks that by the government putting the unemployed back to work and hiking taxes of higher-income earners, it will be possible to finance national health insurance and other costly welfare programs out of additional tax revenue.

"Promising more government goodies without making clear the cost will come mostly from increased taxes of the average working man and woman is the classical political gimmick of an election year.

"The Massachusetts senator, in his spellbinding performance, persuaded the convention to approve his proposal for a \$12 billion new jobs program. This led President Carter to reject within 24 hours one of the most popular and important planks in his party's own platform, an unprecedented act by a presidential candidate the day before he was nominated.

"During the 1976 campaign, Jimmy Carter said he was glad he didn't have to depend on Ted Kennedy to put him in office because he didn't want to kiss his you-know-what. But

in Washington this week, Carter said: 'I hope I have his support. I could win much better with him.'

"Kennedy's brief appearance on the platform Thursday night left most of those who witnessed his curt manner with the impression that the Democratic Party is still far from united."

★ ★ ★

That's the end of Joe's report. After reading it I couldn't help but think of Will Rogers' famous line: "I belong to no organized political party; I am a Democrat."