

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library  
Digital Library Collections

---

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

---

**Collection:** Reagan, Ronald: 1980 Campaign Papers,  
1965-80

**Folder Title:** Memo to Bob Garrick – 09/12/1980

**Box:** 867

---

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digitized-textual-material>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventories>

Contact a reference archivist at: **reagan.library@nara.gov**

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/research-support/citation-guide>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

September 11, 1980

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert Garrick  
FROM: Anthony R. Dolan  
REGARDING: The Opposition Campaign

We are on the offensive on the nightly news, due to the tremendous efforts of a number of key people.

But you said the question came up the other day: where do we go in the next few weeks? Shouldn't our surrogate attacks and daily issues fit into an overall plan?

Here is a framework in which to develop our attacks on the Carter record. Obviously, the idea is to expand each one, then tie them together, then develop them into grand themes.

This strategy is based on the previous opposition memo with many ideas from the Tuesday night group that I've met with.

GENERAL STRATEGY

(Points to keep in mind)

1. THE MOSAIC: (a) We should stick to the strategy outlined earlier--start battles on as many fronts as possible. In short, making the incumbency more a burden than an advantage--Carter must answer for what his administration has done.

(b) The nightly news is the battleground. People will not pay that much attention to each part of our mosaic (incumbency abuses, Justice Department, waste and fraud, GSA, Civiletti, Stealth, Brown, and the Defense Department) but after a while they will perceive the basic point: the Carter record is bad because it is always under attack.

(c) These are the dynamics of any political campaign. Put the other guy on the defensive. Keep him there. The impression will gradually sink in that he has a bad record.

(d) Just when the Carter forces think they have put to rest one problem like Stealth or the debates, we hit them with something new in the Carter record or something that is an elaboration on a previous point.

(e) This will make Carter run on his record and the election is a referendum on that record.

(f) This will also tie the Carter forces up, exhaust them, and occasionally make them desperate. (Jody Powell, when he heard of Casey's call for Civiletti's resignation, said it was the "first whiff of desperation," from Reagan camp. Powell hopes we'll drop this issue and is trying to embarrass us into it.)

(g) This will also increase the probability of a bad mistake. It bears repeating: few people in this world are as edgy as Jimmy Carter about criticism. Few people as capable of self-deception about their own promises and record. Under fire, Carter has a record of snappishness and blue funks. With a concentrated, consistent attack on his record, I expect he may blow the cork right off the top of his campaign bottle. It may be an emotional outburst, it may just be a withdrawal that will cause considerable media comment.

(h) We must guard against letting the media or the Carter camp throw us off our attack on the Carter record. Hearst used to say his editors always got tired of a story just when the public was getting interested in it.

We have set out to do certain things. We must not just

play off the daily news (though that is obviously vital). Because a story is not playing immediately or seems dormant is not, by itself, enough reason to shift. Never know when we are going to hit oil.

#### THE APPARATUS

1. Not enough can be said about the great job of the surrogate operation. However, we need an "overview" (pure brainstorming) two or three times a week on specific issues and how each one fits in the general strategy. Suggest 5 or 6 people including representatives of research and issues along with Williamson, Carmen and maybe two sharp members of our Tuesday night group.

#### SPECIFIC ISSUES

1. STEALTH: Obviously a homerun from our standpoint. Follow up should be: (a) Tie to the President himself--he considered, according to George Wilson's August 14th story in the Post, leaking it in his acceptance speech. Were his speechwriters and politicians tossing this around in a hotel room? What did they know and when?

(b) Moynihan's letter says that the leak of directive 59 was political and quite possibly criminal--Moynihan wrote this in a letter to the Attorney General. What is the response?

(c) We may want a special prosecutor.

(d) The George Wilson piece and Moynihan letter should be in the hands of our surrogates.

(e) NATO allies must be deeply concerned about our security leaks--Rumsfeld or others should have an eye on the

discontent there--it seems some stories would be coming out of European bureaus.

(f) We should think about moving the issue into the general theme of breakdown of national security under Brown. Brown's willingness to juggle budget figures, his secret plan to cut down shipbuilding, (George Wilson piece) his willingness to go along with unilateral cutbacks in strategic programs and the poor readiness of our armed forces. We must concentrate on Brown. Again, a southern tour (kicked off here) with Haig Rumsfeld and Laird visiting various installations where fighters can't fly, navy ships can't leave port, and helicopters that don't work, is essential. We should then make the breakdown of security around the world our final act in this scenario. Hitting, especially, the Caribbean as the "red lake."

2. DEBATE: Obviously playing in our favor, but Carter will try very soon to turn it on us.

(a) Carter's background on debates should be completely brought out: failure to debate Kennedy--promise to debate Kennedy and then failure to live up to it.

(b) Jim Baker should release statement on the phony memo involving the administration's attempt to cover up its political decision to get out of Kennedy debate.

(c) Constant refrain "Carter has been the President. Why won't he debate? It's his record. What is he afraid of?"

(d) Tie in the credibility issue--by saying he didn't keep his words on the debate or on other issues. Cite issues in print ad on credibility.

3. CIVILETTI: A stand off for the moment but with tremendous potential.

(a) On September 15th Carter will be in Texas and on the 16th in Georgia and Ohio. We should place ads in those papers "What about it Mr. President?" with reference to firing any cabinet officer who lies.

(b) Follow-up should be Malcom Wallop's speech outlining transgressions of Civiletti in the past: faulty memory in the Marston affair, recommended by Kirbo for job, Baltimore political tour after he promised not to do politics, Koreagate--where he improperly briefed Congressmen, his failure to object to Charlie Kirbo's interference in the Vesco and GSA investigations. Working with Wallop on this.

(c) Obviously branch this off into the entire Justice Department issue and white paper.

(d) At critical points we have former Justice Department officials call for Civiletti's resignation--statement done.

(e) Open up Vesco, GSA, Public Integrity Section investigations of the Justice Department.

4. BILLYGATE: Bert Lance's face is back on the TV screens in this investigation. We want to re-run as many of these old faces as possible. This plays right into the whole cronyism issue. We should run and then distribute our cronyism ad which summarizes all the episodes like Bert Lance, Peter Bourne, etc...

5. WASTE AND FRAUD: For some reason the speech insert wasn't used in Indiana. This is such a great issue--we must repeat that we are putting this on the campaign agenda and that Carter must account for his four year failure to deal with this problem. It is a problem that reoccurs in a press story every week or so and

once we have put down the platform for it, we can play off it.

6. THE GSA AND CLINKSCALES: Have read Clinkscals testimony before Senate Committee. It is a classic cover-up at GSA, engineered by Tip O'Neil's crony and Charlie Kirbo. It would make a wonderful speech insert for the Governor. Then follow-up with Congressional investigations. Press would jump on it--60 minutes is already planning a major expose on this. Let's beat them to it. OBVIOUSLY THIS PLAYS WELL INTO THE WASTE AND FRAUD ISSUE.

7. RAY MARSHALL AND LABOR DEPARTMENT AND BERT LANCE: By now we have the public worrying about Brown, Civiletti and Charlie Kirbo. Another major cover-up was the use of Teamsters Pension Funds in the Bert Lance bank by Labor Department trustees. When the Labor Department tried to investigate this, they were pulled off by Carter's people. Another incredible scandal. We must hit it hard. Working with Lyle Rider at RNC on this and we have good information. Possibly a speech insert but we should exploit it through surrogates too.

8. NEW BOY NETWORK: A good issue because it opens up the whole area of Carter's incompetence in foreign policy and in his appointments. It also explains the chaos in our foreign policy and throws back in Carter's face the issue of "inordinate fear of communism." This is the problem of the McGovernites and compulsive defeatists. Carter must make them resign if he's going to get tough with the Soviets.

9. FEAR AND FALSEHOOD: The statement that included Carter's distortion of Reagan's record in Missouri and Philadelphia was just one paragraph but was used well by Jim Baker. (We called the Times and made sure they had it Saturday afternoon and they

put in a nice small piece on it). We have laid the foundation for this with the Laxalt letter and the Baker charges. We should continue to hit Carter's distortions and his lousy campaign tactics. We should look for a network story on this. Rafshoon's ads may be real low-life affairs. We should prepare the public for them--possibly Carter's campaign has hesitated because of our attacks so far. We should make "more fear and falsehood" our one-liner in response to Carter attacks.

10. COSMETICS: Carter is running a campaign of symbolism, as Dr. Wirthlin points out. Carter's campaign is almost subliminal and keyed to the nightly news imagery. He goes to Tuscombia (reliving the image of the New South Governor against the Ku Klux Klan that got his picture on Time's cover in 1972 and started him dreaming about the Presidency), and he goes to Missouri and wraps himself in the mantle of Harry Truman. Now he is using the Rose Garden and the Oval office again. In short, he is rejecting the traditional approach of campaigning in key states and instead, thinking about TV images. (They are terribly well done--Carter is always embracing a black child or shaking hands with Jewish leaders etc...) Carter's strategy is to play this to the hilt and then hit the campaign trail. It is critical by October that we make it difficult and distasteful for him to come out of the White House because he will be asked embarrassing questions. (By the way, a lady appeared on the Today Show who was invited at a town meeting to the White House by Carter. She said Carter had done nothing for her and she was voting for Reagan. We should arrange a meeting with Reagan for her. The press would see this as a good story.)

Although Stealth and the debates have gotten the credibility issue off the ground, and Billygate and Civiletti are playing up



the cronyism issue--we still have not gotten cosmetics (the manipulation of the media--government by gimmick and media event--Wisconsin primary, Nimitz incident, phony memo etc...) launched yet. A print ad is being worked on but we need to get this message out to the public through our surrogates. We need to look for opportunities to exploit the manipulative, cosmetic approach of the Carter administration to governing the nation.

11. INCUMBENCY ABUSES: This is coming along nicely--Brock will hold a press conference today on this. We still want to emphasize the Hatch Act problems documented by the Federal Times and make it clear (possibly through a panel of former prosecutors who will monitor this situation) that press and travel staff members that are used to violate the law will be prosecuted. This will diminish the enthusiasm of the bureaucrats who want Jimmy Carter re-elected. We should also hold an event like "Operation Eagle" in Chicago in 1968, in which teams of lawyers are sent to the various agencies with FOIA requests in hand and present them to the appropriate individuals. These lawyers may also want to seek to interview the press and travel directors in each agency on these matters. The cameras would follow them. We should also seek to find out the details of the public service ads run by Neil Goldschmidt that mention Carter's name. McClure should be asked to follow-up on his earlier investigation of Alan Campbell. Other incumbency abuses, outlined in earlier memo, should be pursued. Lyle Rider at RNC, Meg Shields, Loren Smith, and Ed Widefeld are all in on this. I would suggest a weekly or twice-weekly meeting over here on this issue. We are not coordinating enough.

12. IRANIAN STUDENTS: This is an issue with tremendous political appeal. It is high risk, however. We don't want to be accused of doing anything to disrupt the hostage negotiations. Reagan should issue statement noting the Carter administration's failure to live up to yet another promise--that of cancelling visas for the Iranian students who broke the law. This should be a criticism of incompetence and should avoid any jingoistic overtones.

13. I WILL GO TO KOREA: Have a suggested plan that will have considerable impact--our own October surprise--and solve the political problem of the possible hostage release. Garrick has memo.

14. WHISTLEBLOWERS: There are a number of people--Clinckscales in GSA, Ernie Fitzgerald in Defense, Labor Department investigators, White House ombudsmen, Parry on sensitive technology, Interior Department, and Bureau of Mines personnel--all of whom have been banished because of their integrity in pursuing wrongdoing. We should try to put them all together in a major speech or speech insert or through surrogate attacks on the Carter record. Carter promised to help whistleblowers.

15. TAX CUT: We should keep stressing this--Reagan wants serious tax cuts. Carter doesn't.

16. FORD SPOTS: He has credibility. We should ask him for help on selected targets and not too often. A major speech in which he attacks the democrats. We should give this thought, and we should set up a timetable for Ford attacks. He should probably accuse Carter of incumbency abuses and demeaning the Presidency with Stealth and failure to debate. Frankly, Ford would be ideal for the new boy network speech.

17. TV SPOTS: We should open the attack on Carter with Ford ads done in the style of the Grath ads used in Koch's campaign. Ford looks at camera and says, (while titles roll up under his name with the statistics) "In 1976 Jimmy Carter promised a 4% inflation rate, a 4% unemployment rate, he promised to cut federal spending and he promised never to raise taxes for working people. Four years later inflation went to 18%, unemployment to nearly 8% with 8.2 million Americans out of work. Jimmy Carter is the biggest taxer in history--he's proposed 20 new taxes and given working people the largest personal tax increase in history. And federal spending has gone up %. Even Vice-President Mondale now admits the administration is putting people out of work in order to try to stop inflation.

Jimmy Carter broke every promise he made about the economy. After four years, Jimmy Carter has given us economic chaos, a severe recession, incompetent government and broken promises.

Ronald Reagan will control federal spending by attacking waste and fraud, he'll attack inflation and wants to implement 10% yearly tax cuts.

And when Ronald Reagan talks about rebates and efficient government, Ronald Reagan has credibility because that's exactly what he did during his eight years as Governor of California.

Ronald Reagan offers change and growth and credibility. He has my wholehearted support. I hope you'll give him yours.

18. FORD SPOT II: In 1971 Jimmy Carter promised to maintain our national defenses and keep the Soviet Union in check.

By this year, Jimmy Carter and his Defense Secretary had cut \$38 billion off my plans for strategic weapons programs--they dropped the B-1 bomber, and cut back on the Minuteman III, the neutron bomb, the Trident submarine, and the air and sea launched cruise missile programs. (Titles roll up with these facts.)

Our military readiness is weakening every day--we have navy ships that can't leave port, fighters that can't fly, and helicopters that don't work. And to cover all this up, the Carter administration has jeopardized the secrecy surrounding military secrets like the Stealth bomber.

In the last four years the Soviet Union has made dramatic new gains in Southwest Asia, with the invasion of Afghanistan, in renewed countries in the Caribbean, and in Africa where these client states are propped up by Castro' mercenaries.

(Continued)

Our allies are alienated and Jimmy Carter has been so weak in foreign policy, he actually had to threaten the Soviet Union with war last January in front of a joint session of Congress.

We don't need more war threats and Carter brinkmanship. We need strong, quiet, effective leadership that makes foreign governments respect this nation.

Ronald Reagan wants to restore the credibility of our defenses. He wants to keep the peace through a strong national economy and quiet, effective diplomacy. Ronald Reagan is a strong, compassionate and effective leader--we need that in Washington. He has my wholehearted support. I hope you'll give him yours.

19. CIVILETTI SPOT: We should prepare a spot on this because it is the quintessential example of the broken promise. ("If one of my cabinet officers ever lies to you he'll be gone before the sun goes down.") We should also get the story out that we are preparing this ad and we consider Civiletti a real weak point in Carter's administration. It will make the Carter-Mondale people crazy.

20. RICHARD PETTY? ROGER STAUBAUCH? BARRY GOLDWATER? : Particularly in Southern and some border states, these names mean something. Do we want them to do a spot? Petty has done them for Helms. Maybe Goldwater should do a spot about how when he was running for President everyone talked about the fact he would get us into war in Southeast Asia and look what happened. He should hit military readiness and we should play them in Southern states. Staubauch should just say, "Ronald Reagan is a good trustworthy man."

21. VISIT TO CERTAIN DEMOCRAT: Have proposed that Reagan visit a certain democrat--you have memo.

22. SPECIAL SOUTHERN OPERATIONS: We are concentrating on key industrial states with large electoral vote margins. Yet there is a series of Southern and border states (not counting Texas) with votes that add up to 122--more than the 114 of Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey combined.

Furthermore, this area tends to vote as a bloc. Would like to start a guerrilla operation for Southern states. Besides the TV spots of Goldwater, Staubauch and Petty, we should use print ads. I called Manafort about this--he suggested putting the print ads in weeklies there. (Coal in Arkansas, West Virginia and part of Virginia; immigration policy in Florida and Arkansas--more of Carter's incompetence; grain embargo in Louisiana and Mississippi; military readiness everywhere.)

Should be first week in October. We should also get Hill press secretaries to help us with statements on these issues targeted for local papers. (We should just issue a series of statements by Reagan from the headquarters targeted to certain districts.)

Southern tour of military experts should also be done.

23. BRIEFING: Strongly suggest briefing on campaign plane by Wirthlin et al for all issues and policy people.

24. We need copies of every Mondale and Carter speech. Can I add one staff person (if only part time) to work on Southern project and keep the daily speeches.

POINTS IN SUMMARY

1. We need to do more planning and brainstorming--sessions that set off reactions and come up with ideas. A few times a week. General overview of nightly news strategy. Small group - 5 or 6. Not a rushed meeting.
2. We want to keep the criticisms of Carter's record coming fast and furious.
3. We want, as Stef Halper suggests, to come up with one-liners on these issues. (Reagan's response to a Carter attack on energy is great. We could get at the truth if only he would debate. Good response to any further Carter attacks.)
4. We want to broaden out on surrogates. Cohen on foreign affairs, Hyde on incumbency abuses, Armstrong on new boy network, etc...
5. We always want to aim at demands for resignations, special prosecutors, and congressional probes. (Focusing on Brown, Civiletti, Kirbo, New Boys, and Sam Brown.)
6. We want to get good stories out to more non-political writers and to columnists. We shouldn't think about whether we go the surrogate route or this route on each issue.
7. Above all, we should remember the Hearst story--we get used to hearing things, but the average American knows virtually nothing about them (like the defense cutbacks). We must repeat, repeat, and repeat.
8. We want to coordinate our Reagan speech inserts, surrogate attacks, and press stories.

Here is our plan outlined in earlier opposition memo (with updating in parentheses).

SUMMARY

1. Phase I -- The Real Administration

- a. 3 C's -- Credibility, Cronyism, Cosmetics
- b. Carter's Personal Attacks (his campaign of fear and falsehood)
- c. Abuse of the Incumbency (security leaks, Hatch Act, etc...)
- d. Demeaning the Presidency (summary of above points)

2. Phase II -- The Issues and the Broken Promises

- a. Justice (Civiletti, GSA, Kirbo, Billygate)
- b. Defense (the weak Brown)
- c. Foreign Policy (Diplomatic Vaudeville, Inordinate Fear, Newboy Network, Soviet Gains, Caribbean)
- d. The Economy (the main issue and tax cuts)
- e. Waste and Fraud (repeated challenge to Carter, GSA)

3. Phase III -- The Mistaken Presidency

A mournful view of an administration gone wrong and its once bright promise. And the importance of a Republican Congress.

Note: We must keep the attacks going but Reagan must come up with positive programs by mid-October -- Waste & Fraud Plan, parochial school tax credits, restore integrity to Justice Department, etc... We must preempt Carter on leadership issue.