

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections

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

Collection: Fielding, Fred F.: Files, 1981-1986

Folder Title: Albosta – Baker/Casey/Stockman/Gergen
Responses

Box: 45F

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/>

Last Updated: 08/24/2023

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 29, 1983

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

Enclosed are copies of the documents from David Gergen's files which were requested by John Fitzgerald.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Hauser
Deputy Counsel to the President

James Hamilton, Esquire
Ginsburg, Feldman and Bress
1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20006

cc: John Fitzgerald

RAH:gm - 9/29/83
1-subj ✓
2-chron

JUN 23 1983

Document No. _____

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 23 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: ---

SUBJECT: BAKER/CASEY/STOCKMAN/GERGEN RESPONSES TO ALBOSTA RE
"DEBATE BRIEFING BOOK"

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HARPER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
MEESE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HERRINGTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BAKER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	JENKINS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DEAVER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	McMANUS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
STOCKMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MURPHY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CLARK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ROLLINS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DUBERSTEIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	VERSTANDIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FELDSTEIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WHITTLESEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FIELDING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BRADY/SPEAKES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FULLER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GERGEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS:

These are being released at **1:00** p.m. today.

RESPONSE:

Richard G. Darman
Assistant to the President

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 22, 1983

Dear Congressman Albosta:

This letter is to respond to your letter of June 15.

I am pleased to give you my recollection of the matters referred to in the second and third sentences of paragraph two of your letter.

First, I would like to note two things which I know you appreciate: 1) almost three years have passed since these matters are alleged to have occurred; and 2) while there may conceivably be some legitimate basis for concern, there is obviously high political content in the efforts by some to foster press interest in this matter in the hopes of embarrassing the Reagan Administration.

I have no recollection that I ever received or saw any debate strategy or sensitive debating points prepared by the Carter campaign or Carter White House.

In 1980, sometime after the Reagan-Anderson debate and before the Reagan-Carter debate, I do remember briefly seeing a large looseleaf bound book (I believe in a black binder) that was thought to have been given to the Reagan camp by someone with the Carter campaign. But I do not believe this was strategic material. It is my best recollection that I was given the book by William Casey, with the suggestion that it might be of use to the Debate Briefing Team. I should note, however, that I have recently checked this recollection with him, and while he has not contested my recollection, he has no such recollection of his own. It is my further recollection that after briefly thumbing through the binder, I passed it on to the Debate Briefing Team, headed by David Gergen and Frank Hodsoll.

Page Two
The Honorable Don Albosta
June 22, 1983

I did not know then, nor do I know now, how that book was obtained by the Reagan campaign. I never, directly or indirectly, asked anyone in or out of our campaign, or in the Carter campaign or White House, to provide or acquire that book from the Carter campaign or White House. As best I recall, the book I saw contained position papers on various issues. I do not believe there was anything about it or its contents that would have identified it as coming from the White House. I do not recall that it contained any strategic or tactical information relating to a forthcoming debate. I recall it being more of a compilation of Carter Administration positions on a wide range of issues. I don't remember whether the issues were foreign, domestic, or both. As best I recall, the material in the book was not unlike information that a campaign of an incumbent President might supply its surrogate speakers. It did not seem to be close-in briefing material, but rather a compendium of Carter Administration positions.

I do not remember exactly when I saw this book but it could have been before a Carter-Reagan debate had even been agreed upon. We were preparing for one because the Carter camp had been challenging Governor Reagan to a one-on-one debate since early in the campaign. I believe (but cannot be sure) that the book I saw was not something developed in the few days preceeding the debate -- the period during which former Carter campaign officials now say their key strategic debate briefing material was developed. I do not recall sending the book or a copy to David Stockman, but apparently he received some such material from the Reagan campaign.

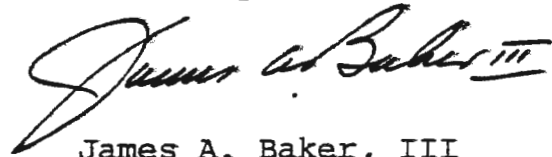
It is correct that, after seeing the book, I did not undertake to find out how our campaign had obtained it. There was nothing on its face that suggested it may have been an official document or a document sufficiently sensitive to have been controlled or closely held. In any case, I would submit that, unfortunately, it is not uncommon in campaigns -- just as it is not uncommon in the ordinary business of the press and the Congress -- for such material to be given or sent for a variety of reasons by a host of people, including people whose contribution may be in conflict with their current or prior affiliations. Further, as I have suggested above, I had no reason to believe that the book was illegally acquired. And even now, I am not aware of any evidence that it was.

Page Three
The Honorable Don Albosta
June 22, 1983

Mr. Chairman, in your letter you say, "I want to assure you that it is not my intention to accept these allegations at face value." I appreciate your approaching your oversight responsibilities in this manner. In this same spirit, I trust you will note the established record of those Presidential campaigns which I ran. In 1976, I was Chairman of the President Ford Committee for the general election. The Federal Elections Commission, and I believe Common Cause, complimented the conduct of that campaign as far as compliance and propriety are concerned. I was also Chairman of the George Bush for President Committee in 1979 and 1980 during the contest for the nomination, and the record of that campaign also reflects full compliance with election laws and high standards of propriety. This record, I trust you will agree, demonstrates that I share your concern for assuring proper conduct in the management of electoral campaigns.

I hope you will be able to dispose of this matter quickly and would be pleased to cooperate in any way that would be helpful.

Sincerely,



James A. Baker, III
Chief of Staff
and Assistant to the President

The Honorable Don Albosta
Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Resources
Committee on Post Office and Civil Service
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

cc: The Attorney General

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505

June 22, 1983

The Honorable Don Albosta
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Albosta:

Thank you for your letter of June 20, 1983.

I have no recollection that I ever received, heard of or learned in any other way of a set of papers which laid out the Carter debate plan or the points which President Carter had planned to make as described in Mr. Barrett's account.

Upon receiving your letter I checked with my secretary during the campaign, two of my special assistants and five of the deputy campaign directors and none of them have any knowledge that the campaign ever received or had any paper or information resembling that described by Mr. Barrett.

I can assure you that the campaign management never contemplated, directed or authorized any effort to obtain information of this kind nor, to my knowledge, did the campaign ever use or have the kind of information described in Mr. Barrett's book.

If I can be of any further assistance, let me know.

Sincerely yours,


William J. Casey

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

June 23, 1983

The Honorable Don Albosta
Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Resources
Committee on Post Office and Civil Service
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Don:

This will answer your letter of June 16.

My recollection of the "document" referred to in Mr. Barrett's book begins with a package of material that was delivered to my office by messenger from the Reagan campaign committee one day before the first debate rehearsal at Wexford, Virginia. I believe this was October 23, 1980.

It was included in a larger batch of debate preparation papers forwarded by the Reagan campaign in order to assist me in my role as the stand-in debater for President Carter. My recollection is that the balance of the material consisted of debate background papers prepared by the Reagan committee.

The "document" in question appeared to be a "policy issues" compilation covering dozens of topics from Afghanistan, to SALT, to solar energy. It was a thick, unbound set of pages containing approximately one issue per page. I recall that it had no index or particular organizational format.

To the best of my recollection, none of these pages contained markings indicating that they were official government business. Nor were they in any way classified.

The documents dealt entirely with policy issues, including "Carter Administration Achievements", and contained standard arguments in support of Carter Administration initiatives and policies. To the best of my recollection, they contained no points challenging positions taken by Governor Reagan or providing contrast between the Carter and Reagan stands on the topics covered. Nor did they contain discussions of campaign strategy, debate tactics or a debate "game plan".

Thus, my recollection is that the set of pages I received was an "issues primer" quite different in character from the internal Reagan debate strategy papers that I had seen at the same time.

Page Two
The Honorable Don Albosta
June 23, 1983

Due to the advocacy character of these issue briefs it was apparent to me at the time that they had in some way come from the Carter campaign. I have no recollection of asking about or being informed as to how. More importantly, since they only dealt with matters of public record I felt no reason to be concerned about having access to them.

The published reports you refer to indicate that these documents were useful to the Reagan campaign. This is true -- but in a very particular and unique sense.

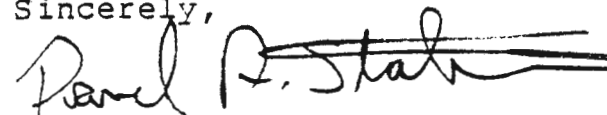
To prepare Governor Reagan for the debate, the campaign conducted mock debates over the weekend of October 24-27, 1980, in which I was the Carter stand-in. Since I had been a vocal critic of the Carter Administration on many issues, I found the documents, written from a Carter Administration advocacy point of view, useful as I prepared outlines of possible debate answers representing the "other side". I might note that I also made extensive use of the material prepared by the Reagan campaign staff on controversial prior statements by candidate Reagan in carrying out my debate role of challenging Governor Reagan's answers.

I doubt that the Carter advocacy materials that I used were or could have been of significant value to others in the Reagan campaign. For example, I recall no mention of them during the many hours of debate rehearsals and preparation, which included all key campaign aides, over the weekend of October 24-27, 1980.

In summary, I had no reason to believe that the documents in question were anything other than a compilation of the public record and position of the Carter Administration on the whole range of issues relevant to the 1980 campaign. My perception today remains as it was then.

I hope these recollections will be useful to you. If I can cooperate in any other way, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David A. Stockman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent, sweeping flourish at the end.

David A. Stockman

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 22, 1983

Dear Congressman Albosta:

This letter is in response to your inquiry of June 15 regarding my role in preparations for the Reagan-Carter debate during the 1980 Presidential campaign. I welcome this opportunity to address the issues you have raised.

The facts are these:

- My role in the Reagan campaign at the time in question was to act as general coordinator and editor of the debate materials prepared for Governor Reagan and, in conjunction with others in the campaign, to coordinate the pre-debate briefing sessions with the Governor.
- I do not recall ever receiving or seeing a "Carter debate book" or any other notebook from the Carter campaign. Had that occurred, I believe that I would remember it.
- It is possible that I did see some pages of "Carter material" for a brief period, but I do not recall it.
- I do recall hearing that some material from the Carter campaign was present in the Reagan campaign. To the best of my recollection, the material was not described to me as important or dramatic; as a result, I never paid much attention to it.
- I did not know then nor do I know now whether such material was prepared by the Carter campaign staff, the Carter White House, the Democratic National Committee or by a related organization. I also have no idea how the material may have come into the possession of the Reagan campaign. To this day, I am not aware of any evidence that the Reagan campaign engaged in unethical or illegal practices to obtain this material.

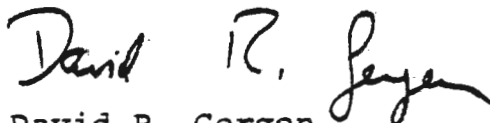
- In my role of preparing written materials for Governor Reagan, I can tell you that I never studied nor drew upon any private or sensitive materials from the Carter camp. To the best of my knowledge -- and I was in a reasonable position to know -- the so-called Carter debate book was inconsequential in the preparation of debate materials used by Governor Reagan.
- The face-to-face debate briefings with Governor Reagan were conducted at a private home in northern Virginia. To the best of my recollection, there was no discussion in any of these sessions of the so-called Carter debate materials. Moreover, there was never, to the best of my knowledge, any hint or suggestion that we had inside information about what approaches President Carter's advisers were urging him to take in the debate.
- As you can well understand, the passage of nearly three years' time leaves me a little hazy about all the many details of the debate preparations. But I do remember the main events of that period, and the presence of the Carter materials in the Reagan campaign never left an impression that such materials were significant to the debate.

May I also mention an additional set of facts that I believe offer a relevant perspective on these events? This incident occupies some three paragraphs plus a footnote on pages 382-383 of Mr. Barrett's book. I am told that his publisher never took it seriously enough to include it in the original promotional materials, and so far as I can tell, he has not included a specific reference to it in the book's 15 pages of index. Mr. Barrett did apparently write up a note for Time magazine the month after President Reagan was inaugurated, but his editors never thought it significant enough to publish anything about it. Mr. Barrett also writes: "At least a couple of reporters became aware of the briefing-book caper months after the event. The story did not make it into print, however."

It is instructive, I believe, that those who have known about this event in the past -- and that includes the press -- have apparently concluded that it did not play a significant role in the debate. It is also worth asking whether there are some people who are now seeking to promote this story for reasons that are at least partly political.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, let me say that I appreciate your statement in your letter that it is not your intention "to accept these allegations at face value." I hope this letter helps to address the concerns you have raised; like others in the administration, I want to be fully cooperative with you.

Sincerely,



David R. Gergen
Assistant to the President
for Communications

The Honorable Donald Albosta
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

cc: The Attorney General

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

June 23, 1983

The Honorable Don Albosta
Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Resources
Committee on Post Office and Civil Service
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Don:

This will answer your letter of June 16.

My recollection of the "document" referred to in Mr. Barrett's book begins with a package of material that was delivered to my office by messenger from the Reagan campaign committee one day before the first debate rehearsal at Wexford, Virginia. I believe this was October 23, 1980.

It was included in a larger batch of debate preparation papers forwarded by the Reagan campaign in order to assist me in my role as the stand-in debater for President Carter. My recollection is that the balance of the material consisted of debate background papers prepared by the Reagan committee.

The "document" in question appeared to be a "policy issues" compilation covering dozens of topics from Afghanistan, to SALT, to solar energy. It was a thick, unbound set of pages containing approximately one issue per page. I recall that it had no index or particular organizational format.

To the best of my recollection, none of these pages contained markings indicating that they were official government business. Nor were they in any way classified.

The documents dealt entirely with policy issues, including "Carter Administration Achievements", and contained standard arguments in support of Carter Administration initiatives and policies. To the best of my recollection, they contained no points challenging positions taken by Governor Reagan or providing contrast between the Carter and Reagan stands on the topics covered. Nor did they contain discussions of campaign strategy, debate tactics or a debate "game plan".

Thus, my recollection is that the set of pages I received was an "issues primer" quite different in character from the internal Reagan debate strategy papers that I had seen at the same time.

:

:

:

Page Two
The Honorable Don Albosta
June 23, 1983

Due to the advocacy character of these issue briefs it was apparent to me at the time that they had in some way come from the Carter campaign. I have no recollection of asking about or being informed as to how. More importantly, since they only dealt with matters of public record I felt no reason to be concerned about having access to them.

The published reports you refer to indicate that these documents were useful to the Reagan campaign. This is true -- but in a very particular and unique sense.

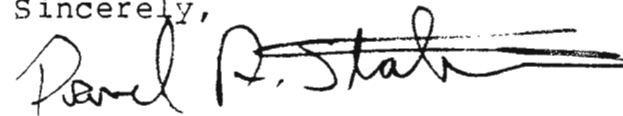
To prepare Governor Reagan for the debate, the campaign conducted mock debates over the weekend of October 24-27, 1980, in which I was the Carter stand-in. Since I had been a vocal critic of the Carter Administration on many issues, I found the documents, written from a Carter Administration advocacy point of view, useful as I prepared outlines of possible debate answers representing the "other side". I might note that I also made extensive use of the material prepared by the Reagan campaign staff on controversial prior statements by candidate Reagan in carrying out my debate role of challenging Governor Reagan's answers.

I doubt that the Carter advocacy materials that I used were or could have been of significant value to others in the Reagan campaign. For example, I recall no mention of them during the many hours of debate rehearsals and preparation, which included all key campaign aides, over the weekend of October 24-27, 1980.

In summary, I had no reason to believe that the documents in question were anything other than a compilation of the public record and position of the Carter Administration on the whole range of issues relevant to the 1980 campaign. My perception today remains as it was then.

I hope these recollections will be useful to you. If I can cooperate in any other way, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David A. Stockman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David A. Stockman

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 22, 1983

Dear Congressman Albosta:

This letter is to respond to your letter of June 15.

I am pleased to give you my recollection of the matters referred to in the second and third sentences of paragraph two of your letter.

First, I would like to note two things which I know you appreciate: 1) almost three years have passed since these matters are alleged to have occurred; and 2) while there may conceivably be some legitimate basis for concern, there is obviously high political content in the efforts by some to foster press interest in this matter in the hopes of embarrassing the Reagan Administration.

I have no recollection that I ever received or saw any debate strategy or sensitive debating points prepared by the Carter campaign or Carter White House.

In 1980, sometime after the Reagan-Anderson debate and before the Reagan-Carter debate, I do remember briefly seeing a large looseleaf bound book (I believe in a black binder) that was thought to have been given to the Reagan camp by someone with the Carter campaign. But I do not believe this was strategic material. It is my best recollection that I was given the book by William Casey, with the suggestion that it might be of use to the Debate Briefing Team. I should note, however, that I have recently checked this recollection with him, and while he has not contested my recollection, he has no such recollection of his own. It is my further recollection that after briefly thumbing through the binder, I passed it on to the Debate Briefing Team, headed by David Gergen and Frank Hodson.

Page Two
The Honorable Don Albosta
June 22, 1983

I did not know then, nor do I know now, how that book was obtained by the Reagan campaign. I never, directly or indirectly, asked anyone in or out of our campaign, or in the Carter campaign or White House, to provide or acquire that book from the Carter campaign or White House. As best I recall, the book I saw contained position papers on various issues. I do not believe there was anything about it or its contents that would have identified it as coming from the White House. I do not recall that it contained any strategic or tactical information relating to a forthcoming debate. I recall it being more of a compilation of Carter Administration positions on a wide range of issues. I don't remember whether the issues were foreign, domestic, or both. As best I recall, the material in the book was not unlike information that a campaign of an incumbent President might supply its surrogate speakers. It did not seem to be close-in briefing material, but rather a compendium of Carter Administration positions.

I do not remember exactly when I saw this book but it could have been before a Carter-Reagan debate had even been agreed upon. We were preparing for one because the Carter camp had been challenging Governor Reagan to a one-on-one debate since early in the campaign. I believe (but cannot be sure) that the book I saw was not something developed in the few days preceding the debate -- the period during which former Carter campaign officials now say their key strategic debate briefing material was developed. I do not recall sending the book or a copy to David Stockman, but apparently he received some such material from the Reagan campaign.

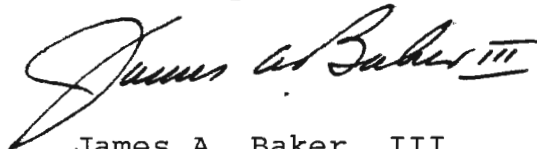
It is correct that, after seeing the book, I did not undertake to find out how our campaign had obtained it. There was nothing on its face that suggested it may have been an official document or a document sufficiently sensitive to have been controlled or closely held. In any case, I would submit that, unfortunately, it is not uncommon in campaigns -- just as it is not uncommon in the ordinary business of the press and the Congress -- for such material to be given or sent for a variety of reasons by a host of people, including people whose contribution may be in conflict with their current or prior affiliations. Further, as I have suggested above, I had no reason to believe that the book was illegally acquired. And even now, I am not aware of any evidence that it was.

Page Three
The Honorable Don Albosta
June 22, 1983

Mr. Chairman, in your letter you say, "I want to assure you that it is not my intention to accept these allegations at face value." I appreciate your approaching your oversight responsibilities in this manner. In this same spirit, I trust you will note the established record of those Presidential campaigns which I ran. In 1976, I was Chairman of the President Ford Committee for the general election. The Federal Elections Commission, and I believe Common Cause, complimented the conduct of that campaign as far as compliance and propriety are concerned. I was also Chairman of the George Bush for President Committee in 1979 and 1980 during the contest for the nomination, and the record of that campaign also reflects full compliance with election laws and high standards of propriety. This record, I trust you will agree, demonstrates that I share your concern for assuring proper conduct in the management of electoral campaigns.

I hope you will be able to dispose of this matter quickly and would be pleased to cooperate in any way that would be helpful.

Sincerely,



James A. Baker, III
Chief of Staff
and Assistant to the President

The Honorable Don Albosta
Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Resources
Committee on Post Office and Civil Service
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

cc: The Attorney General

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 22, 1983

Dear Congressman Albosta:

This letter is in response to your inquiry of June 15 regarding my role in preparations for the Reagan-Carter debate during the 1980 Presidential campaign. I welcome this opportunity to address the issues you have raised.

The facts are these:

- My role in the Reagan campaign at the time in question was to act as general coordinator and editor of the debate materials prepared for Governor Reagan and, in conjunction with others in the campaign, to coordinate the pre-debate briefing sessions with the Governor.
- I do not recall ever receiving or seeing a "Carter debate book" or any other notebook from the Carter campaign. Had that occurred, I believe that I would remember it.
- It is possible that I did see some pages of "Carter material" for a brief period, but I do not recall it.
- I do recall hearing that some material from the Carter campaign was present in the Reagan campaign. To the best of my recollection, the material was not described to me as important or dramatic; as a result, I never paid much attention to it.
- I did not know then nor do I know now whether such material was prepared by the Carter campaign staff, the Carter White House, the Democratic National Committee or by a related organization. I also have no idea how the material may have come into the possession of the Reagan campaign. To this day, I am not aware of any evidence that the Reagan campaign engaged in unethical or illegal practices to obtain this material.

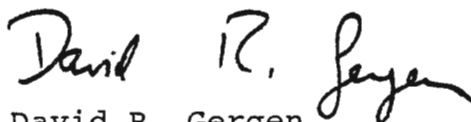
- In my role of preparing written materials for Governor Reagan, I can tell you that I never studied nor drew upon any private or sensitive materials from the Carter camp. To the best of my knowledge -- and I was in a reasonable position to know -- the so-called Carter debate book was inconsequential in the preparation of debate materials used by Governor Reagan.
- The face-to-face debate briefings with Governor Reagan were conducted at a private home in northern Virginia. To the best of my recollection, there was no discussion in any of these sessions of the so-called Carter debate materials. Moreover, there was never, to the best of my knowledge, any hint or suggestion that we had inside information about what approaches President Carter's advisers were urging him to take in the debate.
- As you can well understand, the passage of nearly three years' time leaves me a little hazy about all the many details of the debate preparations. But I do remember the main events of that period, and the presence of the Carter materials in the Reagan campaign never left an impression that such materials were significant to the debate.

May I also mention an additional set of facts that I believe offer a relevant perspective on these events? This incident occupies some three paragraphs plus a footnote on pages 382-383 of Mr. Barrett's book. I am told that his publisher never took it seriously enough to include it in the original promotional materials, and so far as I can tell, he has not included a specific reference to it in the book's 15 pages of index. Mr. Barrett did apparently write up a note for Time magazine the month after President Reagan was inaugurated, but his editors never thought it significant enough to publish anything about it. Mr. Barrett also writes: "At least a couple of reporters became aware of the briefing-book caper months after the event. The story did not make it into print, however."

It is instructive, I believe, that those who have known about this event in the past -- and that includes the press -- have apparently concluded that it did not play a significant role in the debate. It is also worth asking whether there are some people who are now seeking to promote this story for reasons that are at least partly political.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, let me say that I appreciate your statement in your letter that it is not your intention "to accept these allegations at face value." I hope this letter helps to address the concerns you have raised; like others in the administration, I want to be fully cooperative with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David R. Gergen". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

David R. Gergen
Assistant to the President
for Communications

The Honorable Donald Albosta
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

cc: The Attorney General

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505

June 22, 1983

The Honorable Don Albosta
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Albosta:

Thank you for your letter of June 20, 1983.

I have no recollection that I ever received, heard of or learned in any other way of a set of papers which laid out the Carter debate plan or the points which President Carter had planned to make as described in Mr. Barrett's account.

Upon receiving your letter I checked with my secretary during the campaign, two of my special assistants and five of the deputy campaign directors and none of them have any knowledge that the campaign ever received or had any paper or information resembling that described by Mr. Barrett.

I can assure you that the campaign management never contemplated, directed or authorized any effort to obtain information of this kind nor, to my knowledge, did the campaign ever use or have the kind of information described in Mr. Barrett's book.

If I can be of any further assistance, let me know.

Sincerely yours,


William J. Casey