

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library  
Digital Library Collections

---

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

---

**Collection:** Ronald Reagan Presidential Campaign  
Papers, 1964-1980

**Folder Title:** [Reagan for President Campaign  
Plan, 06/29/1980 (Draft)] (1)

**Box:** 177

---

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digital-library>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/document-collection>

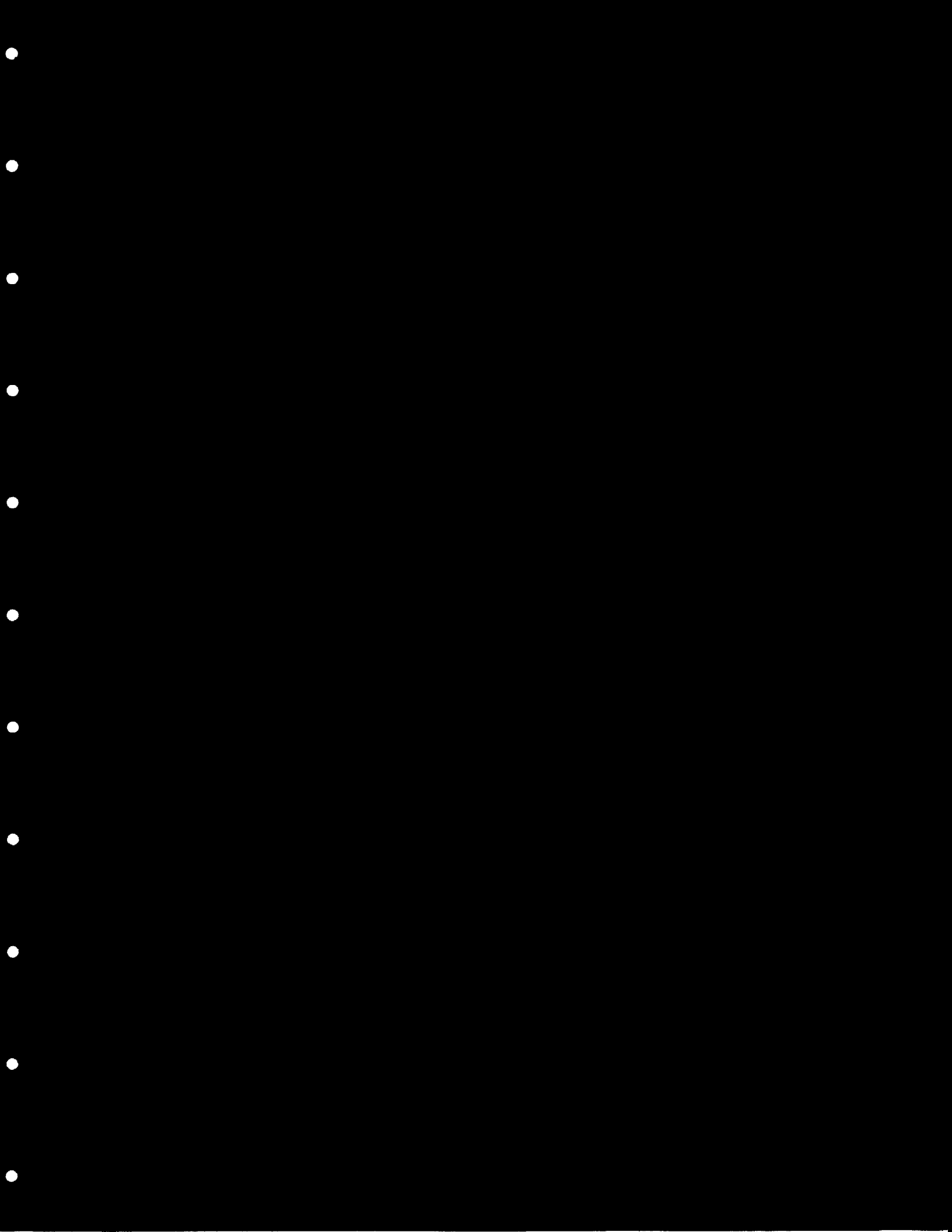
Contact a reference archivist at: [reagan.library@nara.gov](mailto:reagan.library@nara.gov)

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/citing>

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

10/31/90

Beatrix wants  
to see this man  
she returns —  
ca: 3 weeks



REAGAN FOR PRESIDENT  
CAMPAIGN PLAN

June 29, 1980

FIRST DRAFT: COPY #2

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I:	Purposes, Functions and Use of the Campaign Plan .....	1
SECTION II:	Conditions of Victory .....	7
SECTION III:	The Current Political Environment.....	11
SECTION IV:	Campaign Issues .....	40
SECTION V:	Voter Perceptions .....	73
SECTION VI:	Reagan Ballot Strength and Win Constituencies .....	84
SECTION VII:	State Targeting 1980 .....	104
SECTION VIII:	Carter's 1980 Campaign: What Can We Expect? .....	118
SECTION IX:	Campaign Objectives and Strategies ...	136

SECTION I

PURPOSES, FUNCTIONS AND USE OF THE CAMPAIGN PLAN

SECTION I  
PURPOSES, FUNCTIONS AND USE OF THE CAMPAIGN PLAN

This plan, if used and applied properly, should assist in performing five key functions. It will:

- establish an action frame of reference for the campaign;
- lay the foundation for the generation of a consistent and coordinated set of tactics and action plans developed by those with the responsibility and authority to implement them;
- provide the base of assumptions against which requisite changes can be made as the campaign unfolds;
- develop guides for the allocation of campaign resources; and
- serve as a common backgrounder for the candidate and his key staff.

Below, each of these functions will be discussed.

An Action Frame of Reference

Only if the key decision makers agree on the major campaign objectives and strategies will our efforts to elect Ronald Reagan to the Presidency in November of 1980 be successful. Given the tight time frame and limited budget we face, it is essential that those responsible for implementing the major elements in the 1980 presidential campaign have similar views about what is important and operate from the same set of basic assumptions concerning what must be done over the next four months.

Hence, the first function of this plan is to provide a consistent and agreed-upon action frame of reference for the campaign.

### Foundation for the Generation of Consistent Tactics and Action Plans

Against that frame of reference which establishes campaign goals, objectives and strategies, other members of the team will develop for their specific areas of responsibility the tactics and action plans they judge to be consistent with the major strategic elements. Further, they may also identify additional strategic objectives they feel are important to the effective exercise of their individual responsibilities. These will be added to the plan. Specifically, the plan will be rounded out with requisite tactics and action plans through the inputs of:

- (1) Pete Dailey: Media
- (2) Mike Deaver: The Tour
- (3) Ed Meese: Policy and Issues
- (4) Lyn Nofziger: Communications
- (5) Bill Timmons: Political Coordinator
- (6) Richard Wirthlin: Research and Political  
Information Systems

### Base of Assumptions Against Which Requisite Changes Can Be Made

Given the volatility of the 1980 electorate and the still largely unknown impact of John Anderson's candidacy, the plan provides the base of assumptions against which we can update and disseminate any changes in the strategic objectives as the campaign unfolds.



While most of the assumptions and strategic objectives will hold throughout the entire campaign, the plan is set up to easily incorporate any changes into the mix and follow through the impact those changes induce in the specific tactics and action plans.

### Guides for the Allocation of Campaign Resources

The plan develops some of the general operational guides needed to allocate efficiently the campaign dollar resources against always-expanding campaign "needs." Efficiency in this case is defined as maximizing the number of electors Ronald Reagan secures in the Fall with a given amount of dollar resources.

More specifically, the candidate's time, and the time of major spokespersons will also be allocated to the various states with additional precision developed from the plan's state targeting scheme.

### A Common Backgrounder for the Candidate and His Staff

Perhaps one of the most important functions of a plan is to brief and background the candidate and other key members of the staff so that we will all march to the beat of the same drummer.

### Organization of This Report

The campaign plan is designed to move from the very general to the very specific. There are three major thrusts -- (1) a summary of the conditions of victory for the campaign, (2) the data, informational and subjective sources from which those strategic elements were drawn, and (3) a detailed review of the campaign's goals, objectives and strategies.

Section II which follows ("Conditions of Victory") provides a quick overview of the conditions requisite for a Reagan victory in November.

Sections III through VIII catalog seven key types of information that have generated the strategy considerations. These are:

- the general political environment (III);
- issue saliency (IV);
- voter perceptions of Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter and John Anderson (V);
- present ballot strength of Reagan, Carter and Anderson, and the present and target "win constituencies" needed for a Reagan victory (VI);
- optimum state coalitions needed for a Reagan win (VII); and
- Carter's 1980 campaign: what we can expect (VIII).

The third major thrust discusses the conditions of victory from Section II in much greater detail under the rubric "Campaign Objectives and Strategies." (Section IX).

In short, the plan is designed to provide the reader with the option of examining very quickly the key strategic objectives while affording him opportunity to examine very carefully the basis upon which these and other strategic elements were generated. Thus the reader may want to read Sections I, II and IX and then refer to Sections III through VIII on the points that interest him most.

The Appendices contain primarily two types of information. The first involves information used to document and underpin the strategic elements, and the second will contain the various tactical plans for the major campaign divisions -- policies and issues, the tour, communications, media research, and the political division.

Given the volatility of the electorate and the rapid tempo of presidential campaigns, some may argue that it is futile to gauge what the political environment will be even in the near future, making impossible the task of planning a campaign. Not so. As Peter Drucker observes:

"Planning does not deal with future decisions, but with the future of present decisions."

Yes, the time is now -- to plan.

SECTION II  
CONDITIONS OF VICTORY

## SECTION II CONDITIONS OF VICTORY

These "conditions of victory" have evolved from in-depth consideration of (1) the current political environment, (2) the campaign issues, (3) the present voter support and perceptions of Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter and John Anderson, (4) the analysis of our basic win coalitions, (5) the first cut at targeting the states, and (6) our assumptions and projections about the thrust of the Carter campaign. These sources constitute the six major sections of the plan that follows.

### Conditions of Victory

Governor Ronald Reagan can win the 1980 presidential election in November if . . .

- the campaign projects the image of Governor Reagan as embodying the values that a majority of Americans currently think are important in their president -- namely, strength, maturity, decisiveness, resolve, determination, compassion, trustworthiness and steadiness;
- the Governor's natural leadership qualities demonstrate to the public that he is capable of dealing with the pressing problems of the nation, restoring the country to a position of world leadership, and maintaining world peace;
- the public image of Governor Reagan as a man of action, a doer who can solve the nation's economic problems, and a leader who can get the country moving on the right track again, is broadened to include larger blocs of voters;
- the attack strategy against President Carter reinforces his perceived weaknesses as an ineffective and error-prone leader, incapable of implementing policies and not respected by our allies or enemies;

- the candidate and/or campaign avoid fatal, self-inflicted blunders;
- the conservative, Republican Reagan base can be expanded to include a sufficient number of moderates, Independents, soft Republicans and soft Democrats to offset Carter's natural Democratic base and his incumbency advantage;
- the impact of John Anderson on the race stabilizes, and he ends up cutting more into Carter's electoral vote base than into Reagan's;
- the general strategy is built upon the premise that the election will be won in the last 20 days of the campaign, and that limited campaign resources should be encumbered early so they may be allocated dynamically in the waning days of the campaign;
- the majority of the public is convinced that Governor Reagan can present the country with a believable economic plan which increases productivity, reduces inflation and increases jobs;
- the campaign is able to turn Carter's federal "grantsmanship" from what has been a political asset into a political liability. (Carter may well have overplayed his hand in using the spending power of the White House so blatantly during the primaries. This may afford us an opening to keep him on the defensive and thus sensitize him against using his grant-making power as an incumbent.)
- we can neutralize Carter's "October Surprise;"
- the campaign counters Carter's claim that he is the "man of peace" by dramatizing the loss of American power and prestige abroad suffered since 1976;
- we blunt Carter's personal attacks against Reagan through pre-emption, neutralization and inoculation:
  - . use the convention to launch our surrogate attack that it is Carter who is "dumb, dangerous and deceptive."
  - . prepare to neutralize the Carterite attacks by combing the Reagan record so that we know exactly what it is, by establishing definitive positions on the major issues, by responding to any attacks on the Governor's record, and by preparing spokespersons who are non-partisan or Democrats who will come to Reagan's defense.
  - . inoculate the voters against Carter's personal attacks by pointing out in the early stages of the campaign through

surrogates that Carter has in the past, and will in the future, practice piranha politics.

- . minimize the credibility of a Carter attack that Ronald Reagan is anti-union, anti-Black and anti-elderly -- and a captive of the Right Wing.
- Governor Reagan can win the easiest and least expensive minimum of 270 electoral votes with victories in: California, Illinois, Texas, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Virginia, Tennessee, Florida, Maryland, Idaho, South Dakota, Wyoming, Vermont, Utah, Nebraska, North Dakota, New Hampshire, Kansas, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona, Oregon, Alaska, Iowa, Colorado, Washington and Maine (302 electoral votes);
- the issues of special opportunity (e.g., farm issues, urban affairs, health care, care for the elderly, immigrants, justice in America, the family and neighborhood) can be used to project the image of Reagan as a compassionate leader and to attract large blocs of swing voters to the Reagan coalition base;
- every effort possible is made to get out the identified Reagan voters.

SECTION III  
THE CURRENT POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT



### SECTION III THE CURRENT POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

#### The Political Givens of the 1980 Presidential Election

##### Carter's Incumbency

History teaches us that there is a two to one chance that an incumbent President will defeat his challenger; hence, the historical probability would hold that Jimmy Carter will be able to ward off the challenge of Ronald Reagan in November 1980 and retain the Presidency. Of the 22 Presidents who have sought re-election, 14 of them have succeeded. With the recent exception of President Ford (who was not elected), every incumbent President since Herbert Hoover who has sought re-election has been victorious. Thus, unseating Jimmy Carter will be extremely difficult, even unlikely.

To most political observers the assertion that the incumbent has a significant advantage is so self-evident it hardly deserves lengthy attention. As a result, campaigns are all too frequently planned without seriously considering how to overcome, counter or offset the natural, even inevitable, advantages of incumbency. Incumbency reduces the costs of running; it generates a resource base which eases the strain on scarce campaign resources--time, money, media access, and manpower--needed to secure a victory. The incumbent--not the challenger--has the position, the staff, the attention from the electronic and print media, the claim to experience, the record, and the control over the timing of many political events that will affect the campaign in a positive direction. The principal advantages of incumbency for the Carter campaign are:

- Carter can use the Presidency as a way of acting Presidential and "above" the dirty business of campaign (partisan) politics.
- Carter can mix Rose Garden and "shirt sleeve" strategies so he is out among the people when he can control political events affecting the campaign, and retreat to the White House when domestic and international events are not particularly conducive to his candidacy.
- Carter can control, at least better than anyone else in America, the timing of key government actions, policies and announcements. Though no President has total control over all politically relevant events, the President is frequently able to control the timing of many events and policies, e.g. transfers of funds, reprogramming of funds, tax reduction plans, fiscal and monetary policies, foreign policy overtures and international treaties.
- Carter can use the fact that he has been President for the last four years to create the impression that if allowed to stay in office, policies put into place thus far will begin to bear fruit in the next term. A change in Presidential leadership will pre-maturely abort all the good that would otherwise result, for the benefit of the country.
- Regardless of the principle of equal time, Carter will have double media coverage both as President and presidential contender. The selection of newsworthy items by the media will give natural exposure to Carter as President conducting the business of state and as a candidate seeking to maintain the continuity of policy, the former being probably more important than the latter.

It is obviously impossible to undo incumbency, but it can be treated and responded to in the 1980 Reagan for President campaign by:

- never under-estimating or ignoring the advantages of an incumbent president;
- never under-estimating the power of the President to control the timing of selected political events; hence, prepare for "Carter's October Surprise;"
- never under-estimating the dignity of the President and the respect the public has for the Office.
- Nevertheless, do not be hesitant about confronting the President. There has been an increasing tendency in America to take on the President politically, e.g. Robert

Kennedy's challenge of Lyndon Johnson, Ronald Reagan's confronting President Ford in 1976 and Ted Kennedy's attack on President Carter in 1980.

- Pressure should be brought to bear against Carter to come out of the White House; hence, debates and other campaign challenges should be made repeatedly to reduce the President's opportunity to retreat to the Rose Garden and act Presidential.
- Incumbency, for all of its advantages, also has the disadvantage of there being a record for the Carter administration to have to defend. The Carter campaign strategy will be to create the public expectation that policies will come to fruition in the next term. The Reagan for President campaign strategy must be to force the White House to defend its record, and to point out consistently and regularly the failures of the Carter policies and the impossibility that anything significant could come in the next term.

#### Democratic Alliance Gives Carter an Edge

The dominant political coalition for the last forty years is the electoral coalition born out of the New Deal. It was a coalition of the "cities and the South," and the coalition that the Carter campaign solidified in 1976 to win the Presidency. The New Deal Democratic coalition is an issue-oriented, working-class based, ethnic, urban centered alliance. The principal constituencies are union members, the poor, the Black, central city dwellers, Catholics and Jews, and voters in the South. The New Deal realignment produced political majorities in the North and the South at the local, state and national levels dominating politics in the country from 1932 until the postwar years. Normal voting and partisan majorities were determined in the United States largely along the lines of these loosely integrated constituencies. But the election of General Eisenhower broke the string of Democratic presidential victories and became a watershed date for the decline of the New Deal Democratic coalition.

The Democratic coalition attracted from 45-52% of the voters in the country from the late 1930s until the mid-1960s. Since 1952,

however, there has been a decline in the proportions of voters who affiliate with either of the major parties. In 1952 the Democrats held the allegiance of 47% of the voters, but by the mid-term elections in 1978 the rate had dropped to 39%. Today the proportion of Democratic loyalists runs between 42 and 45%. The significance of this fact, despite the well documented decline in party affiliation, is that--regardless of the gradual decline in the Democratic alliance, the Reagan for President 1980 campaign must actively work to overcome the strong numeric lead of the Democrats.

Strong party loyalties have declined perceptibly over the last three decades, but the impact on the Republican party is more dramatic than the effect on the Democratic party. The Republican party was smaller initially and it has been unable to take advantage of the declines in the Democratic party, especially in the South, because these voters have gone primarily to an independent status. Independents constitute somewhere between 28%-32% of the voting electorate; the figures fluctuate considerably from election to election depending on the candidates.

The pool of independent voters has increased steadily since 1952. Neither the Democrats nor the Republicans have drawn off support from one another, and yet despite their dwindling sizes, both parties still manage to command the loyalties of millions of Americans. A fact often forgotten, however, is that a majority of independents vote and act politically like partisans. Issues and candidate images frequently cut across party lines, but few candidates are independents. Since the late sixties, party loyalty has remained very stable with Democrats, plus those Independents who "lean" toward the Democrats, accounting for 54% of the total electorate.

The 1980 Reagan for President campaign must come to terms with the following facts:

- The traditional Republican base is simply not large enough to win the Presidency given the size and remaining loyalty millions of Americans have toward the Democratic party.
- It will be necessary to expand the coalition base to win the general election in November and to establish the governing coalition for the next four years. The Reagan for President 1980 campaign must be forward looking enough to build the larger coalition that can win the election, and solidify the coalition that can govern the nation after the election has been won.
- It will be necessary to define the manner in which the appeal will be made to soft Republicans, independents and soft Democrats to increase the size of the electoral coalition base to win the Presidency.
- There will be conflicts within the Republican party between the more conservative and moderate elements as they solidify around Governor Reagan as the Republican candidate.

#### Perceptions Rule Political Choices

People act on the basis of their perception of reality; there is, in fact, no political reality beyond what is perceived by the voters. There is substantial evidence that voters support candidates whose image, ideology and stands on political issues are perceived to be closest to their own. The closer the perceived proximity between the voter's own ideology and stands on the issues, then the greater the likelihood the voter will support that candidate.

Perceptions are so critical that if the Carter campaign is successful in creating the impression that Reagan is "dumb, dangerous, and a distorter of facts," the vote in November will go against the Governor.

Perceptions are a function of the candidate's activities and style, the campaign organization and its media activities, the opponents, attack strategies, and perhaps most important of all, the

media--electronic and print. The media is an important instrument in the fashioning of a political image; they are the people who not only report the news, but actively work to interpret it for the public. Hence it is essential for the Reagan for President 1980 campaign to:

- Reinforce through the Governor's speeches and the paid media the perception of the Governor as a leader and insure that the media and the public have a perception of him as a leader capable of giving direction to the country.
- Develop campaign strategies which will undercut the Carter strategy of "demonizing" Governor Reagan,--i.e., making him out to be the Barry Goldwater of the 1980s.
- Anticipate that Carter will spend considerable campaign resources to show Reagan is an unacceptable political alternative.

#### The Past May Not Be Prologue

There is a tendency to run presidential campaigns by identifying the trends of previous presidential elections and steering a campaign course which is fundamentally determined, even rigidified by history. There is considerable evidence to suggest that the 1980 presidential campaign ought to be informed and guided by history, but that the contemporary political environment has altered so significantly that strategies ought to weight critical contemporary forces over some historical trends. This is not to suggest, however, that history should not be used to determine the allocation of many campaign resources. Historical trends are important in the overall plan of the Reagan for President 1980 campaign strategy. In the past, soft Democrats gave early support to Republican presidential candidates, but to a large extent this flirtation frequently ended by November. Hence, we cannot ignore historical trends, but the key monitoring mechanism will likely be timely survey research. Every effort should be made to weigh properly the forces currently working in the American political environment.

Among the most important factors for which history will not be particularly informative are:

- The significance of the break-down of the Democratic New Deal coalition for Governor Reagan's candidacy;
- The fluidity and volatility of the 1980 American voter; and,
- The import of the Anderson candidacy.

#### Break-up of the Democratic Coalition

There has been a considerable erosion in the Democratic coalition that elected Jimmy Carter in 1976 and had been the dominant coalition in national politics since the 1930s. Conventionally the Republican party has not been able to take advantage of the defection from the Democratic coalition base. Republican presidential candidates, for example Richard Nixon, have been able to attract these defecting voters but because of Watergate the defection was never translated into new permanent allegiance with the Republican party or ballot. The 1980 Reagan for President campaign must convert into Reagan votes the disappointment felt by--

- Southern white protestants,
- blue collar workers in the industrial states,
- urban ethnics, and
- rural voters, especially in upstate New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.

There is every reason to suspect that the Carter campaign will not be able to make the argument believable that, "The Democrats are the only ones who can control the economy," and "If the Republicans are allowed to win in November, they will inevitably foul up the country's economic well-being." The rate of unemployment is running high,

higher than expected, across the country. Even unemployment funds created to soften the shock of the recession are already depleted, and double digit inflation continues to hurt everyone. These dismal economic factors will continue to erode the solidarity of the Democratic coalition, and the Reagan for President 1980 campaign must continue to develop voter appeal strategies that will attract the voters most directly and negatively affected by these economic failures of the Carter Administration.

The Democratic coalition was formed in response to the economic problems of the 1930s. Many of the working class voters that were drawn into the Roosevelt New Deal are now dissatisfied with the Democratic party's and the President's handling of the economy. But these voters will not switch to the Reagan candidacy without a strong appeal to them from the candidate and the campaign. It is absolutely essential that the campaign differentiate between the official position of the unions and the rank and file members of those unions. The Governor has a strong appeal among the blue collar, union vote in America. These blue collar workers want a tax cut and since the Governor has long criticized the Carter Administration's high taxes this provides a good foundation from which to make that appeal. Both leaders and the rank and file will be equally wary of the Governor because of his position on antitrust restrictions on labor, so the working class must be wooed and treated deftly.

#### The Fluidity and Volatility of the 1980 Voter

A critical dynamic factor affecting the outcome of the 1980 Presidential election is the fluidity and the volatility of the voters' social and political preferences. There is little question but that the primary season is a very dynamic, complex, even atypical period in American political life. But it became apparent that voters in 1980 are much more willing to move back and forth between the available political candidates. Not only are they apparently less



willing to be firmly committed to a candidate and quite willing to shift their allegiance, but they are prone to do it abruptly. The rapid changes in the political environment, the speed at which news is disseminated and the impact of scandals and blunders on vote preferences have all caused sudden and dramatic shifting in the vote patterns.

Survey research showed Governor Reagan behind in New Hampshire after Iowa by 8% and, 48 hours later, ahead by 20%. President Carter's job approval rating has undergone dramatic shifts varying as much as thirty percentage points. Prior to Pennsylvania's primary, Governor Reagan was leading comfortably, yet after the "old facts" and distortion of information problem and the media's handling of the incident, plus the injection of almost a million media dollars by Bush, the vote shifted to Bush who was the subsequent winner of the primary.

The essential idea is that the electorate is fragmented and uncertain; as yet they have not stabilized their political preferences. Hence no constituency can be taken for granted or assumed to be securely within anyone's coalition. The best words to describe politics in America are "fragmentation," "decentralization," and "disarray." The New Deal no longer adequately describes politics in this country and while voters know there is a conservative revival, they remain uncertain as to where to gravitate politically. The party bosses are gone and nothing has replaced them. Direct primaries have diminished the role and power of party organizations. The media's role in disseminating the news has further diminished the function of the political parties. Most issues cut across party lines or are sufficiently complex as to blur most party and ideological distinctions.

Under the conditions of voter fluidity and volatility, the Reagan for President 1980 campaign should:

- Give clear and unambiguous information about the Governor's stands on the critical issues such as inflation, taxes, unemployment, U.S.-Soviet relations, energy, and the role of government.
- Convey the clearest possible message that Reagan stands for leadership and control. The prevailing view in America is that no one is in control; the prevailing impression given by the White House is that no one can be in control; and, the prevailing view abroad is that the will to be in control is gone.
- Never treat a Reagan constituency as solidly in the Reagan base coalition. Coalition building depends on politically cohesive blocs of voters with interests searching for a candidate to carry their cause. While many blocs of voters still exist, the fragmentation of politics in this country broke up many of these voter groups. Presidential appeals have to be very broad and all-encompassing.
- Make consistent and frequent appeals to the voters for their support.

#### The Anderson Factor

John Anderson's candidacy may well be the most single important factor in the 1980 presidential campaign because it introduces high uncertainty into the race. Anderson is vying for the Presidency without the benefit of party support or of an ideological or political movement. He may well be, however, the candidate of the political center which allows him to influence the race in alternate ways. This position gives him several possible roles:

- He may throw the election from one of the two major candidates to the other;
- He may send the election into the House of Representatives;
- He may be a third party challenger whose support erodes well before November, hence alternating strategies;
- Or he may take the prize going away.

Each of these possibilities has an unknown probability; they appear almost equally possible, and hence uncertain.

It is common to hear the statement that Anderson hurts Carter more than Reagan, but this assertion is questionable. The issue is considerably more complex than might be initially supposed. It is more appropriate to assume that Anderson will hurt both candidates equally, or that at different levels of the vote he affects Carter and Reagan differently. Anderson may hurt Carter more than Reagan if Anderson's vote support is between 19-28%. But Reagan may be damaged most if Anderson is between either 10-15% or 29% and above.

Anderson's candidacy is personal; he has gone around the GOP party structure and the primaries to establish a viable challenge. But the polls show his support is drawn from centrist, independent voters whose numbers have increased significantly since the 1960's, and these are the voters who many reasonable analysts believe elect the President every four years.

Anderson's candidacy is viable because:

- He is largely a media candidate, not dependent on a party base to sustain him.
- He is a centrist candidate, which gives him a large pool of potential voters.
- He is an "Independent" whose attraction is primarily because he is an alternative for the protest vote against both Reagan and Carter.
- He is articulate and in a position to run an anti-Reagan and anti-Carter campaign with virtually nothing to lose.
- He alters the traditional coalitions of the major parties by cutting across the customary political alignments. Hence, coalitions become more important than parties which adversely affects Reagan more so than Carter. This adverse effect stems from the fact that the Democratic coalition has always been composed of diverse and reasonably large constituencies of the population. The Republican coalition, on the other hand, is more homogeneous and

comparatively not as large, hence more likely to suffer from a third party because of the erosion produced by the Anderson candidacy.

- Anderson's vote strength is in the eight most populated states, and the winner-take-all formula for electoral votes is particularly advantageous to his candidacy. In New Jersey, Anderson matches at present our vote support and runs 12 points ahead of Carter.
- There is every reason to suppose Anderson will be on at least forty state ballots despite snarls in the state regulations. California is the key state; if he is not on the California ballot, Anderson has said that he may have to reconsider his entire candidacy.
- If Anderson's candidacy begins to fade, the timing will be critical to both major candidates, but perhaps more so for Reagan than Carter. This is because of the uncertainty about where the moderate Republican vote (17% of the electorate) would go if Anderson is no longer in the race.

All of these factors combine to make Anderson a serious problem because of the considerable uncertainty he injects into the political mix for both Reagan and Carter.

The national Anderson vote strength in May and June stabilized between 19 and 24%.

	Gallup (6/5-8)	D/M/I (6/9-15)	Gallup (6/14-15)	Harris (6/5-9)	Wm. Hamilton (5/22)	Roper (May)	D/M/I (moved)
Carter	36%	34%	35%	34%	37%	29%	36%
Reagan	40	36	36	39	36	34	43
Anderson	19	20	23	24	19	20	15
Undecided	5	10	6	3	8	17	8

There is no question that Carter's strategy is to tackle Anderson first even before Reagan. At the 19-24% level, Anderson eats into Carter's vote more so than he does Reagan's.

- Without Anderson in the ballot, Carter polls 68% of the liberal, white Democratic vote, but with him in the race, Carter is able to poll only 49%.

The Carter strategy will undoubtedly be to confront every attempt by Anderson to get on the state ballots by forcing him to satisfy every filing regulation, and to force the "real John Anderson" out in the open. Carter's strategists will attempt the following: show how inconsistent Anderson's voting record is, highlight the fatal flaw of Anderson's proposed Christianity amendment requiring all federal officials to recognize the supremacy of Christ, and attack the idea that Anderson is an "Independent." At the 19-24% level Carter must worry that Anderson will draw off sufficiently from his vote support to make his re-election highly unlikely.

It seems apparent that the Anderson factor implies at least the following major expectations and specific strategic considerations.

- Anderson is especially dangerous to Reagan if the Anderson factor is underestimated.
- Anderson's longevity in the race is critical especially if he is unable to maintain a viable candidacy through November. If Anderson departs anytime before November, it will introduce increased uncertainty and force changes in the Reagan strategy to appeal to the moderate Republicans and other constituencies previously lost to the Anderson coalition.
- Carter, it can be expected, will lead the fight against Anderson both in terms of his being on the state ballots and of the constituencies in Anderson's coalition.
- The Reagan strategy toward Anderson must be different if Anderson's national support base ranges between 10 and 15%, between 19 and 28%, and between 29 and 35%.
- In the 10-15% range Anderson hurts Reagan's Republican base support and draws comparatively little away from Carter. Hence, if Anderson should drop to this level (perhaps because he runs completely out of money), the strategy ought to be to attack vigorously the Anderson candidacy as a throw-away vote, to argue (a) that if Anderson were elected he would be a President without political party support in Congress, and (b) that the Anderson candidacy de-stabilizes the two-party system in America.
- If Anderson is running between 19 and 28% of the national rate, the Reagan strategy should be to attack Anderson on

the issues, but not elevate the importance of his candidacy by giving it too much attention or targeting too many resources toward it. Let Carter's campaign assume the principal burdeen of the challenging Anderson.

- If Anderson's challenge picks up strength and by September or early October (or even before) he is drawing between 29-35% of the ballot, then every effort should be made to attack Anderson directly as a candidate without a political base with no linkages in Congress if elected, for his inconsistent voting record in Congress, for his end-run of the normal process of securing a nomination, challenge any state ballots where he may still not be on the ticket, work to secure the election of Republican members of the House of Representatives, and re-allocate campaign resources in the major states (eight) where Anderson is strongest.

#### Profile of the U.S. Electorate

The major groupings of registered voters from the June survey reveal the following:

- There are slightly more than one and one-half times as many Democratic identifiers as Republican identifiers; specifically the percentages are 30% Republican, 51% Democratic and 19% Independent. Thus, to win, Reagan must not only get a massive majority of the Republican vote and large numbers of Independents, but he must also cut substantially into Carter's Democratic base vote.
- Those with at least some college education or more are slightly less numerous than those whose education includes high school graduation or less (47% versus 53%, respectively).
- Those with high incomes (\$20,000 or more) make up fully 39% of the electorate.
- In the occupational breakdowns, 14% are white collar workers, 23% are professionals, and blue collar workers account for 26% of the population; 2% are farm workers, 7% government workers and 22% retired.
- The young (17-34), the middle-aged (35-55) and the older (56 and over) voters each constitute roughly one-third of the total population, with the young being a slightly larger group.
- There are one and two-thirds times as many Protestants as

Catholics, with about one-sixth the population being of another religion.

- Non-union families make up four-fifths of the population.
- The suburban voters comprise nearly one-third of the electorate.

An examination of the likelihood that various subgroups discussed above will turn out to vote is outlined below.

- The older voters are almost twice as likely to vote as are the young, hence their contribution will be larger than that of the young.
- Republican voters are much more likely to turn out to vote than Democrats, but the higher affiliation advantage of Democrats offsets the Republican turnout advantage.
- The highly educated are two to three times as likely to turn out as are the poorly educated.
- The numerous group of "Born Again" protestants and "high church" protestants are very likely to vote--and to vote Republican.
- Voters in the Mountain, Pacific, Farm Belt and Great Lakes regions constitutes almost one-half the population and also have the highest turnout probability.

See Tables 1 and 2, which follow.

Table 1

## Profile of the U.S. Electorate

(Statistics from Decision/Making/Information National Survey, June, 1980)

---

	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Party I.D. Strength</u>	
Strong Republican	8
Weak Republican	14
Lean to Republican	8
Independent/No preference	19
Lean to Democrat	9
Weak Democrat	25
Strong Democrat	17
<u>Voter Types</u>	
Conservative Republicans	20
Moderate/Liberal Republicans	7
Conservative white ticket-splitters	8
Moderate/Liberal ticket-splitters	11
Conservative white Democrats	12
Liberal white Democrats	22
Black/Hispanic (not GOP)	11
Other (not GOP)	9
<u>Education</u>	
Some high school or less	21
High school graduate	32
Some college/Vocational	25
College graduate	14
Post-graduate	8
<u>Income</u>	
Under \$5,000	8
\$ 5,000 - \$ 9,999	14
\$10,000 - \$14,999	15
\$15,000 - \$19,999	16
\$20,000 - \$29,999	23
\$30,000 - \$39,999	9
\$40,000 or more	7
Refused	7



Table 1 (Continued)  
 Profile of the U.S. Electorate  
 (Statistics from Decision/Making/Information National Survey, June, 1980)

---

	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Occupation</u>	
Professional	23
Government employee	7
Farm owner/Manager	1
Manager/Official	9
Clerical/Sales	5
Craftsmen/Forman	10
Operatives	3
Laborers	12
Farm labor forman	1
Retired	22
Unemployed	2
Housewives/Students	4
Refused	1
 <u>Age</u>	
17 - 24	10
25 - 34	25
35 - 44	18
45 - 54	15
55 - 64	15
65 and older	18
 <u>Sex</u>	
Male	49
Female	51
 <u>Religion</u>	
"Born again" Protestant	32
High-church Protestant	14
Low-church Protestant	9
"Born again" Catholic	8
Roman Catholic	24
Jewish/Other/None	14

Table 1 (Continued)  
 Profile of the U.S. Electorate  
 (Statistics from Decision/Making/Information National Survey, June, 1980)

---

	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Labor Union</u>	
Yes	19
No	81
<u>Location of Residence</u>	
Central metropolitan	17
Suburban metropolitan	29
Small city/Town	45
Rural	9
<u>Geopolitical Area</u>	
New England	7
Middle Atlantic	23
Great Lakes	25
Farm Belt	5
Mountain	5
Pacific	13
Outer South	15
Deep South	7

Table 2  
Turnout Probability  
(by Selected Variables from D/M/I June Survey)

	High (%)	Average (%)	Low (%)
<u>Party</u>			
Republican	45	31	24
Democrat	27	34	39
Independent/Other	32	36	32
<u>Voter Types</u>			
Conservative Republicans	49	29	22
Moderate/Liberal Republicans	39	34	27
Conservative white ticket-splitters	34	37	29
Moderate/liberal ticket-splitters	27	32	41
Conservative white Democrats	26	33	41
Liberal white Democrats	32	38	30
Black/Hispanic (not GOP)	16	33	51
Other (not GOP)	28	38	34
<u>Education</u>			
Some high school or less	-	27	73
High school graduate	18	39	43
Some college/Vocational	56	35	9
College graduate	56	31	13
Post-graduate	62	31	6
<u>Age</u>			
17 - 24	12	36	52
25 - 34	19	39	42
35 - 44	51	31	19
45 - 54	44	30	25
55 - 64	41	35	25
65 and older	30	31	39
<u>Sex</u>			
Male	32	34	34
Female	33	34	32
<u>Religion</u>			
"Born again" Protestant	36	33	31
High-church Protestant	36	34	29
Low-church Protestant	26	28	46
"Born again" Catholic	28	30	42
Roman Catholic	28	37	35
Jewish/Other/None	36	35	29
<u>Geopolitical Area</u>			
New England	29	44	28
Middle Atlantic	31	36	34
Great Lakes	32	29	39
Farm Belt	32	27	41
Mountain	44	29	27
Pacific	37	36	28
Outer South	33	34	33
Deep South	30	40	30

## The Mood of America

Since the quiet, relatively passive years of the Eisenhower period, the American public has been severely battered by political events. The New Frontier and Great Society strategies of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, the racial revolution of the 1960s, the most unpopular war in American history in Vietnam, the alienation of American youth, Watergate, the near-impeachment of an American President, the resignation of President Nixon, and the pardon have exhausted the public politically. This feeling is reflected in the national mood. From 1973 to 1980 fewer than 20% of the country felt the nation was on the "right track;" seventy-five out of every one hundred Americans thought the country was misdirected and in disarray.

The 1976 Presidential campaign was conducted in a political climate where the public yearned for political, presidential leadership that could supplant disarray with order, mismanagement with management, and malaise with confidence. It was extremely difficult for the public to define Jimmy Carter, either the man or his stand on the issues. But for a narrow margin of Americans Carter created the expectation that his leadership could alter the mood of the country and restore to Americans the confidence in their country and its institutions that had been misplaced. In early 1977, more than 365 days after the beginning of the Carter Administration, there was an 11% increase in the proportion of Americans who thought the country was moving on the right track again. A year into the Carter Administration over half of the country thought Carter was at least as good, if not a better President, than they had expected.

In 1976-1977, Carter, the man, inspired the public's trust; Carter, the President, was initially perceived to be able to restore to the country its sense of mission in the world and direction in domestic affairs. But by mid-term the attitude changed. The mood of the country dropped to its pre-1976 Presidential election level; and the President's popularity fell off from the honeymoon highs above

60% to 43% in early 1978. Carter's popularity was lower than every American president since Roosevelt (except for Ford who does not have a mid-term approval rating) at the mid-term point. The public continued to see Carter as likeable, religious, moral and believable, but not too sure of himself, uncertain, indecisive and lacking in strong leadership qualities.

### Voter Values and Aspirations

There is a tendency in our increasingly complex and highly technological society to forget that American Democracy is less a form of government, and more of a romantic preference for a particular value structure. The most fundamental tenet in the American value structure is our confidence in the malleability of the future by individual, spontaneous, voluntary efforts by a community of men. Each element -- community, individualism, spontaneity and voluntarism -- is indispensable to shaping destiny. In this preferred social order, each man is an individual steward whose contributions modify the whole social order, and who is in turn modified by the whole.

The shattering of traditional confidence in America in the last twenty years stems from an erosion in the expectation that given an abundant environment and an adequate amount of time, the individual--with sufficient diligence and ingenuity--would achieve a measure of economic security and a reasonably comfortable lifestyle. There is a sense in the country that Americans' confidence has waned because the unprecedented optimism they once had about the future was based on a generous environment which is now perhaps more fragile and requires greater planning and care. Time, rather than being an ally of man and his ingenuity, is running out. Rather than coping through increasingly more adaptive practical solutions, Americans are losing confidence in pragmatism. The methods of expediency, the essence of pragmatism, are not measuring up against the problematic demands of

contemporary life. Furthermore, the confidence in public and private institutions for the purpose of safe-guarding the natural right of all individuals to realize their potentials is being supplanted by the alternative moral imperative, the well-being of the institution, i.e. the company or the government, is paramount to the well-being of the individual.

The lack of confidence in the central tenet of the American value structure relates directly to the American presidency. The presidency is constantly confronted with the leadership responsibility of creating new confidences and maintaining traditional ones. Confidence is essential to legitimacy in government. When changing circumstances compromise the traditional value structure, a crisis of legitimacy over government emerges. The primal questions of "who governs, and why should the governed obey the governors?" emerge demanding satisfactory answers.

The crisis of confidence is not serious because it is a manifestation of a public's self-doubt, as the Carter Administration has supposed. It is serious because the public does not have confidence that under Carter's lead the future will be rendered more certain and more fulfilling. The confidence gap is doubly serious because it is apparent that the Carter Administration has been unable to serve its morale-building function to lead the country out of a condition of self-doubt and timidity. Presidents must "...make the most of their unique opportunities in the 'bully pulpit'--to clarify the issues and the choices, to educate and persuade, to rally support around what needs to be done. A few of our recent presidents--one thinks of FDR and JFK--did this well. Their leadership had a morale-building element to it. They conveyed a sense of hope. They communicated optimism."

The primary leadership function of the American President is to reaffirm constantly the country's highest purposes and the premise that individual efforts can make a positive difference in the future.

- Voters are optimistic that the nation can be put back on the right track through the selection of a few good leaders. Leadership is the key to solving the nation's problems.
- Voters are firm in their belief that the problems facing the United States are the result of poor leadership and are not the inevitable result of uncontrollable economic and political forces.

### Frustration and Political Cynicism

While the central issue on the contemporary political scene is leadership, it is the public reaction to leadership void in the form of growing frustration and political cynicism which will set the tone of the 1980 election season. Government failures always bring criticism. However, a period of continued government ineptitude results in a public cynicism which is more pronounced and widespread than the negativism which stems from criticism of individual government actions. As a result of the persistent fumbings of the Carter Administration, voters have developed a pervasive disenchantment with the federal government. The government is, in the mind of the electorate, incapable of dealing with the problems facing America today.

- Government has overreached its mandate and is engaging in activities which the voters deem to be illegitimate as government functions.
- Voters see government as being controlled by a few large business and labor interests. This perception has lead voters to rebel against bigness as it occurs throughout society--big government, big business, and big labor.
- Voters cynicism is viewed operationally as distrust, and even disdain, of government. The vast majority of the voters are disgusted with the way the government is being run and believe that the government will fail to act appropriately even in the face of a general popular consensus that action should be taken.
- Voters are willing to blame Carter for the current disarray of the federal government. Although most voters see Carter

as having failed to streamline government or restore trust in government, the vast majority of the voters perceive these two goals as being capable of accomplishment.

- Despite their manifested dislike for government as it is constituted under the Carter Administration, voters feel that the appropriate leader could make the government once again responsive to the needs of the public and bring the activities of the government within the government mandate.

As mentioned above, government isn't the only focus of voter cynicism. Big business and labor are also singled out with expressions of negative attitudes.

- Confidence in organized labor has fallen by more than 50% since 1966.
- The major companies have suffered an even larger drop in public confidence (more than 100% since 1966).

Other manifestations of the frustrated, cynical voter can be seen in the expressions of attitudes related to the past and the present.

- A majority of American voters believe we were "better off in the old days when everyone knew just how they were expected to act."
- Two out of three voters react negatively to today's fast pace. They agree that, "everything changes so quickly these days that I often have trouble deciding which are the right rules to follow."
- Even larger numbers (71%) feel that "many things our parents stood for are just going to ruin before our very eyes."
- Lack of enduring friendship is identified by nearly eight voters out of ten as a condition endemic to contemporary life. "What is lacking in the world today is the old kind of friendship that lasted for a lifetime."

Not only does the current need of America call out for improved leadership to govern the country but also leadership that will represent a stabilizing influence in a fast changing and seemingly



uncaring social and political environment. This sense of personal normlessness reaches its extreme when nearly one voter in two feels that "I am left out of things going on around me."

One response to the feelings of personal normlessness is to seek out and follow some authority figure. The resurgence of religious fundamentalism is one manifestation of this response. In the political sphere, voters are looking for a leader who can take charge with authority; return a sense of discipline to our government; and, manifest the willpower needed to get this country back on track.

#### The Search for a National Leader

Standing in stark contrast to voter frustration with the present national situation and voter disenchantment with Carter's past record is a strong voter optimism for the future. Voters, although discontented with present circumstances, do not perceive as inevitable the problems facing the country. More importantly, the electorate believes that a strong President can reverse the current downward trend, restore pride in the American people, and lead the nation into a prosperous future. The American people are looking for a President who has a vision of the future and who is strong enough to unify the disparate factions of American society behind a plan for achieving those future goals.

In a recent study, Decision/Making/Information measured voter responses to six proposed campaign messages. Significantly, two messages received the enthusiastic support of the electorate. These two messages appealed particularly to voters within Reagan's base of support and within the target groups which Reagan must attract if he is to assemble a winning coalition.

- A Strong Leader: We are tired of suffering insults at the hands of other nations. We need a President who will stand up for America even if the rest of the world doesn't approve. We're tired of a Congress that seems to be going nowhere. We need a President who can unite the Congress and get something done--even if he has to use political pressure to do it. Give us a leader who will restore our pride in being Americans.
- A Problem - Solving Country: America is built on the motto "Can do." We've put a man on the moon and explored the deepest parts of the seas. We can cook food in seconds and fly all the way across the country in only hours. We have solved problems that other countries believed had no solutions. Sure, we've got some problems right now with energy and pollution. But American ingenuity can solve these problems, and our children can enjoy an even better life than we've had.

In the 1980 Presidential campaign, the national mood will have serious strategic implications. The most important, strategic campaign implication is that Presidential campaigns are always a search for national leadership in light of the prevailing political mood of the country. Presidents are elected on the basis of the voters' expectations about the candidate's ability to exert strong, decisive, able and popular leadership. From 1976 to 1979, the perceived need for strong leadership by the President has risen from 49% to 63%. Gallup has repeatedly found that "strong leadership" is the most important thing a President must be able to do.

In the aftermath of Watergate and Vietnam, an exhausted public elected an honest, compassionate, even folksy common man to restore the country's confidence in itself. But in 1980, the national mood continues to be disenchanted and pessimistic; and therefore, not significantly different than it was before President Carter took office four years ago. The single most devastating domestic political failure of the Carter Administration has been the President's inability to provide the necessary political and moral leadership to restore the country to its proper bearings.

The worsening mood of the country is associated with many factors; a declining economy, dramatic changes in the international system, Soviet and Cuban adventures around the world, threats from inflation to the life-styles of millions of Americans and the lack of leadership from the White House.

In July 1979, President Carter linked the sagging mood of the country with a general and deeply entrenched crisis of confidence in American institutions. The argument by the White House and the President's principal pollster, Patrick H. Caddell, has been that the crisis of confidence is real and that there is no single cause--specifically that the economy is not solely responsible for the crisis.

The more powerful and commanding explanation is that the country has not had time to recover from the downward spiral it was trapped in as a result of two decades of inadequate policy and leadership. Whatever the causes were of the crisis, the crisis had now become a serious problem in its own right, threatening the "fabric of our society." The implication of the Administration's view of the crisis of confidence is that the President and his Administration were not the cause of the crisis, nor was it possible for this president, or indeed any president, to significantly change the mood of the country and restore, in the near future, the public's confidence. The Carter position has been that the crisis of confidence is not restricted to government, but is sufficiently widespread that it cuts across every aspect of personal and public life, and every major American institution. The expectations for a better personal life, expectations about the economy and the efficacy of government and business are all waning. The political implication was that Jimmy Carter could not be solely blamed for the nation's ills, nor exclusively responsible for the nation's recovery.

The Carter-Caddell interpretation has been seriously attacked in the popular press as well as the scholarly literature. The debate

ranges from arguments that it is not true that there really is a crisis to the position that the dissatisfaction with the country's major institutions is about what you would expect given how many opportunities are afforded the public in this country.

The strategic implication of the crisis of confidence in the 1980 Presidential campaign is not whether there is a crisis or even how upset Americans actually are. As Everett Ladd, Jr. has observed, "Only a nation of idiots could look at the events of the last fifteen years...and say, 'Gee, isn't it all terrific?'" The American social-political-economic system has mal-performed; principal social institutions and leaders in the country have responded only marginally to the challenges of energy shortages, inflation, recession, crime, urban problems and foreign affairs. The essence of Presidential leadership is to establish the expectation that the President will take courageous stands on pressing national issues, will insist that government respond to the will of the people, will stimulate the private sectors of the society, will perform, and reaffirm the nation's highest purposes. The result will be less uncertain about what the future portends. Leadership is the ability to enlarge men's vision about the future and give them expectations of a less uncertain and more gratifying future.

The Carter Administration has failed to create this expectation of a less uncertain and more gratifying future. An April, 1980, Decision/Making/Information survey shows that the more apprehensive the voter is about the future, the more likely the voter will be to support Reagan over Carter. The President has been content to argue that it would not have made any difference who was President of the United States; the mood would have been the same because the problems, their nature and magnitude, and the time needed to solve them would still have been beyond the reach and control of the country's most powerful public office. Such a position does not manifest leadership and manifests a misunderstanding of the central values of American life.

SECTION IV  
CAMPAIGN ISSUES

## SECTION IV CAMPAIGN ISSUES

### Introduction

The heightened public awareness resulting from disenchantment with the failures of the Carter Administration makes the 1980 election an "issues" election. Voters are particularly interested in electing a President who can meet and solve today's pressing national problems. The leadership void created by the present Administration extends across the spectrum of national issues. The voters want a President who will be able to reverse Carter's failures in both domestic and foreign policy. Voters want a President who understands the critical contemporary situation and has a plan for curing the nation's ills.

Reagan's success in November will be directly related to his ability to convince Americans that he has the leadership skills to resolve the tough issues facing the country today. This section delineates and examines those issues upon which the election will turn,--the issues of greatest voter concern--as a guide to the formulation of substantive campaign messages. The first subsection outlines the 1980 issue agenda--the issues of greatest public concern. The subsequent subsections treat the issues in terms of three strategic areas:

- Issues of Overriding Interest: These issues are of great concern to all voters across the United States. They are the national issues which any successful Presidential candidate must address to attract large blocs of voters. They will be the subjects of the candidate's national policy addresses and the messages which are disseminated to voters through nationwide media.
- Issues of Special Opportunity: These issues are not currently the focus of nationwide attention but are issues which Ronald Reagan can bring into the national spotlight through effective campaign use. These issues have special

appeal to a broad, non-ideological cross-section of the electorate. Governor Reagan can draw large voting blocs into his camp by handling these issues effectively in targeted policy speeches.

- Issues of the Single Issue Voters: These issues are those strongly ideological issues which solely determine how a minority segment of the electorate will vote. By targeting specific messages to these single issue voters, the Governor can swing these minority voting segments into his support base.

### 1980 Issue Agenda

While it is well known that the contemporary issue agenda is dominated by pocketbook issues, it is the relative position of all issues on the agenda that is important in planning campaign messages. This section presents an overview of the relative importance of the various national issues.

#### First Presidential Act

There are several critical elements in the issue agenda structure for the Reagan campaign; among them are: (1) the issues of greatest concern to the nation's voters, and (2) the issues voters believe a President should be able to manage, if not resolve. Based on Decision/Making/Information's June 1980 survey, the most pressing national problems the public feels the new President can and should handle are:

Issue/Action

Improve the economy--general	22%
Cut inflation	20
Reduce unemployment/poverty	17
Improve foreign policy-general	14
Reduce government spending	11
Improve government leadership	11
Improve immigration policy	10✓
Secure release of hostages	10✓
Improve general social conditions	9
Solve energy crisis	8
Reduce welfare	8
Reduce taxes	6
Improve national defense	6
(Other/No Opinion)	(6)

Voters are very concerned about pocketbook issues--inflation and unemployment--but importantly for the Reagan campaign, they generally believe that the ills of the economy can be cured. However, while recognizing that actions must be taken to improve the economy, many voters are unable to identify a specific action that would contribute to such an improvement. Voters are worried about economic austerity and believe that something can be done to reverse the situation, but do not understand economic complexities well enough to know the causes or the solutions.

Since the national issue agenda in a volatile political year is extremely dynamic, five trends in issue saliency are important:

- While voters may be unsure about the cause of the nation's economic problems, they consistently rank them as the most salient. Sixty-one percent of the voters would take an action relating to pocketbook issues upon election to the presidency.



- Pocketbook concerns are especially high among moderate voters (67%). Moderates are much more likely than either liberal or conservative voters to view inflation as the first issue for presidential action.
- During the heights of the Iran hostage crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, inflation was not consistently rated the greatest problem facing the United States. However, the current trend is for the pendulum to swing toward unemployment (17% cite unemployment/poverty compared with 20% inflation).
- A substantial number of voters go well beyond a criticism of specific issue failures to a general castigation of Carter's leadership ability. Eleven percent want improvement in government leadership.
- Republicans and independents show a greater than average propensity to want cuts in government spending; Democrats tend to focus more on reducing unemployment and poverty.

### Priority of Issues

An important aspect of the 1980 issue agenda is which issues command the strongest voter interest. The rank order of issues by voter interest shows that two issues attract almost universal voter attention: national defense and government spending.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>"Very Interested"</u>
Reduce Government Spending	75%
National Defense	72
Federal Income Tax Policy	62
Draft Registration	56
Abortion	48
Women's Rights Movement	33
Ownership of Panama Canal	31

- Interest in the reduction of government spending is highly associated with conservatives: Conservative Republicans, Conservative Ticket-Splitters, and Conservative Democrats.

- The issues which were most strongly differentiated ideologically are abortion, E.R.A. and the Panama Canal, but are not the subject of widespread voter interest.

### Issues of Overriding Interest

Issues of overriding interest are those issues of strong national concern for an overwhelming majority of citizens which any successful presidential candidate must integrate into his plan for the future. In 1980 these overriding issues arise in three generic categories: pocketbook concerns, United States' peace posture, and energy concerns.

#### Pocketbook Concerns

A political axiom that has endured through the political upheaval of recent decades is that a candidate is elected president because he properly identifies the central issue of his time and generates the public expectation that he is capable of dealing with that issue. Civil liberties and social concerns dominated the national issue agenda in the 1960's and Kennedy and Johnson responded with the New Frontier and the Great Society national strategies. As the racial and social revolution yielded to Vietnam in the late 1960's, Richard Nixon's firm and stable group of foreign affairs took him to the White House. The war issue of the early 1970's was replaced by the political reform issue in the post-Watergate era; Jimmy Carter ascended to the presidency by running on personal integrity and against Washington.

The dominant issue in the 1980 presidential election is the American economy and the problems associated with it--inflation, unemployment, recession, the energy crisis, and taxes. Members of the touted "Me" generation are being forced to make sacrifices and decisions, the like of which they have never before confronted.