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Coalitional Change: Swing Support

Our support eroded considerably among the swing coalitions that provided the incremental muscle to defeat Jimmy Carter.

Changes in Swing Support
September 1981 to February 1982

	<u>September 1981</u>	<u>February 1982</u>	<u>Change</u>
<u>Blue Collar</u>			
Approve	60%	46%	-14%
Disapprove	33	46	+13
<u>Hispanics</u>			
Approve	51	42	- 9
Disapprove	40	55	+ 5
<u>Voters in South</u>			
Approve	61	50	-11
Disapprove	33	43	+10
<u>Ideological Moderates</u>			
Approve	56	46	-10
Disapprove	33	46	+13
<u>Union</u>			
Approve	55	41	-14
Disapprove	40	52	+12

It is not accidental that the biggest losses in our swing coalition are seen in blue-collar and union support, but the fact that we have lost 23 points from the moderates comes as a surprise and rude political shock.

If we hope to generate anything approaching the political parity that we enjoyed in the fall of 1980, steps must be taken now not only to increase support for President Reagan across the board, but to give particular and quick attention to our base and critical swing groups.

Four other coalitions deserve special focus. These are women, Midwesterners, older voters, and the Democrats who crossed over and voted for Reagan in the 1980 election.

Coalitional Change: Women, the Midwest and Older Voters

Women voters deserve special attention because they are:

- . less sanguine about the President's ability to turn the economy around,
- . more concerned about the possibility that President Reagan will get us into a war, and
- . to a slight degree, more sensitive to women-related issues, e.g., E.R.A. and abortion.

Women have, from the beginning of the administration, been less enthused about our policies than men.

Not unexpectedly, the Midwest, buffeted by layoffs in the automobile industry and bashed by the economic squeeze on the farms, must be considered very soft for us in 1982.

Anything that might threaten retirement -- whether real or only perceived -- impacts older voters.

Change in Special Group Support
September 1981 to February 1982

	<u>September 1981</u>	<u>February 1982</u>	<u>Change</u>
<u>Women</u>			
Approve	50%	45%	- 8%
Disapprove	40	49	+ 9
<u>Midwest</u>			
Approve	60	53	- 7
Disapprove	32	41	+ 9
<u>Older Voters</u>			
Approve	50	51	+ 1
Disapprove	40	43	+ 3

There was relatively little change in support for the President from September 1981 to February 1982 among older voters, but as the following table reflects, in September when there was considerable discussion about Social Security, the seniors' support for the Administration dropped within weeks of the President's defense of our Social Security position. Also, in November and December, approval ratings of the President among the seniors increased into the low 60's with disapprovals falling below 30, but the presentation of our fiscal 1983 budget and the renewed discussions about "further cuts" in "social programs" hit the oldsters like a thunderclap. All of the latent fears apparently came back to haunt the retirees and the President's support has currently eroded to a low 51% approval, 43% disapproval level.

Reagan Job Rating: Older Voters
March 1981 to February 1982

	<u>Mar</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Feb</u>
Approve	76%	78%	74%	50%	56%	62%	51%
Disapprove	19	21	23	40	38	31	43

Reagan Democrats

A constituency that played a major role in the Reagan victory in 1980 were the crossover Democrats. We now have large enough samples from our 1981 tracking to identify the characteristics of Reagan Democrats who constitute about eight percent of the total electorate. They tend to:

- . be more conservative (even though they are Democrats) than the population at large,
- . be middle-aged (a large share are between the ages of 39 and 49),
- . be disproportionately high school graduates,
- . be union members, and
- . have higher average incomes than the general population.

Throughout 1981, they were more strongly supportive of Reagan than the average American. The sharpest comparative difference emerged from their responses to the question, "What is the most important problem our country faces today?" A very significantly larger portion tagged social problems: Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the Reagan Democratic voters listed social problems as the key issue; only 7% of

the national population did so. They were less concerned than the total population about unemployment, taxes, and other economic problems.

The specific trait they liked most about Reagan was his strong leadership. A full third of this group are Roman Catholics. They still rank the Democratic party more favorably than the national population; one-third now disapprove of the job Ronald Reagan is doing as President.

Not only is it important that we bring a large segment of those straying Reagan Democrats back into the Republican fold, it is imperative that we solidify our base Republican strength.

SECTION IV

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT MAY THROUGH OCTOBER 1982?

The future holds uncertain ground. Given the rather significant unknowns overhanging both the economy and the way Congress may ultimately deal with the proposed budget, we have chosen to block out three possible economic scenarios for consideration. We then draw some assumptions about possible Congressional action to help frame the sections that follow.

The Economic Scenarios

The first scenario assumes that mixed economic news would prevail through October. The rise in the Consumer Price Index would hover in the high single digits, the unemployment rate would range between 8% and 9%, but would be coming down from its summer highs of above 9.5%. The leading indicators would be positive in August, September and October, but interest rates would remain sticky with a prime rate of 14% to 15%.

The second scenario assumes a rather sharp but short-lived early spring recovery followed by a collapse in the bond markets, with unemployment pushing into the depressionary levels above 10%, and the CPI creeping above 11%. Real per capita disposal income, in spite of the tax rebates that come on stream July 1, 1982, would drop substantially from the previous year.

The third scenario assumes a strong recovery beginning slowly in the latter part of April, but building up steam through the summer and into the fall. Even though unemployment would drop below 7% in October, the CPI would be held to single-digit and the prime would run 12% through both September and October.

If the economy assumes the characteristics of the third scenario, we can expect clear Republican victories at all levels, including, most important of all, solid Republican control of the House of Representatives. We have chosen to exclude the third scenario from our consideration because:

- . the political tasks associated with this scenario would be so clear-cut and easy, and
- . the action steps themselves will not differ greatly between the first scenario or the third.

The second scenario, perhaps triggering riots in the urban centers and some other unraveling of the social system, holds the potential for a major political and economic collapse. For the purposes of this report, we will also reject this extreme case and concentrate on the first, or "mixed economy" scenario.

Some Assumptions About Congressional Action

We assume that the major battles to be fought between now and early summer will relate to the budget. It is doubtful that we will get the budget resolution due May 14th. Nevertheless, key political and policy issues such as reductions in spending for social programs, appropriations, student loans, and reduction in employment services will be imbedded in the budget debate.

The major legislative action-forcing event this spring will be the vote to boost the debt limit further beyond the trillion dollar mark. For a wide spectrum of legislators this vote offers the last opportunity to take a run at revenue increases, defense or entitlement cuts, and a myriad of other issues.

For us, this vote could be used to consolidate significantly our legislative position and take a good deal of the venom out of the sniping from the press and the Hill that has stung us recently.

We also assume that the social issues will be hotly debated in this session of Congress with the action centering on busing, prayer in the schools, and abortion.

We now turn to our partisan antagonists, the Democrats, and the kinds of themes we can expect them to use in 1982.

SECTION V

THE LIKELY DEMOCRATIC ATTACK THEMES

The thrust and intensity of the Democratic attack themes will be entirely contingent on the economic changes that will occur over the next eight months. If a sour economy overhangs the summer and fall of 1982 then the Democrats could have a cakewalk. On the other hand, a buoyant and sustained recovery will offer our opponents limited attack opportunities.

It is likely that the Democrats' attack, given a strong recovery, will not differ greatly from what they will mount if the economy sends mixed signals over the next critical period. For the purposes of our own planning, we will assume in this section a mild but not clear-cut economic recovery.

Given a mild recovery we should expect the Democrats to:

1. Focus on the fairness issue. Few opportunities will be lost by the Democrats to show how the Reagan administration induced unnecessary suffering. They will come back again and again to the questions: "Who has been hurt?" and "Who's getting fat because of Ronald Reagan's policies?"

Republicans generally would be cast in the role of insensitive, intolerant advocates of the wealthy and powerful. That lineage stretches back to the opening years of Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration. But more dangerous for us is the fact that a rather large segment of Americans are now buying the "unfair" charge. A year ago they rejected it.

They will use our "treatment" of two groups to make the charge that Republican social insensibilities breed inequities:

- . the old, sick and the unemployed have been bruised by Reagan economics, and
 - . the "harshness" of this administration's record on civil rights.
2. Link the charge of this administration's inequities to its inefficiencies. The most likely target for the Democrats to use to make this argument is a bloated defense budget. They will claim that our defense choices have not only been unwise in the guns and butter trade-off, but also that the Reagan defense policies waste billions on highly sophisticated but logistically cumbersome new tanks and billions on heat-seeking missiles which have not even proven to be battle-worthy.
 3. Attack the President personally. Add "uninformed" and "naive" to the phrases "unwise," "insensitive" and "unfair." While this may be a political mistake for them, they likely will succumb to the partisan temptations.

The single most unified and coherent strategic initiative taken by the Democrats so far was launched late January on the basis of a Democratic National Committee sponsored poll. The message the Democrats attempted to convey to their spokespersons was expressed by Pat Caddell: "Likeability is only important if it translates into political support. If the economy does not recover in the second quarter, the first thing Democrats must do is get over their fear of Ronald Reagan's favored personality -- the notion that he is such a 'nice guy;' he is (not) immune to criticism."

That personal attack, if launched, will extend the same attacks on the administration, as described above, to the President and assume the following tone:

- . The President's personal management style is inopportune and ineffective. Given the grave difficulties Americans face at home and abroad, the Democrats may argue, it is not right that the President work such short days and that he delegate so much authority and responsibility to a not-always-efficient staff.
- . President Reagan is too passive. He frequently cannot identify problems before they become acute. He is too slow to recognize the long term implications of issues.

We know that many of these charges do not now hit their mark. Even the December Democratic poll, designed explicitly to give credibility to the "attack Reagan personally" strategy, indicates that seventy-three percent of all Americans like the President personally. However, there has been some erosion in the President's image strength since then and if the mixed economy scenario should take on just a slightly more somber shade, these kinds of personal charges would begin to cut us.

4. Reinforce all attack thrusts with a multitude of specific examples. This may be typical:
 - . "Five out of every six households on food stamps will have those benefits reduced or wiped out under the Reagan budget proposal according to the Congressional Budget Office."

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- . "If the Reagan proposals go through, the cuts for the working poor would provide a clear disincentive to work; in 24 states, a welfare mother with two children would end up getting more disposable income if she depended solely on welfare than if she went out and took (or kept) an average job. In other states, the increased income from working would be almost inconsequential." (Washington Post, February 25, 1982)

 - . "The new welfare budget cuts President Reagan has proposed to Congress this year would affect not just the working poor, as last year's did, but for the first time would reach "truly needy" households with no other income, claims a study done by the Center for the Study of Social Policy." (Washington Post, February 25, 1982)

 - . "Alcoholic and penniless, Albert Pierpoint expects to die in the streets of the nation's capitol. In Manhattan, an elderly 'bag lady' known only as Diane scrapes by on handouts. In the boomtown of Houston, a young job seeker from New Jersey has ended up on skid row, broke and without hope. Men and women, young and old, broken down or just broke, thousands of vagabonds are barely scratching out an existence on the fringes of society ... The drifters keep dying in distressing numbers. Outlook: as times get tougher, misery and cost will grow." (U.S. News & World Report, February, 1982)

 - . "The moral meanness of the Reagan Administration has been evidenced constantly in its indifference to civil rights or Blacks or equal rights for women; in its attack on legal services for the poor; in the President's own cruel remark that those who cannot find good jobs or schools or services where they live should 'vote with their feet' and move on.

What is hard to accept is that at the same time Ronald Reagan was deliberately tilting economic policy toward the rich and powerful, through massively regressive tax cuts, he was systematically removing government assistance from some of the most needy and powerless." (David Broder, Washington Post, January 20, 1982)

- . "Tip O'Neill concedes that Ronald Reagan may capitalize on a 'dislike for the poor' that he thinks is running across the land. He (O'Neill) says the country will move more in the direction of hatred for the poor, 'unless we stop the programs of Reagan.' (Washington Post, January 31, 1982)

- . "Former Secretary of Education Shirley M. Hufstедler. in an emotional blast against the Reagan Administration, said Friday, the President is 'declaring war on America's children ... by destroying nearly every one of the (federal) education programs built up over the past 30 years.' (Los Angeles Times, March 6, 1982)

- . "Thousands of college students found allies in both parties as they converged on Congress today to protest sharp cuts in federal grants and loans. Capitol police estimated that there were more than 5,000 students, perhaps as many as 7,000, making one of the largest lobbying efforts mounted so far this year against President Reagan's proposed budget reductions in key social areas. Numbers underscore mounting concern around the nation, principally among middle-income families, over what critics view as devastating reductions in aid to college students." (New York Times, March 2, 1982)

The Democrats will avoid the historical framing of our present economic challenges like the plague and conversely will point to the "horror" of what will happen to people if Reaganomics is not blocked this fall.

5. Someone said, "A Democrat denouncing a budget deficit is like a hog with wings. When you see one you know either nature has gone crazy or somebody thinks you were born yesterday." Nevertheless, this will not dissuade the Democrats from doing everything possible to highlight the magnitude of the Reagan projected budget deficits.

Such a strategy likely will have considerable impact on conservative Democrats who supported Reagan in 1980. However, even more damaging (if we do not reach some kind of an accord with the Republican Senate on this issue), the Democrats can charge that the Republicans have a house divided, and severely undercut what in 1981 proved to be one of our principal political assets -- the belief that the Reagan Administration does what it says it will do and gets things done.

6. The Democrats, even given a mixed economy over the next few months, have a good opportunity to put back together their historical coalition which was rather badly shaken by the 1980 election. This coalition includes Blacks, Hispanics, blue-collar Democrats, liberal and somewhat liberal voters, middle- and lower-middle-class working families and especially those families who reside in the upper Northeast and upper Midwest.
7. Our opponents will attempt to use both issues and allies to stitch the Democratic coalition back together. The Democrats correctly believe that high unemployment will bring a large block of those blue-collar Democrats who voted for Reagan in

1980 back into their column. The same source of disaffection also impacts middle-class working families in the Northeast and upper Midwest most hard hit by the sluggish automobile industry and its ancillary industries.

Furthermore, high interest rates cut against middle- and lower-middle-class working families who desire to buy a car and/or a home.

But even more damaging, high interest rates severely erode our base with small businessmen, the construction industry, and young semi-affluents who want to buy a home.

The Reagan Administration's civil rights record will be distorted shamelessly to motivate the Blacks. We should accept the fact that the Democrats will likely be successful in turning out minority voters in considerably larger numbers than ever before in past off-year elections. This held true for the November special elections in Virginia, New Jersey and Mississippi. Even if we get a mixed economy in 1982 we should expect more efforts to activate and turn out the core Democratic base against us.

8. Additionally, the Democratic party has strong institutional allies that can and will make every attempt to bring more Democratic voters to the polls in the fall of 1982.

The position of civil rights organizations is well known. Their spokesmen now reference the Reagan policies as based on a "cave man ethic that seeks to turn back twenty years of progress toward racial equality." They will claim that we have no interest in Blacks, no sensitivity to their concerns and that our "phenomenal" unpopularity with Black America generates directly from this administration's "savaging the

programs calculated to help the poor" and therefore disproportionately harmful to Blacks. Even some civil rights groups within the administration will carry that message as evidenced by the lawyers in the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division who drafted a letter of protest to our "restoring" tax-exempt status to private schools that discriminate.

An institutional vehicle that will undoubtedly play a large role in implementing the Democratic strategy in the 1982 fall election will be organized labor. Clearly, labor intends to cement its ties with the Democratic party to insure labor's leverage in the pick of a Democratic presidential nominee in 1984 and to gore Republican candidates who are not friendly to labor. We can expect the following:

- . COPE will massively finance sophisticated political technology that will assist in targeting vulnerable districts, generating voting lists for friendly candidates, recruiting candidates and in turning out labor's vote. They will be at the forefront in attacking the administration. The "Jamestown Economics" tag is only the first arrow that we can expect to come from organized labor's political quiver over the next nine months.
- . They will increase lobbying efforts not only to minimize any "anti-labor legislation" but also to expose the inequities of the Reagan program as far as the poor, sick, old and unemployed are concerned.

- . In sum, labor clearly is ready, willing and able to assist the Democratic party in 1982, and it is very evident that the Democrats are going to accept that assistance with open arms.
9. The Democrats will also expend time and effort to put together swing coalitions consisting of women, older voters, those who are interest-rate sensitive, and younger voters.
- . Women will represent a major target for the Democrats because they feel that women are more "compassionate" and thus more likely to respond to the "inequities" of Reaganomics.
 - . They will also target older voters who fear budgetary changes will impact their Social Security payments. (Even now 54% of all Americans believe that Ronald Reagan has reduced Social Security benefits.)
 - . Prime voter targets for the Democrats will also be those bruised by high interest rates. This group includes farmers, those in the housing industry, the automobile industry and its ancillary industries.
 - . Younger voters now entering the job market who are more vulnerable to layoffs will also be targeted by the Democrats.
 - . And lastly, students -- who no longer can acquire loans with the same government help -- will represent a useful swing coalition to the Democrats. We can count on the charge that emanated from the Action Committee on Education

being used on campus with a vengeance: "The Reagan budget is a disaster that will put college beyond the reach of hundreds of thousands of the nation's students."

10. Depending on developments in Europe, Africa, and Central America, the Democrats may also attempt in the fall election to charge that our inconsistent foreign policy has lost allies, strengthened the Soviet hand, led this country too close to the edge of another Vietnam, and led us closer to the brink of a nuclear holocaust.

In the subsection that follows, we have placed the above attack themes in a more tactical frame of reference by outlining what a key member of the Democratic National Committee might write under the heading, "What Should the Democrats Do in 1982?"

A Possible National Democratic Strategy
as Written From the Perspective of the DNC

Our Democratic party can come roaring back in the fall campaign. How difficult or easy that may be hinges on the unanswered and unanswerable question: "What will the condition of the economy be on election day?"

No one, except the "win-at-any-costs" types among us, wants the economy to suffer. But the fact is, high unemployment and interest rates will generate a political bonanza for us on election day almost regardless of how we plan and execute.

Our challenge is to define here how we win -- and win decisively -- in what might be called a "mixed" economic environment, which our economists say will mean that the economy will be better in the fall than it is now. This would allow the Republicans to point to mixed but positive trends. Should the economy experience a strong boom in the early fall, then our entire strategy would have to be reevaluated.

While it may be hard to believe now, in February, that the Republicans could run a positive campaign on the economy, we must be careful not to overreach our position by getting people to recall now how bad it was a year ago. The Republicans can counter and say "Remember double-digit inflation? We fixed it just like we said we would."

The fact is, when the problem has gone away, it is no longer a problem. To try to run on the economic problems of February, with a better or improving economy in November, would be futile for all Democrats and there are other juicy targets available to us.

Another fact we must accept, for better or worse, is this: Reagan has changed the course of government in this country. No longer is anyone but a few unreconstructed liberals in our Democratic party advocating unlimited spending on the part of government to solve the problems of mankind.

There will be cuts in the social programs. The rate of growth in the federal government will be slowed. Existing programs and new programs will be held to much higher levels of accountability. These changes have altered the whole frame of the partisan debate.

We must not debate the Republicans this premise. We must provide a positive rationale for how we would do it differently to alleviate unnecessary human suffering.

This does not mean that we need the Democrat equivalent of Reaganomics. It does mean that to win the election this fall, we use every opportunity in every single budget battle to drive the point home that Republicans hurt people and simultaneously help those who are already rich and fat. Thus, we can build our case against the Republicans on particular alternatives that arise. Remember, we Democrats are not in control. We can win not by proposing, but by attacking. In sum, it is not necessary for us to have an "overall," "coherent" and "balanced" program. We can pick and choose our issues based on their vulnerability -- not on our general wisdom or our world view.

Let's talk about our coalitional goals.

Coalitions. Our primary Democratic target audience in 1982 must begin with our historical coalition. Our primary political goal: motivate them to vote.

This coalition includes:

- . Blacks,
- . Hispanics,
- . Blue-collar Democrats,
- . Liberal and somewhat liberal voters,
- . Middle- and lower-middle-class working families, especially in the Northeast and upper Midwest.

Secondary targets are also available -- the moderate "do-gooders" and women voters. The most important political task for Democrats is to use the issues and the image faults of the Republicans to persuade these swing groups to vote for us. In the context of achieving our Democratic coalitional goals, we need to consider two other points:

1. The working press: No one can dispute the fact that to date, they have done a masterful job reporting all the gory details of the recent Reagan budget. Not only have they focused on the numerous examples of pain and suffering that have been caused, but they have highlighted many examples of where budget cuts have been, could be, or will be counter-productive. For example, we Democrats clearly gain when the press focuses on the working poor who lose their benefits and are forced to quit their jobs in order to be able to feed their families on welfare or to qualify for Medicaid, or when they use the example of the closure of offices that helped the unemployed find jobs just when unemployment is going up.

The press will remain allies of our Democratic party because of two simple facts: We have a left-of-center working press and, frankly, pain and suffering make news. Contentment is dead space.

While the press support may perhaps moderate, its anti-administration cant will not stop. There is absolutely nothing the Republicans can do about this.

2. The vulnerability of Republican incumbents. For openers, I would say that there is virtually no Republican who can't be beaten by us this year with the possible exception of ten or fifteen Republican congressmen and a couple of senators. As we all know, for the last several campaigns our Democratic candidates have been the victims of vicious attacks on the basis of individual votes that were construed as unpopular or unwise. Now it's our turn.

As a consequence of the Republican support for the Budget Reconciliation Act last year, our media people can paint almost every Republican incumbent as a hard-hearted scrooge, based on specific and localized examples of the impact of the Act.

Motivating the Democrats to Turn Out. With this as background, let's now consider how we can motivate our voters. It is indeed possible that, contrary to "normal" off-year elections, we may have less of a problem in getting our voters to vote in 1982 than the Republicans.

While the Republicans' normal constituency has suffered because of the economic situation, they generally have not been personally hurt by any specific budget cuts.

Conversely, many of our base Democratic constituencies have been specifically hurt and know exactly who to blame for it -- Reagan and the Republicans.

I do not believe it will require great effort on our part to encourage these people to go to the polls and cast a vote for the straight Democratic ticket. Contrarily, the typical Republican has seen little, if any, personal payoff and may be very squishy about his commitment to Reaganomics.

Finally, the type of media campaigns just discussed that our Democratic candidates can run will both stimulate our core constituents to vote and persuade the fence-sitters to come over to our side. Both groups rely heavily on television for news and entertainment.

A National Democratic Effort. The local dimensions of Reagan's outrageous acts must also be meshed with a more sophisticated version at the national level, keyed to expanding our coalition in the face of a "better" economic situation.

While insensitivity will continue to be our primary Democratic theme, we must also mount a broader attack aimed at an economic policy producing the biggest budget deficits in history, destroying any hope for a balanced budget, assuring near constant recessions, and inevitably generating the highest interest and inflation rates this country has ever experienced.

Such a message need not be keyed to the past but should be cast as a likely vision of the future with the sub-theme that it is all going to happen because the Republican party favors big business, not the average guy.

This message will not only be effective in motivating our core constituency, but also must be equally effective in persuading the moderate ticket-splitting types to be won over to our side of the ballot.

Beyond this, we must constantly remind women of this administration's insensitivity to their issues, and raise doubts about the foreign policy/defense issues.

Women. In regards to women, we all know the record of this administration when it comes to women's rights and appointments. Fortunately, so do most women in the country. This lack of Republican sensitivity to women's issues can be reinforced by our raising doubts about Reagan's conduct of foreign policy. Women by nature tend to be doves, and a hawkish foreign policy triggers concerns with this group in a far more fundamental way than with men.

While even our Democratic data clearly show that the general theme of a stronger America evokes support, the Reagan Administration pushes that theme too far. Democrats can say:

A strong America does not have to be a threatening, meddling bully getting into everybody's squabbles all over the face of the globe. Such posturing puts us in situations where our sons and loved ones may have to end up in combat.

Further, there is considerable room for disagreement on just how much money needs to be spent to have a secure America. As Democrats, we should resist some of the new sophisticated weapons systems and generally favor fairly simple, and less expensive, alternatives. With the high level of visibility Secretary Weinberger has achieved, we should tie every expensive boondoggle that is revealed by the press right around the Republicans' neck. Force them to defend it.

Foreign Policy. Foreign policy failures provide us with ammunition that can be used with the moderate ticket-splitters. Who tend to be more prone to consider broad-brushed policy. Therefore, our Democratic message should be extended into the attack theme that generally Reagan's foreign policy is an incoherent, inconsistent, mismanaged farce.

A Word of Warning. Finally, a cautionary note. Our people should be urged to avoid any over-wrought personal attacks on Reagan. Maybe his personal popularity will drop off and this will change, but for the moment, the American people tend to like him and could well resent any personal attacks. In any event, the press will do our job for us in this area quite well.

Democratic Congressional Strategy. With this as a broad umbrella, we should attempt through our Congressional leadership the following:

- . Force a series of votes on defense, similar to the ones in the Senate last summer when Republicans were muscled to vote for their esoteric, budget-busting weapons systems rather than for more supplies and better maintenance.
- . Sit back and refuse to provide any votes for increasing the debt limit, and, thereby, force a confrontation between Congressional Republicans and Reagan. Reagan can't win such a confrontation if we Democrats withhold our votes. This conceivably might result in some changes in the economic program we would prefer, but more importantly, it is entirely possible that their most valuable asset -- the personal strength of Reagan -- may come out of that confrontation significantly tarnished if he is forced to retreat and compromise.

- . Continue an active program of committee and sub-committee hearings by the House (scattered throughout the country) to provide constant national attention as well as material for the press.
- . Identify high payoff social safety net programs that are being cut and make highly publicized efforts to protect them.
- . Continually question foreign policy goals and call attention to inconsistencies as they occur. This is made particularly easy by focusing on the different philosophies of Secretary Weinberger and Secretary Haig.

This list can easily be expanded as opportunities occur but in doing so, two things should always be remembered:

1. We do not need to create new policy. We do need to -- and can -- win an election.
2. We should only act when we have the broadest possible support in our own ranks so that our candidates can take full advantage of what is happening here in Washington.

How Can We Break the Republican Coalition? Finally, we should examine what we can do to de-stabilize the Republican coalition.

As we know, they have already shattered part of it themselves by losing one of their historically strongest groups, the older voter.

Since nothing new will be happening on the Social Security issues in the next seven or eight months (if we can sidestep the COLA issue in the budget debates), our Democratic mission is to simply remind senior voters that Reagan and the Republicans can't be trusted. They may have backed down in an election year, but come 1983 when they need

to make more cuts in the budget to pay for their war machine, Social Security is right where they are going to have to cut. Besides, a lot of the senior citizens already believe that Reagan has cut Social Security benefits.

The New Right. Despite the New Right's grumbling, they generally can be expected to be back on the line against most of our Democratic candidates come the fall. It is possible, though, that we can help precipitate a major crisis within one element of this coalition: the conservative Christian and right-to-life groups.

The Republicans' leadership has made no secret of the fact that they want to avoid the right-to-life issue at all costs this year. Why don't we recruit some of our people who are in agreement with them on that issue and try to develop a legislative strategy that will force an up or down vote on that issue? This needs to be carefully analyzed but, by and large, our Democratic members are compatible with the pro-choice majority in their districts, whereas the right-to-life minority can decimate our Republican opponents.

Summary.

- . Don't talk about economic issues against what has happened in the past, but talk about the present and future pain of Reagonomics instead.
- . Highlight every instance of pain and human suffering and tie it directly to Reagan and the Republicans. Cite local examples where possible in our state and congressional races.

- . Attack the Defense Department as wasteful and inefficient. Advocate basic systems as opposed to the esoteric.
- . Point out the dangers and inconsistencies of Reagan's foreign policies. Raise the horrors of the nuclear arms race.
- . Highlight examples of Republican insensitivity to women's rights.
- . Point out that next year's cuts have to come from Social Security if the Republicans are still cutting the budget.
- . Create some rumbling in their ranks by using the social issues -- in particular the right-to-life issue -- to our advantage.

The year 1980 belonged to the Republicans. We can own politically 1982 and erase almost every gain the Republicans made in 1980, even if the economy improves.

SECTION VI

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Given what's at stake in 1982, where we stand today, what circumstances we might face now through the end of the year, and the likely Democratic attack themes, "What should we do?"

Before addressing this question, we must first probe the more generic query, "For what purpose?" Hence, we will begin this section by first articulating the single most general objective and then proceed to outline strategic objectives and some specific action steps.

Many of the action steps reviewed here -- and especially those that fall under the rubrics of communication, scheduling and targeting -- were generated at our Camp David meeting February 5. Clearly, given the expertise of the White House units responsible for many of these areas, the action steps described here should be considered as only suggestive. It is hoped, however, that the strategic objectives themselves will generate interest in the proposed action steps which the White House may want to expand upon and implement solely or in conjunction with some highly selective non-White House resources.

Goal: 1982

Our goal in 1982 is to govern in such a fashion that we merit the respect and support of Americans, thereby strengthening our governing coalitions. This will enable us to set in motion the long-term political changes envisioned and articulated by Ronald Reagan in the 1980 election.

Outlined below are some strategic objectives that seem to be consistent with this goal given our present status and the possible range of circumstances we can expect May through October, as well as the attack themes our opponents, the Democrats, will likely mount against us in the same period.

Strategic Objectives: Overview

There are only two issues that require our undivided attention in 1982: economic recovery and the perceived fairness of our program. If the recovery occurs, the bite will clearly be taken away from the charge that our administration is insensitive and unfair. However, that will not happen automatically, and we must view every presidential action and every presidential policy -- economic, domestic, and foreign -- against this criterion:

Does this action/policy say to Americans that we are fair, especially to the least fortunate members of our society?

Hence, while we list several disparate strategic objectives below, the single most critical ones in terms of satisfying the above general goal relate directly to those things that will impact the economy favorably.

This holds not only because most Americans' greatest concern still focuses on the economy, but also because the economy itself will greatly condition the fall elections of 1982. Press and media judgments are like personal judgments -- frequently self-fulfilling. The media will imprint failure or success on the Reagan Administration at the end of this year as a direct consequence of our successes or failures in the November elections.

Thus, the economic issue takes on added importance in light of the fact that changes in real per capita disposable income are the single most critical determinant of how many seats are lost in the House in an off-year election by the party that controls the White House. Two elements of that economic measure will move favorably for us: (1) inflation will likely be considerably more moderate in 1982 than it was in 1980 and 1981, and (2) the rebate of tax dollars will directly boost disposable income.

The unknown element, which will perhaps condition the level of real per capita disposable income even more than moderation of inflation or the Reagan tax rebate, will be total income. Total income, in turn, and its growth will be contingent on the timing, the depth and the speed of the economic recovery.

Aside from this somewhat mechanistic measure of our economic political fortunes in the fall, it is clear on a number of grounds that if a positive economic climate exists in August, September and October, then almost all the wind goes out of the sails of the Democrats.

Hence, our first and clearly most important strategic objective over the near term relates to the economy.

Strategic Objective 1:

To put into place all the elements we can to facilitate a strong, broad-based, durable economic recovery.

To date, Americans have exercised considerable patience in waiting for the economic program to work. While inflation has moderated, both unemployment and interest rates have increased dramatically since Reagan became President. Americans at this juncture, however, do not feel that the Reagan Administration can be blamed for the current

recession. Contrarily, most believe that it will take at least a year before the impact of Reaganomics will be fully felt. While this perception is now clearly measured, the reservoir of patience could quickly run very dry if the economic pain and suffering experienced by Americans should intensify and/or if Americans should lose faith in the Reagan economic program. As long as large numbers of Americans believe that our programs will eventually redound to their economic benefit, we will not inherit the political whirlwind born of economic frustration.

There are some action steps that can be taken to assist in this regard. First, to encourage Americans to be both patient and hopeful, it is essential that we come back to the basic principle of speaking of the program generically and not get involved in defending alone the individual of the program. The focus must remain on these six points:

- . The Reagan Administration will continue to exert pressure to reduce total government spending.
- . It will stand behind its 10% across-the-board tax cut for individuals.
- . It will persist in eliminating undue and cumbersome regulations that smother initiative without sufficient offsetting benefits to society at large.
- . Pressure will be increased on all federal agencies to reduce waste and fraud.
- . The administration will encourage the Federal Reserve Board to increase the supply of money consistently to assure a steady rate in the growth of the money supply of around 5%.

- . This administration intends to begin transferring functions that it has performed in the past back to the local and state governments who can perform those services more efficiently, responsively and sensitively.

If there is one lesson that comes out of the experience of 1981, it is that our program has greater impact than the sum of its parts. Whenever the President or others spoke of the economic recovery program in total, the response was much more favorable than when only one element, such as the reduction in government spending or taxes, was singled out.

There is, however, another economic objective we cannot ignore that the President addressed on many occasions which was not an explicit part of his economic program -- the deficit. President Reagan said we could accomplish our economic goal of stimulating economic growth (through the above steps) and at the same time move toward a balanced budget by 1983 or 1984.

This implicit assumption we must deal with directly. There is evidence, from our own economists, that the fear of huge and growing deficits as projected in our own budgets through 1985-86, directly impacts the concerns extant in the money markets and keeps interest rates unduly high. Such rates could very possibly choke off the beginnings of a late spring or early summer recovery. It is this issue that our second strategic objective addresses.