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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Dick Cheney,

Dave Belin periodically

sends in campaign
suggestions.

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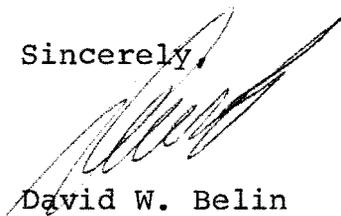
Dear Mr. President:

I am enclosing a copy of my December, 1975, Strategy Paper, entitled "Winning Independent Votes - Major Strategy Considerations." Like the November paper, this has been reviewed by Tom Stoner, Iowa Republican Chairman, who was Governor Ray's campaign manager on the last two gubernatorial elections. Tom Stoner concurs in these observations.

I will be calling Bob Hartmann in the near future to arrange an appointment to discuss this paper with him. Also, I am still concerned about the fact that Bo Callaway is still making statements that you are going to win the Presidential primaries in New Hampshire and Florida. This may very well be true, but I think we have nothing to gain and everything to lose in making these public statements at this time. I covered this in my November Strategy Paper entitled "Defusing the Reagan Challenge," and I hope that you will have an opportunity to review that paper again and reconsider whether or not it is wise for your national Campaign Chairman to be making predictions of this kind.

Best regards.

Sincerely,



David W. Belin

DWB:cs

Enc.

c.c. Robert Hartmann
c.c. Richard Cheney
c.c. Ron Nessen



THE ELECTION OF PRESIDENT FORD

BASIC STRATEGY PAPER NO. 2 - DECEMBER, 1975

David W. Belin

Winning Independent Votes - Major Strategy Considerations

Almost every Republican leader agrees that in order for Republicans to win elections, they must gain the support of Independent voters as well as discerning Democrats.

This strategy paper discusses two aspects of this question, one of which involves what I believe to be a major strength which already exists for the President and the other of which involves what I believe to be an existing weakness--a weakness that has also been a major Republican weakness through the years.

A. Public dissatisfaction with Congress--a major Presidential advantage.

In 1948, President Truman won re-election in large part because of the campaign against the Republican-controlled Eightieth Congress. He even carried the State of Iowa--at that time a rock-ribbed Republican state with a Republican Governor, two Republican Senators, and a solid Republican Congressional delegation.



In contrast, today Iowa is no longer a "rock-ribbed Republican state" although it does have a Republican Governor who has been elected four successive times by the people. (In response to the question, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Robert Ray is handling his job as Governor of Iowa?", the most recent state-wide Iowa poll shows 78% approve, only 10% disapprove and 12% have no opinion.) Today five out of the six Congressmen are Democrats and both Senators are Democrats.

Nevertheless, there exists in Iowa, as I believe there exists across the country, great dissatisfaction with Congress. For instance, attached as Exhibit 1 to this paper are the results of the Iowa Poll conducted by the state-wide newspaper, The Des Moines Sunday Register, and published on November 30, 1975.

When Iowans were asked, "Who do you think is more to blame for lack of a definite energy policy in the United States today-- President Ford or Congress?", only 10% said President Ford, 51% said the United States Congress, and the balance were undecided.

When asked, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Mr. Ford is handling the job as President?", 60% approved, 21% disapproved, and 19% had no opinion. In contrast, when asked, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way the U. S. Congress is handling its job in Washington?", only 26% approved, 54% disapproved, and 20% had no opinion.



With particular reference to the Independent voter, on this last question, only 23% approved of the way Congress was handling its job, 57% disapproved, and 20% had no opinion.

This offers a fertile field for the 1976 campaign if cultivated properly. Furthermore, it is probable that at least one and perhaps both of the Democratic nominees for President and Vice President will themselves be members of Congress. If this should happen, it will make the particular issue of public dissatisfaction with Congress an even better one for President Ford, unless his running mate is also a member of Congress.

However, President Ford cannot just attack Congress without offering positive proposals of his own. He should continue to make positive recommendations to Congress for legislation. The energy program is a good example: The President has come forth with a specific plan and has told Congress in substance, "If you have a better plan, let's enact it, but at least let's get some specific legislation for the people."

As the 1976 campaign progresses, President Ford should adapt part of what Harry Truman did with the Republican Eightieth Congress, except that it should be on a much "softer" basis.



There are two basic reasons that I recommend a "softer" approach. First, I believe the public is getting tired of all of the bickering that is going on in Washington. Governor Ray, who I believe is one of the most astute political leaders in the country, wholeheartedly agrees with this. An attack against Congress that is too "hard sell" could result in the public saying, "A plague on both your houses." Therefore, I would recommend a more indirect approach which would emphasize what President Ford has done in positive accomplishments and in positive recommendations to Congress and contrast this with Congressional performance or lack of Congressional performance or inconsistencies on the part of Congress.

The second reason why I believe a "soft" approach is necessary in handling public dissatisfaction with Congress is that when Harry Truman started a hard-hitting campaign against the Republican-dominated Congress, he had one major asset which the Republican Party has not had through these past few decades. This involves exploitation of what I believe to be one of the major Republican weaknesses through the years: The failure of the Republican Party to be identified in the minds of the average citizen as a Party that cares for people.



B. A major Republican weakness: Perception as the Party without compassion.

In discussing the failure of the Republican Party to be identified in the minds of the average citizen as a Party that cares for people, the issue is not whether a particular Republican candidate--such as President Ford--actually has compassion for his fellow citizens. Rather, the issue is how that candidate, and the Republican Party as a whole, is perceived.

I believe that relatively few Americans perceive the Republican Party as a political organization that has compassion and concern for the lives of the average citizen--particularly people of below-average economic status. I believe this perception extends to how President Ford is viewed by a great many Americans. To be sure, they do not know him as an individual. Nevertheless, I believe he is perceived by far too many people as someone who is far more concerned with balancing the budget than he is concerned about caring for the needs and problems of the average American.

There is another basic problem which permeates our American society today: An overall lack of optimism for the future.



Twenty or thirty years ago, an overall frame of optimism permeated our entire country. In contrast, today we have almost a fatalistic sense of resignation--in large part caused by a multitude of problems ranging from Vietnam and Watergate to the energy crisis, inflation and unemployment.

If these assumptions are at least in part correct, the next question to ask is whether or not there is an issue which would afford the President an opportunity to meet both of these problems head-on: To kill the proverbial two birds with one stone.

I submit that there is an opportunity to meet these two problems which confront America today--and that opportunity lies in one of the most important basic economic assets of our country--our natural resources and technological capabilities to produce food.

First, a few facts: In 1974, American had a net trade deficit of nonagricultural products of approximately \$10 billion. On the other hand, the net trade surplus of agricultural products was approximately \$12 billion. Were it not for the ability to produce food in abundance, this nation would have been in dire economic straits.



The agricultural trade surplus in 1974 is a harbinger of the future. To be sure, today we have an energy crisis. But that energy crisis will be solved--it may be ten years from now, twenty years from now, or thirty years from now; it may be energy from the sun, from the wind, from coal, from nuclear power; but regardless of how the problem will be solved, we can be confident that technologically America will be able to solve its energy problems through substitutes for oil.

On the other hand, there is no substitute for food. And as world population continues to grow, this ability of America to produce food will become progressively more and more important through the years.

This fact alone is of tremendous long range economic consequence and also constitutes a ground for basic long range economic optimism for the future of our country.

There are a number of specific opportunities arising out of our food capabilities. First, food can make a major contribution in getting this country economically healthy. Second, our food capabilities can be of tremendous benefit in helping us meet potential challenges from international cartels and in particular the oil cartel. Third, food can be of tremendous



benefit in overall American foreign policy in American relations with our adversaries and in particular Russia. Fourth, food can be of major import in our relationships with friendly countries of the world as well as the uncommitted countries of the world and can also have great import in the overall image and standing of America in world affairs, if properly handled. There are also other direct benefits that relate to America's food productivity, all of which go to the question that many Americans are asking today, "What does it do for us?" This directly relates to the problem of regenerating confidence in ourselves and rebuilding an overall outlook of optimism for the future.

There is another aspect of food which relates to the problem of how President Ford and the Republican Party as a whole are perceived by the American people. There are tremendous opportunities from the humanitarian standpoint of being able to provide food for others. The starting point has to be food deficiencies that exist in the United States today. Thus far, the major role of the government to help America's needy has been through food stamps. It is a program which is capable of gross abuse.



Certainly, we want to help poor people buy food. But surely, there must be a better way than food stamps. Can we make food available to economically-disadvantaged Americans in ways that are better than current programs?

Another possible alternative pertains to school-age children. Many schools have hot lunch programs, although questions have been raised concerning the overall administration of those programs. On the other hand, many schools do not have any hot lunch programs at all. Furthermore, even in those schools with hot lunch programs, children often go to school without adequate breakfast and leave school without provisions for an adequate supper. Is there a better way to make food available to America's children--particularly those of school age?

What about food as an instrument of humanitarian foreign policy? On the one hand, Americans do not want to continue to spend billions of dollars of foreign aid annually--aid which all too often has been unappreciated by the recipients. Yet, basic American traditions of compassion and charity surely would not preclude some aid in the form of food given to alleviate starvation in some of the poorer countries in the world today.



One of the things that stands out most in the administration of Harry Truman was the Marshall Plan. It took place at a time when America could better afford to give away the billions of dollars annually that it gave. The money not only helped others, but also in the long run helped this country by maintaining the freedom of the independent nations of Western Europe.

Although today we cannot afford to give away money in the staggering amounts given after World War II, I submit that there is a place for American leadership in helping alleviate starvation in the world today.

A specific program might include a major portion of technology aid to foreign countries--perhaps particularly stressing Latin America--to help these countries help themselves. Some people believe that from a long-range standpoint it is more important to give this technological assistance than it is to merely provide food.

At the same time, there could be government programs to encourage better food technology production methods in this country and better educational programs and research programs on the overall aspects of food and nutrition.



Henry Kissinger in a September speech before the United Nations brought forward some of the long-range foreign policy benefits that this country could gain. Secretary Butz in recent speeches has also come forward with some aspects of this problem (although I happen to have some substantial differences with some of the programs of Secretary Butz).

For President Ford to undertake leadership in this area with particular reference to American citizens and also with reference to world food problems could have a major effect on how President Ford is perceived by the American people. At the present time, most Americans do not know the President, and they do not fully appreciate the fact that he is, indeed, a compassionate human being. This inaccurate perception is perhaps the greatest single weakness facing President Ford in the 1976 campaign. There must be a way to correct this.

I believe that the best possible way is through food. As an Iowan, I have vividly seen how Herbert Hoover gained the affection of America and the world after World War I because he helped save Western Europe from starvation. There is no doubt that this played a major role in his road to the Presidency, although his accomplishments in the area of food have been unfortunately overshadowed by the 1929 Depression.



If President Ford were to undertake some major national and international leadership in the area of food, this would have an effect on actions that he has already taken. Perhaps he would have to change his course in several areas. But surely the fact that a man changes his mind on a major issue is something that can be admired and will be admired by Americans if handled in the right way.

I believe that America's preeminence in food offers President Ford a tremendous opportunity to meet head-on the problems of how the Republican Party in general and how the President in particular has been perceived by the great majority of the people in this country and also the problem of lack of optimism for America's future.

If there is disagreement about the particular solution I proposed, surely there can be no disagreement about the fact that the two major problems that I have outlined do exist. And if food is not the vehicle to help overcome these problems, then some other vehicle must be found.

The key conclusion I wish to emphasize is that the demonstration of caring for people and compassion for the underprivileged in this country and throughout the world can make



a major contribution toward election victory in 1976. There are a number of collateral benefits ranging from the positive effect it will have on how the press perceives the President to the positive effect it will have on the Independent voter himself in the November election.

In addition, I believe that Presidential leadership in this area could make a major contribution toward securing the Republican Presidential nomination.

Finally, and most important of all, there is one additional element that I believe is crucial: The element of what is best for the people of this country. It is my firm conviction that good government is good politics. And to me, I cannot think of anything that is more important to the government of this country than to make sure that its citizens, and in particular its children, are adequately fed.

David W. Belin
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December 12, 1975



Results of Iowa Poll

Iowans were asked the following October 1-4.

Question: Who do you think is more to blame for the lack of a definite energy policy in the United States today—President Ford or Congress?

	Total		Oct. '75		
	Oct. '75	June '75	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
President Ford	10%	11%	19%	5%	7%
U.S. Congress	51	57	39	64	50
Undecided	39	32	42	31	43

The 10 per cent who said President Ford is more to blame gave these reasons:

	Total
Ford has had poor energy proposals	25%
Ford hasn't done anything	17
Ford doesn't work with Congress	15
Ford vetoes Congress' energy bills	15
Ford favors oil companies, not people	12
Miscellaneous/Indefinite	17

The 51 per cent who said Congress is more to blame gave these reasons:

	Total
Congress won't cooperate with Ford	22%
Congress has done nothing	22
Congress has power to legislate	20
Congress is doing poor job in this area	15
Congress has held office longer than Ford	7
Party differences	2
Miscellaneous/Indefinite	12

(Above tables add to more than 100 per cent because some gave more than one reason.)

Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Mr. Ford is handling his job as president?

	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	
October, 1975	60%	21%	19%	
June, 1975	67	19	14	
January, 1975	52	32	16	
September, 1975	64	24	12	
	Total	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
Approve	60%	73%	44%	62%
Disapprove	21	11	35	18
No Opinion	19	16	21	20

Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. Congress is handling its job in Washington?

	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	
October, 1975	26%	54%	20%	
June, 1975	31	52	17	
January, 1975	44	34	22	
September, 1975	45	37	18	
	Total	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
Approve	26%	18%	39%	23%
Disapprove	54	60	45	57
No Opinion	20	22	16	20

THE IOWA POLL is based on 602 personal face-to-face in-home interviews with Iowans 18 years of age and older located in 106 sampling points throughout the state. A permanent staff of 64 independent interviewers follows a probability sampling method that eliminates interviewer's choice in selecting persons to be interviewed. The IOWA POLL was established in 1943 as a public service and is sponsored by the Des Moines Register and Tribune Company.

IOWANS CITE CONGRESS FOR ENERGY WOES

By BRUCE NYGREN
Iowa Poll Staff

Iowans blame the U.S. Congress more than President Gerald Ford for the lack of a definite energy plan in the U.S.

An October Iowa Poll found that 51 per cent blame Congress while only 10 per cent hold the President accountable.

Opinion on the issue has changed slightly since a June poll revealed that 57 per cent of Iowans blamed Congress and 11 per cent faulted Mr. Ford for an inadequate national energy program.

Iowans who blame Congress criticize the lawmakers for not cooperating with the President (22 per cent), doing nothing (22 per cent) or a

IOWA POLL

poor job (16 per cent), and not performing their proper role by passing energy legislation (20 per cent).

Of those who think Mr. Ford is more responsible for deficient energy policy, 25 per cent said his policy proposals are poor and 17 per cent said he hasn't done anything. The President was accused by 15 per cent of not working with Congress.

Both the President and Congress received lower marks in the latest poll for their general job performance.

Mr. Ford's approval rating decreased from 67 per cent in June to 60 per cent in October.

The President has lost favor more with Republicans than with Iowans of other political persuasions. Mr. Ford's June approval rating with those in his party was a lofty 84 per cent — 11 percentage points higher than it is now.

This drop in popularity is not a cheerful note to Ford supporters now that Ronald Reagan has announced his bid for the Republican Presidential nomination.

However, since Reagan entered the race after the October Iowa Poll was conducted, the impact of his candidacy cannot be learned from the results.

The President's popularity in Iowa is still considerably above what it is nationwide.

An early November Gallup Poll reported that in the country as a whole, 44 per cent approve of his job performance, 44 per cent disapprove and 12 per cent have no opinion.

The low regard shown by Iowans for congressional efforts in the area of energy may be related to the low rating the legislators receive for general job performance.

In the latest poll, only 26 per cent approve of the job Congress is doing. This compares with 45 per cent who approved in September, 1974.

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