



1/23

Questions are being raised about the initiation of planning for the 1976 campaign. This memo examines some of the considerations which will shape that planning activity and suggests next steps.

Background

There has been some discussion about the role of the RNC in the campaign. This discussion, however, misses the basic point that at least until the convention is over, the President cannot use the RNC since it must remain neutral so long as another candidate might emerge. Therefore, ~~we must establish~~ some sort of a separate Presidential campaign organization ^{must be established} prior to the convention.

The pertinent questions are:

What should such an organization do?

When should it be established?

Who should head it?

How (if at all) should it relate to the WH and the RNC prior to the Convention?

How should it relate after the Convention?

Discussion

What Should the Organization Do?

There are four separate types of activities which the organization can perform:

--detailed strategic planning

--fund raising

--local state and national organization building

--implementation of campaign strategies in primaries and general election.



Strategic planning at least in the early stages could be done elsewhere, for example, in the White House. ^{Within a short time} In the ~~long run~~, however, this activity would become extensive involving ^{the collection of} substantial amounts of data, ^{development of} detailed flow ~~charts~~, ^{charts,} ~~memorandums, papers~~ ^{about developments} and discussions with others. It would not be appropriate to have these activities carried out by an individual or individuals on the public payroll. The other functions, of course, could only be properly performed by a non-governmental body. As I write this, the wire is carrying an article on Jack Stiles which makes the point.

When Should It Be Established?

The organization could be established in two ways:

- as an immediate follow on to a firm Presidential commitment to run again
- as an independent group which does so without committing ^{formal} ~~itself~~ ^{next} of the President ^{to} ~~run~~ to run.

The former approach is by far the cleaner one since it fully recognizes the campaign reform act. Its disadvantage ^{is} ~~is~~ ^{are} that it starts the countdown on primary campaign expenditures very early in the game. ^{and that it delays comprehensive planning until the organization is established} The latter approach has been used in the past even without the constraints of campaign spending laws. It would allow ^{set up} expenses to be excluded from the limitations, ~~and a later~~ ~~formal announcement date~~. On the other hand, this approach ^{act} may well be viewed as deviating from the spirit of the law.

Who Should Head It?

Again, there are some choices here. A person could be named as a fill in until the President was willing to name his top man. Or the top

man could be named at the start. The former approach allows deferral of a tough decision, but it would also entail very close WH involvement and oversight. The blurring of the President's governmental and political roles might well ^{recall} suggest previous campaign styles. If the top man could be selected early on, it would avoid this problem since responsibility and authority could be combined in one man. The key would be that this individual chosen have:

- the confidence of the President
- the stature to deal with national, state and local officials
- the managerial ability to develop and run what will become a large organization.

How Should It Relate to the WH and RNC Prior to the Convention?

The organization must for legal and political reasons have a great deal of autonomy. The RNC, as mentioned above, will have to be neutral before the Convention. The friction points will probably occur in the competition for funds at all levels. I ~~understand that~~ ^{but there is} one of the ^{real} complaints against CREEP was that it acted as a vacuum cleaner for political funds, and that by the time RNC started fund raising, there was little to be had. The right head of the organization could set mutually acceptable ground rules with RNC. There will have to be some coordination with WH in several areas such as scheduling the President's time. Close links at several levels, however, should be avoided if ~~we are to maintain~~ ^{is to be maintained} a real distinction between the President's governmental and political roles. A single WH contact point would be the best way to do this.

How Should It Relate After the Convention?

It is unrealistic to imagine that an organization such as the one contemplated could (or should) disappear after the convention. It is also unlikely that the organization could be successfully folded into the RNC. Decisions on the specific form of the relationship fortunately can be deferred until the organization is set up, the top man chosen, and the date of the Convention draws closer.

