

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 11, 1976

F.
Campaign
Strategy

MEMORANDUM FOR: DAVE GERGEN
FROM: STEF HALPER SAH
SUBJECT: Luncheon with George Will

George Will was the speaker at a luncheon I attended on Thursday. I spoke with him at length afterwards. His comments ranged over the contemporary political scene. I have noted some of his observations which are relevant to us.

On campaign strategy, Will pointed out that of the 10 largest states, all but 2 have Democratic Governors. Had a few thousand votes been different in Ohio and Michigan, they would all be Democratic. Furthermore, all have congressional delegations dominated by the Democrats. The 10 largest states bring you within 12 electoral votes of victory. In the non-Border South, with 120 electoral votes, Jimmy Carter is perceived more as a cause than as a man. Even though Will is double counting Texas and Florida, any Republican candidate has an uphill fight.

Will suggested that Ford might write-off the South and capitalize on the anti-Carter feelingⁿ the West and Northeast. He suggested that many would look to Richardson but added that Richardson was a bright man and a poor campaigner and might add little to the ticket. Will then said, "If I were doing the picking I'd take Anne Armstrong -- she's a real pro, a great campaigner, bright and from Texas". He said that the Ford campaign was less astute than the Carter and Reagan efforts, probably too unimaginative to realize that they were in deep trouble and had to take dramatic and persuasive steps to get past the ho hum attitude that most people have toward Ford's candidacy. His point is that while Baker, Rumsfeld, Richardson, Brock, Evans, Wilson, etc. are all good men, something dramatic and unusual is called for. He implied that Carter as a cause must be responded to with a cause; that the Republicans can't win this one by just doing a good job -- we've got to capture people's imagination and make Ford's candidacy as unique as Carter's.