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THE PRESIDENT

BRIEFING BOOK I

LAST DEBATE

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 20, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

MIKE DUVAL

Mike

SUBJECT:

Last Debate

Briefing Materials

Attached are two very brief books of briefing material for the last debate.

Book I contains a recommended first answer, themes and rebuttal material, and closing statement. We strongly recommend that you concentrate on this book. In our judgment these are the points you should make in the debate.

Book II has some background materials on subjects which may come up.

Attachments



FIRST ANSWER

[Answer specific question in one minute or less, then say:]

Mr. _____, I hope you'll ask a follow-up question, if you want to.

But at the outset of this last debate, let me say this -- I asked for these debates because I felt Mr. Carter and I owed the people a full presentation of our different positions. But with 10 days to go in this election, that hasn't happened. Mr. Carter has been running for President as long as I have been serving as President, but the people still don't know what he would do as President.

We know of little he did as Governor of Georgia. We know he has no foreign or defense policy experience at all. In his campaign and in these debates he has talked only in general terms. The moment of truth has come.

I hope he, and you on the panel, will both help make these debates successful by assuring the American people that specific questions get specific answers.

Mr. Carter wants to reorganize government -- but he won't say how. He wants to cut the defense budget, but he won't say how. He wants to raise spending and balance the budget, but he won't say how.



He wants to reform the tax laws, but changes his specifics everyday.

The American people deserve to know more than Mr. Carter has given them. That surely is what these debates are for.

I think my record is clear. It is a record of honor restored to the White House. It is a record of peace. Inflation cut in half. More new jobs than any peacetime period in American history. And tax cuts proposed for every middle income family.

After the comeback of the last two years, I think most Americans are feeling good about America. Mr. Carter promises to change things drastically. I think it's time for him to tell us precisely what he would do differently and how he would do it.



THEMES

PEACE

As a young man entering public service, my inspiration was Senator Arthur Vandenburg who used to say: "It's easier to be critical than correct." Mr. Carter might think about that.

There is one overpowering truth about America today: We are at peace.

- And I will maintain our strength so we can stay at peace.
- We are at peace -- and no Americans are fighting and dying anywhere on this earth.
- We are at peace -- and every American family knows what it means that there is no draft.
- We are at peace -- and we are using our diplomatic skills and initiative to keep the peace.

Mr. Carter, with no foreign policy experience of any kind, can criticize. But I believe that most American are feeling good about this country. And one reason is that we are at peace and we're strong enough to stay at peace.



TAXES

My proposals would cut the taxes for every middle-income family in America -- by raising the personal exemption from \$750 to \$1000. The result would be a substantial tax cut for all families.

Mr. Carter is all over the lot.

- He has said he would raise taxes on everybody making over \$13,000. Now he says he's changed his mind.
- He has said he wants to eliminate the mortgage interest deduction, which would raise the taxes on nearly every American homeowner.
- He has said he wants to close the tax loopholes on the very rich. But these are the very loopholes he has used on his own tax forms.

All of Mr. Carter's talk about tax reform is a shell game. His support of Humphrey-Hawkins, comprehensive national health insurance and the Democratic Platform, which he wrote, would vastly increase spending. That means higher taxes, not lower.

The difference is simple. Mr. Carter wants higher spending which will mean higher taxes. I want to control spending and give middle-income Americans a tax cut.

EMPLOYMENT

This Administration will never be satisfied if there is one American who wants a job but can't find one.

And I think the record of the past two years proves that. In 17 months we have created 4 million new jobs -- that's a record. That's more new jobs than in any peacetime period in American history.

- We've done it without a single combat job.
- We've done it without drafting a single person.
- We've done it while cutting inflation in half for the 88 million American who are working.

During the same time the people entering the work force looking for jobs has also expanded at a record rate. We'll meet our goal of providing a good job for anyone who wants to work. We know it can be done because we've done it.

Mr. Carter's drastic answer is the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill which will rapidly increase spending which can only result in higher inflation or higher taxes, or both.

Sure, every economic recovery has its pauses. But I think most Americans know the economy has been getting much, much better. I think most Americans are feeling good about America. And I don't think they want the kind of drastic change Mr. Carter seems to want.

EXPERIENCE (Foreign Policy)

I just wonder what the American people think -- what America's allies think -- and what America's enemies think -- when they hear a Presidential candidate with no foreign policy experience

- propose slashing the defense budget;
- call for removing U.S. forces from Europe;
- call for removing U.S. forces from Korea;
- waffle on the B-1 bomber, an essential weapon in the strategic balance of power with the Russians;
- and, extend a friendly hand to the Communist Parties of Western Europe.

My reaction is to ask you to reassure the people by telling them who your Secretary of State would be. I agree it wouldn't be traditional to do so; but neither has it been an American tradition to run for President without any experience whatsoever in foreign or defense policy.



EXPERIENCE (Georgia)

You know a man by what he's done. I think the people know what to expect from me from the steady, stable comeback we've experienced since I became President.

I think it's fair to ask what Mr. Carter has done:

-- In foreign affairs and national defense the answer is nothing. He would be the least experienced President in this century, coming to office in history's most dangerous hour.

-- In domestic affairs, his record as Governor of Georgia, is hardly reassuring. Government employment went up 25%; government spending went up 50%; the State government debt went up 20%.

You know a man by what he's done. And on that basis I'm not sure America can afford Mr. Carter.

COMEBACK - FEELING GOOD

Mr. Carter has said he can't think of a single thing I've done as President. How about peace? How about 4,000,000 jobs? How about inflation cut in half? How about honor restored in the White House? I think Mr. Carter makes a mistake to belittle America's comeback. I think the American people are feeling good about America. And I don't think they want the kind of drastic change Mr. Carter represents.

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REBUTTALS

REBUTTAL POINTS

If Carter ducks question: I don't believe Mr. Carter answered the question. I regret that he doesn't take seriously the people's right to know what he would do as President.

If Carter is overly critical: Mr. Carter's continual criticism might be a little more effective if just once he would tell us in specific terms what he would do as President.

If Carter talks of national shame, lack of respect, etc: I don't think a candidate for President should rundown America. I think it's wrong to say Americans are ashamed. I think it's wrong to call Americans cowards. I think most Americans are feeling good about America.

If Carter or others talk of low-level campaign. I believe most Americans feel good about America. I regret that Mr. Carter's campaign has sunk to personal innuendo. There's a simple way to improve the campaign and that is for Mr. Carter to end his harping and start telling America what he would do as President -- in specific terms.



If Carter talks of Nixon-Ford or the last eight years. I'm sure Mr. Carter would prefer to run against my predecessor. But (look at Carter), I am not Richard Nixon. I proudly run on the record of the last two years. when we have restored honor to the White House, brought peace, cut inflation in half, and created 4 million new jobs.

If Carter attacks Kissinger: Secretary Kissinger is my Secretary of State and he will be my Secretary of State. I know some Americans disagree with him but most realize he is a superb negotiator and diplomat who has helped achieve a world at peace. A more relevant question is this: Given Mr. Carter's total lack of experience in foreign and defense policy, who will be his Secretary of State. I know it's not traditional to name one in the campaign; but neither is it traditional to run for President without any foreign policy or defense experience of any kind.

If Carter or questioner raises Eastern Europe statement: I mispoke in the second debate. The military domination of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union is obvious. But the people of Eastern Europe will never allow their hearts or minds to be dominated. Their aspiration for human freedom is a cornerstone of American foreign policy and will forever be. It has been a

part of my public record for 28 years -- and I'm sure no one can seriously doubt that. Frankly, I think the issue reminds us that my 28 year record of public service and foreign and defense policy experience stands in marked contrast to Mr. Carter, who has no experience in this area of any kind. Inexperience is not a qualification to be leader of the free world.

If John Dean comes up: Mr. Dean's allegations are absolutely false. I have been confronted by Mr. Dean and Mr. Carter with a host of charges in an effort to destroy my reputation for integrity. The Watergate prosecutor has dismissed them. More important, I probably have been more thoroughly investigated than anyone in American history during my Vice-Presidential confirmation. So I doubt that many Americans are going to be taken in by a host of election campaign smears. I think the American people know an honest man when they see one. My integrity means more to me than any election, so I must tell you that I resent the charges very deeply.

If Dole's comment about Democratic wars comes up: It would be grossly unfair to blame America's wars on any one Party. What I think Mr. Dole was saying -- and this is a fair statement -- that Republican Presidents have done a very good job of keeping the peace. America is at peace now. We have the strength

and experience to keep the peace. With Mr. Carter's desire to slash the defense budget and with his total lack of experience, frankly I don't know whether he can keep the peace or not.

If General Brown's statement comes up: I disagree with his comments. Our alliance with Israel is a vital asset to this country -- one which we cherish and will continue to do so. I have a certain sympathy for people who have trouble explaining themselves clearly. I would never make him my Press Secretary, but he is a distinguished military leader who loves his country. I have discussed his remarks with him and he knows that any repeat will not be tolerated.



CLOSING STATEMENT

CLOSING STATEMENT

I want to thank the League of Women Voters for sponsoring these debates. They have been historic -- not so much because this is the first time in our 200 year history an incumbent President has debated his opponent. These debates have been historic because this election is historic.

Seldom have we had a more important election in this country. Seldom have the stakes been higher. Seldom have the differences on programs and experience of the candidates been clearer.

Our country has been through an extraordinary decade of tension--culminating in a betrayal of the people's trust by their highest leaders.

In August of 1974, our people had lost trust in their leadership, had lost faith in the economy, and had lost that spirit of optimism which had always buoyed our nation.

We have come a long way back. Inflation has been cut in half. 4,000,000 new jobs in 17 months is a peacetime record. This country is at peace again -- around the world -- and here at home. And the people know that honor has been restored to their White House.

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When you remember the despair and recrimination of two years ago, it is an incredible comeback. The question now is whether we keep on this steady course to greater prosperity for all Americans -- or pursue an uncertain future with untested leadership.

If we really are feeling good about America, then this election is vital. To stay on our steady course, I need your help. I need your vote.

In the ten days remaining before Election Day I ask you to think about this country we love, to think about the importance of experienced leadership, to think about the kind of government best designed to assure the stable prosperity of each American family.

I am confident that your decision will be right for America.

Thank you.