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THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID...

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 11, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: JACK MARSH  
FROM: DAVE GERGEN *DS*  
SUBJECT: Missouri Appearance

As you know, the President plans to speak off the cuff tonight and did not want special notes prepared. Dick did ask last night, however, if I had any special thought about what points he should cover. Herewith a few ideas:

1. After expressing pleasure at returning to Missouri, it would be helpful to plug Kit Bond, Danforth, etc., as the fresh new faces in the Republican Party who are the promise of the future. The elections that will take place at the State level this fall are just about as important to the future of the country as those at the national level; we must put together a team that can win up and down the line.
2. Two years ago, Republican Party fortunes were at a low ebb and some wondered if the party would survive. But we've come back -- and now we can go to the people on a strong record of peace, prosperity and trust. This is the first time in 20 years -- since Ike in 1956 -- that the Republican Party could campaign on such a strong record of peace and rising prosperity. It could win for Ike, and it can win for us.
3. This is an emotional time, when many of us have a sentimental favorite for the party nominee, but it is critical -- to both party and country -- that we unite behind a candidate who can win in November.

-- The party might not long survive another debacle such as 1964. A loss of that magnitude could reduce GOP membership in the House to as low as 100 Members -- the worst GOP showing since 1934 -- and would surely sink many other worthwhile Republican candidates at the State and local level.

-- As for the country, just imagine what it would be like to have a Senate that was better than 2-1 Democratic, a House that was better than 3-1 Democratic, and a New Deal Democrat in the White House. What we had after 1964 -- the beginnings of the Great Society with all its inflation and the expansion of the war -- should leave no doubt about how dangerous it would be to turn over Washington to the Democrats lock, stock and barrel.

4. The Republicans this year are in a different position: the party is down to a fifth of the electorate, there is a split in party ranks over the nominee, and the Democrats are hungry -- so hungry that for the first time in a century they are uniting behind a candidate from the Deep South.

The GOP cannot afford continued fratricide; the GOP cannot afford to go with a high-risk candidate; we must bind up the wounds of the party and unite as quickly as we can behind a candidate with a proven record, a candidate who can appeal to voters of every background and belief -- in short, a candidate who can win. Only one candidate -- President Ford -- can meet those qualifications.

cc: Terry O'Donnell