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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.

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# EVANS-NOVAK POLITICAL REPORT

WHAT'S HAPPENING . . . WHO'S AHEAD . . . IN POLITICS TODAY

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To: Our Subscribers

September 29, 1976 - No. 270

From: Evans-Novak

Despite an unimpressive performance in the first Presidential debate and the continuing flap caused by his Playboy interview, Democratic Presidential nominee Jimmy Carter still maintains a fairly substantial, though diminishing, popular vote lead (7 percentage points, according to some polls) and a large, though shaky, electoral vote lead over Republican President Gerald R. Ford. Carter is benefiting from an initially broad base of support and, although Ford is picking up at the same time that Carter is slipping, the President remains the underdog today.

The election is rapidly boiling down to this: Will the public decide that Jimmy Carter is so weird and unreliable that the gap in key industrial states, already narrowing, closes entirely and tips the election to Ford?

The answer may depend, in large part, on Debate No. 2 next Wednesday evening on foreign policy and national security, subjects in which we do not believe the supposed Ford advantage is as great as is generally perceived. If Carter takes a hard line, he might regain his lost momentum.

The dark cloud over the Ford campaign is the Special Prosecutor's investigation. If it continues (even without reaching a conclusion), it could damage the President badly. We can tell you that the White House is very worried, much more so than aides let on.

## PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ROUNDUP #4

Since our last Report, the narrowing of the popular vote has had little effect on our electoral vote projection. In fact, we still call an electoral vote landslide for Carter if the election were held today. The major change is a heavy flow of states from "Probable for Carter" to "Leaning to Carter," shifting his "Probable" total from 351 four weeks ago to 153 two weeks ago to 90 this week, a substantial erosion. Thus, the election is at the tipping point: Any further shift will result in some electoral vote payoff for Mr. Ford.

States Probable for Carter: Arkansas (6), District of Columbia (3), Georgia (12), Hawaii (4), Kentucky (9), Massachusetts (14), Minnesota (10), New Mexico (4), Oklahoma (8), Rhode Island (4), Tennessee (10), West Virginia (6). Total: 90 electoral votes.

States Leaning to Carter: Alabama (9), Alaska (3), California (45), Delaware (3), Florida (17), Iowa (8), Louisiana (10), Maine (4), Maryland (10), Mississippi (7), Missouri (12), Montana (4), Nevada (3), New Jersey (17), New York (41), North Carolina (13), Ohio (25), Oregon (6), Pennsylvania (27), South Carolina (8), South Dakota (4), Texas (26), Vermont (3), Wisconsin (11). Total: 316 electoral votes.

Total Carter electoral votes: 406

States Probable for Ford: Idaho (4), Kansas (7), Utah (4), Wyoming (3). Total: 18 electoral votes.

States Leaning to Ford: Arizona (6), Colorado (7), Connecticut (8), Illinois (26), Indiana (13), Michigan (21), Nebraska (5), New Hampshire (4), North Dakota (3), Virginia (12), Washington (9). Total: 114 electoral votes.

Total Ford electoral votes: 132

These new totals represent the following shifts:

1) Connecticut from "Leaning to Carter" to "Leaning to Ford." For reasons that are not entirely clear, this has always been Ford's strongest Northeast state in which he was only marginally behind when trailing badly elsewhere.

2) Idaho from "Leaning to Ford" to "Probable for Ford" as he consolidates his Western strength.

3) The most significant shifts: From "Probable for Carter" to "Leaning to Carter" - Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, South Carolina, Texas - reflecting the softness of Carter's once solid Southern base.

Here is a quick rundown of the Big Seven states:

1) New York: The confidential state GOP Committee poll now shows GRF trailing JC by only 3 points. However, his hope of a liberal defection away from Carter has been hurt by ex-Sen. Eugene McCarthy being ruled off the ballot. On the other hand, savvy Democratic politicians feel that Carter's close alliance with New York City Mayor Abe Beame is a mistake.

2) Pennsylvania: Almost as close as New York, with this difference - Since JC will not help in his probable recall election, will Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo try to cut Carter and, if so, can it succeed? A puzzler.

3) Ohio: Carter's lead is down to 6 points, with softness in Cleveland's ethnic wards.

4) Michigan: Ford is leading by less than 10 points in his own home state. The Ford-UAW strike does not help the GOP's chances.

5) Illinois: Carter's strategists blame Ford's narrow lead here on over-close identification with Chicago Mayor Richard Daley and his losing gubernatorial candidate Sec. of State Mike Howlett. Carter may risk snubbing Daley on his next visit to the state.

6) Texas: Even before the Playboy interview, Carter's big lead here had narrowed to around 7 percentage points. Now, with the LBJ attack and Lady Bird Johnson's putdown of Carter, Ford has pulled close to even.

7) California: A narrow, soft, diminishing Carter lead in probably the key state where both candidates are perceived as dull losers to the primary winners ex-Gov. Ronald Reagan (R) and Gov. Jerry Brown (D). Reagan, so far, is doing as little as possible for Ford, and Brown, though appearing with Carter last weekend, was able to contain his enthusiasm. As of today, neither man can win; by November 2nd one of them will lose worse than the other.

## THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

Debate No. 2: Despite the mood of euphoria in the White House and the obvious concern in the Carter camp over foreign policy-national security supposedly favoring Ford, two points may give Carter some hope:

1) This debate will revolve more around rhetoric than statistics, and this favors Carter over Ford. That could be neutralized, however, if JC persists in trying to detail Pentagon Budget reductions, an area where Ford has the clear advantage in research and resources.

2) Carter is being urged to take a hard line a la JFK in '60 - anti-Kissinger, anti-Helsinki, anti-detente, even anti-SALT. Ford can talk about high defense spending all he wants, but he is stuck with Kissinger's policies. Watch to see whether Carter risks his liberal support by taking a hard line.

Special Prosecutor: The exceedingly strange investigation of Rep. Jerry Ford's campaign finances is a real threat that the White House is powerless to

do anything about. The strangeness stems from these factors:

1) The Special Prosecutor is empowered to handle only Presidential action between 1969 and 1973 - not included in the present investigation.

2) The office is really in caretaker status with only Charles Ruff and two other attorneys left from the big staff.

3) It is generally agreed that Attorney General Edward Levi must have known about the investigation in advance but did not notify the White House.

The White House is really steaming about the timing of the whole thing, but the basic emotion is not anger. It is fear.

Media: With the first commercials starting to appear, the early edge goes to John Deardourff (Ford) over Jerry Rafshoon (Carter). The first Carter spot, showing him in a T-shirt talking about tax reform, got poor reviews. The first Ford spot stresses his accomplishments and the peace theme, though the praise of the past two years may have been laid on too heavily.

The Economy: The sluggishness of the economy and lack of hope for any spurt are causing long faces at the White House. If you had told Fordmen early this year that the economy would be this poor at this stage of the game, they would have said we have no chance. Instead they have a chance because:

1) Carter has great trouble exploiting economic issues. His arguments during the first debate were very poor indeed.

2) Inflation is clearly worry No. 1 - much greater than unemployment. While it is no great plus for the GOP, it is tougher for JC to exploit.

Ford: We spent two days in the Deep South with GRF and file this Report:

1) The White House is convinced that the South is going to be split on Nov. 2, with Carter getting the lion's share but Ford capturing a respectable and important 30-to-50 electoral votes.

2) Ford pollster Bob Teeter showed GRF down in Florida by 10 points and gaining; GRF is behind by 6 in Texas and 3 in Mississippi and South Carolina. Another poll shows Ford ahead by 7 in Virginia. Louisiana has not yet been polled.

3) The Mississippi River boat trip was highly successful, impressing the media, old-line former Democratic segregationists, Governors and Congressmen and cheering up the local troops and the candidate himself.

Why Ford's Southern push? We think there are two reasons:

1) At the least, frighten Carter about his Southern base and either force him to move Right in the North and West or risk damaging contradictions when his Northern words are played back down South.

2) At the most, by swinging hard on such issues as gun control, abortion, defense spending, big deficits, Taft-Hartley 14B, etc., woo the Right away from Carter in the conservative South.

Carter: Even after the first debate, the Playboy interview has not gone away - much to the outrage of JC who complained to reporters in a California meeting. He has resumed a hard line, attacking the Washington establishment, but that is by no means a sure solution.

We traveled with Carter over the weekend in California where the candidate and his campaign seemed becalmed. In a state where the Governor, both Senators, the Mayors of Los Angeles and San Francisco, a majority of the Congressional delegation and both houses of the state legislature are all Democratic, the Democratic Presidential candidate is in Big Trouble. Reasons: 1) The candidate himself does not turn on Californians; 2) Mistakes, such as endorsing the Farm-workers' Ballot Proposition 14 (at the behest of Jerry Brown), which has split the state Democrats; 3) The Carter organization is late getting into the field and is still struggling to pull together the chronically fractious California Democrats.

McCarthy: He is fading as a threat. He may be on the ballots of 37 states

at a maximum, but in neither New York nor California. There is no campaign.

#### HOUSE '76

Continuing sectional analyses of House races, we turn to the South:

West Virginia (4 Democrats): No change.

Virginia (5 Democrats, 5 GOP): State Rep. Billy O'Brien (D) has a good shot at Rep. Robert Daniel (R). Long shots as losers are Reps. Herbert Harris (D) and William Wampler (R). One Probable Democratic Pickup. One Possible Democratic Pickup. One Possible GOP Pickup.

North Carolina (9 Democrats, 2 GOP): Ex-Rep. Wilmer Mizell (R) is favored to regain his old seat from Rep. Stephen Neal (D). One Probable GOP Pickup.

South Carolina (5 Democrats, 1 GOP): Ex-Rep. Ed Young has a good chance to evict Rep. John Jenrette (D). Democrats have a remote chance against Rep. Floyd Spence (R). One Probable GOP Pickup. One Possible Democratic Pickup.

Georgia (10 Democrats): Newt Gingrich (R) would be favored in his second try against Rep. John Flynt (D), were not JC running. One Possible GOP Pickup.

Florida (10 Democrats, 5 GOP): Rep. J. Herbert Burke (R) is vulnerable against Charles Friedman (D). One Possible Democratic Pickup.

Alabama (4 Democrats, 3 GOP): No change.

Mississippi (3 Democrats, 2 GOP): Rep. Trent Lott (R) could be toppled by State Rep. Gerald Blessey (D). One Possible Democratic Pickup.

Louisiana (6 Democrats, 2 GOP): No change.

Arkansas (3 Democrats, 1 GOP): No change.

Tennessee (5 Democrats, 3 GOP): Rep. Harold Ford (D) may be vulnerable to Memphis City Council Chairman Andy Allissandratos (R). One Possible GOP Pickup.

Kentucky (5 Democrats, 2 GOP): No change.

Texas (21 Democrats, 3 GOP): State Rep. Jim Mattox (D) is favored against Nancy Judy for vacant GOP seat. Newly elected Rep. Ron Paul (R) may be vulnerable. One Probable Democratic Pickup. One Possible Democratic Pickup.

Summary: This area, controlled by Democrats 90-to-29 after the '74 Water-gate fiasco, shows no great GOP improvement in '76 with JC leading the ticket. Two Probable and Five Possible Democratic Pickups. Two Probable and Three Possible GOP Pickups. However, Carter is slumping and we'll keep close watch.

#### SENATE '76

California: Some polls show Sen. John V. Tunney (D) ahead of S.I. Hayakawa (R), but savvy Democratic polls still list this as Possible GOP Takeover.

Indiana: Sen. Vance Hartke (D) has made up ground on ex-Indianapolis Mayor Richard Lugar (R). Shift this from Probable to Possible GOP Takeover.

Michigan: Just as Rep. Don Riegle (D) moved well ahead of Rep. Marvin Esch (R), personal and tax problems struck. Keep it Possible Democratic Retention.

New York: A Gannett poll shows ex-U.N. Ambassador Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D) leading Sen. Jim Buckley (Cons.-R) 52%-to-39%. Shift from Possible to Probable Democratic Takeover.

Pennsylvania: Rep. William Green (D), troubled by the Rizzo recall, moves from Probable to Possible Democratic Takeover against Rep. John Heinz (R).

Utah: A stunner. Orin Hatch (R), a Reaganite, leads Sen. Frank Moss (D) who is not helped by the Allan Howe affair. Possible GOP Takeover.

Summary: Six Democratic Takeovers, Six GOP Takeovers, keeping the present Democratic edge of 61-to-38 (with one Independent).

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