

Press Pool Report #40

(AF#1)

October 28, 1976

(Indianapolis to Cincinnati)

Dick Cheney briefed aboard Air Force One. Said schedule now is set for rest of the campaign. Friday after leaving Cleveland, he will stop in Milwaukee, St. Louis, and on in Houston. Saturday, he will tape the sixth 30 minute TV program before leaving Houston for North Philadelphia, Bucks County, Syracuse, and on in Buffalo. Sunday, he will make an airport appearance in Rochester, travel to Long Island, Suffolk County, then to New York City to tape show, then back to Nassau County. He will overnight in Eastern Ohio, make an appearance in the Warren, Youngstown, Akron area and Columbus Monday late afternoon in Detroit then on to Grand Rapids.

No California visit. Cheney said polls overall show the race is "very, very close". He said there has been a lot of movement in recent weeks toward the President since the third debate. The President has made progress in Louisiana, Texas, North and South Carolina, Mississippi, and Virginia.

"Present time, the margin between the two candidates is exceedingly close." Cheney said he was encouraged by improvement in the President's agriculture and rural base, cutting into Carter's strength in the South, and the narrowness of the big states.

Cheney attributed the improvement to: (1) from a mechanical standpoint of the operation of the campaign; (2) saving our campaign allocation; and (3) our TV network hook-up is extremely useful, letting us reach the maximum number of voters in each state. He says foreign policy has become more important; we have clearly got the edge in people's minds. A lot of people who waited until after the third debate to make up their minds are making that decision. The movement is toward the President, basically, we've got a dead-even race going right to the wire.

The reason the President is returning to Texas is that polls there have him slightly ahead; a lot of movement there in the last week. Cheney said when they went back into to Texas to poll, it was to determine whether or not to allocate any more resources and time there. The movement was going "from behind to slightly ahead".

The President is doing better in the South than many people had believed. There is less than 1% between the President and Carter in North and South Carolina, and it looks good for the President in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Virginia - the six states of the Old Confederacy. With improvement in the South, Cheney said, the President now could win by taking only four of the big states (previously he has talked about needing five of the big states). North and South Carolina, for example, have 21 electoral votes-- the equivalent of Michigan; a few less than Ohio.

He repeated several times that "the big states have gotten exceedingly close" in the past week or two. He predicted the President could win with the prerequisite 270 plus electoral votes; "so many states that are so close" such as Pennsylvania with 27 electoral votes, within 1% either way.

Warren Wheat - Cincinnati Enquirer