

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 20, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: DICK CHENEY



SUBJECT: Press Conference

The following are some thoughts you may want to keep in mind for today's press conference.

I think it's very important that your style today be very Presidential. I would strongly recommend that you avoid any harsh or strident criticisms of Jimmy Carter, and if possible, you avoid mentioning his name.

I think you should seek to achieve the same kind of mood that prevailed at the last press conference where you used a little humor, short answers and firmness when appropriate. We want very much to convey a sense of confidence about the election and the campaign.

On defense cuts, it is important you avoid saying that Jimmy Carter wants to cut the defense budget by \$15 billion. Instead, I recommend that you say Jimmy Carter has stated in the past that he wants to cut the defense budget anywhere from \$5 to \$15 billion, and then go on to make the point that any cut in the defense budget would jeopardize the interest of the United States.

With respect to John Dean, there is an excellent answer in your briefing book. It is important, I believe, that you go beyond your response last time, if the subject comes up, by referring once again to your Congressional testimony, but also adding that your actions with respect to the Patman Hearings were stimulated by requests from Republican Members with the Patman Committee and not the ~~instructions~~ of White House directions.

**RESULT**



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You may be asked about the statement at your last press conference that you want to get the campaign back on a high level. Some people in the press corps believe we did not do that last week when you were very tough on Carter in Illinois. I would recommend that you respond by saying that your concern is to see to it that we do everything possible to have the campaign focus on the issues. That is obviously difficult when your opponent is Mr. Carter. Nonetheless, you think a tough, hard-hitting campaign on the issues is appropriate, and that is the kind of campaign you have been running.

You can anticipate receiving a question on General Brown. A good answer is provided in your briefing book.

With respect to the campaign, I think you can make a number of points that will convey a sense of optimism about the outcome. I would suggest you indicate we have evidence based on polls in states such as North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida and Oklahoma that we are pulling even with or going ahead of Governor Carter in some key Southern States. For that reason, we are putting additional advertising into those states, and we have scheduled campaign stops this coming weekend in the Carolinas. You might also note that Governor Carter has begun to campaign more actively in the South which you take as an indication that he too is aware of the problems he has in the once solid South.

You may also want to argue that you feel that we are back on track after a tough week two weeks ago, that the organization is working extremely well, that the advertising is extremely effective and that you look forward to the last debate in Williamsburg and to the final campaign swing for ten days thereafter.

You may be asked if we have written off any states. I think that you should say that we have not. You may want to point out that this year more than ever we have a very large number of states, perhaps as many as twenty, which are extremely close at the present time. You believe the election will be won or lost over the next two weeks, and that at this point it doesn't make any sense to write off particular states, especially in light of Carter's erosion in the South.



My final piece of advice would be to simply relax and enjoy the press conference.



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