MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT
FROM DAVE GEGGEN and JERRY JONES

SUBJECT: The Southern Trip

When originally scheduled, this trip was intended to offset the notion that you were writing off the South. As the momentum has swung in your direction, however, the trip has become more and more an opportunity to score major points in Carter's stronghold -- and to test how much emphasis we can place on the South in order to capture states such as Louisiana, Mississippi and even Alabama.

A key question is what theme you should set for the trip. What headlines are desirable? How much attack is appropriate? Etc. We have discussed this with Bob Teeter tonight and based upon his latest data (Mississippi poll and post-debate poll), here are our joint recommendations:

-- The tone of the trip should be fundamentally positive and show your growing confidence that you have a fighting chance in the South. It would be premature -- and probably not credible -- to say now that you're definitely going to win. But you can clearly be upbeat. For example, you should say, "We're going to surprise a lot of people in the South."

-- Your remarks should not be a direct, frontal attack on Carter. Teeter thinks that Southerners might be offended by this so that it would backfire and mar the tone of the trip. Drawing comparisons between yourself and Carter is fair game. There is
evidence that Carter is now being tied in many
voters' minds to the liberal Congress and that
Carter suffers worst from being perceived as
fuzzy. What you say should reinforce these
thoughts. We want to move Carter as far toward
Humphrey and the liberals as possible.

-- At the same time, you do not want to
appear to be kowtowing to the South and especi-
ally to perceived Southern prejudices. If your
supporters in Philadelphia find you stressing very
conservative Southern themes, they could easily
be alienated. Instead of identifying yourself
with strictly Southern interests, what you want
to do is identify interests of the South with
the interests of the entire nation -- interests
that you deeply share. You should definitely ask
for their votes, and this is the basis upon which
you can do it.

-- Teeter strongly recommends that you talk
far more about the future than about your record.
He suggests you spend two to three times as much
on your hopes and goals as on your record. Those
who support you for your performance in office
already know about the record. The question is
how to attract over other voters; and the way that
you approach the future as opposed to Carter is
one of your most appealing issues for them. This
is a view very strongly shared by pollster Al
Sindlinger.

-- The key issues that appeal in Louisiana,
Mississippi and Alabama are fairly predictable:

- Holding down government spending;
- Holding down the size of government;
- Holding down taxes;
- Holding down cost of living;
- Maintaining a strong national defense.

These should be done in a way that stresses compar-
ision -- how your programs will make peoples lives
better, create more jobs, less inflation, more
individual freedom, etc. On the key issues, it is
clear that you represent much more faithfully the
interests of the South -- and of the rest of the nation -- than does Mr. Carter. You might even make a point that for years, Southerners told the nation that they should be judged not by their accent or their background but by how much they could contribute to the country. Today you are asking the South not to judge by accent and background but on how much more you can do for the nation.

-- More and more Southerners are coming to appreciate your vetoes, not because they disliked the original bills but because they now see the vetoes as necessary.

-- Louisiana is heavily Catholic, but it is suggested that you not bring up abortion.


Fred Slight and Agnes Waldron have developed the attached briefing book for you on issues by state.