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CAMPAIGN STRATEGY - GRF vs. JEC - NOVEMBER 2, 1976

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

GRF emerges from GOP Convention, August 20, 1976, 15 to 30% behind JEC; what does GRF do to close the gap in the 73 days to November 2? This problem is essentially a perception one. The American people in landslide proportions will be saying that from what they know about the two men, their abilities, character and policies, they prefer JEC to be the next President or (they prefer that GRF is not the next President).

A. To catch and pass Carter will be difficult because of structural factors alone:

1. The Democratic Party enjoys a 43% to 20% registration advantage. A GOP candidate will always have difficulty closing a large gap on a Democratic opponent.
2. Campaign expenditures for JEC and GRF will be the same. Thus we no longer have the previous advantage of being able to outspend the Democratic opponent. This is a particular handicap when we are behind. Also given the dollar limitation, any dollar wasted cannot be recouped.
3. Independent expenditures by volunteer intensive labor unions to turn out the vote in JEC's behalf will be hard to match and will likely nullify our usual turnout advantage.
4. Unfortunately, the GOP Convention is late, the party will be divided after the nomination fight and will have little time to bind its wounds. This is particularly troublesome since conservative workers are the majority of the GOP's campaign workers.
5. A campaign designed to woo various voter blocs through extensive government programs and patronage is not in the cards in 1976.
  - a. Budget dollars are not available to fund extensive new program initiatives.



b. The broken promises of 1972 have made the buyable voter blocs wary of promises.

c. The President's most basic philosophy has been to ask the people to sacrifice short term benefits in return for long term gains. Changing this philosophy now is too late;

- to be credible to the recipients.
- to escape a media storm.

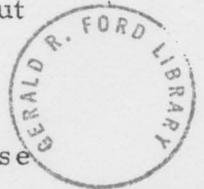
6. The reporting press will probably be biased for Carter - the new face.

B. In spite of these structural factors, I believe JEC can be caught. The mood of the electorate has been unprecedentedly mercurial in 1976 and can change rapidly in the President's favor if he wages an effective campaign.

C. The strategy for an effective campaign must be defined in terms of manipulating the voters perception of the relative merits of GRF and JEC - their character, their personal qualifications, their programs and positions on issues, deemed important by the American people.

D. The primary goal of the campaign is to reverse the present perception (that JEC would make a better President) of the swing voters in the swing states. By the end of the 73 campaign days these targeted voters must feel that:

1. GRF is relatively superior to JEC in terms of the personal characteristics necessary to carry out the functions of the office.
2. GRF's positions on the major problems facing America are relatively sounder solutions than those advocated by JEC and the Democratic Party.



E. Because GRF is having to come from behind, his campaign strategy must be aggressive. Business as usual will not close the gap; this is a year for gambles and bold action. Carter has run an error-free campaign to date, we cannot count on a Carter error to give us the election.

F. The following sections of this paper describe the key elements required in the campaign strategy, presents and analyzes the facts necessary to decide how best to use each elements, details the strategy options most likely to change the current relative perception of GRF vs. JEC:

1. The key elements of the campaign strategy.
2. The swing states and swing votes.
3. The messages to be conveyed to the voters.
4. The strategy to convey these messages.



THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

A. The elements which make up a national campaign effort are well known and will not change under any of the strategic options open to the President:

1. Definition of the base support and swing states and swing voters who will affect the election result.
2. Definition of key issues to base support and to swing voters.
3. Definition of the image to be projected both of the President and of JEC to base support and to swing voters.
4. Use of tools to project image to base support and to swing voters.
  - a. Position on issues critical to swing vote.
  - b. Selection of running mate.
  - c. Presidential behavior, conduct, activities, speeches, interviews to project image.
  - d. Paid media advertising.
  - e. Direct mail to key constituency groups.  
A group which tracks Carter and searches for his weaknesses.
  - f. Advocates to carry message to key states, key groups.
  - g. Use of special voter interest organizations to carry specific messages to specific interest groups.
5. Identify and turn out those voters favorable to the President in the key states through use of:
  - a. Door to door canvassing.
  - b. Telephone bank operators.



6. Organize the White House staff and campaign organizations to effectively carry out the above campaign elements.

B. The critical strategy calls are threefold:

1. Definition of the constituency - who are the base supporters and who are the voters in what states that we must move to win the election.

2. Definition of the images to be projected to this constituency and how best to use the campaign elements to project them.

3. Allocation of manpower, time and dollars between the various campaign elements. This allocation is particularly important in 1976 since we have a close ended fund of \$20 million to finance all campaign operations. A dollar spent for one element is a dollar that cannot be spent for another.

C. The first strategy call - to define the base supporters and the swing states and swing voters - is addressed in the next section.

D. The second call that must be made is to define the images or messages to be conveyed and decide how to use the various campaign tools to project this image.

E. Finally campaign resources can be allocated to those tasks necessary to accomplish the perception goals.



THE CONSTITUENCY - THE BASE SUPPORT AND SWING VOTE

A. In any election there is a base vote for each candidate:

1. 35% for GOP
2. 40 to 45% for Democrats

B. When translated into votes in the Electoral Collage - this means that 9 states representing 40 electoral votes are sure Ford states.

C. The swing votes are the 20 to 25% in between made up of:

1. Disgruntled GOP voters.
2. Most of the Independents and ticket splitters.
3. Disgruntled Dem voters.

D. Because of the Electoral College, swing voters are only important in the swing states for that particular election. In this election:

1. JEC carries the South.
2. GRF carries the most Republican states.
3. The swing states are the large states, and a series of smaller states which have traditionally been battlegrounds in a close national election or where a Southerner will turn off traditionally Democratic leaning voters.

E. If JEC carries the South, then GRF must do unusually well in the large swing states.

F. The groups he must win in those states are:

1. All the GOP voters - 90 plus percent.
2. A solid majority of the Independent voters - 55 to 65%.
3. A healthy number of disgruntled Democratic voters - 15 to 20%.

G. It is in these groups that GRF's perception relative to JEC must improve. The campaign strategy must be designed to obtain this perception advantage.



THE MESSAGES TO BE CONVEYED TO THE VOTER

Since swaying the perception of the swing voters in the swing states is the goal of the campaign strategy, it is key that we define the message or image to be conveyed to these voters through analysis of the following:

- The mood of the electorate.
- The key issues of the campaign.
- The present voter perception of JEC.
- The present voter perception of GRF.
- The actual strengths and weaknesses of JEC.
- The actual strengths and weaknesses of GRF.
- JEC apparent campaign strategy.

This analysis provides the definition of the message our campaign must convey to the voters during the 73 campaign days.



The mood of the electorate

A. We are in a highly unusual political year; conventional wisdom seems to be out the window:

1. Vietnam wounds are healing but still there.
2. Watergate is just under the surface.
3. People are reluctant to believe the prolonged recession is over at last.
4. And each of the above three traumatizing events occurred as the US began the difficult sociological adjustment into the post industrial age.

B. The major characteristic of voter mood is that it is volatile and will change and change rapidly.

C. Beyond volatility, the following mood seems to hold true:

1. There is a sense that things are not right; that the government could and should be better.
2. Thus to stand pat is probably not attractive to most voters, more of the same is unattractive, and change, any kind of change, is attractive; anything new might help.
3. Citizens are disillusioned about the government, it doesn't work well, doesn't do what it says it will do, is increasingly corrupt.
4. Each citizen seems powerless to have an impact on the government. The frustration level is very high - something is wrong and I can't do anything about it - nobody listens.
5. Because of the failures of government, citizens have seemed to become more conservative.

a. Let's don't let the government do it, they will screw it up.



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b. Let us try to do it, we can't do worse than others.

c. Let's stop large organizations from abusing us; they all take advantage of the individual.

6. Citizens seem to be evaluating and weighing more heavily the character and personal qualities of each candidate. The Nixon betrayal has highlighted personal character. Thus perceived character is more important than:

a. Facts.

b. The record of a given candidate.

c. What each candidate actually says.

7. Politics as usual is not acceptable. The old blatant political style and activities has come to a negative impact on perception. The successful candidate will be political without seeming to be political.

8. Citizens are tired of not having the government work. They don't like the endless D.C. squabbles and posturing. Let's be honest with them, they seem to be saying.

9. The electorate seems no longer to be in the mood to wait, they want these things to be straightened out now or at least the problem defined and workable solutions proposed now.

10. Also, they want solutions to problems that have a moral content. Amoralty no longer seems acceptable.

11. The people are basically hopeful and optimistic. They want a President who is hopeful and who projects the feeling that he can make things better.

12. Finally, the electorate seems to want a President who is strong enough and authoritarian enough to step in and set all the problems straight.



Key issues of the campaign

Beyond the mood of the electorate, these are the specific issues that the voters say are important to them.

A. Want a leader and a man of character as President. They care very much about the characteristics of the next President and seem to want the following:

1. Excitement.
2. A man with a sense of direction.
3. A man with character and moral values.
4. A man who can make things happen, who is strong and can control the random, out-of-control mess in Washington.
5. A man who cares about people's problems.
6. A man who will try to solve the unsettling problems of the country.

B. Big government which is oppressive and out of control.

C. Economy.

1. Inflation.
2. Unemployment.

D. Crime.

E. Foreign Policy, defense, and America's place in the world.



The Present Voter Perception of JECPositive

- A. A winner who has "it". A man with real personal appeal, "I like him".
- B. A man with strong spiritual and moral values, a man of character.
- C. A family man.
- D. A man who cares about the common man and his problems.
- E. A new kind of politician.
  - 1. Against the corrupt Washington system.
  - 2. Will not lie.
- F. A man concerned about government efficiency and dedicated to making the government work better.
- G. A man who seems to deal with and resolve issues in a non-controversial way.
- H. He is a man with quiet strength, he will not let the bad guys run over him. He is in control and will run the country with authority.

Negative

- A. A Southern talking fellow.
- B. A man who wears his religion on his sleeve; he is very self-righteous.
- C. A man who tries to be all things to all men; we don't know where he stands on issues.
- D. A man whom we don't know enough about; we really don't know who he is as a person.



Causes for perception of Carter

- A. He is a winner; winners walk on water; they are admired and respected.
- B. He has a strategy and he lets it guide his campaign and uses it to help him achieve the correct public perception. He is consistent in his campaign and behavior; he consistently projects the same image.
- C. He has keyed in on those characteristics to project which the voters seem to want in a President.
- D. He has built up those characteristics that he thinks the public wants.
1. Acts Presidential; handles himself with coolness, with dignity.
  2. Is supremely confident.
  3. Makes few errors in public.
  4. His team is tight and doesn't leak damaging information.
  5. He has emphasized the key issues effectively.
  6. Need a moral man in the White House.
  7. Need a man who will make government work better.
  - 8. Need a man who will subdue the Washington monster.
  9. Need a man who can make things happen.
  10. Need a man with a vision of the future.
  11. Need a man who will be open with the people.
- E. He uses TV effectively to get across his message.



The Present Voter Perception of GRFPositive

- A. I like him, he is a good man who tried hard, I hope he succeeds.
- B. He is safe and will do the right thing.
- C. He came in under horrible circumstances and the situation in the country has gotten better under him.
- D. An honest man, who will try to do the right thing, he has restored honesty in the government.
- E. He will keep the activists from taking over and springing another Great Society on us.
- F. He is the underdog, I always root for the underdog.

Negative

- A. Not decisive
- B. Not really on top of the job.
- C. Doesn't seem to have a clear view of where he is going and why; doesn't seem to understand our problems or have solutions for them.
- D. Spends too much time on politics, too worried about election, doesn't seem to spend enough on the people's business, too much of an old politician.
- E. He is practicing the same old politics. He started his Presidency by being honest and straight with us, but he has resorted to all the old political tricks during the campaign - shading the truth, using government money and projects to influence voters. He is politically expedient, he seems inconsistent - swings one way and then another.



- G. Isn't strong enough to lay Reagan away, does this reflect on his abilities?
- H. Doesn't seem to really be in control of the government. HAK and others seem to be able to control him; he is their puppet. He doesn't seem to want to use his power and authority.
- I. He seems to always be making errors, may not be smart enough to do the job.
- J. He doesn't seem to care enough about the problems of the comman man.
- K. He always fights with Congress.
- L. He seems to understand the problems of the country but he doesn't seem to be able to do anything about them.
- M. He is boring, not exciting.

Conclusions on Ford's Perception

- A. The President is not seen as a leader.
1. No vision.
  2. No will.
  3. No control.
- B. He has the smell of a loser.
1. Can't lay RR away.
  2. Many errors, embarrassing problems.
  3. Seems befuddled.
  4. Doesn't seem to be able to get anything done.
- C. After a promising start, he is coming to be seen as just another politician.
- D. He doesn't seem good enough to be President.
1. Indecisive.
  2. Reactive.
  3. Not smart.
- E. His record is being discounted because of the public's perception of him as a leader.



Causes for Poor Perception

- A. The struggle with Reagan - and the resulting comparison with Reagan - President is just another candidate.
- B. Over-exposure on political matters, transparent campaigning techniques.
- C. Lack of a vision of what life in America should be, and a well-articulated, logical program to get us there.
- D. Inability to articulate his goals and programs effectively.
- E. Serious White House, Administration and PFC organization and personnel problems.
  - 1. Not bringing strength of incumbency to battle.
  - 2. Error rate is high.
  - 3. Lack of team play.
  - 4. Poor execution of campaign and government efforts.
  - 5. No control over prima donnas.
- F. No strategy for running government and campaign which has in turn led to a series of seemingly contradictory decisions and actions.
- G. GREF doesn't come across effectively on TV.



The Actual Strengths and Weaknesses of JECStrengths

- A. His strategy is on target with the mood of the electorate, and he plays the strategy effectively (vision, character, morality, spirituality).
- B. A good political mind, good instincts.
- C. A good, well-knit organization, which executes effectively. It does not leak.
- D. A favorable public perception, on characteristics and issues important to the voters.
- E. He has united the Democratic party, which will work on his behalf.
- F. The promises of change, that he has solutions to problems.
- G. A low error rate, few things mar the image he is attempting to project. His organization is relatively small and tightly run.
- H. He is subtle, he can send political signals with a light touch. These signals don't seem political.
- I. His religious background.

Weaknesses

- A. Personal makeup is not in tune with public perception. He appears to be vindictive, arrogant, egotistical, bull headed. He is a poor winner. (If you liked Nixon, you will love Carter.)
- B. Position on issues is to the left of a rightward moving electorate - Humphrey, Hawkins, and many others.
- C. He has the support of the Democratic Party which brought us our Great Society hangover; he will either have to defend the Congress or party or reject it; either of which will give him problems.

The Actual Strengths and Weaknesses of GRFStrengths

- A. His record; the country is in good shape.
- B. His experience; he has done the job and handled the office.
- C. The power of the incumbency; he is the President, people will have to want to kick him out. Also, he can take action, while Carter can only talk.
- D. His decency, and honesty.
- E. People have empathy with him.
- F. His family.
- G. The fact that he is a good President.
- H. His personal makeup, he isn't vindictive, mean or an egomaniac. He can listen to others, take advice. In short, he is human.

Weaknesses

- A. Seems to lack the will to make obvious, needed changes in personnel and organization structure.
- B. Is reluctant to think in terms of vision and quality of life, and articulate these.
- C. Seems unwilling to take charge and discipline his Administration even when it is in his interest, eg. HAK, Simon. Thus organization is loose and gives off often contradictory signals. This in turn brings to question the President's ability to manage.
- D. Is a poor communicator of ideas, has no feel for language, political argument at the Presidential level. He is not articulate.
- E. He is a poor politician. Repeatedly makes decisions and plays them in such a way that both sides of the decision wind up angry at him. He doesn't think politics. Seems to rely on others to do it for him.

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F. Has no concept of the value of voter perception on what he must do to project a consistent favorable image.

G. His instincts for a Presidential campaign are poor. He doesn't seem to have a feel for how his behavior will play out there.

H. Has no sense of how the people expect a President to act. No sense of the dignity required of the office.

I. Has no sense of people, can't judge who will do well in a job and who will do poorly. Is unwilling to change or discipline poor performers.

J. Has no sense of organization and how he must organize to effectively accomplish tasks.

K. He conducts himself in a way that projects indecisiveness.

L. His speaking style projects lack of intelligence.

M. He is not subtle, his political efforts seem heavy handed and overkill. Many innocent activities seem political.



JEC's Apparent Campaign Strategy

A. Play to mood of people, particularly his constituency, which means to emphasize personal characteristics as opposed to issues.

1. Need leadership.
2. Need morality in government.
3. Want a man of character, who they can respect.
4. Want the system to work better.
5. Long for a change, something that shows an effort to improve the quality of life.

B. Play up characteristics as his strengths which are seen to be his opponent's weaknesses.

1. Emphasize vision.
2. Emphasize competence, planning, control.
3. Emphasize openness.
4. Emphasize that he is his own man in foreign policy, will bring the Congress into process, will not be soft on USSR, will deal a great deal more with friends.

C. Play down issues, particularly issues that would split the democratic coalition. Issues that would turn people away from the key thrust on personal qualities.

D. Put together democratic coalition and play on Dems hunger for Presidency.

1. Shaping issues vaguely.
2. Playing to all interests without compromising himself.

E. Attack GRF on perceived points of weakness.

1. He isn't very competent.
2. He has no vision.
3. I can do everything better than he can.
4. I can straighten out the mess he and his buddies created in Washington.

Conclusions on Messages to be Conveyed.

A. It is clear that Carter is projecting the image of a candidate that more nearly fits the mood of the country and what the voters are looking for in their next President.

B. We must develop a campaign strategy and action plan that changes swing voters perceptions which:

1. Capitalizes on GRF's strengths.
2. Shores up GRF's weaknesses.
3. Turns some of GRF's weaknesses into strengths.
4. Undercuts JEC's strengths.
5. Points up JEC's weaknesses.

C. Major things strategy must accomplish:

1. Reestablish the perception that the President is up to the job, that he as a person is relatively more able to perform the duties. This requires that the President become more Presidential and projects that:

- a. He knows where he is going, he has a vision of the future he is trying to reach.
- b. He is in control.
- c. He knows his own mind and is consistent.
- d. He is dignified and acts like a President.
- e. That he is not just another old hack politician.
- f. That he is intelligent, sensitive and subtle.

Until the President reestablishes the perception that he has the personal characteristics of a President and must be taken seriously can the other strategy objectives come into play. Without this credibility, all other efforts make him appear a desperate politician, a fool or worse. This objective must be accomplished first.



2. Counter Carter's advantage on vision for the country and shore up the President's weakness in this area by weaving a strong sense of vision into the campaign.

3. Force Carter to become explicit on major issues which will impact negatively on swing voters and split his coalition. The President has a good advantage on specific issues.

4. Reunify the GOP so that there is little or no defection to Carter and so that GOP voters don't stay home.

5. Draw out the ugly traits in Carter's personality that scare people.

6. Get off the feeling that the President represents a stand pat position and is against change. Project the sense that change is necessary, that problems can be solved, that "things" can get better, that the country is moving and will move rapidly toward a better, more problem free life under GRF.

7. Project a more decisive, authoritative Presidency. Stop the sense of drift, lack of control, and randomness that the people are beginning to feel about the President. He must project firmness, control, the will to solve problems.

8. Select a Vice President who can help shore up our weaknesses, and expose Carter's weaknesses.

9. Revamp the White House and PFC organizations so that they are capable of carrying out this strategy to change voter perception. Decisions must be made surely and quickly; and implemented effectively.

10. Shape the President's position on key issues of importance to swing voters in swing states in such a way as to attract these voters.

D. The key conclusion: The campaign is a battle of perceptions carried out on the battlefield of the media. We are presently losing this battle and must develop a gambling, aggressive catch-up strategy if we are to win.



E. The key messages to be conveyed are as follows:

1. On personal characteristics of the President:

- a. That he is a man of vision, and knows where he wants to take the country.
- b. That he is competent.
- c. That he is intelligent.
- d. That he is honest and trustworthy.
- e. That he will do the right thing in the crunch.
- f. That he has a strong enough will to make his solutions stick.
- g. That he is not just another pol.
- h. That he is consistent.
- i. That he is in control.
- j. That he has the experience to run the country's business.
- k. That he has emotional balance and does not have a messiah complex.
- l. That he is a good man who tries hard, who doesn't claim to be a good politician but is a good President.

2. On the President's policies and programs:

- a. That his policies have worked to help solve the country's major problems.
- b. That he has defined the problems of the future, and has solutions to them.



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c. That he represents the right kind of progress and change in his programs.

d. That he is aware of the issue needs of the swing voters and is sympathetic to their major concerns.

3. On Carter's personal characteristics:

a. That he has the wrong kind of personality to handle the job properly.

- He is vindictive.
- He is not honest.
- He is stubborn.
- He has the same messiah complex that Wilson, Hoover, LBJ, Nixon has that led us to disaster.

b. That we don't really know who he is as a person, that he is hiding the real James Earl Carter.

c. That what he says now is just to get elected; that he is a hypocrite.

d. That he doesn't have enough experience to handle the job.

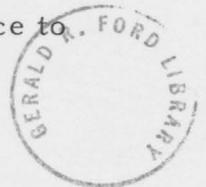
4. On Carter's program:

a. That it is the same old Democratic stuff; more government, more spending, more intrusion into people's lives, more inflation.

b. That he is trying to have his cake and eat it too; i. e., have the support of the Democratic establishment while denouncing what they have done to the country over the years.

c. That his solutions won't work.

F. The above conclusions set forth requirements that are exceedingly difficult and in the best of worlds can't really be done in the 73 days after August 19th. We must start now. We have only 73 days to get this message across; therefore, the ways selected to project it must be dynamic and forceful.



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THE CAMPAIGN STRATEGY TO CONVEY THE MESSAGE

The President has available several major tools for use to alter the perception the voters now have and to convey the necessary messages:

- A. The theme of his reelection effort.
- B. His vision of where he is trying to take the country.
- C. His programs and action plans designed to address the key issues of the campaign.
- D. Presidential campaign activities.
- E. Selection of a VP candidate.
- F. The nature of attack on Carter.



The Theme of GRF Re-election Effort

A. Clearly a theme which crystallizes what the President stands for must be used - a theme is the quickest way to project a positive message about the President and his program.

B. Peace, Prosperity and Trust was used during the primaries but didn't catch on.

1. People were more concerned about the future, than the past record.

2. Voters' perception of past record was a mixed bag - they were not convinced that the President has brought prosperity; and we got out of Vietnam by losing it.

3. Voters saw the President as an old fashioned campaigner - a pol which eroded the impact of the theme.

4. There was concern about other issues on which the President seemed vulnerable, eg. big government, detente, we're number 2 in defense, the Panama Canal giveaway.

C. A new campaign theme should be developed which not only plays on his past record but which indicates that he has a direction he is attempting to take the country and indicates that there will be movement and change for the good if he continues in office. Such a theme should convey the following message:

1. I have a program.

2. Things will get better.

3. Stick with me.

4. My past record is good but there is more to come.



The President's Vision of the Future

A. All of the President's programs are designed to solve real problems and as such promise something about the future. However, he has yet to hit on a way to tie these promises into a concise, convincing summary statement of the direction his programs will move the country and why this is the way to go. Precisely the opposition impression has been given - namely that he has no goals for where he is going.

B. This must change; the President must begin weaving a strong sense of the future, and the changes he feels we must make to get there, into his speeches, paid media, etc. More of the same doesn't seem to be enough to get us there.

C. We should start projecting this vision immediately. But the obvious time to get maximum exposure for these thoughts is his acceptance speech at the Convention. He, for the first time, can set out his theme and vision for the future which can then be used as the basis of his campaign efforts, the spokesmen, his media effort, etc.

D. This will tend to nullify Carter's present advantage in this area.

E. Properly played, a vision can reflect back to personal qualities of the President - he has a will, he knows where he is going, he has a will to get there.



Programs and Action Plans on Key Issues Campaign

A. The President has a policy position or an action plan on virtually every issue currently in the public dialogue. Many of these positions have been played with the same intensity and consequently the major issues have tended to be down played.

B. On the major issues, we must freshen up the position, indicate movement or change and have a scheduled plan to maintain a high level of visibility and action on the program.

1. Only the President can take action.
2. He looks his most Presidential discussing and working on issues.
3. Such concentration can point up the President's experience and wisdom and show Carter's issue positions to be shallow, or duplications.

C. The major issues are:

1. Big government; the role of government in the society.
2. The economy.
  - a. Inflation
  - b. Rate of growth
  - c. Jobs
3. Crime
4. Defense and foreign policy.

D. The President must not only propose activities on these issues but take action wherever possible in the form of Executive Orders, legislative proposals, etc.



Presidential Campaign Activities

A. Essentially the President has two options as to how he personally should campaign:

1. Use the Truman strategy of going to the country in an intensive but short campaign effort and fight for what he stands for in battling, spunky style.

2. To do little or no traditional campaigning but rather:

a. Announce at the outset that he will not campaign in the traditional way, that he feels such a campaign is the old politics and misleads people. Rather he intends to stay in Washington and talk rationally about where the country should be going and how it should get there.

b. That he would hold a press conference once a week to discuss the issues.

c. That to help the people compare the two candidates, he feels that he and JEC should debate the key issues in four regional forums - during the month of October.

The key question is which of the two personal campaign approaches would best convey the message about the President.

A. The first option indicates he is a scrapper and is determined to win, to sell his approach to the government.

- But it also puts him in much the same campaign mode that he was in during the primaries and it didn't work then.



B. The second is certainly non-conventional but it:

a. Puts him in a Presidential posture discussing the future and the issues.

b. Sets him apart.

- He is different, he wants to change the old campaign approach, which has become discredited.

- He is concerned about the people and the issues.

- He is acting like a President.

c. The debates, while risky, are the quickest way to close the perception gap.

- To show Carter's lack of depth on the issues and to make him focus on the issues.

- To demonstrate the President's understanding of the country's problems and his sense of direction.

- To point up Carter's straddles on the issues.

- To point up the Great Society tone to Carter's approach.

- Also Carter has not shown well by comparison when he has made joint TV appearances with the other candidates.

- But needless to say, if the President loses the debates, he loses the election.



Selection of a VP Candidate

A. If the President selects the no campaign option, his VP nominee and VP Rockefeller will have to take on the heavy burden of campaign activities. They will have to lead the attack on Carter and be the front line spokesmen on why the President is personally and substantively the superior candidate.

B. Thus the first criteria for a VP nominee is that he must be an excellent campaigner, and a superb attackman.

C. An effort to win a state or group of states with the selection is of secondary importance because the President will start out behind in many, many states. He will have to close the gap in each one and only a VP nominee who can project the necessary messages through his campaign abilities can make the difference.



### The Attack on Carter

As pointed up in the section on messages to be conveyed, Carter is vulnerable to attack. To achieve a change in voter perception of Carter will require an effective attack on his vulnerabilities - to point them up but not arouse a sympathy backlash for him.

The President cannot attack Carter directly, only indirectly and only on issues. Instead the President should point up his own positive programs and leave the attack to others.

- A. The President's good guy image does not permit an attack posture. People don't expect it and seem to be jarred and think less of the President when he attacks.
- B. An attack also puts the President in the political arena, rather than above the battle and Presidential.
- C. The President can attack the Congress and force Carter either to defend or deny their actions or lack of action.

Thus, the President's advocates must carry the attack:

- A. On issue positions.
- B. On fuzziness.
- C. On inconsistencies.
- D. And perhaps on personal attributes.

Also, the paid media can be used effectively to paint the correct picture of Carter.

