



M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Ed Meese

DATE: June 22, 1980

FROM: Charlie Smith

SUBJECT: Issue Center Concept

As discussed with you on June 17, 1980, it is recommended that the national campaign include the use of several Issue Centers that would supplement private or Congressional Issue Advisory Panels and central issue staff by providing comprehensive, objective, concise, and rapid position papers or recommendations on issues as they emerge. As requested, attached are materials on the concept, including:

1. a strategy for handling issues;
2. examples of principles;
3. a list of possible issue areas and issues;
4. an Issue Center description;
5. some Issue Center staff examples;
6. example Issue Center coordinator assignments
7. possible issue information flow.

The above plan involves the use of part-time/volunteer Issue Center Coordinators until such time that a need exists and adequate funds may be available for full-time/paid Issue Center Coordinators.

After you have reviewed these materials, I would be glad to discuss them in more detail--including how I might help implement the concept.

Attachment



STRATEGY FOR HANDLING ISSUES

1. Adopt a set of principles with which each issue can be related.
2. Select a small number of issue areas within which specific issues can be incorporated.
3. Identify specific issues within each issue area that relate to the role of the Executive branch of the Federal government on the national level and develop a position on most issues with assistance and sanction (as appropriate) from Issue Advisory Panels, Issue Centers, central issue staff and field issues staff.
4. Make only general statements at the beginning that relate to principles, issue areas or issue topics.
5. Give a major speech on each issue area that takes a position on some issues.
6. React to questions on specific issues as they arise based on positions already developed or positions developed rapidly during campaign.
7. Give additional major speeches or participate in debates (candidate or surrogates) on issue areas and specific issues as circumstances require.
8. Cooperate to maximum extent possible with national media as they may provide a surprising amount of support at editorial and news level if candidate makes sense on the issues.



EXAMPLES OF PRINCIPLES

1. Place the maximum responsibility possible on private individuals, organizations and the free enterprise system to meet personal, social or economic objectives.
2. Provide maximum freedom possible to each person or organization as long as such freedom does not cause excessive harm to the common good.
3. Provide maximum peace of mind and security for persons or property.
4. Provide services, regulations, and incentive where needs exist, resources are available and success is likely.
5. Expend the minimum amount of tax dollars possible and still fulfill priority objectives.
6. Place emphasis on the prevention of problems rather than the cure.
7. Place emphasis on a consensus among various interests and on goals and productivity for the nation as a whole.
8. Select leaders in the private and public sector who have a commitment to a set of principles and a vision of something specific rather than individuals who only react to crises or numbers.
9. Be positive in proposing policies or programs rather than just asking questions or being critical of others.
10. Strive to develop competence and confidence among all to achieve desired objectives.



POSSIBLE ISSUE AREAS AND ISSUES

For the purposes of this analysis, the term issue is defined as a "matter of disagreement." A possible list of preliminary issues is provided in the following pages--with each issue phrased as a question to enable an existing position to be related to the issue or a new position taken. All issues are organized into seven issue areas (human rights, values and attitudes; economic inflation and regulation; national security and foreign policy; energy and natural resources; social and health services; science and technology; and government administration).

Within each issue area, there is no intent to list the issues in a priority order. In addition, some issues could be listed in one or more issue areas. Further, many issues relate to other issues and a position on one issue will impact on the position on another issue. Finally, new issues can be added to each issue area or new issue areas could be developed if desired.

ISSUE AREA 1: HUMAN RIGHTS, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

1. Should equal rights or opportunities be provided to all persons, regardless of sex, race, ethnic group, religious beliefs, sexual preference, physical condition, or mental ability?
2. Should the government or its citizens have the right to kill another person if circumstances are justified (e.g., war, law enforcement and criminal justice, self-defense, mercy)?
3. Should parents or guardians have the right to refuse interference from the government in their handling of their children and should children have the right to act without approval of their parents or guardians?
4. Should abortion be granted to women on their demand?
5. Should all citizens be given the right to privacy?
6. Should all citizens be provided with free access to all types of weapons?
7. Should all persons be able to practice their own religion where they choose (e.g., should prayers be held in public schools, can prison inmates demand special religious rights)?
8. Is our present society excessively interested in materialism, self-satisfaction, and personal freedom?
9. Is our present society excessively aggressive, disrespectful for the life and property of others, and tolerant of unpleasantness?
10. Is our present society excessively burdened with stress, depression, apathy, lack of confidence in self and others, and insecurity?
11. Should the government attempt to develop or enforce ethical or moral values in the public and private sector?

ISSUE AREA 2: ECONOMIC INFLATION AND REGULATION

1. Should the Federal government regulate wages, prices, interest rates, discount rates, profits, dividends, and rents to control inflation and recession?
2. Should the Federal government maintain a gold standard on its money?
3. Should the Federal government guarantee loans to private industry (e.g., Chrysler, Lockheed) to avoid bankruptcy?
4. Should the Federal government provide financial assistance or guaranteed loans to States or localities (e.g., New York City) to avoid financial collapse?
5. Should a variable minimum wage be established (e.g., for teenagers, welfare recipients)?
6. Should all Federal contractors be required to pay the prevailing local wage?
7. Should the Federal government have a policy for foreign trade (e.g., controls, promotions)?
8. Should the Federal government provide tax incentives (e.g., capital investment, productivity, research and development, savings, hiring of disadvantaged)?
9. Should the Federal government vigorously enforce anti-trust laws?
10. Should the Federal government seek to control or mediate collective bargaining in the private and public sector?
11. Should the Federal government tax windfall profits?
12. Should the Federal government vigorously prosecute white collar and organized crime?
13. Should the Federal government have a balanced budget?
14. Can a balanced Federal budget be achieved simultaneously with a cut in income or estate tax rates in a time of inflation?

ISSUE AREA 7: GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

1. How should staff or program performance be evaluated?
2. Should planning and social trends analysis techniques be used?
3. How can private sector services or personnel be used more effectively (e.g., contract services, volunteers, paraprofessionals, non-profit agencies, neighborhood reconciliation panels, business/professional personnel)?
4. Should the Federal government provide any types of grants to other public jurisdictions or private organizations (e.g., block, grants-in-aid, research, action projects)?
5. Should the forms and procedures of the Federal government be simplified?
6. Should open meeting (or "sunshine") laws or procedures be established or enforced?
7. Should agency termination (or "sunset") laws be established and implemented?
8. Should the Administration seek to manage the Executive Branch as a whole or to just facilitate the relatively independent function of Cabinet and regulatory agencies through policy and budgetary control?
9. Should the Administration seek to eliminate contradictory policies that exist among Cabinet and regulatory agencies?
10. Should the Federal government assist in the development or implementation of standards at the local level?
11. Should the Federal government use sanctions (e.g., withholding of funds, court suits) to implement Federal policy at the local level?
12. Should the Federal government use budget management techniques such as program budgets, zero based budgets or management by objectives?
13. Do reorganizations among or within major Federal agencies really have good results?