

December 11, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

BO CALLAWAY

FROM:

ROBERT TEETER *RT*

SUBJECT:

Momentum

The Gallup Poll is a further indication that we have a serious momentum problem. However, in attempting to slow Reagan down and regain the momentum for the President, there are several things we should keep in mind.

1. Without a Mayaguez or something comparable that we don't see in the immediate future, there is probably no one thing the President can do to himself to turn this situation around. Moreover, we ought not to be looking for something spectacular but rather develop a plan in conjunction with the White House to work our way out of this problem over the next six weeks.
2. The Christmas lull may well be the best thing we have going for us in that it should blunt Reagan's momentum and give us the opportunity to start anew after the first of the year. However, what the President does over Christmas may be significant. Whatever he does should be seen as working at the Presidency and if he goes to Colorado for Christmas, it should be for a minimum amount of time, the family tradition and family get-together aspect emphasized, and it be seen as a working vacation.
3. We need people out talking about the President, explaining, agreeing with, and praising his actions. Most of the things that need to be said about the President are things he can't say himself. There needs to be a planned series of speeches, interviews, etc., over the next two or three months by administration officials and other public figures talking about President Ford, what he is trying to do and what he has accomplished. This needs to be happening in the various regions of the country every day during the early months of next year.

4. It may be time for us to help put the bright light on Reagan. No one yet has really gone after his record as Governor of California or his 90 billion dollar proposal which most of the press people recognize as unwise, unworkable and a political blunder. While the President certainly shouldn't do this and the majority of it should be reserved until after the new year, I think we need one recognized, respected public figure to make a tough, blunt statement on just what Reagan's record is and what he might do to the country, let alone the Republican Party before Christmas. This person should not be directly connected with the President Ford Committee nor should he be seen as a member of the liberal wing of the Republican Party. He should be someone like Laird or Rogers Morton.

One further note is that the President's political travel is going to get blamed (and probably rightly) for a share of this downturn. It is my belief that it is not the fact that he traveled as much as he did during the past few months as much as what he said and how he said it that hurt him. I think he could have made most of the trips and gone to most of the fund-raisers if he would have avoided the partisan rhetoric and talked to the country as President in each of these appearances rather than to the narrow partisan audiences. This is easy to say with the benefit of hindsight, but I think it once again points out how very important style of leadership, that is the way he does what he does, is to his perception. Also the fact that anything he does is seen and heard by the entire country, not just his actual audience or those who live in the region he happens to be in.

