

Richard Nixon Presidential Library  
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Folder List

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>	<u>Document Date</u>	<u>Document Type</u>	<u>Document Description</u>
32	24	09/26/1968	Letter	From Charles S. Rhyne to Nixon, letter requesting 175 copies of Nixon's memo on "Dewey's Plunge to Oblivion." 1pg.
32	24	10/09/1968	Letter	From Lance Tarrance Jr. to Mr. Dick McCormick, letter of thanks for receiving a draft copy of "Dewey's (1948) Plunge to Oblivion," as well compliments. 1pg.
32	24	10/01/1968	Memo	Copy of "Dewey's Plunge to Oblivion", which examines the final six weeks of the Dewey-Truman campaign of 1948. 11 pgs.
32	24	n.d.	Memo	From Richard V. Allan to Dick McCormack, complimenting McCormack's memo concerning Vietnam, includes of copy of McCormack's memo. 10 pgs.



UNITED CRAFTSMEN  
FOR NIXON-AGNEW

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CHARLES S. RHYNE  
National Chairman

September 26, 1968

Mr. Dick McCormack  
Nixon-Agnew Campaign Committee  
450 Park Avenue  
New York, New York 10022

Dear Dick:

Your memo on "Dewey's Plunge to Oblivion" is something I would like to send to all of my people.

Here is a quote from one of our fieldmen:

"Incidentally, both the local and state party organizations have been sitting on their hands, hoping and waiting for a Nixon landslide to get their state candidates elected. You have a mirage in the sky, but no substance here. This is blunt but the truth."

I am worried about such comments so if and when you get your draft done in quantity, I'd like about 175 copies.

Sincerely,

Charles S. Rhyne  
National Chairman

CSR/P

cc: John Mitchell



# REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE

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RESEARCH DIVISION

RAY C. BLISS  
CHAIRMAN

October 9, 1968

Mr. Dick McCormick  
Nixon-Agnew Campaign Committee  
450 Park Avenue  
New York, New York 10022

Dear Dick:

Just wanted to thank you again for leaving a copy of your draft on "Dewey's (1948) Plunge to Oblivion." I read it and thought it quite good, and in fact, I distributed it to all of our senior staff.

You might say that your memorandum has kept us on our toes.

Sincerely,

Lance Tarrance, Jr.  
Deputy Director of Research

LT:dh

October 1, 1968

M E M O R A N D U M

Dick McCormack: Foreign Affairs Staff Member

SEPT.-NOV. 1948 DEWEY'S PLUNGE TO OBLIVION

- "How did we go wrong? Frankly I do not know." Roper, the day after the 1948 election.
- "Poll taking is still an infant science." Dr. George Gallup, same day.
- "How could fifty members of the Washington Press Club be unanimously so wrong?" New York Times, same day.
- "I can't believe it! I just can't believe it!" A defeated Republican office seeker who declined to be identified, same day.

The purpose of this memorandum is to take a brief look at the atmosphere of the final six weeks of the Dewey-Truman campaign of 1948; and see what implications this may have for us now.

Domestically the U.S. had just shaken itself free of the economic paralysis of the 1930s. Virtually every voter remembered the soup kitchens, the mountains of unsaleable farm commodities, the collapse of the banking structure; and the fear, desperation and individual humiliation which accompanied these conditions. But by October, 1948 the people were fat and happy.

Major concerns on the homefront were: 1. A 10 percent annual rate of inflation (Food prices were up 131 percent since 1939); 2. An enormous harvest which had a depressing effect upon farm produce prices; 3. Labor resentment at the Taft Hartley Act; and 4. A fear that the new found prosperity might evaporate.

Except for the Eastern Seaboard, foreign affairs really didn't concern the voter excessively. After all, the U.S. had just crushed fascism, had exclusive possession of the atomic bomb, and an economy which was the envy of the world.

There were trouble spots, to be sure. Czechoslovakia had just fallen. China's future seemed questionable. Berlin was being

squeezed. Greece was under attack. Incidents of violence were beginning in Korea. And the Stern Gang had just assassinated the United Nations representative in Jerusalem. In September, 1948, a new Draft Law was enacted and Secretary of State George Marshall flew to Europe trying to develop plans to resurrect the continent's tattered economic, political and military structure.

Politically the Democratic Party was wracked by dissention. Not since the slavery issue split the Democratic party in 1860 and put the first Republican President in the White House had America witnessed anything like the internecine warfare in the Democratic Party in 1948. On the left, Henry Wallace's Progressive Party savagely attacked Truman's hard line against Russia and his relatively conservative economic policies at home. On the Right, Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrat movement, embittered by the Civil Rights Plank of the Democratic platform, hoped to prevent anyone from getting a majority in the Electoral College and thus to throw the election into the House of Representatives.

The Republicans, exhilarated by their Congressional Sweep in 1946, were convinced that the hour for a recapture of the Presidency had struck. It was "time for a change". Pollsters unanimously agreed. So did almost every major newspaper in the country, including The New York Times.

It was against this background of events that Thomas Dewey, the newly nominated Republican candidate for President, began his campaign in September, 1948, a campaign which he promised would be "rugged and extensive.....".

"As his train rolled through the rich Pacific Northwest, Tom Dewey was obviously gaining in confidence, and apparently he was translating into a new maturity. He seemed less like a candidate bidding for votes and more like a statesman speaking not only for his party, but for his country." TIME - Oct. 18, 1948.

"Some observers, like columnist Joseph Alsop, found his manner

'a trifle too ostentatiously noble', but they were all agreed on one thing. He was making and keeping votes." TIME - Oct. 4, 1948.

"By every available piece of evidence, the voters had already made up their minds to answer: Yes, it's time for a change. That was why Earl Warren (the Vice Presidential candidate) could afford to campaign like a big friendly Saint Bernard, tail wagging his way east across the nation. The Republicans had only to raise no ruckus, make no thumping blunders, keep their fingers crossed against a world upheaval - and their election seemed assured." TIME - Sept. 27, 1948.

"Except for a promise to his farm audience that price supports would be maintained, Dewey attempted no detailed outline of his program, shrewdly contented himself with general pledges which friends wanted to hear and enemies would find difficult to attack. He promised a foreign policy made effective by men and women who really understand the nature of the threat to peace and who have the vigor, the knowledge, and the experience required to wage peace successfully." He promised an administration 'made up of men and women whose love of their country comes ahead of every other consideration'." TIME - Sept. 28, 1948.

"One of the last readings which each of Dewey's prepared speeches is given before delivery is for the purpose of taking out or toning down any allusion to Truman which might widely be regarded as harsh or enhance his underdog role.

"In the words of one of Dewey's chief advisors, 'We don't want this election to leave any bitterness'."

"You get the feeling that Dewey chafes a little under these self imposed restraints. He can, and likes to punch hard. And a good many Republican candidates for lesser office would like to have him hit with full force....."

"The best way to win a presidential election is not always the best way to lay a foundation for a successful administration. But in this case, the two objectives go together. Dewey must be credited,

not only with smart campaign tactics, but with sound strategy preparation for the trials beyond November 2." ERNEST K. LINDLEY, NEWSWEEK - Oct. 25, 1948.

So confident was the Dewey team that "Presidential Candidate Thomas E. Dewey rested on his oars last week riding the ground swell of pro-Republican sentiment. But as the man who expected to command the ship of state next winter, Dewey continued to take soundings on the shoal water ahead. Throughout his Western Journey, he had been in daily communication with his chief advisor on Foreign Affairs, U.S. Delegate John Foster Dulles. Now Dulles was returning from Paris to make a first hand report on the international conditions."

NEWSWEEK - Oct. 18, 1948.

On the same page of NEWSWEEK which described Dewey resting on his oars, Truman's campaign was contrasted.

"Like a touring star, President Truman hardly changed his act from day to day. Sometimes his words were barbed, at other times the folksy appeal was stronger. The crowds loved it either way, roaring or chuckling their approval. And like an actor facing an affectionate audience, Mr. Truman gave it everything he had, to cries of "Attaboy Harry". After only a four day respite from his Western Campaign trip, he was still incredibly tireless, this time barnstorming Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and upstate New York. Drawing increasingly larger and more vociferous crowds, he could point to an SRO sign at almost every stop." NEWSWEEK - Oct. 18, 1948.

While Truman entertained the crowds and garnered sensational headlines with blasts at "Fascist Republicans" and epithets such as "These Republican gluttons of privilege are cold men, they are cunning men", he systematically created the impression among the newly prosperous farmers and workers that "the country could go to the dogs if the Republicans win." The question was, "Are you going to let another Republican blight wipe out your prosperity?" TIME - Sept. 27, 1948.

Assailing the Republican controlled "Do Nothing Congress" for "voting themselves a cut in taxes and you a cut in freedom", Truman accused the Republicans of being the "tool of special interests".

"If you let the Republican reactionaries get complete control of Government, ... I would fear for the wages and the living standards of the American working man, but even for our democratic institutions of free labor and free enterprise." TIME - Sept. 27, 1948.

"And everywhere large crowds turned out to cheer the dogged little man." TIME - Sept. 27, 1948.

"So confident was the Dewey team that the Republican candidate, during last week's swing to the Great Plains and back, appealed more for votes for GOP Senators than for himself. He still pitched his campaign on National Unity. He still argued only in terms of broad generalities." NEWSWEEK - Oct. 25, 1948.

"We are entering upon a campaign to unite America. We are going to move forward to a new unity." LIFE - Nov. 1, 1948

Even Truman's incredible blunder in foreign affairs - his big weakness - the "Vinson to Moscow" fiasco - failed to provoke a hard hitting statement from Dewey. While privately deploring the Truman scheme as a "desperate blunder" with possible "tragic effects around the world", Dewey publicly confined his attack to the following statement.

"The people of America wholeheartedly and vigorously support the labors of our bipartisan delegation and specifically its insistence upon a prompt lifting of the blockade of Berlin. The nations of the world can rest assured that the people of America are in fact united in their foreign policy and will firmly and unshakeably uphold the United Nations and our friends of the Free World in every step to build and preserve the peace." NEWSWEEK - Oct. 18, 1948.

With the candidate they preferred mouthing such platitudes as "Our future lies before us", friendly newspapers searched for the meager line here or there that might make a match for those headlines being garnered by the President. But Dewey believed that his major error in the 1944 campaign was his all out blast at FDR and thus confined himself to vapid, uncontroversial platitudes.

On the day before the election, the Gallup Poll gave Dewey 49.5% to Truman's 44.5%. Time Magazine gave Dewey 29 states with 350 electoral votes to Truman's 9 and Thurmond's 4 states. Roper, basking in the prestige of having predicted the previous three elections within less than 1 percent error, announced that Dewey would have a landslide comparable only to Roosevelt's massive victory over Landon. These predictions were consistent with the soundings made throughout the campaign. Fifty members of the Washington Press Club, most of them bureau chiefs, unanimously predicted a Dewey victory.

ON NOVEMBER 2 THE ACTUAL RESULTS OF THE ELECTION WERE:

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>States Carried</u>	<u>Electoral Vote</u>	<u>Popular Vote</u>
Truman	28	304	23,600,000
Dewey	16	189	21,500,000
Thurmond	4	38	1,000,000
Wallace	0	0	1,100,000

The Democrats also gained majorities in both Houses of Congress.

What Happened?

One Dewey partisan in the candidate's hometown of Owosso, Michigan, theorized that "There are just more damned fools in this country than there are intelligent people." It seems likely that this theory applied to Dewey's mobile campaign headquarters, the "Victory Special" if not to the country as a whole.

More specifically:

1. The farm vote went to Truman because he convinced them that the Republican Congress had slashed programs designed to benefit the farmers, that the Republicans would cut back on price supports, and that the Democrats deserved the farmer's gratitude. Dewey refused to counter these and other specific accusations beyond a vague statement indicating that he would not abolish all price supports.
2. Labor mechanically and efficiently got out the vote to oppose Dewey because of outrage at the Taft Hartley Act.

3. Truman as president systematically cultivated special groups of voters, such as the 1,500,000 Federal Employees whose pensions were increased during September 1948.

4. Dewey's speeches were so bland that even though the vast majority of newspapers were in favor of him, they couldn't scrounge up enough sex to compete against Truman's sensational headlines.

Example. "Truman Compares Dewey to Hitler".

Dewey's campaign was devoid of emotion. To quote one post election analysis: "What...explains it... is the distrust of the warm sentient average man for the man or the party of calculation."

6. Lulled to slumber by the predictions of pollsters and columnists, the Republicans failed to make maximum effort. In fact the Republican National Committee cut the party's radio money as well as its time - down \$200,000 from a 1944 high of \$700,000, in the mistaken belief that the election of Dewey was in the bag and consequently there was little need to waste money answering the Democrats' charges. Instead of refuting the "Gluttons of Privilege" epithets, the Republican radio campaign concentrated on a bland spot announcement: "DEWEY GETS THINGS DONE. REMEMBER, DEWEY GETS THINGS DONE."

7. The precinct workers of the Republican party, already fewer in number than the Democrats, lulled by the same siren song of complacency, failed to actively proselytize during October and to urge indifferent Republicans to go to the polls on November 2. Since the voters weren't terribly excited about either candidate, the party commanding the most active and efficient machinery to get the voters to the polling booths carried the day.

8. Truman was greatly helped in key states by a large number of popular Democrat candidates for Senate, Governor and House races. Douglas in Illinois, Humphrey in Minnesota, Lausche in Ohio, etc., etc.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR 1968

Many of the implications of the 1948 campaign are so self evident as to require no further amplification. And, of course, there are important differences between 1948 and 1968. For one, the average voter no longer has the specter of the Depression foremost in his

consciousness. And after 8 years of Eisenhower, public fears that the Republican party would reverse all the social legislation of the New and Fair Deals have evaporated.

Another important difference is that Humphrey, unlike Truman, does not command the office and prestige of the presidency. Nor apparently has he a string of extremely popular candidates for local offices to help him through key areas. And, of course, Truman had no seemingly endless war on his hands, nor was he plagued by race riots terrorizing American cities.

In a nut shell, in 1948 after a ten year depression, things were finally going along just fine and people were concerned about rocking the boat with new and unproven leadership. In 1968 two monstrous problems dismay and frighten voters and people are looking for leadership with solutions.

#### SPLINTER PARTIES 1948 and 1968

The threat of the splinter parties in 1948, while serious, was smaller than today. Russia's post war belligerence had taken much of the credibility out of Henry Wallace's attacks on Truman's hard line. The widespread prosperity reduced the effectiveness of Wallace's attacks on Truman economic policies. Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrat movement against the comparatively mild civil rights plank of the Democratic platform seemed rather irrelevant to many Southerners living in an iron clad segregated society. As a consequence each of these splinter groups received only about 1,000,000 votes.

Today's Wallace movement focuses on the fears and resentments of a large percentage of lower and middle class whites. The Negroes, flag burners, pot smokers, hippies, yippies, etc., appear to threaten their whole system of values. A vote for Wallace seems to be a way of vicariously lashing out physically at the long-haired protesters and militant Negroes. It is interesting that one of Wallace's best crowd pleasing lines is his threat to run over any hippy or protester who might lay in front of his car after Wallace's being

elected President.

The latest poll soundings indicate that 21% of the voters would vote for him today. Yet to be determined is how many more voters really plan to cast their ballot for Wallace but are ashamed to admit it to pollsters.

A blatant appeal by us to the hard core of the Wallace element probably would cost us the election. Perhaps the most sensible way to approach the bulk of potential Wallace supporters is to issue a stream of balanced statements and speeches decrying violence and proposing concrete improvements in ghetto conditions. Ghetto schools (invariably the worst in facilities and faculty in the City) should be upgraded. Black Capitalism emphasized (Federal loan guarantees to low income entrepreneurs through local banks). "Pride of ownership" theme should be stressed (Home improvement loan and mortgage guarantees). Tax credits should be offered to industry to hire and train hard core unemployed (Bell Telephone of Michigan and Ford Motor Company's experiments in Detroit). Each of these constructive statements gives us an opportunity and a platform for saying "WE CAN NOT HAVE RIOTS IN OUR STREETS."

The average Wallace sympathizer is probably not merely anti-Negro. He is afraid. He is afraid that the value of his house - the major investment of his life - will plunge in value amidst an invasion of "low class" Negroes. He is afraid that his union job security will vanish if large numbers of Negroes are admitted into his trade union. He is afraid that his wife and daughter will be attacked by Negro hoodlums. He is afraid that the education and safety of his children will be jeopardized by bussing them to inferior schools in Negro ghetto areas.

It is by addressing ourselves frequently to these specific fears in a constructive manner that we can best combat the Wallace threat.

Since the lower middle class reads the papers and watches

the media with far less attention and care than more educated elements of the population, and since Nixon gets far more prominent coverage in the media than Agnew, I suggest that it would be a mistake to give Governor Agnew the major burden of carrying the message of the Republican ticket to the potential Wallace voter. (Is the Wallace voter watching "Face the Nation"? Is he reading the Times and Post political and editorial sections?) What kind of coverage do the newspapers in Cicero and Levittown give Nixon and Agnew's respective comments?

#### COMPLACENCY

All available journalistic and poll evidence suggested that Dewey would win in 1948. As a consequence, the grass roots level of the Republican political machine (the Precinct workers) failed to make a vigorous effort to propagandize the voters during October, 1948. On election day, the same thing occurred. This is probably the biggest danger to our campaign right now. To combat this, I suggest that State and Local Chairmen be sent large numbers of reproduced editorials analyzing the Dewey defeat in 1948 to distribute to their ward and precinct leaders. The second danger of complacency is that one's statements become so bland and uncontroversial as to be boring. The underdog in desperation has a tendency to lash out with increasing vehemence as the campaign progresses. In competition for headlines, this situation can be deadly. This is particularly dangerous because political scientists (V.O. Key, etc., etc.) have documented that a large number of voter switchovers occurs in the last two weeks of a campaign. We must make damn sure that we keep generating exciting, headline provoking, proposals and attacks. We must also anticipate that Lyndon Johnson will pull out all the stops during the next three or four weeks to make his administration look as good as possible to the voters. We will, therefore, be competing for favorable headlines not only with Humphrey, but also Johnson.

One of the legitimate areas for garnering headlines is Humphrey's verbal blunders. Let's not find ourselves again in the situation where "TRUMAN COMPARES DEWEY TO HITLER" spreads across the front pages of the land, while Harold Stassen's "authorized" rebuttal gets short shrift on page 7.

Humphrey is now consciously following the successful method of Truman in 1948.

- A. Offering gifts to special voter groups  
(Proposed 50% increase in Social Security, etc., etc.).
- B. Strongly attacking RN.
- C. Increasingly making sensational gestures and dramatic proposals in the hope that one or the other will capture the imagination of the voters.

In many other national, state and local elections, this technique has enabled an underdog to overwhelm the front runner in the last minute. The increasing Wallace poll strength is another great incalculable factor.

1968 has been the year for political surprises. I think we can do without another one.

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Richard V. Allen

Nixon for President Committee  
455 Park Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10022  
(212) 687-3400

Foreign Policy  
Research Coordinator

Memo:

Dick Mc--

*1303  
Fellows, 1/10/71*

Excellent memo on VN. I have  
made a few changes, which you will  
see.

Please be sure that copies of the  
memo do not go outside the organization.

When these changes are made, I will  
forward the memo to the tour.

September 13, 1968

MEMORANDUM from Dick McCormack, staff member  
who recently returned from Vietnam

SUBJECT: Recent promising developments in Vietnam.

### I. THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT

Ironically, if the War in Vietnam is won, it will be partly because of the attack by the Viet Cong at TET; for amid the smoke and ruins, and fear of a new thrust, desperately needed reforms both in policy and personnel were and are being implemented.

The most important of these reforms was in the Vietnamese Government itself. Discrediting corruption of vast proportions extended up to and including Vice President Ky himself. Tens of thousands of dollars were offered for province chief positions, so vast was the opportunity for personal aggrandizement. This extended down to virtually every level of Government.

Worse, because every president to succeed Diem was essentially a compromise figure, large numbers of officials from previous administrations remained on the job. Their loyalty and responsiveness was directed, not at the new president, but at the respective power faction which had sponsored them. The power block was considered permanent - the president temporary. Thus a presidential directive could and frequently was ignored when it conflicted with the power faction's idea of its own best interests. Under this system of mutual backscratching, even when an official's corruption

became so notorious as to attract the attention of the American press, the official was quietly transferred to a new location until the heat was off.

Under this system of fragmented patronage and administrative power, essential and long range planning was ignored: a "let the Americans do it" attitude prevailed, corruption openly flourished. Even war widows frequently had to kick back a percentage of their meager pension if they received it at all. Robbed in every conceivable way in virtually every governmental contact, it is little wonder that the Vietnamese people felt no respect for its Government.

Since TET, President Thieu and his equally honest and respected Premier Tran Van Huong have rapidly and effectively consolidated the fragmented administrative structure under them. For the first time since 1963 large numbers of corrupt officials have been removed from high position. Three of the four powerful corps commanders, 21 of 44 province chiefs, and over 100 district chiefs were unceremoniously dumped. To replace still more corrupt, unresponsive or incompetent officials, Premier Huong recently opened a ten week school for top administrators. A sign of the times is that he had difficulty getting candidates for jobs which formerly were bought for tens of thousands of dollars. The word is out: greater honesty, hard work, and results will be demanded of officials. For the first time since Diem's early days, the South Vietnamese Government enjoys the respect of the people. Without this respect, U.S. forces could have fought almost endlessly without achieving victory. There still remains much to be accomplished in improving the Administration of South Vietnam, but the trends are all in the right direction.

## II. VIET CONG INFRASTRUCTURE

Unlike the unwieldy administrative structure formerly representing Saigon, the Viet Cong had developed a superbly disciplined and organized political infrastructure comprising between 80,000 and 100,000 men. It is these political and administrative forces, rather than the roving North Vietnamese divisions, which must be eliminated if victory is to be achieved. This belated post-TET realization has resulted in a major shake up of our fragmented pacification program. For the first time we have begun to coordinate our intelligence and counter-intelligence efforts. In this process, we made some astonishing discoveries. We found, for example, that we had in one district eleven separate and uncoordinated intelligence networks operating. Frequently agents belonged to and were paid by several intelligence agencies unknowingly. Thus one man could give us some piece of unreliable intelligence which would show up on several separate reports, giving it undue weight. The sheer mass of information generated by this process left much of it unused. In a country where timely reaction is of the utmost importance, this situation proved to be disastrous. The TET fiasco was only the most obvious aspect of this. But it brought matters to a head.

In the aftermath of the TET offensive, Ambassador Komer was able to coordinate the information gathering networks. Using this information, he was able to expedite project Phoenix, a massive undertaking to identify the elaborate V.C. infrastructure and to eliminate it by the most direct means. Combined Reconnaissance and Intelligence Platoons, Popular Reconnaissance Units, and a number of other similarly oriented,

combined American/Vietnamese teams began suddenly visiting Vietnamese villages in response to intelligence reports. Concentrating on key personnel, this rapidly expanding program has eliminated more than 6,000 V.V. administrators within a few months. This program is doubtless one of the most important and promising activities now under way in Vietnam. It is through the Paris talks or an Hanoi decision the level of hostilities is decreased, this project will be of critical importance. This doubtless explains dramatically increased interest in Phoenix by the GNV.

### III. MILITARY IMPROVEMENTS

Militarily, a number of improvements have recently manifested themselves. More than 100,000 soldiers, many elite troops of the North Vietnamese Army, were killed during and since the TET offensive. As a consequence, the careful planning and high discipline which characterized North Vietnamese actions has deteriorated. Front assaults on heavily fortified positions, badly coordinated attacks, Green troops and inferior leadership have caused them horrendous casualties for meager results. However, most military observers agree that massive infusion of replacements have brought the North Vietnam strength numerically back to its pre-TET condition. In this period, however, our own strength has grown far beyond that of January, 1968.

The replacement of General Westmoreland with General Abrams has met with virtually universal appreciation. The character difference between the two men is best reflected by their respective valedictory and inauguration addresses.

-1-

Westmoreland declared that it was impossible to stop the rocket attacks on Saigon and other cities. A few days later Abrams said he could and would, and did. He established a double ring defense system around Saigon and installed computerized radar to spot and silence rocket and mortar attacks. Beyond that, Abrams' no nonsense character has made a singular impression on the Vietnamese Government. Abrams has demanded action and has gotten it. When recently he asked for the results of a Vietnamese ambush system in Gia Dinh and learned that of 1,600 monthly "night ambushes" only one contact with the Viet Cong had been made, he exploded. Changes were made.

Abrams has a reputation for being far more aggressive than was his predecessor. He has emphasized saturation small unit patrolling and ambushing. I am also told that staff changes which he has made have produced a marked qualitative improvement at MAC V headquarters and elsewhere.

Under Abrams, the training and arming of the South Vietnamese Army with the latest weaponry has been dramatically accelerated. He has recognized that South Vietnamese units armed with World War II vintage M1 rifles will not move aggressively against a foe better armed with the automatic AK 47. It is difficult for me to emphasize what an enormous difference in morale I noticed among ARNV units armed with the M16. Already 100,000 have been distributed to them with 100,000 more on the way.

Abrams is also increasing the number of joint Vietnamese/American operations in marked contrast to his predecessors preference to operate exclusively with American troops whenever possible. In the I Corps, the Marines are "marrying"

2  
14-man squads of leathernecks with Vietnamese popular force units. I feel strongly that this experiment can and will be rapidly expanded. Adams has approved the formation and arming of civilian "Self-Defense Councils". Already more than 400,000 Vietnamese voluntarily enrolled and 40,000 have been armed. Many more will be shortly.

I do not wish by this report to infer that all is well in Vietnam--or that victory is around the corner. It took the British ten years to wipe out 15,000 hard core guerrillas in Malaya. I do, however, believe that the trends finally are in our favor, that the Army of Vietnam can assume an increasing degree of the responsibility, that we can pull out substantial numbers of our non-combat forces in 1969, and that with certain other changes we have now a winning recipe.

#### IV. SOME PROBLEMS

We must, however, steel ourselves against certain dangers. Saigon and all other cities and towns of South Vietnam have been infiltrated by thousands of Viet Cong agents. Countless other Vietnamese are subject to coercion by threatening exposed relatives with reprisals. These agents and sympathizers have largely remained submerged. They could, however, if coordinated, plant enough bombs, set enough fires, and throw enough grenades to thoroughly disrupt much of metropolitan Vietnam. If this were coordinated with an attack from the outside against Saigon, it could produce an impact of unold proportions on World Press and U.S. public opinion. Worse, if the attack were prolonged, a siege on Saigon could drive

prices to the point where the priceer would be virtually worthless. (Already beef prices are 300% higher in Saigon than in Kienhongs province, some 270y miles distance.) A scarcity of food, a wildly inflating priceer, and a long series of block-destroying fire fights could eventually produce the kind of homeless, hungry masses which could topple the Government. It is this goal, after the cold shower effect of the McCarthy defeat in Chicago, that Viet Cong are counting on to bring them to victory.

Other reforms would greatly contribute to a quicker victory. The fact that officials, both civilian and military, rotate back to the states after only one year in Vietnam means that the "institutional memory" is very short. Ghastly mistakes of both omission and commission are directly attributable to this cause. Battle casualties being what they are, however, those involved in actual combat (less than 90,000 out of total commitment of 550,000!), should have an option to return after the one year's tour of duty. This should apply to captain's level and below. BUT THERE IS NO REASON WHY OFFICERS OF HIGHER RANK SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO DO A TOKEN TOUR OF USUALLY SIX MONTHS WITH A COMBAT UNIT, FLY A DESK IN SAIGON FOR AN ADDITIONAL SIX MONTHS, AND THEN RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES WITH ALL THE PAINFULLY ACQUIRED AREA AND COMBAT EXPERIENCE. Civilians in the higher AID, CORDS, and Embassy staffs should similarly have their tours increased. Positive incentives should accompany the mandatory tour extensions.

For all those who remember the McNamara press conference at the LBJ ranch three days before the 1966 congressional elections, at which a massive reduction in draft quotas was announced and a rosy Vietnam picture presented to the then more gullible American electorate, there can be no doubt that Humphrey will attempt some similar coup.

Stories are leaking out of Saigon that officials are reporting that 100,000 troops could be now withdrawn with no harm to the military effort. Presumably these would be engineers, clerks, officer club staffs, etc. etc. Imagine the impact of a pre-election LBJ fireside chat pointing out statistically progress in various areas, and concluding by announcing that because of the successful training of Vietnamese units, 100,000 of our boys will be home by Christmas, and more will follow. We should prepare for this contingency.

Humphrey's own position on Vietnam has bounced during the last week from one extreme to the other. He has supported President Johnson's position, declared that he could have supported the Dove Platform, retracted that statement, urged Nixon to join him in saying that no new administration will offer "softer terms" to Hanoi after January 20, etc., etc. Surely a statement blasting this vacillation is in order.

Otherwise I strongly counsel avoiding specific detailed recommendations on the war. A statement calling for a reduction of troops and a deamericanization of the war could blow up in our faces if a POW #2 occurs. Let us continue with our position that any specific comment on Vietnam's future could jeopardize the negotiations in Paris; and that we won't trade American lives for a few political points. If constrained to speak at length on the subject later in the campaign, I urge that we have Agnew do it, largely confining ourselves to blasting the many, many errors the Administration has made during the buildup, the surreptitious way the Administration duped the public while the buildup was underway; the tactical errors in Vietnam. We might also denounce Humphrey for hurrying negotiations by his repeated public statements that progress had been made in the Paris talks (there are straws in the wind, etc., etc.) statements which were later discredited by Harriman as well as by the Hanoi negotiators; and which I was informed by a high state department official had a definitely negative effect upon the negotiations by leading the North Vietnamese to believe that any small concession or hint of concession by them would be immediately used as political ammunition by the Administration.