THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 6, 1972

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT (Per HRH As Requested)

FROM: PATRICK J. BUCHANAN

Have received the poll briefing and while the findings on the issue are unexceptional, the conclusions that are drawn are wrong, I think -- if I do not mistake them. Our surrogates and the Vice President should not spend a disproportionate amount of their time defending our record on unemployment, and economic management. By most everyone's judgment, our record is not considered as that good; this is our "weakest" point -- and a national debate over whether we managed the economy well is perhaps the one debate with McGovern we can lose.

Agreed that Vietnam, inflation, etc. are the crucial issues. We can win on these issues by not so much verbally defending our reocrd, but by portraying McGovern as disasterous to the stock market, disasterous to the job market with his budget cuts in defense and space, disasterous to the security of the U.S., disasterous to the price situation, because of his $1000 program, or his $6500 welfare giveaway. In short, let's not so much defend our record, which is subject to criticism, as to attack McGovern with being a clear and present danger to the prosperity we now have.

The point is this: If the Democrats had nominated Harpo Marx, the Teeter polls would have said Vietnam, economy, inflation are the major issues. Would we, in a race with Harpo, talk about those issues -- or would the winning issues rather be the manifest lack of qualification of their candidate -- despite our record.

The decision in November and our rhetoric must not focus upon their issues -- i.e., "unemployment" and the unequal economic record of the last four years -- it must focus upon our issues -- i.e., the extremism, elitism, radicalism, kookism, of McGovern's person, campaign, and programs, against the solid, strong, effective leadership of the President. The first campaign described above is the only way we can lose in 1972 -- and if I am not mistaken,

this is something close to what the Teeter folks recommend, when they say we ought to talk up the economy, and spend an inordinate amount of time defending our record on unemployment.

Nor should we forget the capacity of a candidate (i. e., Kennedy and the "missile gap," Goldwater and "extremism") to create issues, on which elections turn, sometimes legitimate issues, sometimes illegitimate. When we portray McGovern's ideas as preposterous, foolish, and even dangerous to U.S. security and the nation's economy, we are right now pushing against an open door -- with the media at large, as well as the country.

The campaign should turn, we should make it turn, upon the manifest unqualification of this character and his ilk to even be in the Presidential contest -- not whether a damn referendum in our spotty economic performance, which talking, talking, talking about the economy and jobs, and unemployment would make it. So, I disagree strongly with what I view as the central thrust of recommendations of the Teeter polls.

Buchanan