

Determined to be an
Administrative Marking
E.O. 13526, Sec. 1.2
By JWS NARA, Date 12/16/2010

September 21, 1971

INFORMATION

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: JOHN D. EHRLICHMAN

FROM: John C. Whitaker

I have reviewed the proposed speech entitled "The Eco-Crusader and the Strategy of Quality." Although it's a good job of writing and I participated in it, I strongly recommend against this speech being delivered by you.

The public impression will certainly be that the speech is an attack on the environmental movement and a turn in direction for the Administration.

It conveys the idea that the significant portion of the environmental movement are crusading zealots. It is my firm conviction, backed up by all the polling data available, that the backbone of those concerned over the environment is white, middle-class, suburban America and that housewives are a major component. To equate this group with a sort of wild-eyed radicalism is erroneous and politically harmful.

There are zealots in the movement. They are not calling the tune, and they are a small, though highly vocal, minority. The best way to insure more influence for them is for you to attack them.

In my view, while the draft takes a much more reasoned tone than the Shepard polemic, it can open you to criticism for falling into the same simplistic, black-or-white approach to highly complex problems as it accuses environmentalists of doing. It follows the

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tactic of polarization of the issue -- a certain guaranty of extremism on both sides. The opportunity for real leadership is to demonstrate carefully thought out rational programs to deal with highly complex problems -- which you have been doing.

This is not to say we do not also need rational leadership and rational results. We do. But like the Santa Barbara oil lease controversy, when so many people are emotionally involved on what they perceive as one side of a question, one speech does not turn them around, it turns them off. If what we are against are the hard core bank of environmental extremists whose rhetoric seeks to sap the national will through conscious playing of the doom-and-gloom theme, this type of speech is like using a sledgehammer on a gnat.

The "politically harmful" part of the environment is the potential loss in capital investment and jobs -- we are working on this problem very intensively -- but this speech draft really doesn't get at that problem.

It boils down to this in my opinion -- One speech saying how deeply you feel about the "disaster lobby" is going to hurt you badly because people just don't want to hear it. But a speech with a program to help industry pay pollution abatement costs is politically viable and it will take us two more months (under contracts now underway) to define industries that may have become marginal solely due to pollution abatement costs. When we know who they are we should help them and you should say so publicly.

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