

Nixon, Confident of Gains in '70, Planning Same Tactics for '72

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President on Offensive

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 — President Nixon and Vice President Agnew, apparently confident that their 1970 election strategy is clicking smoothly, as already looking toward employing the same basic approach in the 1972 elections.

The White House believes that it has been able to reverse the normal stance of the party in power by robbing the opposition of such key issues as Vietnam and putting the Democrats on the defensive.

The President's aides appear to be so delighted with the way the 1970 Congressional campaign has developed that they are even expressing regret that the next national election is two years away. "I wish we

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were running ourselves this year, for President and Vice President," one of Mr. Nixon's campaign aides said the other day. "We'd run the Democrats off the map."

Some sources here question whether the White House optimism is well founded. Most 1970 political forecasts are that the Republicans will gain some Senate seats while losing some House seats and Governorships, and the skeptics say that that prospect is not surprising enough to indicate that the Nixon method is proving to be a big success.

But White House sources are looking beyond the immediate Congressional results because they believe they have found the key to building a new national majority.

The Nixon-Agnew method consists largely of writing off the blacks and the liberal vote, discarding issues to make a visceral appeal to the working man, and using a one-two punch of Vice-Presidential rhetoric and Presidential politicking to make the Democratic party out as a national philosophic villain.

The tale of how the villain was created, pieced together from interviews with White House political strategists, is nearly as interesting as the campaign itself. It revolves in part around Thomas E. Dewey and a pair of Democrats whose book was a best-seller at the White House before it went on sale.

Mr. Dewey sent some advice about winning elections to President Nixon last year. Professing to have learned a lesson from two losing bids for the White House, he reportedly advised that if the Republicans were to gain Congressional strength Mr. Nixon "had to have a villain to campaign against."

In six weeks of nearly non-stop moralizing, Mr. Agnew has identified the target: "A little band of men guided by a policy of calculated weakness. They vote to weaken our defenses. They vote to weaken our moral fiber. They vote to weaken the forces of law." They vote, in short, in Congress according to what Mr. Agnew dubbed a philosophy of "radical liberalism."

Same Theme, Lower Tone

Hard on the Vice President's heels, Mr. Nixon has begun a mopping-up action, lower in tone but the same in theme. Pointing at the inevitable cluster of anti-Administration demonstrators, he declares: "One vote is worth a hundred obscene slogans." And, by implication, the vote should go to the Republican candidate around whose shoulders Mr. Nixon wraps his arm.

The strategy is straight out of "The Real Majority," the book that two Democrats, Richard M. Scammon and Ben J. Wattenberg, published in early September. They described, through a study of voting patterns, and demography, their theory that the average voter is a 47-year-old housewife in suburban Dayton, Ohio, whose husband is a machinist. That is, elections are determined by middle-class, middle-aged whites.

Three weeks before the book was published, Mr. Nixon was reading extensive excerpts from an advance copy while working at the Western White House in San Clemente, Calif. Until then, he reportedly had planned to send Mr. Agnew campaigning this fall against Democratic "big spenders" in key states with Senate contests. "The Real Majority" helped to change the game plan.

Its arguments reinforced those of one group of White House aides who were protesting, as one of them later described it, that "we've been running against big spenders for 40 years and getting our clocks cleaned." Instead, these officials argued, the 1970 campaign should be waged on what Mr. Scammon and Mr. Wattenberg identified as the "social issue"—concern among blue-

collar parents, traditionally Democrats, about such things as marijuana, pornography, protest, permissiveness and dwindling patriotism.

Mr. Nixon agreed. At first, however, the Republican National Committee was said to have balked at the unorthodox style of a Republican campaign to capture the affections of labor. Eventually the national committee also agreed that a new national majority would not be created by appealing to conservative businessmen in Orange County, Calif.

"The New York Times editorial writers keep telling us we have to appeal to the young, the poor and the black," said a White House official last week. Armed with the Scammon-Wattenberg thesis, the White House was convinced that was not the way to create a majority.

Further, the strategists decided that, although many among the young and the poor were as frustrated about social turmoil as the mythical 47-year-old Dayton housewife, the Negro vote could be written off.

"Rather than say we are antiblack," said one Nixon theorist, "let's say we have a better chance to get the Queens Democrat than the Harlem Democrat. We put our money and our effort there instead of letting some silly ideologue tell us what to do."

The new strategy depends upon convincing the unyoung, the unpoor and the unblack that President Nixon's efforts to stem crime and violence, halt inflation and bring an honorable peace in South Vietnam are being frustrated by those, mostly liberal Democrats, who are on record with statements and actions that trace to a decade of identification with the young, poor and black.

In the words of one official traveling with Vice President Agnew, "The tactic of this whole campaign is not to let those on the left get back to the center." Thus the phrase "radical liberals" was coined and Mr. Agnew began flinging it at such Democratic Senators as J. W. Fulbright of Arkansas, Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, Birch Bayh of Indiana, George S. McGovern of South Dakota and Fred R. Harris of Oklahoma, and, in a gesture of nonpartisanship that also was meant to rid the Senate of an uncooperative Republican, at Charles E. Goodell of New York.

Three Main Targets

Mr. Agnew, in particular, has focused on three targets: Mr. Kennedy, because his family name is so readily identified

with liberal causes; Mr. McGovern, because he has, according to one White House official, been "so indiscreet" with his liberal statements; and Mr. Fulbright, because his antipathy toward Vietnam policy is so well known that the mere mention of his name never fails to evoke loud applause, and often cheers, for the Vice President's remarks about him, whether uttered in Casper, Wyo., or Orlando, Fla.

In the process of raising nearly \$3-million for his party since Sept. 10, Mr. Agnew has also made his point. Gov. Claude R. Kirk Jr. of Florida brought 6,000 people to their feet, cheering and whistling, in Orlando last Friday when he proclaimed:

"Mr. Vice President, to all of the people of Florida, Republican and Democrat, you are our gladiator. You've been going into the fields all across this nation to do battle with the Philistines, the ultraliberals and the wild radicals and we love you for it."

The metaphoric comparison with a Christian crusader was not inappropriate. Whether lecturing in Las Vegas against a "drug culture," expressing in Salt Lake City his indignation with indecency, or warning in Milwaukee against permissiveness, Mr. Agnew has sounded at times more like Billy Sunday than a leading politician.

In Tulsa, Okla., last week, his speech was preceded by "Onward Christian Soldiers," played by a teen-age orchestra.

The Presidential tacticians insist that their 1970 emphasis on morality as a theme is not a trial run for 1972. They expect the law and order issue to diminish in impact by then. They say that the environmental issue is likely to be supplanted by a developing health care crisis. In addition, taking into account the uncertainties of Southeast Asia and increasing fears of a new diplomatic confrontation with the Soviet Union, they contend that foreign affairs may shape the next Presidential election more than they affect the Congressional campaign now under way.

All the same, the White House has little doubt that it has come up with a winning theme for 1970. There is still pessimism being voiced about gaining a Senate majority, which would require a net gain of seven seats, but the Republican expect to pick up a minimum of three, a rare feat for the party in power during an off-year election.

On the other hand, some observers in Washington believe that Mr. Agnew may already have overdone it. Eyebrows canted upward when he made an off-the-cuff comparison between Christine Jorgensen's change of sex and Senator Goodell's change of philosophy.

Also questioned was an attack on the "classic unthink of the radical liberal," in which the Vice President recalled that Senator Edmund S. Muskie, Democrat of Maine, told a 1968 audience, "You have the God-given right to kick the Government around." Even though Mr. Muskie may not have been advocating physical violence, said Mr. Agnew, "it is a short step from kicking Government around to kicking police around."