

Clipping undated but first portion (with minor omissions) carried by SFChronicle 17 Aug 72, ending at point where "Footnote" begins. "Peace prospects," marked, not included in versions carried by Washington Post and SFChronicle.

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WASHINGTON — Talking election strategy with Republican leaders recently behind closed doors, President Nixon called for an "affirmative" campaign that won't alienate Democrats.

He doesn't want to discourage Democratic defections, he said, by running a partisan campaign. He intends, therefore, to direct his campaign against the "McGovernites" rather than the Democrats.

Not only does the President intend to travel the high road, but he wants his subordinates to campaign on the same level. As he spoke, he faced Spiro Agnew across an oblong table but otherwise didn't direct his remarks to the Vice President.

"Let's campaign on our record," admonished the President. "Let's not fight with anybody."

His nonbelligerent policy, he said, included the press. "We may not like the way the press handles the campaign," he said, "but we want no quarrels with the press."

Again he emphasized: "Let's stick to the affirmative."

Thus, his re-election strategy departs emphatically from the

rock 'em, sock 'em campaigns that brought him to the pinnacle of political power.

The strategy session was held over poached eggs and toast in the White House state dining room. The President invited his cabinet officers, principal aides and GOP congressional leaders to join in the political give-and-take.

"I hope you had enough to eat," he began. "I thought you would like the way they do the eggs around here. Of course, I don't eat them often myself."

Then he swung into political gear. "I am going to tell you," he said, "how we ought to look ahead to this Fall."

He was optimistic about the economic outlook, expressed confidence the "brakes on inflation" would hold and promised to veto excessive spending bills.

His visits to Peking and Moscow, he felt, had reduced world tensions. And the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from Vietnam, he suggested, had largely defused the Vietnam war as a campaign issue.

As he stressed the affirmative, he kept his own counsel about

avoiding attacks on the Democrats. Even though he was speaking privately to Republican strategists, he made no cracks about the Democratic fiasco in choosing a vice presidential candidate and he mentioned his rival George McGovern only in passing.

But not all his listeners agreed the campaign should be quite as restrained as the President outlined.

"We should carry the fight to the opposition," urged Senate GOP leader Hugh Scott. He cited McGovern's "incapacity to control his staff" as evidence that McGovern "couldn't run the country."

Agreeing, House GOP leader Gerald Ford suggested that the Republicans should take the offensive over the failure of the Democratic-controlled Congress to pass revenue sharing and welfare reforms.

The President concurred that they should run on the record not only of "what we have achieved" but also "what we have sought to achieve" from Congress.

He wound up his political pitch with an appeal that they "take nothing for granted" and that they "keep stressing what we have done." He added that each leader "should make your own arguments to fit your own situation." But he hoped they "would make some of the points I have made here."

Footnote: Some congressional leaders urged the President to make campaign appearances in their areas. He said he "would like to get around," but was "going to be busy doing my job." He indicated that he would make some appearances on "special occasions" and before "large gatherings."

Peace Prospects — The Central Intelligence Agency, in a secret dispatch, has quoted a "reliable" source as saying a Vietnam cease-fire can be expected as early as September. The source, according to the CIA, is close to the North Vietnamese delegation in Paris.

Military Aid — The United States has now replaced most of the military hardware that the South Vietnamese army lost during the first weeks of the North Vietnamese offensive. Military aid has also been rushed to Cambodia to bolster the faltering Cambodian army.

Congressional Prospects — Despite brave public predictions, GOP congressional leaders don't hold too much hope of winning control of Congress in November. Their private estimate is that they will pick up no more than 20 seats in the House, not enough to take the leadership away from the Democrats. The battle for control of the Senate, however, could be closer. But here, too, the Republicans expect to fall short a seat or two.