

Democratic National Committee-President, 1977-79

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DATE 1-25-83

TO: PRESIDENT CARTER
FROM: HAMILTON JORDAN
RE: KEN CURTIS MEETING

There is a good chance today that Ken Curtis will raise with you today the fact that he is unhappy as Chairman of the DNC and wants to leave and go back to Maine. This has been developing over the past couple of months as people at the White House and the DNC have become increasingly dissatisfied with the relationship between the staff here and the Committee and also unhappy with the product of the work of the DNC.

In fairness to Ken, it was not a job that he sought. It is even a tougher job when the party also has the White House as the Chairman of the party has to work - in effect - for the party and the President. As long as Phil Wise was

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there, I felt that he and Ken collectively could do the things that needed to be done. Those include:

- Stay in touch with Carter supporters
- Stay in touch with Democratic Party leaders and elites
- Help elect Democrats to Congress and governors' offices
- Monitor party rules for 1980
- Serve as information apparatus for the White House
- Support Administration objectives

To accomplish these things, the Chairman and Executive Director collectively need to possess these traits:

- Strong leadership
- Working knowledge of Carter supporters
- Technical expertise in political campaigns
- Fundraising capability

When Phil Wise left, we lost the key person at the DNC who knew most - if not all - of our early Carter supporters and also lost the person most experienced in campaign techniques. We have suffered in both areas since his departure. The fundraising has gone well because of Joel McCleary's efforts and the generous amount of time you

have given him in raising money for the party. What has been lacking all along has been strong leadership. Ken has been miscast as party leader. You either have to be a strong leader or something of a "wheeler-dealer" to be a successful Chairman. Ken, by nature, is neither and as a result nobody is very happy with the way he is running the DNC. Again, in fairness to Ken, many of the expectations have been unrealistic. Some people expect him to have major policy input on certain issues and be the grand patronage chief for the Administration. This obviously is not our style.

I have been unhappy with the general operation of the DNC because they have not been able to do the things that they should be able to do: spend party monies wisely, handle sticky personnel problems, and support our own objectives. This lack of leadership results in the DNC not being able to endorse the Panama Canal treaty, not to be able to put Mike Abrams on the Executive Committee despite our commitment to him and our request to do so, and so forth. Ken has been reluctant to make some tough decisions and carry them out. We (me) made a mistake in recommending

Carmella Lacayo to be Vice-Chairman of the Party. Ken has enlarged on it by letting her have more staff than she needs and getting involved in things that the Vice-Chairman has never been involved in, etc. The fundraising people - who are having to raise the funds - are made at the loose way that monies are accounted for. In short, the DNC has become an additional political burden for us instead of a resource.

I don't know anyone who has dealt with him that does not like and admire Ken Curtis. But, I am also hard put to name anyone that is very pleased with the DNC's performance to date. I regret that all along the way I did not monitor this more closely and see the problems before they became so acute. On the other hand, a DNC operation that requires a lot of time and supervision from here is more of a problem than a help.

For that reason, I think that it is important that we not discourage Ken from leaving. If he is inclined to leave later as opposed to sooner, I would also suggest that we prod him to leave sooner. I can handle that with Ken

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Ham,

I notified

Tim - Phil

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MARKING BY SS

DATE 1-25-83

TO: PRESIDENT CARTER
FROM: HAMILTON JORDAN H.J.
RE: REQUEST TO DO DNC RECEPTION AT WHITE HOUSE

As requested, I checked with Tim, John White and others regarding the necessity of doing the Finance Council Reception at the White House.

First, I think it is important that we do something at the White House even if you do not attend. My own suggestion would be to have your wife and/or the Vice-President host the function. You could hold open the option of dropping by and making five minutes of comments. *ok* *?*

This group of people is very important to us for the future and some contact with you is important. Also, theDNC continues to be in a weak financial situation.

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December 14, 1977

DETERMINED TO BE AN ADMINISTRATIVE

MARKING BY

B/B

DATE

7-25-83

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The need to select a new DNC chairman offers an opportunity to reflect on the Administration's political posture after one year in office and to try to look ahead towards 1980. This memo is an attempt to do that in a constructive way, but it goes beyond the immediate issue of the chairmanship.

We took office last January with a large amount of public goodwill but with the enthusiastic support of few of the traditional or institutional Democratic constituencies -- labor, teachers, farmers, Jews, minorities, party activists, liberals, etc. This was understandable because Carter was nominated and to a lesser extent elected without their direct help. Coming in as he did as an "outsider," many of these groups were skeptical and deliberately withheld their judgment and, more importantly, their commitment.

The situation is essentially unchanged today. Our relations with some of these groups are better, but some are worse. In no case that I can think of do we have the kind of relationship that will be needed to command their enthusiastic support in 1980, and that includes many of the original Carter supporters.

Some of the disappointment these groups feel with us is unavoidable because it is based on policy disagreements. Although you have been able to mitigate some of this on such things as ILO, department of Education and the Middle East, no one would argue that the President shouldn't be able to make policy based on what he thinks is right for the country. In any case, the Administration's policies are not responsible for our basic

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political problems, because in my judgment they are correct and defensible. The problems stem rather from inadequate procedures, communications and courtesies in dealing with these groups and from a sense of remoteness and at times unresponsiveness they have in their dealings with us. Among many politicians there is a sense of exclusivity in the White House; they feel they are not particularly needed or wanted.

All of this is preliminary to stating the obvious, namely that we are going to need the active and enthusiastic help of most of these groups in 1980, and if we don't get it we'll be in serious trouble. No one doubts that Jerry Brown will challenge us if we appear the least bit vulnerable and, if so, this time he will be the outsider. We will be hostage to our record and he will be running against it. The circumstances of having been in office for four years will preclude the kind of brilliant grass-roots/outsider campaign you ran in 1976; it simply wouldn't be credible. Instead, that's the kind of campaign Brown will try to wage. And he's already working hard at picking off those groups which have some degree of disaffection with us. I was very impressed by the impact he had at the AFL-CIO Convention last week. He told them exactly what they wanted to hear and left a favorable impression on a large number of delegates, as Landon will verify.

These groups can and should be very helpful to us in thwarting a challenge for the nomination. If their disaffection

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is serious, however, they can be terribly damaging to us if they decide to actively join the opposition, and I have little doubt that some of them will be inclined to do so unless we persuade them otherwise.

We have only the first six or eight months of 1978 to consolidate our relations with these groups. By the end of that period everyone will be preoccupied with the 1978 elections, and as soon as those are over the race for 1980 will be under-way and our ability to court them effectively will be seriously diminished. If we are to cement good political relationships with them it must be done now, in the first half of 1978.

What we need is a plan to enlist the political support of these groups and the resources to implement it. I'm convinced we have the resources if we use them right.

The most important aspect of this relates to personnel. You have necessarily had to get deeply involved in the political dimensions of policy-making, and we're all thankful you've done so. I believe what we need, however, is one or preferably two people under you working on nothing but political liaison, people who won't be preoccupied with strategies involving Panama, the Middle East, energy, etc. These should obviously be people who have not only your confidence but also credibility and standing with those groups they would be dealing with, particularly the party. They would become the focal point, under your direction, for all White House political activities and contact;

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simply their presence and their identification as political operatives would do much to enhance our credibility with other politicians. Here are some of the kinds of things they could do that would help us enormously:

- Develop a list of the 100 or 200 political figures in the country most important to us, divide it up, perhaps geographically or by constituency, 8 or 10 of us who would be asked to call our list every two or three weeks to take political soundings, offer to be of help, ask for advice, but mostly just to convey the fact that we care about them and want them on board.
- Hold a series of briefings at least semi-annually for state chairmen and others (the list of possibilities is almost endless) in the White House where they would hear from top Administration figures on current policy developments, concluding with a social event where they could meet the President.
- Make strategic use of state dinner and other invitations not only to reward past supporters but also to court those we'll need in 1980. They could also create special social events, such as a dinner with the AFL-CIO executive committee members and their wives similar to the one held last week for staff. We tend to forget that many of these people have never even been to the White House and the effect such an invitation can have.

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- Similarly, to think strategically about appointments to boards and commissions with the same purpose in mind.
- Begin developing 1980 political strategy for each state, particularly the key primary states like New Hampshire, Florida, etc., in an effort to assess the kinds of problems we are likely to face, which 1976 Carter supporters can be counted on, which areas should the President visit before 1980, etc. Les Francis has developed an excellent strategy for California which can serve as a model for other states.
- Get a political handle on the cabinet and sub-cabinet officers, particularly in relation to their travels around the country. For example, when a cabinet member or other high official goes out of town, his staff should check with someone in the White House to get a) a list of those people who should be notified he is coming, b) a list of persons he should at least call when he arrives and c) suggestions of people who should be offered the opportunity of arranging a lunch or dinner involving people important to us.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for all of the key non-party constituent groups similar to the very effective job Landon is doing with labor. This should consist of regular policy briefings on matters of special interest, e.g. Jewish

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leaders on the Middle East, instead of waiting for a crisis and then reacting. To some extent Stu's and Zbig's shops should become politicized for this purpose to work closely with yours.

This is only a partial list of things that can be done to show these groups that we care about them and want them as part of our team. The overwhelming majority of them, regardless of where they were in 1976, want to work with us and support us. They will be for us unless the feeling persists that they are not wanted, and that's what we have to change. Like most people, they don't like being ignored, they want to feel a part of things, they want to "belong." If they feel they're not wanted, it's inevitable they will go to someone who makes them feel wanted. It's one of the most basic drives in human nature.

And it doesn't take that much effort on our part to make it work. A couple of first-rate staff people under you and the President's willingness to spend a little time at it is all it requires.

DNC CHAIRMANSHIP

Now is obviously the time to re-think the role of the DNC and then select a new chairman based on whatever conclusions you reach. I think we all agree better use can be made of the DNC in terms of the President's objectives. My own feeling is that, given the limited resources there and the public perception

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of parties generally, we may have been expecting too much from it. For example, we hoped they would be able to mobilize a great deal of public support for some of our key initiatives, such as energy and the Panama Canal Treaties. My impression is that their efforts in these areas have not been very effective.

In looking to the future, I believe we should lower our expectations of what the DNC can do for us and ask them instead to do fewer things better. Here are the things I think they could be asked to concentrate on:

- o Fundraising. This is probably the best operation they have underway; Joel is doing a very effective job. We have to retire that damn debt, however, before we can hope to have the resources for a really effective DNC operation. Therefore fundraising should receive top priority, and this is one place where DNC personnel should not be cut ("it costs money to raise money").

- o Financial and technical assistance to candidates in 1978. I don't have a good idea of what's in the mill in this area but it should get very close scrutiny. It was my experience in Minnesota that incumbants don't want or need technical help from the party; they want money. They've been through it before and, right or wrong, they don't care for advice from outsiders. So if we're planning to do much in this area it's bound to be largely

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wasted. That's not true, however, with non-incumbent candidates. They do want and need this kind of assistance and, working together with the congressional campaign committees, we should be prepared to give it.

In my judgment we should try to concentrate our resources as much as possible on a single effort that will benefit all candidates -- voter registration and turnout. This is the most effective single thing we can do for them, and the beauty of it is that enables us to help candidates on the state and local level as well as those running for Congress. Moreover, it will enable us to develop, maintain and refine machinery that we will need in 1980. It's a complex and massive organizational job, as you know, and therefore requires a lot of lead time. I'm convinced that more elections are won or lost on this factor -- voter turnout -- than any other, and we can't begin at it too soon.

o Political intelligence. We simply need to know what's going on around the country to be able to deal with it. So far the DNC has done a fair job at this, but it has been erratic and incomplete. If we are to make a major effort as outlined above to try to include party activists and others in our long-term plans, we have to know what they are thinking and doing.

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- Representing the White House to the Party and Vice Versa.

We have to do a better job of communicating our priorities and concerns to party people and also a better job of understanding theirs. This is not that difficult to accomplish but it does require constant attention and regular communication between the White House staff and the DNC leadership. It also requires candor on their part and a willingness to listen and respond on ours. Only in this way can we hope to give the new chairman the political credibility he will need to operate effectively.

* * * * *

While I don't have a candidate for chairman, I do have some thoughts on the kind of person we should seek. First, I think it's important to look at the chairman and executive director as a package because we're unlikely to find all the qualities we are seeking in one person. For example, it's difficult to think of someone who can deal effectively with the early Carter supporters and yet have a great deal of credibility with the regular party people. Both of these functions are important, however, and should be lodged in one or the other of the top two officers.

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Here are the qualities I think we should look for in a chairman, roughly in the order of their importance.

1) Complete loyalty to the President.

2) Ability to work closely and effectively with you and others on the White House staff, but especially with you. If you have any doubts about any possible candidate on this score, he or she should be scratched from the list.

3) Ability to deal effectively with DNC members and other party activists and turn around the feeling many of them now have that they are not needed and have no meaningful role to play vis a vis the Administration.

4) Ability to lead forcefully and to articulate the Administration's positions, and especially the ability to manage effectively next year's mini-convention where the potential for damage is almost unlimited. In short, somebody with the brains and talent of Strauss.

5) Ability to keep effective lines of communication open to the original Carter supporters.

6) Ability to help with fundraising.

7) Ability to administer the organization.

8) Technical "nuts and bolts" ability.

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I don't expect you'll agree with this ranking of priorities, but I do think a strong case can be made for it. It boils down to the fact that what we need now is a damage-control operation. If we don't get the party people on board this Administration in a meaningful way in 1978, we're going to find many of them opposing us in 1980 and there's no point in allowing that to happen. If a choice has to be made between finding someone known to the early Carter people and someone who can work with the party regulars (I would sure like to find a person who could do both but Kraft is the only one who even comes close), I would opt for the latter and try to deal with the early Carter people through an executive director whom they know and trust. By selecting someone respected by party regulars, we expand our base by sending out a clear message that this is not to be an exclusive political operation. As I read it, this is what most political types in the country are going to be looking for in the selection; in a sense they are going to use it as a test of our real intentions. If that is indeed the message that we want to send -- that we want them and need them -- there will never be another opportunity like this to send it.

This decision also becomes part and parcel of 1980 campaign strategy. I don't think the person selected to head the DNC necessarily has to be the same person you have in mind to run the 1980 Presidential campaign. That person obviously should

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be a close and early Carter loyalist but, being just that, he should complement and be compatible with a person at the DNC who can most effectively fold the party regulars into our campaign effort.

* * * * *

I recognize that I have painted things with a pretty broad brush in this memo and that its recommendations are easier said than done. I'm really trying to convey a sense of the direction in which we should move more than anything else, and I hope that has come through. There are some very sensitive aspects of this which I have left out but which I would like to discuss with you if you want to pursue them or, of course, anything else relating to this subject. Needless to say, I'm prepared to help in any way you see fit.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
December 5, 1978

*Ham - (on)
I get out of
this ? a) Crucial
time b) Time for
bipartisan image
J*

TO: The President
FROM: Phil *Deil*

The Democratic Finance Council (300 plus spouses) will be in Washington the week of January 22.

Chairman White and Chuck Manatt request a reception for them here at the White House on Wednesday, January 24.

Kraft endorses.

_____ approve _____ disapprove

STATEMENT ON THE RESIGNATION OF KEN CURTIS

We are troubled by published reports that Ken Curtis was urged to resign as chair of the Democratic National Committee because of his insistence on free and open debate within the Democratic Party.

We are veteran Democratic Party activists and we view open procedures as values to be preserved rather than undercut. We will lose our credibility with the American people if we abandon democratic procedures in Party meetings. We will lose that credibility even sooner if we silence Party discussion of issues our 1976 Platform pledged to address. Recently, a number of us spoke out to demand that Democratic office holders fulfill the 1976 Platform promises of full employment and economic justice. We expect to become even more outspoken on such matters in the months ahead.

Without Party reform and open processes in the Democratic Party, the nomination and election of Jimmy Carter would have been impossible. We are proud of the open Party which brought this about. We do not want it closed up again.

The Democratic Party cannot win elections in 1978 and 1980 without the participation of those who have become active in the open Party we now enjoy -- women, blacks, union members, Native Americans, youth, seniors, Hispanics, farmers, the handicapped, Asian Americans, ethnics of every heritage. We will work to insure that the Democratic Party gains of the last 10 years are maintained intact.

Sue Ellen Albrecht, DNC Wisconsin
Jo Baer, DNC New York
Anne Baker, Eastern Regional Vice Chair,
DNC
Michael Bleicher, Chair, Wisconsin
Democratic Party
Ruth Cain, DNC Minnesota
Ed Campbell, Chair, Iowa Democratic
Party
Billie Carr, DNC Texas
Herbert Cheever, Jr., DNC South Dakota
Ed Donahue, Exec. Vice Pres., Graphic
Arts International Union
Don Fowler, Chair, South Carolina
Democratic Party
Jerry Grossman, DNC Massachusetts
Michael Harrington, Chair, Democratic
Socialist Organizing Committee
Dwayne Holman, Chair, Young Democrats
Richard Ista, Chair, North Dakota
Democratic Party
Millie Jeffrey, Chair, National
Women's Political Caucus
Florine Koole, DNC At Large
Charles Manatt, DNC California
Mariko Miller, DNC Wyoming
Midge Miller, DNC Wisconsin
Michael Muftic, DNC Colorado

Bea Peterson, DNC North Dakota
Rick Scott, Chair, Minnesota Democratic
Party
Leon Shull, Executive Director, Americans
for Democratic Action
Gloria Steinem
Mary Sullivan, DNC Connecticut
Joanne Symons, Chair, New Hampshire
Democratic Party
Marjorie Thurman, Chair, Georgia Demo-
cratic Party
Dagmar Vidal, DNC Iowa
William Winpisinger, President, Interna-
tional Association of Machinists
Constance Woodruff, DNC New Jersey