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DESKBY 030800Z

FM WASHINGTON 022355Z NOV 80
 TO IMMEDIATE F C O
 TEL NO 4459 OF 02 NOVEMBER 1980
 INFO ROUTINE NATO POSTS, MOSCOW, TOKYO, UKREP BRUSSELS,
 DUBLIN.
 SAVING INFO ALL CG'S IN U.S.A.

U S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

1. A YEAR AGO THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM WAS THAT CARTER HAD LITTLE CHANCE OF HOLDING ON TO THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION: AND THAT REAGAN, WHILST CERTAIN OF THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION, HAD NO HOPE OF WINNING THE ELECTION. NOW ALL THE PUBLIC OPINION POLLS SUGGEST THAT THE POPULAR VOTE WILL BE VERY CLOSE NATIONALLY. THE LATEST GALLUP POLL PUTS CARTER AHEAD BY 44-41 PER CENT AMONGST REGISTERED VOTERS BUT REAGAN AHEAD BY 44-43 PERCENT AMONGST THOSE MOST LIKELY TO VOTE. MOST OTHER POLLS GIVE SIMILARLY INCONCLUSIVE RESULTS.
2. ACCORDING TO THE POLLS ANDERSON HAS CONTINUED TO FADE AND HIS FINAL SHARE OF THE VOTE COULD SINK TO AROUND 5 PERCENT NATIONALLY: BUT HE COULD STILL INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME IN ONE OR TWO IMPORTANT STATES.
3. OF COURSE THE ELECTION WILL BE DECIDED NOT BY THE POPULAR VOTE NATIONWIDE BUT BY THE OUTCOME OF 51 SEPARATE ELECTIONS IN THE INDIVIDUAL STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. THE PRESIDENT IS FORMALLY ELECTED BY THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE, IN WHICH EACH STATE HAS THE SAME NUMBER OF ELECTORS AS IT HAS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS (PLUS 3 ELECTORS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA), WHO ARE PLEDGED TO VOTE FOR THE WINNING CANDIDATE IN THEIR STATE ON A WINNER TAKE ALL BASIS. A WINNING MAJORITY IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE IS 270.
4. IN TERMS OF ELECTORAL COLLEGE VOTES THE ARITHMETIC FAVOURS REAGAN. REAGAN'S BASE WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI (INCLUDING CALIFORNIA WITH 45 ELECTORAL VOTES) LOOKS VERY SOLID. BY CONTRAST, THE COALITION OF BLACK AND RURAL WHITE SUPPORT WITH WHICH CARTER SWEEPED THE SOUTH IN 1976 HAS BEEN ERODED THIS YEAR: FLORIDA (17 ELECTORAL VOTES) AND MISSISSIPPI (7) SEEM LIKELY TO GO TO REAGAN AND SO TOO COULD TEXAS (26) AND LOUISIANA (10) THIS MEANS THAT FOR CARTER TO SURVIVE HE MUST NOT ONLY HANG ON TO STRONGLY DEMOCRATIC EASTERN STATES SUCH AS NEW YORK (41) AND MASSACHUSETTS

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(14) (WHICH HE SHOULD DO, DESPITE RECENT POLLS INDICATING MUCH CLOSER RACES THAN HAD EARLIER SEEMED LIKELY), BUT HE MUST ALSO CARRY ALL OR NEARLY ALL THE LARGE INDUSTRIAL MARGINAL STATES OF THE EAST AND NORTHERN MIDWEST: PENNSYLVANIA (27) OHIO (25), MICHIGAN (21), WISCONSIN (11) AND ILLINOIS (26). THESE STATES COULD GO EITHER WAY.

5. IN THIS SITUATION, TURNOUT IS LIKELY TO BE CRUCIAL. THE REPUBLICANS ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE MUCH GREATER RESOURCES OF MONEY AND MANPOWER WHICH THEY CAN COMMAND FOR GETTING OUT THE VOTE WILL OFFSET THE DEMOCRATS' INBUILT ADVANTAGE IN NUMBERS OF REGISTERED VOTERS, ESPECIALLY IF THE TURNOUT IS LOW. THE DEMOCRATS HAVE THE PROBLEM OF PERSUADING THEIR OFTEN APATHETIC ELECTORATE TO GO TO THE POLLS. FOR EXAMPLE, LABOUR LEADERS ARE NOW WORKING HARD TO TURN OUT A STRONG ANTI-REAGAN TRADE UNION VOTE, BUT MANY OF THEIR RANK AND FILE APPEAR UNRESPONSIVE. VERY FEW BLACKS WILL VOTE FOR REAGAN; BUT A RECENT SURVEY INDICATED THAT ALMOST HALF OF ALL BLACK VOTERS HAD NO INTENTION OF VOTING AT ALL. THE EFFORTS OF FUNDAMENTALIST EVANGELICAL RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO MOBILISE THEIR CONGREGATIONS TO VOTE FOR REAGAN PRESENT A NEW AND UNQUANTIFIABLE THREAT TO CARTER'S WHITE RURAL CONSTITUENCY, PARTICULARLY IN THE SOUTH.

6. IN A NUMBER OF STATES UNPREDICTABLE LOCAL OR SECTORAL CONSIDERATIONS MAY TURN OUT TO BE DECISIVE. FOR EXAMPLE, DISENCHANTMENT WITH CARTER AMONG THE PREDOMINANTLY DEMOCRATIC JEWISH COMMUNITY MAY AFFECT THE OUTCOME IN FLORIDA, WHERE THE ADMINISTRATION'S HANDLING OF THE RECENT FLOOD OF CUBAN REFUGEES IS ALSO A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE; AND IN ILLINOIS THE OUTLOOK IS COMPLICATED BY A BITTER INTERNECINE STRUGGLE IN THE COOK COUNTY (CHICAGO) DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

7. I CANNOT SAY AT THIS STAGE WHAT THE IMPACT ON VOTING IS GOING TO BE OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HOSTAGE SAGA.

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TEL NO 4460 OF 02 NOVEMBER 1980

M.I.P.T.

U S ELECTIONS: THE CONGRESS.

1. IN ADDITION TO THE PRESIDENCY, THE ENTIRE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (435 SEATS), ONE THIRD OF THE SENATE (34 SEATS) AND 13 GOVERNORSHIPS ARE ALL UP FOR ELECTION ON 4 NOVEMBER. IN ADDITION, THERE WILL BE ELECTIONS TO STATE LEGISLATURES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. (DETAILS IN THOMAS' LETTER TO BERTHOUD (NAD) OF 23 SEPTEMBER).

2. THE REPUBLICANS HAD HIGH HOPES IN MID-SUMMER OF WINNING THE 9 SEATS NEEDED TO SECURE A MAJORITY IN THE SENATE. THEY HAD NO REAL HOPE OF WINNING THE 59 SEATS NEEDED TO GIVE THEM A MAJORITY IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BUT ABOUT 30 DEMOCRATIC SEATS DID LOOK VERY VULNERABLE.

3. SINCE MID-SUMMER, THE DEMOCRATS HAVE CLOSED THE GAP AND NOW LOOK LIKE RETAINING THEIR MAJORITY IN THE SENATE, THOUGH WITH A POSSIBLE NET LOSS OF HALF A DOZEN SEATS. IN THE HOUSE, THE REPUBLICANS CAN LOOK FORWARD TO A NET GAIN OF PERHAPS 10 TO 20 SEATS.

4. THE REPUBLICANS HAVE CONCENTRATED THEIR FIRE ON ABOUT SIX DEMOCRATIC SENATORS (ALL SUPPORTERS OF THE SALT II TREATY):
BIRCH BAYH OF INDIANA (CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE AND OF THE RECENT SENATE INQUIRY INTO THE BILLYGATE AFFAIR):
FRANK CHURCH OF IDAHO (CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE):
JOHN CULVER OF IOWA (THE MOST LIBERAL MEMBER OF THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE):
THOMAS EAGLETON OF MISSOURI (BRIEFLY MCGOVERN'S RUNNING MATE IN 1972):
GARY HART OF COLORADO (A POSSIBLE CONTENDER FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION IN 1984):
GEORGE MCGOVERN OF SOUTH DAKOTA (THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE IN 1972).

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5. OF THESE, CHURCH AND MCGOVERN MAY BE THE MOST VULNERABLE. CHURCH HAS BEEN A LIGHT-WEIGHT CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, BUT IF HE LOSES HIS SEAT, HIS LIKELY SUCCESSOR (CLAIBORNE PELL OF RHODE ISLAND) IS UNLIKELY TO BE A MARKED IMPROVEMENT. AND THE ALMOST CERTAIN DISAPPEARANCE OF SENATOR JACOB JAVITS OF NEW YORK, THE SENIOR REPUBLICAN ON THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, WILL MEAN THE LOSS TO THAT COMMITTEE OF A STEADYING INFLUENCE ON SUCH MAJOR ISSUES AS SALT. JAVITS LOST THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARY AND IS NOW RUNNING ON THE LIBERAL TICKET. HE HAS NO CHANCE OF CARRYING NEW YORK, WHICH MAY WELL GO TO THE DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGER, CONGRESSWOMAN ELIZABETH HOLTZMAN.

6. IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, A NUMBER OF DEMOCRATIC LEADERS ARE VULNERABLE, INCLUDING MAJORITY WHIP JOHN BRADENAS OF INDIANA, WHO LOOKS SET TO LOSE. JIM WRIGHT OF TEXAS (MAJORITY LEADER, AL ULLMAN OF OREGON (CHAIRMAN OF THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE), MO UDALL OF ARIZONA (CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERIOR COMMITTEE) AND TOM FOLEY OF WASHINGTON (CHAIRMAN OF THE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE AND OF THE HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS AND A LEADING IRISH AMERICAN WHO HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY HELPFUL TO US) ALL FACE STIFF CHALLENGES. BUT WRIGHT, ULLMAN AND FOLEY APPEAR TO HAVE STRENGTHENED THEIR POSITION IN RECENT WEEKS.

7. ONLY 13 GOVERNORSHIPS ARE AT STAKE THIS YEAR. ALTHOUGH 10 OF THESE ARE CURRENTLY HELD BY DEMOCRATS, REPUBLICANS ARE LIKELY TO MAKE GAINS IN ONLY ONE OR TWO STATES TO ADD TO THE 19 GOVERNORSHIPS WHICH THEY HOLD NATIONWIDE.

8. ELECTIONS TO STATE LEGISLATURES WILL BE MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN USUAL THIS YEAR BECAUSE THE NEW LEGISLATURES WILL CONTROL THE DECENNIAL REAPPORTIONMENT OF DISTRICT (IE CONSTITUENCY) BOUNDARIES AT BOTH STATE AND CONGRESSIONAL LEVEL NEXT YEAR. THE DEMOCRATS CONTROL NEARLY ALL THE STATE LEGISLATURES IN THE 10 MOST IMPORTANT STATES AND THE PROSPECT IS FOR ONLY SMALL REPUBLICAN GAINS.

HENDERSON

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