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Prime Minister

THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE: 1984.

1. NOW THAT REAGAN HAS DECIDED TO RUN, THERE ARE AT PRESENT 9 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES UNDER STARTER'S ORDERS: REAGAN FOR THE REPUBLICANS: MONDALE, GLENN, CRANSTON, JACKSON, ASKEW, HART, HOLLINGS AND MCGOVERN FOR THE DEMOCRATS.

2. REAGAN HAS A GOOD DEAL GOING FOR HIM: THE INCUMBENCY, THE GROWTH IN THE ECONOMY, HIS COMMAND OF TELEVISION AND VIRTUALLY UNLIMITED ACCESS TO FUNDS. HIS NATURAL OPTIMISM AND GENIALITY PROJECT AN IMAGE WHICH APPEALS TO A GREAT NUMBER OF AMERICANS: 'AMERICA IS BACK AND WALKING TALL AGAIN' IS WHAT AMERICANS WANT TO HEAR. 'THE ISSUE', SAYS THE PRESIDENT'S POLLSTER, 'IS LEADERSHIP'.

3. THE DEMOCRATS ARE STILL JOCKEYING FOR POSITION AND MANY OF THEM WILL HAVE FADED OR FALLEN AT THE PRIMARY FENCES BEFORE THE END OF MARCH. THE CANDIDACIES OF ASKEW, HART, CRANSTON, MCGOVERN AND HOLLINGS ARE SHORT ON STAYING POWER AND THEY ARE LIKELY SOON TO RUN OUT OF SUPPORT AND THEREFORE OF MONEY. MONDALE IS THE CLEAR FAVOURITE: GLENN IS FAILING TO CHALLENGE, JESSIE JACKSON THE MAVERICK. OUT OF SIGHT, BUT NOT OUT OF MIND, IS THE DARK HORSE, KENNEDY, HOLDING HIMSELF IN READINESS FOR 1988 AND CASTING A SHADOW.

4. THE DEMOCRATS ALSO HAVE A GOOD DEAL GOING FOR THEM. THEY ARE THE NATURAL MAJORITY IN THE COUNTRY, BUT THEY FIND IT MORE DIFFICULT THAN THE REPUBLICANS' TO GET OUT THEIR VOTE. MOREOVER MONDALE HAS ROUNDED UP THE DISAFFECTED MINORITIES: WOMEN, BLACKS, JEWS, AND THE HISPANICS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE FLORIDA CUBANS. THE ISSUES ARE 'FAIRNESS' AND 'DO YOU FEEL SAFER NOW THAN IN 1980?'. MOREOVER REAGAN HAS TO RUN A STEEPLECHASE WHEREAS OTHERS ARE MORE OR LESS ON THE FLAT AND HAVE THE LUXURY, AND THE HOPE, OF WATCHING HIM STUMBLE. HURDLES FOR REAGAN INCLUDE THE BUDGET DEFICIT IF THE DEMOCRATS MANAGE TO TURN IT INTO A CAMPAIGN ISSUE: SO FAR THEY HAVE NOT, SINCE THE CAUSES OF THE DEFICIT - TAX REDUCTIONS, DEFENCE SPENDING AND ENTITLEMENTS - ARE ALL POPULAR. BEECHER'S BROOK IN THE SHAPE OF LEBANON LIES AHEAD. CENTRAL AMERICA COULD BECOME AN ADDITIONAL HURDLE, BUT FOR THE MOMENT IT LOOKS LIKE BEING OFF THE COURSE.

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5. AT THE OFF, REAGAN MUST BE FAVOURITE. BUT AS NANCY REAGAN IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID, THE RACE WILL BE 'REAL TOUGH'. I WOULD NOT DREAM OF ARGUING WITH THE LADY. AND WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES.

WRIGHT

FLO/WHITEHALL
NAD

(Repetition to REYKJAVIK
referred for departmental decision,
repeated as requested to other posts.)

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