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Folder: State of the Union, 1978

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15 of 4 years

January 10, 1978

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DETERMINED TO BE AN ADMINISTRATIVE
MARKING BY BB

DATE 1-4-83

TO: PRESIDENT CARTER
FROM: HAMILTON JORDAN *HJ*
RE: THOUGHTS ON YOUR STATE OF THE UNION SPEECH

I believe that the single objective of the speech should be the reassertion of Presidential leadership in confronting the problems facing the American people.

The themes which should be developed in support of that objective are:

-We are a confident people with great resources and national strengths facing difficult and complex problems here and around the world.

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-You were elected by the American people to lead and confront these problems. You did that in 1977 and you plan to do that in 1978.

-We had success in many areas in 1977, but many great problems remain to be solved. The Congress is your working partner in this effort.

Your speech should not be a laundry list of all that we hope to accomplish, but it should be a public presentation of the programs and issues which we think are major and on which we are willing to be judged politically.

These priorities should include:

-Energy. The speedy resolution of the obstacles facing the Conference Committee. The need for the energy bill tied to the crisis facing the dollar around the world.

-The Economy. Our plans for the economy. I would recommend that we publicly acknowledge unemployment in the inner cities as one of the great domestic problems facing this country and your Administration. A strong statement on inflation.

- Making Government More Efficient and Effective. Progress on and plans for reorganization of the Federal government. Mention of ZBB and hope for balanced budget by 1981. Reaffirm support for welfare reform and intention to send health plan to the Congress in 1978.

- Panama Canal Treaty. The need for the Senate to consider and vote on the Panama Canal Treaties in 1978. A strong statement of our own national interests.

- SALT II. Public statement expressing hope that SALT II Treaty/Agreement will be consummated in 1978. Strong defense of the progress made to date in the SALT II negotiations.

- Middle East. Public reaffirmation of our policy on the Middle East and the role we hope to play in 1978.

Brief mention should be given to several other issues and/or legislative proposals. I am not sanguine about what precisely should be included, but it could include:

- Department of Education
- ERA
- Consumer Protection
- Labor Law Reform
- Election Law Reform
- Omnibus Crime Bill
- Farm Problems

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DETERMINED TO BE AN ADMINISTRATIVE
MARKING BY DS

DATE

1-4-83

January 17, 1978

TO: PRESIDENT CARTER
FROM: HAMILTON JORDAN *HJ*
RE: COMMENTS ON YOUR SPEECH

1. Your speech in its present form is good. With some work and good delivery, it could be great. It is a bit too long. Any reduction in length would be helpful - I believe - in terms of holding the interest and attention of the viewing audience.
2. In the present form, there is no device or phrase in the opening paragraphs that grabs the Congress

or the viewing audience. Just to get them with you, we might say,

"We have seen this week in the celebration of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King and in the passing of our beloved Senator Hubert Humphrey what the people of this country are and what they ~~can be~~ can be."

Or perhaps a memorial minute of silence in honor of Humphrey and Metcalf. Throughout the Humphrey ceremonies I wondered how the Metcalf family felt as they were largely forgotten as all the attention focused on the Humphrey ceremonies.

3. Our theme -we are tackling the tough issues and don't expect 100% success - is stated at the outset but is not reinforced throughout the speech or at the end. The strong restatement of this theme at the conclusion would drive this point home more effectively.

4. A minor change that is needed: You refer to "Mexican-Americans" in one part of your speech. This should be broadened to include other Americans of Hispanic heritage through the use of the term Hispanic-Americans.

Finally, I believe that this speech is tremendously important to your Presidency. For a lot of the wrong reasons, the American people have incorrect impressions today about your ability to lead this country and manage the government. This speech offers a good opportunity to correct some of these impressions. Nothing is more important than your strong delivery of this speech and I would encourage you to take as much time as necessary away from the office to prepare for the speech.