

MACK McLARTY

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

6/23/94

June 16, 1994

Mr. President:

David Gergen asked me to deliver the attached memo for your review. David gave this succinct commentary a lot of thought, and I believe he makes points worth considering on both North Korea and Health Care.

I have also attached three commentaries from today's USA Today, Wall Street Journal, and Washington Post that are very relevant to our health care efforts. Given the ~~press~~ of the day, I was afraid you might not have seen them.

Attachments

cc: The Vice President

WJC

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 15, 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: David Gergen 

Subj: Miscellany

I will be away for the next couple of days at an annual AEI/Gerald Ford conference in Colorado and would like to leave a couple of thoughts with you:

-- North Korea. Your national security advisers are talking about a possible Oval Office address early next week. I very much agree that we need to build better public understanding of Korea, but my soundings outside and the remarks from the GOP leaders this morning raise serious questions that I would want to resolve before an evening address to the country.

* First, is this a problem that we should manage on a somewhat slower, lower-key track? If you speak to the nation next week, do you run a risk of over-hyping the issue and then forcing yourself to do something dramatic to satisfy public expectations? An Oval Office address will certainly be necessary -- next week or whenever -- if you are announcing big military deployments, but absent such deployments, a big speech coming out of the blue may only succeed in scaring the country without advancing the ball overseas. Bottom line: we should carefully think this through before asking you to give such a major address.

* Second, you were very much on the right track today in telling the joint Congressional leaders that you want to consult privately with them in coming days over Korea. I would urge that you do the same with leaders of the foreign policy community. Consultations will accomplish at least two things: give you greater confidence that you have availed yourself of the best thinking in the country as you make crucial decisions, and also build the support we so much need among foreign policy experts who will be speaking out on your Korean decisions. It is absolutely critical that you not go into the maelstrom of a big foreign policy crisis without more support among opinion leaders.

As you did on China, it would be most helpful if your outside consultations included people who are tough critics of the administration. (Of course, your NSC adviser, Secretary of State, Defense Secretary and others of us should be engaged in much the same kind of outside conversations on a regular basis, funneling ideas and insights to you. You shouldn't feel you have to do these kinds of things all by yourself. You don't.)

-- Health Care: Within a matter of weeks, perhaps days, you will probably have to make a decision whether you are willing to accept a bill that makes substantial progress but has only the flimsiest of guarantees of universal coverage or whether to say hell, no and go to the country this fall. "Take it or tank it". Personally, I believe it would be in your interest, your party's interest and -- very much to the point -- the country's interest to take the best deal you can and then go to the voters over ways to complete the journey; if you wish, I can spell out arguments some time soon. In the meantime, it might be helpful to you to ask Stan Greenberg very privately to test public sentiments on this question; my bet is that the public would salute you for getting two-thirds of the way this year -- farther than any president in history -- and fighting for the rest in the future.

-- Bi-partisanship: I know how frustrated you are right now with Republicans. I did think, however, that Newt Gingrich had a point worth pursuing when he raised the question of dinner invitations. It continues to stick in their craw -- and make politics harder for you -- that at a staff level, we don't act with the same graciousness that you and the First Lady regularly display toward members of the other party. Among the many examples: at the NCAA championships, we invited a number of Democratic members to watch from your box but we neglected to invite the Congressman from that district (Alex McMillan) and the mayor of Charlotte, both Republicans. McMillan was extremely angry. It would be most helpful if you put out word on this front.

In the meantime, I sense that your stellar performance on the D-Day trip has greatly helped to shore up the country and has left you in a stronger position to wrestle with North Korea and health care.

"USA TODAY hopes to serve as a forum for better understanding and unity to help make the USA truly one nation."

—Allen H. Neuharth
Founder, Sept. 15, 1982



Peter S. Prichard
Editor

Karen Jurgensen
Editor of the
Editorial Page

Thomas Curley
President and Publisher

Don't give up on health care for everyone

The White House ought to be kicking and screaming over the prospect that Congress will reject employer mandates, and thus any chance of universal health care. Yet this week, it has accepted that possibility with barely a murmur or moan.

For many Americans, it's a puzzling retreat. Poll after poll shows that most of us support comprehensive health reform and think employers should help pay for it. In one recent USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll, 90% of those surveyed said employers should pay for all or part of the cost of their employees' health insurance.

And why not? An employer-based network of providers is in place and working well. Indeed, almost 60% of the population gets health insurance through the workplace. Using employer mandates to expand that network to the millions of workers who cannot get health insurance is just common good sense.

Still, the mandate is on the ropes. In Congress, many Republicans and moderate Democrats are fighting it as if it were a tax. And they're winning. Sens. Daniel Moynihan and Bob Packwood of the powerful Senate Finance Committee visited the White House this week to tell Clinton face

to face that the mandate won't fly.

A major reason is the opposition of lawmakers like Bob Dole, the Senate minority leader, who has flatly said that mandates are unacceptable. Given his preposterous January declaration that there is no health-care crisis, his opposition to mandates — and reform in general — is no surprise.

Other senators at least are looking at alternatives. Packwood and Sen. John Breaux have offered compromises that employ "triggers" to force additional action if lesser reforms fail to achieve specific results by a specific date.

Trouble is: Trigger-based reforms do not — cannot — assure universal coverage. To the contrary, they allow lawmakers to avoid making the necessary commitments.

Congress is fast approaching legislative lockup over comprehensive health reforms, and the public has failed to rally 'round. Momentum is melting like a Popsicle in the sweltering Washington summer.

Plainly, the time has come for voters to defend their interests more loudly.

Likewise, the White House should stay cool and fight hard for its central principles — including health care with every job and universal coverage for all. And if it is forced to accept an inadequate, trigger-based deal, it should make certain that, this fall, voters know who was responsible for the sabotage of true and comprehensive health reform.

► Clinton courts Congress, 4A



Americans Still Support Reform for Health Care, But Poll Finds Zeal Waning and Fear of Change

By GERALD F. SEIB
And HILARY STOUT

Staff Reporters of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
WASHINGTON — Watching the pounding the Clinton health plan is taking in Congress, it would be logical to conclude that the public has lost its desire for health-care reform.

Logical, but not quite right.

As the congressional debate on health care enters its most critical phase, a new Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll, as well as a review of polling data over the last year, suggests that Americans retain a strong underlying desire for changes in the health-care system. Asked in the new survey whether they think Congress and the president should continue their efforts to reform the system or leave it as it is, an overwhelming 71% favor reform.

But the public has lost both its passion for change and much of its confidence in Washington's ability to make the right fix. An improved economy has lessened people's fears that they could lose their jobs and their health insurance at any moment. Meanwhile, fears of lost health insurance have been overshadowed by a different set of fears: that most health-care reforms will translate into taxes and more government control.

"People both want major changes and they fear the changes they want," says White House pollster Stanley Greenberg.

Opponents Take to the Air

Meanwhile, to make the administration's sales job even tougher, some of the best-known opponents of the Clinton plan are returning to the airwaves. The Health Insurance Association of America said yesterday it plans to air two new "Harry and Louise" spots blasting the price controls and some insurance market reforms in the administration's approach. "It's quite possible Louise will mention the 'R' word," said an association spokesman, suggesting an assertion that current proposals would lead to rationed health care.

Overall, in the last year people appear to have gone from looking at health-care reform as a tonic that will make them feel better to seeing it as bitter medicine they think they'll have to swallow eventually. The new poll shows that people tend to believe that reform, while necessary, will increase the cost of care, erode its quality and leave availability about the same as it is now. And health care has slipped down the list of most pressing issues.

Yet the underlying level of support for doing something remains high largely because of a vague sense that the current system, if left unreformed, would be even worse than the alternatives.

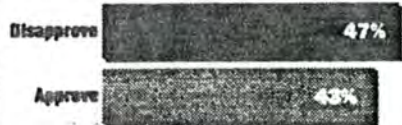
"The bottom line is people haven't lost interest in the issue," says Robert Blendon, a public opinion expert at the Harvard University School of Public Health who has focused on public views of health care.

Of Two Minds

"Should Congress and the president continue their efforts to reform the health-care system, or leave it as it is now?"



"Do you approve or disapprove of the job Bill Clinton is doing in handling health-care reform?"



"Do you approve or disapprove of the job Congress is doing in handling the issue of health-care reform?"



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL/NBC NEWS POLL

"What's happened is the president's plan scared people, and the effect of being scared is to make people much more cautious about what is to be enacted."

Mixed Message

The public jitters are being read in Congress, where lawmakers are reacting by moving away from the Clinton plan. But the frustration for the administration is that, as public support for its plan has steadily declined over the last year, the public consistently voices approval for the main elements of the administration's approach.

That remains generally true in the new survey. Overall approval of the Clinton health plan held steady at 38%, roughly the same level as in March but well below the 51% immediately after the president unveiled it in a nationally televised speech last September.

But even as the president's critics hammer away at his call for "universal coverage" as an overly costly dream and propose instead more modest steps to make insurance more affordable, the public strongly backs universal coverage. By a 57% to 34% margin, Americans said the main goal of reform should be universal coverage rather than insurance reform. And 41% say covering the underinsured and uninsured is the most important reason for reform, far more than cite reducing costs or improving quality.

Though the president's call for requiring employers to pay much of their workers' insurance premiums is under heavy attack, the survey finds that Ameri-

cans like that idea far more than a government-run insurance system and about the same as a Republican alternative of requiring individuals to obtain their own insurance.

And a substantial majority, 62%, cite price controls on insurance premiums and limits on medical fees as the best way to pay for guaranteed health insurance for all Americans.

So why has political support for the president's initiative eroded so badly?

President Clinton himself attributes much of the problem to the heavy pounding he took from his political critics in the politically crucial early months of this year. In remarks yesterday to a small group of columnists, Mr. Clinton said the campaign against his health plan is a "classic example" of the kinds of efforts mounted to scuttle overhauls of the health-care system in the past.

And he suggested that he agrees with analysts who assert that much of the effort to focus attention on the controversy over the Whitewater scandal grew out of his foes' desire to scuttle his health plan. "I still think we have a chance to get it," Mr. Clinton said of his health plan. "The biggest enemy we have is the overall cynicism of the American people."

Lack of Confidence Overall

In fact, the new poll reveals a lack of public confidence not only in Mr. Clinton, but in all the major players on health care. Confidence in Congress is down even more than confidence in the president. While 47% of those surveyed said they disapprove of the job Mr. Clinton is doing on health care, 61% disapprove of Congress's performance.

Confidence in Democrats generally has dropped. A Journal/NBC poll last month indicated that the share of those who thought Democrats would do a better job on health care had fallen to 26% from 57% shortly after Mr. Clinton took office. But faith in Republicans didn't go up much; only 17% said the GOP would do better. Instead, a plurality of Americans, 38%, said both parties were about the same on the issue.

But beyond such general doubts, the president's problems also clearly arise from a failure to better sell the administration's approach to the public. In fact, doubts about the president's plan have grown most markedly among the very groups that should be most strongly behind him—Democrats and Clinton voters. While support for the Clinton plan has been eroding across the board, approval among Democrats has fallen an especially sharp 14 percentage points in the last eight months, to 57% now from 71% last October. That's a more pronounced drop than among any other demographic group.

Democratic pollster Mark Mellman complains that the health-care debate has

essentially turned into a welfare debate, with voters now interpreting phrases like "universal coverage" as code for providing benefits for the uninsured poor at the expense of the middle class. That's exactly the sort of trade-off that Republicans have wielded successfully against Democrats for a generation. "You need to shift the focus to the end benefits for the insured, middle-class person," Mr. Mellman says.

Meantime, a generally healthy economy actually works against the administration. Mr. Greenberg says that his surveys have found a "sharp drop" in the share of Americans who think somebody in their family will lose his or her job in the next year. That lessens anxieties about lost insurance and has pushed health down the issues ladder. In the new Journal/NBC News survey, just 13% cite health reform as the issue that needs the greatest attention from the federal government, well below the 34% who cite crime and violence.

"WHAT'S THE MATTER — YOU DON'T LIKE PARADES?"



David S. Broder

Poli-Sci Earthquake

My friends in academia are up to something. Those who teach and study government are committing public heresy on what two generations of Americans had been told.

To hear them talk and to read their most recent books, the political parties don't mean diddly when it comes to running the government. And the president isn't such tall cotton either.

That is obviously my crude interpretation of their message. Academics would never put it that way. But leading political scientists would not dispute that there has been a revolution in their interpretation of the way this remarkable system of ours works.

The shift is important intellectually and it also has the potential to change the way the broader public thinks and acts. Over time, these theories affect the writing of American government textbooks, and in time youngsters reading these texts come to believe that's the way it's supposed to be.

So when leading political scientists conclude that divided party government (a Republican president and a Democratic Congress, say) works just as well as a one-party government, or when they say that presidents have less to do with lawmaking than we suppose, it behooves us to pay attention.

To understand what a huge flip-flop this is, you must know the doctrine that is being replaced. Going back to Woodrow Wilson, a scholar of government before he became a governor and a president, teachers have been nearly fixated on the president as the leader of the nation. Historical eras are known for the presidents who dominated them—the age of Jackson, the age of Roosevelt. The one officer elected by the whole nation combined the roles of chief of state, chief of government and commander in chief. In more recent eras, he has also been awarded the titles of chief diplomat, chief legislator and chief communicator.

All this we learned in school. We were also taught that the instrument of effective government was the political party. It was the bridge between the executive and legislative branches, the indispensable unifying device for collecting the diverse opinions and interests of a continent-sized republic and blending them into government policy.

The American Political Science Association in 1946 enshrined this doctrine in a formal report, urging the strengthening of parties so that they are "able to bring forth programs to which they commit themselves and . . . possess sufficient internal cohesion to carry out these programs."

That was then, and this is now. I first learned that this view was in trouble three years ago, when David R. Mayhew of Yale published to great acclaim a book called "Divided We Govern." He studied the important laws enacted in each Congress from 1947 to 1990 and came to the stunning conclusion that divided government was at least as productive as one-party government. Indeed, the highest annual output, he said, came in the Nixon years, which most of us thought were marked by bitter battles between the White House and Capitol Hill.

Now comes another distinguished academic, indeed the president of the American Political Science Association, Charles O. Jones of the Brookings Institution, with more heresy. In his new book, "The Presidency in a Separated System," he not only endorses the Mayhew thesis but argues that the press and public have grossly overrated the president's influence in lawmaking.

He is particularly hard on the notion—at the center of the old theory—that national elections create "mandates" for policies espoused by the winning presidential candidate. The very notion of a mandate has caused more grief for presidents (in the form of unachievable expectations) and for the country (in ill-considered policy) than anything else, Jones says.

Turning conventional wisdom on its head, Jones argues that the biggest current problem—the intractable budget deficit—is the result of the two elections where Congress, the press and the public bowed to a president's claim of a landslide-election mandate. Lyndon Johnson's 1965 Great Society gave us a mass of expensive entitlements, and Ronald Reagan's 1981 New Economic Policy stripped the government of the revenues to pay for them, Jones says. Result: unending deficits.

Far better, and far more normal, Jones argues, is the situation when Congress, whether controlled by political allies or rivals of the president, heeds its own interpretation of its constituents' desires, listens to (but does not obey) the president's wishes and enacts laws through an intricate pattern of "co-partisan" and "cross-partisan" coalition-building.

And wise the president, he says, who realizes that this is the way the Constitution said it's supposed to be—and does not beat his head against the wall in frustration. Jones concedes that there's not much direct accountability in this system, but says our government was not designed to fix responsibility on anyone.

It is damned disquieting to be told that everything you've thought and believed and written all your life is wrong. All I can tell you is that some awfully smart people are saying black is white and white is black.

PHOTOCOPY
WJC HANDWRITINGBig problem
w/ this:

① Deficit reduction

② Fair labor

Brady Bill

Gridlock

Dialysis

③ Initiatives

Hate crime

Health care

62000

Stowman

Re-emergence

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6/23/94
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WASHINGTON

- ① list up → growth, GATT
- ② New Ag → jobs: Macro/Micro
Dom/Foreign
- ③ New global infant
- ④ Brigades / Whet
Initiation

Other countries: France

Other " areas : Rwanda
Davao relief
Bosnia
W-Chemistry

[- MIA Access
- New Aid
- Jap Framework]

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David Mixner
356 Huntley Drive
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Craso
we need to
discuss — This
is when most of
our allies from 92
are on their way
I think B.

June 3, 1994

President William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Our good friend Marsha Scott is delivering this letter for me. We are fortunate that we are able to communicate directly and privately. I am getting too old for handcuffs and those "paddy wagons" seem to be getting hotter and more uncomfortable! This is a far better way.

As I watch from here in Los Angeles, I am in awe of your abilities to handle so much in such a difficult time. It must be overwhelming for you to wake up each morning with renewed energy to tackle the problems of our time. To face Bosnia, North Korea, Haiti, Healthcare, Crime, etc. each day and be prepared to provide fresh leadership and innovative thinking must drain you of your energy, and at times you must feel very alone.

Like you, many of us have come to appreciate what is demanded of a person who is the President of the United States. There is a new understanding of what can be accomplished and what must be sacrificed for future generations to solve. It is with this understanding and appreciation of what you face each day that I write this letter.

My concern is AIDS.

There is no question that your Administration has done more than any other to combat this epidemic. The funding has increased, the symbolic appearances you have made are inspiring, the creation of the Office of AIDS was an important step and the Justice Department's effort to stop discrimination against HIV positive people has been applauded. Clearly, like all Americans, your healthcare program will improve the quality of healthcare that people with AIDS will receive as they fight this disease.

Unfortunately, it is not enough and it is not working.

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PAGE TWO
PRESIDENT CLINTON
JUNE 3, 1994

I am now entering my third generation of friends who are starting to get sick and die. So far, I have lost 223 dear friends from this disease. If I am to maintain my sanity as I go through this next group of friends who are dying, than I must share with you what I think must be done to win this battle.

Please allow me to privately make some suggestions to you that this Administration is capable of handling even with all of its other responsibilities.

1. Given the massive scope of problems that you face each day, it is essential that the person who is assigned the task of finding a cure for AIDS be among the best and the brightest. They not only must have your confidence but the confidence of those who he/she will need to do their job. It must be a strong person, one that has great vision and the power to make things happen. Unfortunately, Christine Gebbie, who is a good person, has totally failed to gain our confidence and to create a national will to find a cure. Her vision is weak, her program is years behind, she lacks the personality to inspire and she has failed to use the power that you have given her. For us to find a cure, we need a powerful and charismatic leader who gets the job done.

2. The word we need to rediscover is "cure". We have become experts at developing our social services agencies, raising money to fund them and taking care of our own. We have pioneered many innovative ways to provide social services and healthcare to our sick. The Ryan White Act is funded. Federal, State and local governments are beginning to accept their responsibilities. The time has come for the administration to focus on one thing regarding AIDS: a cure.

3. What needs to be done is no mystery. Last November in Madison, Wisconsin, a group of AIDS activists and members of your Administration agreed on seven specific targets to find a cure for AIDS. They are:

- (1) Create a more collaborative and coordinated effort for development of HIV therapeutics.
- (2) Create a new information exchange technology specific to AIDS research.
- (3) Develop multidisciplinary training programs to facilitate future discoveries.
- (4) Establish small-budget, fast response grant programs.
- (5) Establish specimen and data repositories.
- (6) Launch a pilot program, the Accelerated AIDS Research Initiative.
- (7) Obtain funding for new efforts without sacrificing existing research.

PAGE THREE
PRESIDENT CLINTON
JUNE 3, 1994

I do not doubt your commitment. Secretary Shala has provided stellar leadership. Others have distinguished themselves in this effort including FDA Commissioner David Kessler and Surgeon General Elders.

But with all the burdens facing you as President, it is essential that you have someone in the position of "AIDS Czar" who will ensure that to find a cure continues to be a major priority in your Administration. This person must mobilize a nation, the scientific community, our universities, private enterprise and a skeptical AIDS community to find a cure. They must be strong and have the ability to communicate to this nation your desire to find a cure. Without such a person, our hopes dramatically decline and we see this issue fading into the bureaucracy of everyday government.

I fear that unless we regain the upper hand with this issue that the divisions that we experienced in the Reagan / Bush years will return. The nations attention will not be on a cure but on our anger.

Mr. President, we have known each other for a long time. Neither of us could imagine what would be required of us and the obstacles that would be placed in front of us in order to fulfill our lifelong dream of changing the world. After I buried Peter Scott, there was nothing left for me to lose. I seek no office, I desire no appointment and I aspire to no greatness. I simply have the commitment to do everything possible to assist in finding a cure to AIDS and to obtaining our freedom.

To have our freedom with our friends dying at an unbelievable rate would be an empty achievement. To find a cure to deliver those saved lives into a world of hatred would be an incredible tragedy.

I hope we both live long lives. I would like to think that in decades to come that future generations of lesbians and gays will be hanging the picture of President and Mrs. Clinton in their living rooms because, you will be our Roosevelt and our Kennedy.

If we fail to mobilize this nation to find a cure then millions of lives around the world will be lost to this epidemic. I am here to assist this effort in any way that I can. Please call on me - and others. Let's just get the job done.

Our hope is in your hands. Please help.

In friendship always,

David Muxer

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~~Franklin~~
~~High~~
~~Street~~
~~Paulston~~
~~Park~~
~~Wentworth~~
~~South~~
~~of~~

~~Get in touch with him~~

~~SECRET~~

~~Intercom~~
Intercom → Radio