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MEMORANDUM TO THE MOAKLEY COMMITTEE

FROM: Boyce W. Slayman
DATE: January 12, 1995
RE: Repositioning JJM

I write to share my observations of the moment and to recommend a strategy to "Reposition" JJM, offering several recommendations for winning public recognition, fund raising and re-election strategies.

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Background

Once again in his long and illustrious career, JJM finds himself needing to come up with a strategy to overcome a tremendous challenge. The Republican control of Congress, JJM's sudden loss of power, the likelihood of a stronger opponent(s) in '96, along with serious personal health issues pose challenges which require a calculated and exact response. That which I propose is not a makeover of JJM (he does not need to be made over!), rather I propose a strategic shift of *emphasis*.

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Repositioning of Public Image

Positioning is the act of gaining a place of recognition in, and a share of a person's mind in an over-communicating society with thousands of competing messages. Positioning takes what's in the prospect's mind and turns things inside-out. It is not a communications process, it is a selection process that starts with the question: What message has the best chance of getting through? And ends with selection of that most effective message. Selecting the right message is important because the human mind has just so much space for concepts.

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In the case of JJM, our challenge is to transform the current, positive images of JJM, dean of the delegation and the "cloutmeister," into future-serving images, that will generate goodwill, campaign contributions and votes.

Because JJM can no longer portray himself as the cloutmeister, continued political success requires that we foster a new public perception of him. This new perception must be believable, have currency in Boston as well as in Washington DC, be personally comfortable for JJM, contribute towards his effectiveness in the 104th Congress and to a successful '96 re-election as well.

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I propose we reposition JJM to confer upon him "Elder Statesman" status. This is not a reinvention of the man. To the contrary. This is actually nothing more than a highlighting of the natural evolution of JJM over a lifetime of public service: from under-age patriot-eager-to-serve-his-country, to Elder Statesman, equally-eager-to-serve-his-country-and-better-able-to-do-so.

Clearly as the dean of the state's delegation, JJM enjoys widespread respect. Our mandate, under this repositioning strategy, is to impress upon the public and the press that JJM, the dean of the delegation, is the heir to Tip O'Neill, the soul of the delegation, a font of wisdom and knowledge, and the keeper of a proud Democratic tradition. As such, and because he has never changed who he is or what he's all about, JJM represents permanence, continuity, and tradition.

The repositioning of JJM can be accomplished through a coordinated program. I propose the following as some of the components of such a program:

- **Organizing a program of events designed to allow JJM to exercise stewardship of the delegation--** one element of the program could be regular (but no less than quarterly) Monday breakfast meetings hosted by JJM in his office, or within the WTC. These meetings might also be extended, occasionally, to the entire New England delegation (I'm reminded that when he brought the First Lady to town for a Health Care meeting, other N.E. Congresspersons were invited).

Other events could be Congressional Hearings; Panel Discussions aired live on N.E. Cable News or PBS; and a regular radio or cable tv broadcast.

- **JJM should deliver policy speeches holding forth those traditional Democratic values which lend themselves to the day's great debates, utilizing a "Think Tank" such as the McCormack Institute, as the background.** Founded to advance state and local politics and policies, and named after an earlier Massachusetts Elder Statesman, the Institute and JJM make a natural match. Further, these speeches need not be made to large gatherings. Faculty, students and invited guests would suffice, with coordinated press coverage (including tapings for re-broadcast on cable tv).

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- **Public recognition of service should be made throughout the district through select celebratory events, including award ceremonies, dedications and keynote speeches. These could be public as well as private sector events, reflecting his many friends and varied contributions.**
- **There should also be carefully managed increased visibility within the district. The lessening of JJM's congressional duties affords more time to selectively attend Town Meetings and to visit senior programs, Colleges and job sites.**

The '96 re-election

I believe one important theme of '96 opponents will be JJM's length of service. This strategy, as a preemptory strike, would doom such an effort to failure or to the dust-bin. If this strategy is successful, an opponent would be forced to campaign against a hugely popular father-figure. Draping himself with words, wit and the warmth of Speakers McCormack and O'Neill, Ambassadors Kennedy and Volpe, it will be extremely difficult for an opponent to get through to land a decisive blow against JJM. Traditions and institutions have enduring qualities that protect them.

The Campaign Message

JJM's primary message would be that, while the Republican majority in Congress threatens some within his district and their program proposals challenges many of his long-held Democratic values, he will steadfastly continue doing what he has always done: use his experience, knowledge and connections in the most effective way to bring home the bacon to the 9th Congressional District.

Implications for Fund Raising

Successful repositioning will facilitate successful fund raising. But there is another major consideration: Newt Gingrich. Portions of Newt's program are tremendously attractive to big donors in the business sector. JJM should be careful not to alienate these proven donors. I believe there is room for them to support Newt, and his likely beneficiaries, *and* JJM.

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The strategy I suggest in this regard is for JJM to not be a part of the nitpicking-and-constantly-sniping-at Newt-crowd. If he goes down that road JJM risks exhausting his reserve of goodwill without deriving any tangible fund raising or re-election benefit. Leave this to the younger warriors.

In his role as elder statesman JJM should seek to take full advantage of the friendships he has made over the years as well as the tremendous amount of respect he engenders from both sides of the aisle. When asked, JJM's comments about Newt's agenda and the Contract should, be more or less, along the following lines:

"Speaker (spoken with respect for the office) Gingrich certainly is exciting many people with his reform ideas. However, the test for me is will these ideas make life better for the residents of the 9th Congressional District."

Or, *"Professor (spoken with respect for his Ph.D.. and professorial predisposition) Gingrich is certainly stimulating much intellectual debate. I too am poring over his proposals to see ways in which the people of the 9th Congressional District benefit."*

Or, *"I've been in politics long enough to appreciate that everything is cyclical. Time will tell whether or not this is a flash fire or not. Meanwhile, I'm not distracted in the least from seeking solutions to the problems of the hard-working people of the 9th Congressional District."*

Fund Raising Committee

Operationally, the Committee should appoint a fund raising committee of about 12-15 individuals representing a cross-section of JJM's donor base and charge it with raising \$400-500k this year. This Committee's success would be greatly advanced by adoption of this (or a similar) repositioning strategy. On the other hand, without repositioning, the focus of potential donors is likely to be squarely on JJM's effectiveness-- ie. loss of clout-- and that would be a major obstacle to raising money. Not raising money this year would be an encouraging signal to challengers. Further, with the '96 Presidential

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campaigns underway (as well as John Kerry's re-election), raising money in Massachusetts next year will be extremely difficult.

Personal considerations

I imagine that JJM could easily be in a prolonged state of depression. He has witnessed an amazing, historic shift of power within the House and between the seats of power. He has lost his seat of influence. Many of his personal friends were swept out with the Republican tide. The "Contract With America" threatens many of the programs and policies that lie at the heart of his traditional Democratic values system. And personal health issues are serious and persistent.

We need to be aware of and responsive to this. Our efforts must be to encourage JJM to stay the course and not make any decisions other than those we are presently operating under at least until next July or August. I think it will take that long for us to be assured that his decisions about the future are not in response to a temporal state of depression. JJM has worked hard and given much. Our focus at this time must also assure that those contributions are recognized and rewarded, and that his career ends as it began--on his own terms.