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BRIEFING

THE 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: HOW MUCH DO CAMPAIGNS MATTER?

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MODERATOR:

THOMAS E. MANN
Senior Fellow, Governance Studies, and W. Averell Harriman Chair, Brookings Institution

PANELISTS:

LARRY M. BARTELS
Donald E. Stokes Professor of Public and International Affairs, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University

DARON SHAW
Associate Professor of Government, University of Texas at Austin

RICHARD BERKE
Washington Editor, *The New York Times*

ANTHONY CORRADO,
Visiting Fellow, Governance Studies, Brookings, and Charles A. Dana Professor of Government, Colby College

KENNETH GOLDSTEIN
Professor of Political Science, and Director, UW Advertising Project, University of Wisconsin-Madison

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. MANN: Good morning. Welcome to Brookings. Delighted to begin the second in a series of five election seminars that Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School and Brookings are cosponsoring. The first one, two weeks ago, was on partisanship and political polling. It was rather timely.

Today, we have our session on "How Much Do Campaigns Matter?" And it wasn't by accident that we chose this topic for the day after the first presidential debate. Two weeks hence, we will focus on issues: "How Do Issues Matter?" The fourth, which is right before the election, will be on mobilization and turnout, and the final in the series will be after the election, looking at mandates and governance.

I've been delighted to work with Larry Bartels, the Stokes Professor of Politics and Public Affairs at Princeton, and Director of its Center for the Study of Democratic Politics, in organizing these seminars. And I've been delighted that we've been able to attract the cream of the crop of electoral scholars, and that we've been able to entice the very best journalists to come over and keep us honest while this is going on. John Harwood, of the *Wall Street Journal*, was with us last time. Richard Berke, of the *New York Times*, is going to play that same role this time.

We are on C-SPAN live, and I would ask when we move to the question period that you all would wait for a microphone and then identify yourselves before asking questions.

I was down in Florida the day before yesterday and yesterday morning at the University of Miami putting together a program on how would Bush govern in a second term and how would Kerry govern, with the focus much more on the governance than on the political side. But I had occasion yesterday morning to visit the debate site

and the media center, which was put in the Wellness Center of the university. It was a sight to behold, I have to tell you.

There is now an official part of the media room that is called Spin Alley. We always used to refer to that informally, but now it's the formal title and there are signs directing you to Spin Alley.

There was a lot of spinning last night and this morning, and it will continue. The whole theory behind this series is to see if we can't step back a little bit to see what we as scholars have learned about elections and voting behavior, and see if we can't provide a little added value to the conversation. You ultimately will be the judge of whether or not we succeed in that, but that certainly is our intention.

I've already introduced two of our participants: Larry Bartels, who is, along with me, a permanent fixture at these series, and Richard Berke, who I have told you is with the *New York Times* as its Washington editor, and who within a matter of months will become the associate managing editor for news starting in January 2005. Rick has covered three campaigns himself--'88, '92, and '96--and worked all over Washington. He's now overseeing the daily work of 40 reporters and coordinating the political campaign coverage.

Next to Rick over at this end is Daron Shaw. Daron is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Texas at Austin, and has done some of the most original, creative, and informative work on the impact of campaigning on voting behavior. He is currently writing a book on the 2000 and 2004 presidential campaigns, and he has the virtue of being a first-rate political scientist and analyst. But also, by serving as a consultant in campaigns—in the 2000 Bush-Cheney campaign and

now as a consultant to Bush-Cheney—Daron is able to see campaigns up close, which is a great advantage to him and to all of us.

We then move to Tony Corrado. Tony is the Charles Dana Professor of Government at Colby College, in Maine, and more importantly a Visiting Fellow here in Governance Studies at the Brookings Institution and my colleague this past year. Tony knows more about presidential campaign finance than anyone in the country. This is a consequence not only of his research and writing, but also of his having worked on four Democratic presidential campaigns over the years.

Finally, we come, next to Tony, Ken Goldstein. Many of you have discovered over the course of the last several years that Ken, a Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and director of the university's Advertising Project, has become the go-to guy on what the candidates are doing as far as their campaign advertising strategies are concerned.

He has figured out a way of using a very interesting data set, adding to it, and helping us understand both the day-to-day and week-to-week strategies of the candidates, but then also going inside that and doing some first-rate analytic work on all of it.

So you can see we have assembled a really terrific group of colleagues, and I'm very grateful to all of you for your willingness to participate in this event.

Let me tell you what our format is today. It's similar to two weeks ago. Larry will get us off to a substantive start by making a presentation with the overhead here. Once Larry finishes his initial remarks, we will begin a discussion, first, about debates and the media coverage of debates, then turning to campaign advertising.

Next, we're going to talk about the allocation of presidential and presidential candidate time, and maybe even vice-presidential candidate time, and what difference that makes, and also deal with the matter of resources and financing. Those are the subjects that will allow us to reach some broader conclusions about whether campaigns matter, how they matter, and how much they matter, at which point we expect you all will have plenty of comments and questions to keep us going.

So with that introduction, I turn the floor over to Larry Bartels.

MR. BARTELS: Okay, thanks, Tom. Thanks to everybody at Brookings for your hospitality; to the Carnegie Corporation, which is helping to support this series of discussions through their Project on Promoting Public Understanding of the American Electoral Process.

What I want to do to start is just to say a little bit generally about how political scientists think about campaign events and their effects, which is rather different, I think, that the way most people tend to think about them. I think most people's views about campaigns and how they work is in significant part the product of a kind of self-interested conspiracy between journalists who want you to believe that it's important to get up every morning and read what Rick Berke writes about what happened yesterday because it's somehow fundamental to how the election is going to turn out, and campaign consultants who have an even more obvious professional self-interest in convincing the world that what they do is important and indeed often decisive.

Well, it can be decisive, as we found out in 2000. When the election is close, even things that have small effects can hugely important. That is obviously true, but what I want to talk about a little bit is how we should think about those effects and their likely magnitudes.

I want to start with a picture that I--I hope you can see that, but it's also in the hand-out for those of you who have the hand-out--a picture that I downloaded from the website of the political scientist Jim Stimpson [ph] at the University of North Carolina.

This is the tracking heats over the course of 2004. What he's showing you here is the proportion of votes that Kerry is getting in trial heats at various points in the year, starting at the very beginning of the year. You see that the curve events out pretty quickly in late January at the sort of decisive point in the Democratic primaries, and then running through as of about a week or two weeks ago is where this picture ends.

Now, this curve, I think, is interesting in two ways. One is that the little jagged line you see there is Stimpson's estimate of the state of the trial heats at any given day of the campaign. These are based essentially on averages. They're somewhat sophisticated averages that take account of differences in the way different polling operations work, and so on, averages of the results in any given day.

You see that there's a lot fluctuation in those, but much less fluctuation. If you look at the scale here, we're talking about fluctuations on the order of a few percentage points, and so one point to make here is that if you look at any particular poll and try and understand how the world is going on the basis of a poll result that's, you know, 5 points or 10 points different from the same poll results a few days ago or some different poll results at the same time, that's likely to be entirely noise.

But the other kind of averaging that Stimpson is dong here is the darker line that he has imposed on the little jagged line, which is a kind of rolling summary of

how things are going at any given point in time, evening out the day-to-day fluctuation not only across polls, but across days as well.

If you look at the campaign at that level of resolution, starting in late January and going through as of a week or two ago, there isn't really a whole lot of movement. This is really a quite consistent picture over time. You might say that there have been two events in the campaign so far. One was Kerry building a lead of a few points during the summer, and the other was that lead dissipating and Bush building a lead of, you know, five points or something like that as of the last couple of weeks. So all of the day-to-day events that have gone on since late January have produced in some sense very little aggregate movement.

Another way to think about the polls at various points in the campaign is to understand how they relate to the actual election outcomes. What I have here is a statistical analysis of the relationship between poll results at various points in the campaign and the actual election outcome. This is based on Gallup data from the late '40s through the late 1980s. I haven't updated it since then, but I suspect that the pattern is likely to be pretty consistent.

If you look, for example, at the middle column, which is labeled Early October Polls, the question here is how much of the poll margin that any candidate has in the Gallup poll in early October is actually likely to last until election day. The answer is this estimate in this cell here, .51, which is to say any lead that you see at this point in the polls, half of it is likely to disappear by election day, and so you should bear that in mind when you're trying to interpret how the campaign stands at any given moment.

The other thing you should keep in mind is that there's a lot of variability in these polls from day to day and a lot of things that are going to happen by the end. So not only is there a tendency pretty systematically for any given lead in the polls to decline over time, but there's also a good deal of uncertainty about where things are going to turn out.

If you just look at the average difference between where things stand in early October and how the election actually turns out, an average kind of difference is on the order of eight percentage points. So if 2004 is anything like past campaigns, it's pretty likely that we're going to see more movement between now and the end.

How should we think about that movement? Well, here's a picture based on a big national survey that was done by the Annenberg School at the University of Pennsylvania in 2000. They started interviewing people at the beginning of 2000 and interviewed them all the way through the inauguration in 2001, actually. But what I'm showing you here is the data from late July through election day.

Again, the trial heat here, so the 50-50 mark is Gore having a lead or training Bush at any given point. Again, you see the difference between the day-to-day fluctuations, which are pretty substantial, and the kind of smooth trend over time which has less fluctuation in it.

And you see that they've given you in the picture here various kinds of events with the idea that you'll look at how the polls are moving around the events and gauge something about the impact of, for example, the debate. So if you ask yourself, you know, did last night's debate matter, we'll look at the poll and we'll see some kind of movement in the poll and say that was the effect of the debate.

The more interesting question, it seems to me, though, as a person who cares about the election outcome rather than about trial heats during the course of the campaign is how this is all going to turn out in the end. And so an important distinction is, you know, does the debate produce a three-point bump that dissipates over the course of the next week and everybody has forgotten about it by election day, or does it produce a three-point bump or a one-point bump or a half-a-point bump that actually lasts until people get into the polling both. That's an important question that I think Daron Shaw is going to have a little bit more to say about.

The other thing to think about here is how much of what goes on actually influences the outcome in an even more smooth way. So if you take, for example, the traditional definition of the fall campaign starting on Labor Day and lasting through election day, you ask yourself, all this stuff that went on in 2000, what impact did it have.

One answer is here's where things stood as of Labor Day and here's where things stood as of election day. That one point or two points, or whatever that change was over the course of a fall campaign, obviously turned out to be hugely important to the outcome. But in terms of magnitude, that may be the kind of magnitude that we're thinking about with these campaign events, rather than the more grandiose ideas that you sometimes get from listening to the consultants and reading the papers.

So what I've tried to do is to go back through the last several campaigns and get some sense of how different kinds of campaign events may have mattered in terms of influencing that movement that I just showed you between Labor Day and election day in any given year, and looked at a variety of kinds of possible campaign effects using survey data from the national election studies, which goes back for half a

century and interviews people over the course of each fall campaign starting on Labor Day and running through election day.

There are three different sets of possible effects that I'm going to talk about here in terms of a variety of specific issues--ideology, abortion, taxation, foreign policy issues; in terms of the candidates' images, how people think about the candidates as being strong leaders, honest, caring sorts of people; and in terms of the economy and people's perceptions of whether the economy is going well or badly.

Political scientists believe that those three kinds of categories of considerations are the ones that are most important in determining people's eventual voting behavior. So we want to think about those three kinds of things.

We want to think about effects of two sorts with respect to each of those. One kind of effect, which I'm going to call persuasion, has to do with changing prospective voters' minds about any of those three things, convincing them that they ought to take a more conservative view about policy issues or a more liberal view than they had at the beginning of the campaign, convincing them that a particular candidate really is a strong leader or really cares about people like them, convincing them that the economy is going well or the economy is going badly. So that's one thing that these campaign events and campaign activities might be intended to do.

Another possibility that political scientists have looked at a lot is what I'll refer to as priming. The idea there is that you're not changing people's minds about these different considerations, but what you're doing is encouraging them to attach more weight to a given consideration or less weight to a given consideration in their eventual voting choices. And so another thing that a campaign might do is to prime the economy,

for example, to get people to think about economic conditions and take them into account in deciding how to vote.

So what I want to do is to look at the past six presidential campaigns, which are the ones for which we have good data about these things, and see whether the campaign, as measured from Labor Day through election day, has had any significant impact either on persuading people to change their views about these various considerations or on priming some considerations as opposed to others.

So here's a picture of how things look with respect to persuasion. The separate bars in each of these pictures refer to the six campaigns from 1980 to 2000, and so the first set of pictures here are an estimate of how far the incumbent's vote share moved as a function of either candidate succeeding in persuading people to change their views about issues.

So if the bar goes up from the zero point, it means that the incumbent was advantaged over the course of the campaign. If the bar goes down, it means the challenger was advantaged. I'm not going to talk year by year about these effects, but what I want you to notice is the magnitude of effects that we're talking about here.

In the case of issues, it looks like the biggest effects are on the order of a one-percentage-point shift, and on average they're a good deal smaller than that. In terms of the candidates' personal images, you see some bigger effects. And so to the extent that the campaigns are mattering, it looks like they're mattering mostly with respect to convincing people that particular candidates are attractive, honest, intelligent and strong leaders rather than about issues, or for that matter about the economy. People's views about whether the economy is going well or badly don't seem to change very much over the course of the fall campaign. But the maximum effects that we're

looking at here are on the order of three percentage points. The average effects are on the order of about half a percentage point in a given campaign.

Here's a similar kind of analysis for priming. To the extent that the campaign succeeded in making people attach more or less weight to given considerations, how did that influence the eventual election outcome?

Here, you see that the effects are, in general, even smaller, very few instances in which you get an effect that's even as large as one or one-and-a-half percentage points. Although there are a couple instances of that kind, the biggest effect here is the negative effect for the economy in 1980. As people began to attach more weight to economic conditions, it was obviously bad for Jimmy Carter and that had a pretty substantial effect, but that effect was on the order of three percentage points.

The other point to notice here is that if we care about the election outcome, we care not only about these effects lasting to election day, but we also care about the net effect of the campaign rather than the effect with respect to any one of these considerations being primed or persuading people to change their views.

And because the campaigns are doing lots of things and have lots of possible effects, it's quite possible for those effects to cancel out with respect to the actual election outcome.

So what I've done in this picture is to just rearrange the same data that I've showed you, but to do it organizing the data by campaign rather than by the kind of consideration that might be primed or where you might observe persuasion, and to look at the pro-incumbent or anti-incumbent effects with respect to a variety of considerations at the same time.

In some cases, they tend to go preponderantly in one direction. So, again, you see in 1980, to the extent that the campaign was having effects, it was mostly having effects that were bad from the point of view of the incumbent. But in many other instances, you see a variety of effects, some of which are good for the incumbent party and some of which are bad for the incumbent party.

So in 2000, for example, with respect to some of these considerations, people moved a little bit over the course of the campaign in the direction of Al Gore. With respect to others, people moved a little bit over the campaign in the direction of George Bush. On net, it was very close to being a wash.

One last way of thinking about this is in terms of the quality of the candidates and their campaign organizations and how that contributes to the outcome of the election. What I've done here is to try and calculate the impact of candidates, again, over the course of the fall campaign, now going back all the way to 1952.

The data here are data where people in the surveys are answering open-ended questions about what they like and dislike about each of the presidential candidates. And so we can distinguish between the two candidates and we can see how their net favorability is changing over the course of the fall campaign. The idea is if people's attitudes toward the candidate are getting more favorable over the course of the fall campaign, it probably means he ran a good campaign. If they're getting less favorable, it probably means he ran a bad campaign.

So which are the candidates that gained and which are the candidates that lost over the course of the last half century, and how well does that comport with our conventional wisdom about who's a good candidate and who's a bad candidate?

The answer to the last question is not very well. There are some instances where that kind of match conventional wisdom. You see Al Gore went down a little bit. That probably cost him something on the order of two percentage points in 2000, by comparison of where he was at the beginning of the fall campaign. Again, that was a pretty decisive difference, given the overall balance in 2000.

But more generally, you don't see much evidence in favor of the kind of standard ideas about who's a good candidate and who's a bad candidate. For example, McGovern and Goldwater both gained substantial ground during the course of the fall campaign. Well, that was because they were both behind by a whole lot going into the campaign. So you might want to discount that, but it's not consistent with the idea that they were terrible candidates in the way that people often talk about them.

Look at Ronald Reagan. Here's the Reagan effect in 1980 when he was running as a challenger. Here's the Reagan effect in 1984 when he was running as an incumbent. In the first case, it's less than one percentage point. In the second case, it's actually a small negative effect. So the idea that Reagan was a master campaigner certainly doesn't seem to hold up very well in these data.

The same thing is true for Bill Clinton, who's running as a challenger here and as an incumbent here, so again somebody that political observers and political journalists routinely refer to as having been a master campaigner, but who, judging by the evidence that we have about how people actually reacted to him over the course of the fall campaign, doesn't seem to have been a particularly outstanding candidate.

So one point is that there are a variety of possible campaign effects, but as best we can tell, they mostly look pretty small. Many of them seem unlikely to last until election day. To the extent that they matter at all, they may very well cancel

themselves out if we add up across the various considerations the various kinds of things that candidates are trying to do.

And to the extent that there are real effects here that can have substantial impact when the election is close, we may not be very good at identifying them in real time because the kinds of tea leaf-reading that produce an explanation about this particular difference moving through the trial heats at a given moment in time may not be very good in terms of understanding what people actually take into the voting booth with them on election day.

So let me stop there and we'll turn to a more substantive discussion of the actual things that candidates are doing and how it matters.

MR. MANN: Well, I'm going to do it as best as I can. Larry, thank you very much for that lucid presentation, one that cuts in many respects against conventional wisdom about campaign events and campaign effects.

Well, we've had a presidential debate. We've had a slew of instant polls taken. Last night, we had groups of captive focus groups. By the way, I was scanning the television stations, and I thought “The Daily Show's” panel of undecided voters was by far the best of the evening coverage. If you haven't seen it, the host of this segment became rather profane in her irritation with the voters, asking "What do you mean you haven't decided yet? Where have you been?"

In any case, let us now move from those instant polls and see if we can't get a little better handle on, looking back at debates over time, what kind of an impact they seem to have had. And the best place to go is to Daron Shaw.

MR. SHAW: Well, thanks, Tom. I always feel so trivial after Larry talks on how campaigns don't matter and there's minimal movement. And Tom will say, well, now, Daron, why don't you describe the two-point bounce you saw last night to today?

But having said that, let me just again, in sort of the spirit of the conversation, give you some instance of how political scientists attack these problems and what the conventional wisdom is, and we can sort of depart from there, I guess.

The first thing, I guess, to say broadly is that debates and conventions are really, you know, together, the two seminal, predictable events in any presidential campaign. There are obviously unpredictable events, occurrences that, you know, you can't foresee. But these are the things that we know are going to occur and we know are going to attract relatively large audiences. Last night, they were predicting 50 million. I know what the numbers suggested, but it sounds to me like about on average.

And the reason that we sort of hone in on these events is not only because there's a large audience viewing, but because there's an enormous amount of interest in the media. So even if you don't watch the debate, it is the subject of subsequent reporting as well as water cooler conversation the next day. And so we assume there's this sort of echo chamber that exists.

And so that's why we spend a lot of time focusing on them in political science, and we presume, well, if anything matters, certainly conventions and debates are going to matter for shaping the race, for affecting the one- or two- or three-point sorts of changes or shifts that Larry was talking about.

Having said that, last night was the 21st presidential debate, you know, kicking off since 1960, where we had the four Kennedy-Nixon debates. They started up

again in 1976 with Ford-Carter, and we've had two or three, roughly, every year since then, every four years since then.

I ran some numbers and I'm going to refer now to what is commonly called the bounce, and I think maybe I ought to describe exactly what we're talking about because it's a jargon that I think is intuitive, but actually requires a little bit of precision.

What we tend to do is we tend to take all available polls from one week before the debate, average them, and then compare the results with the polls that we get two to three days after the debate, and the difference in the margin is what is generally referred to as the bounce.

So when I say there's a two-point bounce, I simply mean that if the race was 50-50, you know, now it's 51 to 49, right. That would go from an even race to a plus-two for one candidate, all right. So it's a fairly simple metric. And by that standard, really, I guess the point to be made is that we don't really have many recorded bounces that are particularly impressive.

Since 1984, we have had a bounce that exceeded three points. So for those of you who are expecting, you know, wonderful bounces to, you know, bring the race back to even or Bush is going to put the race away, that's not something we would expect. That's certainly not to say it can't happen. We only have 20 cases that we're judging from, but it's unlikely.

The largest debate bounce on record, 1984; Mondale got a seven-point bounce after the first debate. Remember where Reagan had the long, sort of rambling Highway 101 speech that no one quite understood. But then, you know, the second

largest bounce was Reagan's bounce in the second debate in 1984 where he gained back seven points.

And so there are sort of two points to be made. One is that the bounces don't tend to be terribly large, and that oftentimes one candidate will get a bounce out of the first debate that's immediately offset by the other candidate's bounce in the second debate.

This happened, actually, in 2000 when Gore did lost two points off the first debate, three points off the second, but he regained two points off the third debate. So the net effect of the debates wasn't good for Gore, but it wasn't, you know, all that impressive. Clinton gained a couple points in '96. Clinton, I think, probably would have gotten a few more points in '92, except for Perot's presence in the debate, which kind of flattened out the effect. So the magnitude of the debate effects aren't particularly large.

The other question that Larry sort of raised is what sort of durability is there involved with these debate bounces. The truth is I've done some research that suggests we have what we call a step effect, and that is if you think of the different possibilities, one possibility is there's a bounce, but that bounce dissipates. And so you go right back to the equilibrium point you had before the debate, so a temporary effect.

Another possibility is that you get a step effect; that is, there's an increase in the candidate's vote share and that becomes the new equilibrium point. That becomes kind of the new status quo in the race. That's an effect that's durable. That's an effect we care about a little more in political science.

The evidence suggests that debate effects tend to look like step effects; that is, they tend to be fairly durable. They set a new equilibrium point. The problem is that debates are so close together now that you really can't with any kind of precision

measure how durable the effect is because next Tuesday we'll have a VP debate; next Friday, we'll have another presidential debate. And so it becomes very difficult to measure these things. We think that they tend to be fairly durable; that is, you know, they kind of do reset the table a little bit off a point or two.

And then, finally, I should just sort of say, throwing it back to Tom, the other thing that debates do--and this is more from sort of a consultant's perspective, although I think it does get to some of the issues Larry was talking about--debates freeze the conversation. They freeze it in two ways.

First of all, physically, they root the candidates in a locale for a few days, so that, you know, people like Rick have to, you know, sit outside while they do debate prep. They don't do many visits, they don't do many events, and everybody sort of focuses in on the debate. So it kind of stops the dialogue for a little while.

And it also provides--the substance of the debate itself can pivot or shift the conversation slightly, all right. And so Larry is talking about sort of priming and also the impact on favorability. Debates do give candidates an opportunity to do that, to shift the conversation, to reintroduce themselves slightly, to increase favorability ratings, and those things can be important. And I think there's a general sense that particularly on the question of favorability that Kerry might have helped himself last night.

MR. MANN: Daron, thanks very much.

There are a couple points I'd like to follow up on and have Rick start thinking about one, and maybe Tony about another.

The first deals with the direct versus the indirect effects. You talked about the water cooler effects, Daron. There was some information in the Annenberg study last time that suggested that people who watched the debate ended up carrying

away a different impression than those who did not and simply learned about the debate through the media coverage. So what do we know about that, and do we know anything about whether those perceptions vary? Was 2000 an exception, when there seemed to be this disjuncture between direct effects going one way and indirect effects going the other?

The second question is on your point about the cluster timing of debates. Is it the case, Tony, that now, at least in this cycle, the debates are so close together that we may have one long (or not so long) debate period, rather than repeating the pattern of previous years when the debates were spread out over time and other events and campaign activities could intervene?

Rick?

MR. BERKE: Yes. Well, Tom, I think it's so hard to know the impact of these debates, just as you say, because we talk about, you know, a focus group or a set group of people at Comedy Central or whatever watching the debate and being watched by professional debate watchers. But most people don't see--I don't think most people see the debate that way. I mean, most people, I mean, sort of have it on, and they might have it on for all 90 minutes, but they're eating dinner, they're talking on the phone.

Just from a journalist's point of view, let me tell you how we covered it last night and you'll get a sense. I mean, it's not like we can sit there and spend a lot of time thinking about how best to write the story. These things happen so late that for our first edition last night, we had to write the story off of essentially the first half hour of the debate for many of our readers because of the deadlines. I mean, we go to press before the debate is over.

And we say in that early story, you know, based on--this is the early--you know, based on the beginning of the debate. We don't pretend otherwise. And then we come back and fill in the gaps and write a new story as the deadlines roll on through the night.

But we have, you know, teams of people putting together these stories. And I was watching last night, I had different reporters watching it, different experts in different policy areas and political areas, and everyone had different perceptions on how one Bush was doing, how Kerry was doing. And it's so hard to offer our readers sort of a stepped-back of how the debate went when you're doing it so hurriedly on deadline.

And the reason I say that, it's not just for print coverage, but I think for everyone else who watches these things, you have--you know, you talk about it the next day and over the water cooler, and you talk about certain moments that may--you talk about Bush's scowling. That's probably--I would bet more people talked about that than whatever their policy was on North Korea, you know, because it's so hard to know what affects people's perceptions of the candidates and what reinforces preexisting views and what doesn't.

So it's hard to separate it out and say this debate had xyz effect on the outcome or on someone's decisionmaking on a candidate because of these glimpses and snatches. At least that's my non-professional journalist view of it.

MR. MANN: Thank you.

Would any of my colleagues like to weigh in on this issue of direct versus indirect effects?

Tony?

MR. CORRADO: The indirect effects can have a very important influence on how the public ultimately views the debates.

If one looks historically at these debates, it's often the case that the initial impressions the public reports about which candidate did well often changes over the course of the next 72 hours as individuals start to absorb the coverage and the press clips, and particularly the sound bites provided on the evening news, because for many Americans that's what they end up seeing.

Even though, as Daron argues, the overall effect is small, the debates play an important role, because that overall effect is small, but it's very meaningful.

The vast majority of the electorate in recent elections has made their voting decision by the time September or mid-September comes along. At this point, there's only 20 percent of the vote—at most—that's floating around. If one candidate does extremely well in the debates and wins, in public perceptions, by 60-40, the result is going to be 4 points. So when you have these close decisions and debates, it's generally the case that there isn't a big bump.

But the debates have two important effects that aren't reflected in the top-line voting number. One is that there is some pretty good research that shows that they tend to reinforce partisans; individuals who are Democrats or Republicans, who are unsure about their nominee and are wondering whether this is the best candidate and whether to vote for him, often see the debates in a way that reinforces the view that, our nominee is okay and supports the decision to vote for him. And this produces some marginal movement amongst the partisans on each side that reinforces their commitment to vote.

The second effect is what Larry mentioned earlier, the priming effect. For the most part, one of the things the campaigns do as they look at debates is look underneath the top line voting number to see whether the public is getting a more favorable impression of a candidate. If so, this will open that candidate up to the possibility of being a voting choice for voters down the road if he or she can close the decision.

The debates can have a very important effect in this regard. In fact, in 2000, if you look at poll questions along the lines of "have you heard or seen anything that is more positive or negative," or "have you heard or seen anything that is more favorable or unfavorable about one candidate or the other"--a question that the campaigns use to get at these indirect effects--what you find is that Gore and Bush were fairly even before the first debate. There wasn't any relative difference between the two of them on this measure.

But after the second debate, that starts to change dramatically, and Bush moves to plus 15, Gore moves to minus 12. There's a big gap in terms of the general impression of Bush versus Gore, which then closed a bit during the course of the third debate and the follow-up to the third debate, but basically creates a dynamic where the race moved from Gore being about four points up going into the debates, according to the Gore campaign research, and coming out with Bush up two at the end of the three debates.

There's a real debate within campaigns about whether this new model of debates is going to produce that type of an effect; that the electorate views them not seriatim, but rather as a kind of collective. In other words, you have to wait until you

see parts two and three of the movie before you know what really happens to Luke Skywalker.

There's a debate now about this notion that Daron highlighted: about the extent to which this debate period freezes the voting decision. In 2000, both of the campaigns not only basically start to ratchet down their activity by the candidates as they get ready for the debates, but it's also the case that they really ratcheted down their paid media.

In 2000, both campaigns drop off in their paid media on the assumption that all of the news and the discussion is going to be about the debates, so it'll be very hard to break through with any paid media. Bush then started to ratchet up more quickly than Gore as the campaign moved into the third debate. This behavior reflected the view that the campaigns at least believe that while this debate period is going on, that's what's going to dominate the public conversation.

It was a very different dynamic in the '80s when there would often be a few weeks between debates and thus time to have these broader movements in the polls. One of the interesting things to watch for, given the fact that one out of five voters are reporting that the debates are going to be very important to their decision this year, is whether or not the public waits until they see this series of debates and then we get a movement at the end of the period.

And it will also be interesting to see if the campaigns are going to let the news coverage of the debates dominate the message during this two-week period, or whether they'll continue to do lots of advertising on top of it.

MR. MANN: Thanks very much.

Can we just for a moment now take some of this and focus it on this race and last night, just for the heck of it? We don't have a lot of data, but on the priming issue clearly the candidates had different objectives.

John Kerry wanted to return the campaign frame to a referendum on the President's performance, and particularly on Iraq. The President wanted to keep the focus, as his campaign has effectively put it, on John Kerry's alleged inconsistencies and mixed signals and lack of reliability. That's one important sort of struggle. The other was the struggle over the extent to which Iraq and the war on terrorism are linked or not and whether Iraq was helpful or harmful in the broader effort against terrorism.

Is this a good time to make judgments about the effectiveness of the candidates in the debate in achieving their objectives here, or are we going to have to wait 72 hours for this to play out as it reverberates on the morning news shows and local television stations and print coverage and the rest?

MR. BERKE: Tom, I think, if anything, we've learned to sort of sit back and be careful about it. At least journalists have learned to do that, because remember what happened after the first debate four years ago when all the pundits were saying Al Gore won the debate and then we found out days later that the conventional wisdom changed and people were talking about his body language and the concerns about his whole presentation, and Bush did better than people initially said. And people sort of revised their views of it.

So I think if we've learned anything, it's let it settle for a while, and maybe that's an effect of sort of the water cooler talk and how it's portrayed on the local news over a few days. But I think it's too early to judge.

MR. MANN: Daron?

MR. SHAW: I think the one thing you can talk about is the way the media cover these things, which, you know, there's--I sort of always have two different things I'm watching during the debates. The first is the political game, and then, secondly, the media's action, which, of course, is a huge part of the former equation.

But last night I was sort of--you know, we were kind of limited in our hotel. We don't get MSNBC or Fox News, so I was sort of glued to CNN, and Jeff Greenfield led with something I thought was very interesting. He said, well, I just talked with--I just got off the phone with a Democratic consultant and he was very happy, which I was happy to hear.

[Laughter.]

MR. SHAW: But this was sort of given as a profound statement. But the second part of the statement was more, I think, interesting where he said they were very concerned that Kerry would go on too long and would flip-flop, and he did not do that. And I thought they've won the expectation game, at least on CNN, right?

I mean, if your criteria for judging the effectiveness of the candidate is does he go well--you know, do they have to push the buzzer to get him to stop, you know, do they have to wrestle him physically offstage, that didn't happen, or the notion that he would actually have a flip-flop on camera. And since he did not do that, this was sort of seen as a victory.

And I thought this was certainly better than I think the Gore people did in 2000. I mean, clearly, the Kerry people had done--I think had a fairly effective job at sort of minimizing expectations. And so my sort of reaction not so much to whether this shakes up the race--I agree with Rick; I mean, that's impossible to tell for a few days.

But I do think that we kind of see Kerry's people were a little more effective at managing expectations than Gore was. Now, again, that might be because of their position or the fact that Bush is an incumbent. You know, there was limited amounts that they could do to diminish expectations. But I do think you can make that appraisal right now, and I think that's kind of dominating the post-debate conversation.

I certainly think--remember, Gore's problem going into 2000 was, you know, oh, he's exaggerating, and the series of little stories that occurred before the debate, and the debate actually amplified that problem.

I think Kerry's problem coming in here was he's a flip-flopper, and I certainly don't think the debate amplified that. The question is whether it actually sort of put that fire out for a while, you know, and that may be. I mean, that's probably the best thing that Kerry could get out of this, so in that case it would be good.

MR. CORRADO: If you think about the role of debates in terms of trying to help voters decide, the key to a debate is providing a contrast between the two candidates and to highlight certain issues and frame them in a way that allows the audience to see the contrast between the two individuals seeking the office of the President.

In this regard, last night's debate was one of the more successful debates we have seen. One did not come out of this debate feeling that there was this muddle of different issues and feeling uncertain about where the candidates stood.

I think both candidates, and the efforts that the moderator made to clarify the positions of the two candidates gave fairly clear visions, at least the clearest articulation we've seen in the campaign to date of what the two positions of the candidates are with respect to Iraq: why Kerry believes, at least in the articulation he

gave last night, that the policy in Iraq is indefensible, and on the Bush side, an extension of the flip-flop, inconsistent argument he has advanced against Kerry, placing it in a context and arguing that it is important because commanders-in-chief can't be inconsistent and it has implications for how you lead in the global world.

So I think, if nothing else, whether or not people think one candidate performed well--and I'm sure we'll have more discussion of Bush's facial looks than we'll have of the details of the two policies--I think for voters at least, it was a step in the right direction because the candidates tried to separate themselves in a way that most voters haven't seen to date. And at least to that extent it'll have some effect in helping to guide voters.

MR. MANN: Thanks, Tony.

This moderator realizes how quickly the time is going, and we've only covered one of our topics. So I'm going to turn to Ken Goldstein and ask him to help us think about campaign advertising and the place that plays in trying to understand the impact of campaigns.

Ken?

MR. GOLDSTEIN: Thanks, Tom. Let me start doing that by reiterating some things that Larry said and agreeing with Larry, and then taking a small difference, or unfairly focusing on one small thing that he said to jump for the remainder of my comments.

One, Larry is absolutely right that you should be ignoring the daily fluctuations that you see in the six or seven polls that are out there. And the exercise of averaging--and there's various methods of averaging the polls--you really do see interesting and probably correct trends when you average, but you ignore these pools

that are plus seven, minus six, plus eight, plus ten, because it's simply not telling you very much about the election.

Second, fundamental factors are obviously going to drive 95, 96, 97 percent of the variance in this election, as they've driven 95, 96, 97 percent of the variance in previous elections--partisan previous positions, the state of the economy, what's going on in Iraq. And there is very, very little, if anything, that the candidates can do about those things, and very, very little that television advertising can do about those things.

Having said that, if John Kerry can get this race back to a point where it's not at 5 or 6 percentage points nationally, as it appears to be now, although we don't know what it is now because we don't know what's going on after the debate, that's when all the stuff that I'm going to talk about, all the stuff that I study--political advertising--can matter because it's all marginal effects.

And I think what Larry was saying is all of campaign effects are marginal effects. But in 2000, we lived in an environment where the margin mattered. In 2002, everyone talks about the great President Bush victory in 2002 and how brilliant Karl Rove was. A 25,000-vote difference in Minnesota and Missouri and Tom Daschle is still the Majority Leader and we'd be talking about how President Bush squandered his capital on a mid-term election.

And so we are obviously in a political environment where the margin matters, and so something that has a marginal effect, like television advertising, can matter. So the one just small thing I want to use as a jumping point, what Larry said, most of the political science work has looked at campaigns after the traditional Labor

Day start. And much of the evidence that Larry showed was looking at campaigns after the traditional Labor Day start.

Well, this year we had campaigns starting on the traditional St. Patrick's Day start--

[Laughter.]

MR. GOLDSTEIN: --and actually a couple weeks before the traditional St. Patrick's Day start. If you would have started looking for campaign effects on Labor Day, you would have already missed the airing of 550,000 ads. Tony just wrote me a note. You would have already missed the Kerry campaign and the Bush campaign spending $423 million, and probably another over $100 million spent by 527s and other groups. So, obviously, lots going on.

Also, you may not have heard of it. It was this little ad by a group called the Swift Boat Veterans. You also would have missed that if you would have started looking for campaign effects after Labor Day.

So Tom and Tony and I were a little bit involved in this whole campaign finance, so I was just joking with them before how, you know, their do-gooder efforts obviously have, you know, completely choked off political speech in terms of political advertising; that, you know, really no one was able to have a voice and we saw a deep decline in political advertising this cycle. Obviously not been the case and those predictions were slightly exaggerated.

We're seeing more television advertising than ever. Of course, we're seeing more than everything than ever. We're seeing more field, we're seeing more radio, we're seeing more phone calls, we're seeing more Internet. But we are certainly seeing unprecedented amounts of television advertising.

We have seen levels of television advertising that one would typically see in late October. We've been seeing those in the battleground states--and I'll talk more about how that has changed--we've been seeing that since March 4th or March 5th, okay. So we're in, what, fifth, sixth month of third-week, fourth-week-of-October advertising activity.

Now, my major academic interest is tracking political advertising. I've done that for the last couple years at the Wisconsin Advertising Project. We use two sources of data. One is data from the Campaign Media Analysis Group that used to track advertising in the country's top 75 markets, now tracks advertising in the top 100 markets. This year, we got--we're very excited to also get a new source or data from Nielsen Monitor Plus, who tracks advertising in all 210 markets. So that gave us obviously an additional 110 markets, and gave us about another 40 or 50 markets which are actually drawing political advertising.

Why do I like studying political advertising? Well, the way Tom Mann set this talk up this morning, set this presentation up this morning was we were all going to try and get beyond the spin. And I think one of the interesting things about looking at the decisions about the candidates are talking about in their television advertising and where they're putting their television advertising, it really gets you to look beyond the spin.

One way to look at the effect of the debates--I can't do it now, but will be in a week-and-a-half when I'll be able to look at where the campaigns are putting their advertising dollars. And if the advertising dollars are going sort of more into States that Bush should be defending, we'll know that Kerry had a pretty good debate. If we see advertising dollars continuing to flow out of Arizona and Colorado and Missouri and

Louisiana and Arkansas, we'll know that Bush's lead has not changed much from the debates.

Advertising in this campaign, like I said, started on March 4th, March 5th, after it was clear that John Kerry would be the Democratic nominee. Advertising started in 17 States. It then went up to 20 or 21 States. Recently, though, starting in late August, early September, the campaigns have backtracked from their advertising. More specifically, the Kerry campaign has taken some States off the board.

The Kerry campaign now is not advertising at all in Louisiana and Virginia. They tried to play in those Bush-leaning States or Republican-leaning States over the summer. They are not advertising there anymore. And when the Kerry campaign pulled out, the Bush campaign pulled out, as well.

The Kerry campaign has also reduced significantly their buys in Arizona, Colorado, North Carolina and, interestingly, Missouri, and I want to come back and talk about Missouri. The North Carolina Democratic buy, I think, is just up because it would be completely embarrassing if you totally pulled your advertising from your State. Anyone remember who the Democratic vice presidential candidate is? John Edwards. And I think the Democrats are also--they think they have a real good shot at retaining that Senate seat, so they want to keep some advertising up there for Erskine Bowles.

The advertising, not shockingly, is being targeted most heavily at the big three. So as difficult a last couple weeks as John Kerry has had, if he can get that number back closer, if he can move down that 5 or 6-percentage-point national number, this election still remains about winning two out of three of Florida, Pennsylvania and Ohio. If Bush still has a 5, 6, 7-point lead, those States take care of themselves and we

don't worry about that. But if this race gets close, the race, as it was from the start, is winning two out of those three States.

And both campaigns, fill in your adjective--"heavy" doesn't really even get at it; extraordinarily heavy for five or six months already in all the major markets in those battleground States.

We are also seeing heavy advertising in three other States--my home State of Wisconsin, which my new sound bite is Wisconsin is the new Missouri. So maybe we'll have that as our new travel commercial. What I mean by that is it's the new Midwest State of medium size that tends to mirror national trends.

And I think if you look at Wisconsin polling and track Wisconsin polling and track national polling, it's just about even and we are seeing--the Madison economy certainly appreciates it--lots of visits from the campaigns, their candidates and their surrogates, and also intense, intense advertising in Green Bay, in Milwaukee, in Madison, in Lacrosse, in Rhinelander.

To give you an idea of how much more advertising is going on in a truly swing State--you got your swing States and then you got your really swing States--10 to 11 times as many ads airing in Madison than St. Louis, 10 or 11 times as many ads airing in Milwaukee as in Kansas City. That was not the case when we first looked at these data in July. When we first looked at the data in July, Kansas City and St. Louis were two out of the top seven, eight, nine markets in terms of political advertising in the country.

Now, one interesting thing that's going on in these big States is that there's slightly different targeting strategies by the two campaigns. When the Bush campaign decides that a State is competitive, in terms of their television advertising they

will go into a State at virtually the same point level, not the same dollar level, obviously, because some markets are bigger and more expensive than others, but the same amount of ads, the same amount of points in just about the same market. So a Lima or a Zanesville is much cheaper, but the Republicans, the Bush campaign is putting as many points there as they're putting in Cleveland.

The Democrats--and Gore did this as well in 2000, including not being up in major parts of the Florida panhandle. What are campaign effects? I don't know, Larry doesn't know. Probably, more than 537 votes would be our assumption, and the Gore campaign advertises very little in Jacksonville, very little in Mobile, Pensacola, very little in Tallahassee.

Early on, the Kerry campaign was doing the same thing, barely advertising in the panhandle, not advertising in small markets in Ohio and Pennsylvania. On the other hand, the Kerry campaign had an advantage, and often a significant advantage, in some of the bigger markets.

So if I was spinning for the Bush campaign, I'd say, okay, we're behind in the bigger markets where most of the votes are, but we're already up at such extraordinary high levels that if you're getting out-advertised 13,000 ads to 11,000 ads, that's not significant, although it is significant if you get out-advertised 2,000 ads to zero ads.

The Kerry campaign, I think, would make an argument that their most fertile ground for voters is in these places where they're most heavily advertising, although unlike candidate visits which Daron is going to talk about, when it costs just as much to go to a small market even though you reach fewer people, with advertising it's directly proportional. You do get what you pay for in terms of reaching voters.

One other interesting thing in the data which we continue to see. If you just compare Bush ads and Kerry ads, Bush has an advantage in many markets, probably a slight majority of the 94 markets that have received any spot political advertising. But when you add in the DNC, Move On, Media Fund, Sierra Club, all these other groups, the Democrats have an advantage, and often a significant advantage.

So there might be many reasons why John Kerry is, although maybe he's not anymore, facing a 5- or 6-percentage-point deficit in the polls, but it's not because he has been out-advertised, although we could talk about the quality of the advertising in a bit.

One other point. When I was talking about the 94 markets, almost 60 percent of Americans live in media markets that have not or will not receive any spot political advertising. So only 40 percent of the country is seeing spot political advertising.

Now, I've talked about 550,000 ads and I've talked about all this bean-counting I can do in terms of comparing who's up and who's down in markets. Figuring out what matters--I should be reminded of this, journalists should be reminded of this--message matters. An ad airing 10,000 times that's not a good ad is going to make--is not going to have an impact, where an ad that perhaps aired a few thousands times or a few hundred times can have a significant impact.

When we first tracked the airing of Swift Boat--and we can say was it fair, was it unfair, was it a low blow, et cetera, et cetera--it was obviously a very effective ad. It aired 700 times in 7 markets, including huge metropolises like Rhinelander, Wisconsin, okay. At that time, we tracked 700 Swift Boat ads in 7

markets. There had been over 500,000 ads aired in 94 markets. So, one, message matters. The quality of the ad matters.

In the work I do, obviously one of the big mistakes--it's hard to do, in my defense--to figure out campaign effects is you can't just say a Bush ad is a Bush ad or a Gore ad is a Gore ad or a Kerry ad is a Kerry ad. The other thing that the Swift Boat ad points out--and we were talking about direct and indirect effects of debates--also, the media intensively cover the advertising war. And the way the Swift Boat ad was then magnified and that message came out as it sort of came up from Drudge Report to Washington Times, to smaller newspapers, to cable, to mainstream newspapers, that was obviously a very, very large part of the effect.

All of my research is consistent with Larry's research that he showed here that political advertising can matter one, two percentage points. It's very, very difficult to tease out effects that are that small. But, again, if we get to a point where the margin matters, 1 or 2 percent obviously can be decisive.

Scholars--and this will be my last word--scholars--how should I say this?

MR. MANN: Carefully.

MR. GOLDSTEIN: Carefully.

Scholars are absolutely right that the media pays too much attention to the daily fluctuations. The media is absolutely right when they say about scholars, come on, the campaign matters, okay, and you've got to pay attention to that 5, 4, 3, 2 percent. So I think one of the good things about these events is that it brings--you know, it bridges that divide in a serious way.

Usually, scholars have considered that presidential elections aren't a very good place to find campaign effects because everyone has such huge resources and

everyone is even. Actually, in presidential elections I've found surprisingly more geographical and temporal one-sided flows of information. So maybe when you add it all up at the end, this side has this many ads nationally and this side has this many ads nationally. But there are times in particular markets and there are particular markets where you do see effects.

Unfortunately, unless you have access to the sorts of incredibly, you know, not sophisticated, but voluminous polling that's going on in the States to tease out those effects, it'll be very difficult.

And I'm Ken Goldstein and I take responsibility for that talk.

[Laughter.]

MR. MANN: Ken, thanks very much.

We are going to have to move on quickly to a couple of other topics, but first I'm going to ask Daron and Tony to briefly to react to this. Obviously, the campaigns gather the same data that Ken is gathering, and each campaign knows what the other campaign is doing with its media buys.

Is there enough room there to do more than, in effect, neutralize the other campaign? Are there opportunities for having a campaign effect?

Daron?

MR. SHAW: The short answer is there's really not much opportunity to affect serious changes. I mean, you know, Ken sort of pointed out you get to what we call in political science ceiling effects, which is if I see an ad five times and Rick is my opponent and Rick doesn't put an ad on the air, I have an advantage. If I put an ad on 75 times and Rick has only got 70, chances are that advantage isn't going to mean very much.

And that's what you find in places like Florida and Ohio and Pennsylvania, you know. But no one wants to engage, you know, unilateral disarmament, right. You know, it's like, well, I can save my $4 million and, you know, buy votes or something--

[Laughter.]

MR. SHAW: --which, by the way, I'm sure is being looked at by both campaigns, you know. So there are opportunities. I do think what has happened a little bit this cycle--two quick points.

The first is the Bush campaign is really serious about mobilization, and so it's not only that they're going into traditionally Republican markets where the Democrats are basically sort of prone to concede, but they're going in there at fairly high levels, so that the notion that we're not really into persuasion, we're into mobilizing these people and firing up the troops, I think, is being put into practice.

And it will be interesting to see the extent to which the Republicans sort of collectively, with ads, plus, you know, get-out-the-vote drives, ratchet up turn-out in these Republican-leaning areas. It'll be interesting to see how that plays out.

The second point, just to say something about campaign appearances. It is the case that these are not interchangeable, advertising versus appearances, because of the point Ken mentioned, which is it costs me the same to advertise in Racine as it does to advertise--or different, but, you know, it costs me no more than the cost of points to buy in one market versus another.

But if I'm a candidate and I send my candidate out to western Wisconsin, that takes a lot of time and I'm not reaching very many voters. So the candidate

appearance patterns are a little more concentrated, a little more metropolitan, a little more prone to speak to fairly larger audiences.

And just a final point on the appearances. As Ken said, with advertising, obviously when you're giving a speech to 500 supporters at a rally, the target audience is not the supporters at the rally. The target audience is local media, and so appearances as much as anything else are meant to drive favorable local media coverage. That's why the candidates do it. That's what they're interested in.

And one question that, you know, you may want to consider is the extent to which local media coverage is no longer especially fawning of presidential visits. I have this sort of notion that back in the '50s and '60s, you know, oh, my goodness, Eisenhower is here, you know. And, you know, Ike is here and the triumphant sort of coverage in the paper.

And now, I mean I think they're as prone as not to get some local papers saying, you know, John Kerry, bleeding in the polls, you know, dragged his, you know, campaign into "fill in the blank" today. I think there is more of a tendency for local media to engage in the kind of coverage we expect to see at the Times and at the sort of heavyweight institutions.

MR. MANN: Daron, just to follow up briefly on the candidate appearances, do you have evidence of mobilization effects?

MR. SHAW: Yes, the real quick anecdote from 2000, and after the 2000 Democratic Convention, you remember the Gore-Lieberman ticket took the steamboat--or I'm sorry--paddle boat down the Mississippi, starting in Wisconsin and into Iowa. And at the Bush campaign, there was a lot of laughter, like, oh, geez, derivative, another paddle boat.

And then we took out a map and realized that he was doing events in western Wisconsin and eastern Iowa. And someone raised a question; they said, can we get a plane in there? And it suddenly dawned on all of us that the nearest airport that could, you know, hold the 727, the campaign plane, was in Davenport or Des Moines or something like that. In other words, it was about a four-hour bus trip to these counties that Gore and Lieberman were hitting.

So we sort of filed that away. You know, we didn't have the time to send the candidate into those areas. When the race concluded, we noticed that Gore had significantly over-achieved in western Wisconsin and eastern Iowa counties. It's a single case, but I think that has had a lasting impression on the Bush people, which is why he spent a lot of the inter-convention period hitting these smaller Republican-leaning markets that you don't have time to reach during the fall campaign because it takes too many days out of your schedule.

MR. BARTELS: More generally, do you think that there's good evidence about the impact of these appearances?

MR. SHAW: I actually have some evidence from 2000--a lot of you will like this--that where Dick Cheney went, there was a negative.

[Laughter.]

MR. SHAW: Now--

MR. BARTELS: That's why I'm asking because, in part, the big Annenberg survey also found negative effects for Bush and Cheney.

MR. SHAW: Now, in the Vice President's defense, after the VP debate, that went away. It wasn't a significant positive; it was a mildly positive effect. But up until the time of the vice presidential debate, the tracking polls--you get enough polls

that you can actually kind of isolate market-by-market effects, and it suggested that, you know, there was a bad reaction, which sort of fueled my thought that maybe local media coverage is more cynical, more horse race-driven, you know, more kind of in your face than it had been in the past.

Again, that's where I think we need to go as scholars and sort of investigate these more localized effects, which obviously transport to studies of local elections and races.

MR. MANN: Tony, I'd like you to say something about this, but also just a word or two (to set it up for the questions, which we need to move to almost immediately) on the financing side of things.

MR. CORRADO: Okay, a couple of things. In terms of the advertising, I think Ken makes a point. These campaigns pursue different strategies. If you look at 2000--to show you how money only has some effect and advertising can only have some effect—if you look at the general election last time around, the RNC and George Bush spent $101.7 million on paid media advertising. The Gore campaign and the DNC only managed about $75 million. There was a big gap between the two campaigns in this regard.

One of the things that Gore and the DNC faced was that they were being out-spent on paid advertising by 33 percent. Therefore, they followed a strategy that's very disciplined—they focus on markets where they think the maximum persuadable vote is to be found, and therefore they get the biggest bang for their buck in terms of moving vote.

They concentrate on particular markets within States and they keep a constant eye on 270 Electoral College votes. And one of the more interesting things

about the Gore strategy in the last race was the fact that they were willing to pull out of States when they decided that that wasn't where they wanted to set up the final battles. Hence, they were dark in Ohio for the last two weeks in 2000 and put more resources into Florida.

Even though they were out-spent by $6 million on TV in Florida in the last 10 days, they were competitive. And one of the ideas followed in these campaigns is to put as much on TV as possible in those last two weeks when those final voters are going to start to break. That means working out media buys from the back forward, especially when you're using your limited public funding. And both campaigns this time are trying to use as much of their public money as possible on TV, in part because of the fact that there's much more use of these local candidate appearances.

I guess where I tend to disagree with Daron is that I don't think the local media are as cynical as he portrays. These local candidate appearances, particularly in third-tier areas and cities and rural counties, are still a big hit. And maybe that's just because, Daron, I'm from Maine and every time someone comes to Bangor, it's big news in this election cycle.

In fact, I'm getting called about who do you think will come next. A candidate appearance is good for three or four days of coverage. Using the candidates and surrogates is also a way of trying to break through all the clutter of this advertising by having news stories about the candidates that might be more credible. Whether they are or not is unclear.

What is clear is that the candidates are spending an enormous amount of money in this race, as everyone has said. In fact, we're spending more money on a scale that I can't even keep up with anymore. Just to give you some idea, the two candidates

themselves will spend somewhere in the area of $580 to $600 million. That compares to about $306 million that was spent by Bush and Gore last time, when you add in everything--primary, general election, recount money, the whole ball of wax.

Second, the parties are playing a much bigger role this time. The parties traditionally have relied on their coordinated spending allowance to help out their presidential candidate. And then, of course, last time around they did advertising using soft money funds on so-called issue ads.

In the 2000 general election the parties spent about $81 million, when you add up their coordinated spending and their soft money advertising, on paid TV and radio for the candidates. This time around, the parties are spending much more because they can not only spend the $16 million they're allowed to spend in coordination with their candidate, but they're also able to now spend money independent of the candidate.

The DNC has already spent $50 million in support of John Kerry independently. They're spending about $7 million a week. I expect the DNC alone will spend more than the amount spent by the two parties combined in the presidential race last time, and we are yet to see what the Republican National Committee is going to do.

For those of you who wonder, I would note that at the beginning of this month, the DNC had $56 million to spend, the RNC had $94 million to spend. And one of the interesting things to watch for will be to see whether or not the RNC pursues a very heavy independent expenditure campaign against Kerry at the end of this month to try to move that final 1 or 2 percent in some of these key markets.

The third thing that's interesting about this race is, aside from all the talk about the 527 groups and all, that by the time we get into the last two weeks of October, these groups are going to run into inventory problems. There's so much money being

spent by the candidates and the parties, there's nothing good left to buy in terms of where you want to be placing ads. Where the real effect is going to come in is in these ground activities that are being conducted.

One of the interesting things about this race is that we've really reached a point now where the presidential campaigns are out of the business of having field organizations and passing out signs and mobilizing the vote. That's being left to the parties and to outside groups, and these groups are spending money on a scale of at least five to six times what we have seen in any previous presidential race.

Most of the political science research on voter mobilization shows that spending money on personalized voter contact does help to increase turn-out. We are going to see marginal effects from that spending at least in about 12 States where most of this is concentrated.

And I guess the one other point I would make, Tom, is related to the trend Ken talked about in terms of the narrowing number of battleground states. But I think by the time we get to the last ten days of this campaign, I won't doubt that most of the activity has shrunk down to seven or eight States; that we're really at a point where they are focusing as much as possible on those last few races in the bid for 270 Electoral College votes.

MR. MANN: Thank you very much.

We'd like to take questions. A mike is moving up here and we're going to start right in the front.

Let me make one footnote. The interesting finance development is that the Bush campaign decided that if they used in their ads a reference to electing the broader Republican Party, they could share the expenditures with the RNC. They could

have gone independent, of course, but their method gives the campaign manager much more direct control of the strategy, because independent party expenditures have to be fully independent. I see that the Kerry campaign has followed in kind. Interesting development.

Yes, please. Yes, it's on. Just speak up.

MS. : Okay. My name is Ludlow [ph] and I'm from the Embassy of Denmark.

MR. MANN: Yes.

MS. : You've talked a little about the TV ads, and in the end here you mentioned the importance of personalized advertising. Nobody has talked about the role of the Internet in this campaign and how--I received from the Kerry campaign yesterday--I've signed up on the newsletters--how they try to really get control of the spin by listing all the polls you could go into, the radio programs you could call and give your opinion, and to forward this e-mail to everybody you knew so they could do the same thing; how you can easily organize house parties.

What do you think is the impact of this new media?

MR. MANN: Thank you. Okay, a question about the Internet. By the way, both the Bush-Cheney website and the Kerry-Edwards website just won an international award for the very creative use of their websites.

How important is the Internet this time around?

Ken?

MR. GOLDSTEIN: The Internet has been a crucial fundraising tool, especially for--Howard Dean figured it out and the Kerry campaign and the DNC have built on that. So a lot of this money that Tony talked about getting raised was raised on

the Internet. The Internet is a tremendous way to raise money because you don't have to send your candidate there, you don't have to buy people a beer or buy them food. So it's all cash right into your account.

The Internet is also a very good organizational tool. It still is not a way of getting out message, okay. It may be a way to perhaps mobilize some core voters, but the folks who are paying attention on the Internet, I think, don't need much convincing and probably don't need to be stimulated to turn out. But it has had a crucial role as an organizational tool, getting them to be volunteers and also raising money.

MR. MANN: Rick?

MR. BERKE: I think that's all true, but there's one other area where these bloggers have had an outside impact this year that we hadn't seen in the past. And one prime example is the whole CBS Guard scandal, where people just blogging on the Internet turned up, started raising questions about the authenticity of those documents about Bush's Guard service, and injected that into the race in a way it might not have--that might not have happened otherwise.

MR. SHAW: The campaigns don't largely see the Internet as a means of persuasion. You know, it is the case that late in the campaign some undecided voters may come across your website, but that's not really what the Internet is about. It's about communicating with the media because it actually allows you to disseminate rapid response and it's about communicating with your core partisans.

The RNC--and I'm sure the DNC has done likewise--have really done an effective job of setting up sort of secure websites where they're communicating targets and voter lists and things like this to people in the field, which is partly a practical

matter, but it's partly a way to make people all across the country feel really vested with the campaign, too.

MR. MANN: Thank you.

The woman right here, please.

MS. SULLIVAN: I'm Margaret Sullivan, and for the purposes of this discussion I'm at the bottom of the campaign heap. I work in a precinct in Fairfax County, and we've obviously, since I'm a Democrat, been written off by the national campaign. And I have two questions, one dealing with that and one dealing with a different kind of campaigning that hasn't been discussed.

Is there some advantage perhaps in States that may still be sort of marginally in play to being under the radar and not being blitzed? That's my question for the mass media.

My other concern has to do with the kind of advertising that is also happening under the radar and is epitomized by a flyer that the Republican National Committee has mailed out in West Virginia and in Arkansas about the potential of, if there is a liberal win, banning the Bible.

Now, this is clearly--it sounds funny, it sounds awful, and to me it's infuriating because it's getting at a level of impotent, ignorant fear. And those kinds of ads is something that none of you have spoken about.

MR. MANN: Okay, who would like to weigh in? A two-part question.

Larry, and then--Go ahead, Larry, please.

MR. BARTELS: I was just going to react briefly to both parts. On the second part, you described this as under-the-radar activity. The fact is that it's hard for

this stuff to stay under the radar anymore. I mean, you know and we all know about this because--

MR. : There's been media coverage.

MR. BARTELS: --communications now are so intensive that it's much less common than it used to be for this kind of stuff to escape scrutiny of some sort. Whether that will be effective in limiting or eliminating it is hard to know.

On the first point, it seems to me that the strategists are much too over-confident about deciding how they think are going to go in particular States and making strategic decisions to pull the plug on a State on the basis of what I think is often pretty flimsy information.

I'd be willing to bet anyone, for example, that the 2004 vote pattern across States will be more strongly related to how they voted in 2000 than it will be to whatever the polls are showing in those States today. But that's not the kind of information that the strategists mostly rely on, and I think they have much less respect than they should for the amount of uncertainty and variability over time in how these States are going to go. And so we'll wake up the day after the election and someone will say, you know, they should have spent money here because it was much closer than they realized it was.

MR. MANN: Daron?

MR. SHAW: Well, I disagree with that. They're acutely aware of historical precedent, and the question is, you know, for Gore in 2000, for instance, gee, West Virginia looks like it's slipping away, but West Virginia always votes Democratic. You know, what do we do? And, you know, if you're sort of slavishly following

historical pattern, you don't defend West Virginia. You assume it will come around with the other Gore States, and it didn't. So you're caught.

Right now, the question would be New Jersey, which is do we ignore New Jersey and figure, you know, it's a safety Democratic State? Do we do nothing or do we invest resources there to shore it up--visits? Certainly, you're not going to advertise there because of the expense, but, you know, you're getting half coverage because of Philadelphia.

You know, that's a tough decision and they really do wrestle with those things because you don't want to make a mistake and miss a new State. You know, Minnesota, for instance. Is it really--you know, both campaigns think it's a target. I think Larry would suggest that maybe you shouldn't view it that way, that it will probably come in line. You know, I don't know. And so they are aware of this. The question is do you make the right decision.

And I absolutely agree, though, with the point that they don't have really strong, firm information about how solid some of these tendencies are. Even if you get a poll right now that shows, you know--Wisconsin, for instance, is a good example, plus five or six Republican. Wisconsin has been historically a Democratic State and there's a strong sense on both sides that it's going to come back to zero pretty soon, you know, but how soon and how much money do you want to bet on it?

MR. MANN: Interesting.

The gentleman right here in the third row.

MR. : Michael Bankefish [ph], Germany's business daily Handelsplat [ph]. I have a question to Mr. Goldstein.

Judging from your experience, which are the 7 or 8 States the campaigns might focus on in the last 10, 14 days, as far as you can judge it today?

And a question to Mr. Shaw. How would you evaluate the President's performance of yesterday night, including his body language, and what would you recommend to him for the second TV debate?

MR. MANN: Okay.

MR. GOLDSTEIN: I'll take the easy one and then pass that on to Daron.

It's going to be where we're seeing really the most intense advertising now, which is Pennsylvania, Florida, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Nevada. And then, you know, if the advertising continues in places like Minnesota and Oregon, that's probably not good news for the Kerry campaign. If the advertising goes back into Missouri or a Colorado or an Arizona, that's a little bit better news for the Kerry campaign.

But those six or seven that I named are--hard to imagine that they will not continue to receive an intense amount of advertising.

MR. MANN: Daron, would you agree with that? Has he got the States right?

MR. SHAW: Yes, I think--did you have New Hampshire in the mix?

MR. MANN: He didn't mention--

MR. SHAW: New Hampshire is a little--oh, yes, because New Hampshire--the problem, of course--and this is a little inside baseball--

MR. GOLDSTEIN: An efficient buy, yes.

MR. SHAW: Yes. You're buying Boston to cover New Hampshire. The same with New Jersey; you're buying Philly and New York to cover New Jersey. So it's not simply, gosh, let's take a flyer. It's do we want--and by the way, just standard--and,

Ken, correct me if I'm wrong. The general feeling is--and Tony, too, actually--that you need about 1,200 points to get an advertising on people's mind. In layman's terms, that means you need about 12 viewings of an advertisement for it to really sink in, right. And 1,200 points in New York City, you know, is a couple million dollars' worth of investment.

And the question about Bush's performance. Bush was brilliant, clearly won the debate.

MR. SHAW: Hi, Karl.

[Laughter.]

MR. SHAW: You can turn it off now.

I thought--you know, I was watching it, actually, with Professor Bartels last night and I kind of thought, you know, it was a good debate. I actually liked it. From a citizen's point of view, I thought it was a very solid debate, particularly because it was on foreign policy.

I was a little--I wish they hadn't gone quite as much on Iraq and completely excluded, you know, Latin America, other parts of Africa, China. A China question might have been nice.

MR. MANN: The Middle East.

MR. SHAW; Yes, the Middle--yes, or Israel.

MR. MANN: I mean Israel, and the Palestinians, too.

MR. SHAW: Bush's performance. You know, I thought--the sort of visual stuff, I think, will be water cooler conversation. I think that was something that didn't help him and will probably cost him, you know, in the post-debate evaluations.

The actual critique I would have, though, is that he's defending his policies. As an incumbent President, that's what you do. But he never sort of challenged Senator Kerry on Senator Kerry's voting record in the Senate.

In other words, Senator Kerry made the claim, I think, effectively and repeatedly, I will keep America strong. You know, I will be aggressive in pursuing American rights. And the standard Republican response is, well, you opposed, you know, weapon systems x, y and z. You were for finding cuts. You were for funding cuts. You've missed Intelligence Committee hearings in the last couple years. You know, what credibility do you have?

But he was so into the defense, and I think kind of almost, you know, kind of miffed at some of the questions--that was the perception--that he didn't come at the back end of some of these responses after the defense to say, and by the way, you know, simply asserting you're going to be strong isn't good enough, Senator. So from a partisan perspective, I wish there would have been more of that, you know.

You know, I've seen some of the flash polls and they were--you know, I think 60-40, which is the number that Tony pointed out is about right, you know. I think it'll probably cost Bush a point or two, but who knows? I've been very wrong about these before. I didn't see Gore's rouge or sighs in 2000 as being very significant and that became all the rage afterwards.

MR. MANN: The last question right here.

MR. MITCHELL: Gary Mitchell, from the Mitchell Report. A question probably for Tom and Richard, and this is about what I call the "enough" effect in last night's debate.

And the quick punch line is that after the first debate in 2000, Bush-Gore, Richard Norton Smith summarized his take on the debate by saying that Gore proved he knew a lot, Bush proved he knew enough. And my question is did John Kerry get the "enough" effect last night in what arguably were the two issues for him? One was likeability, and second was a sort of decisive, quick and to the point?

MR. : I think that's the question that we're waiting to find out. I mean, I think Kerry had more to gain than Bush because, you know, Kerry is the one that wants to show he can be on sort of a level playing field and on the stage with an incumbent President, and that he has what it takes to be Commander-in-Chief. I think he had more at stake.

And I think neither of them--they both performed fine, in general. When you stand back, there were no big blunders on either side. And I think--as my colleagues here have said, I think it was sort of a good civic lesson. It was a pretty interesting, lively debate where issues were discussed, and you certainly had two different choices there. But the answer to your question, was it enough for Kerry, well, we'll have to see.

MR. MANN: I'm interested in whether 1980 will prove to be a useful analogy in looking at the dynamics and sequence of the race. Mind you, the incumbent president, Jimmy Carter, was much lower in public standing than George Bush is today. Bush is in the middle range between successful and unsuccessful incumbents seeking reelection. Jimmy Carter was clearly in the unsuccessful category.

And yet he led the race up until the one debate when voters, those swing voters—floating voters who hadn't invested much time—saw them together and could

imagine Ronald Reagan as their president. He was acceptable; he was plausible as an alternative.

My guess from viewing the debate and reading the reactions in the surveys and the man-in-the-street, woman-in-the-street assessments is that Kerry managed to do that. He looked and sounded presidential. There is now an alternative. There will be a lively debate still over the frame of the campaign: referendum on Bush or just how reliable is John Kerry. But it won't be of the same sort that it was before the debate. Now, it's different, and that's what John Kerry probably takes out of this first debate.

Listen, I want to thank my colleagues. They were wonderful. And thank you all for coming.

[Applause.]

[Briefing concluded.]