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# MACHINE CANDIDATE

## IDEAS

**NEWSWEEK**

"First of all," intones the speaker, "let me say that the United States is not a failure. I recognize that it's foolhardy to unilaterally disarm, but . . ." So begins an upbeat, let's-look-at-the-record foreign-policy speech that could well be the kickoff of the 1980 primaries. The speaker, however, is not Jimmy Carter, Ted Kennedy or even Howard Baker, but a fresh political voice from the Midwest: The name? IBM-370.

The slick-tongued computer-orator is the branchchild of two communications professors who believe that getting elected to

three "dramatic" views of the world, then play to the most widespread of the views. Set in a foreign-policy context, these three attitudes translated into cold-war, neo-isolationist and power-politics mind-sets. On the Panama Canal, for instance, the cold-war view held that the U.S. ought not to surrender the Canal Zone, the neo-isolationist view dictated that the U.S. get out of Panama and the power-politics view supported the negotiation of a new treaty to protect U.S. interests in the zone.

The professors picked twenty such issues to be covered by the speech. They culled newspapers and magazines for months, jotting down quotes that reflected all three positions on all twenty issues, then transferred the quotes onto 60 index cards. Finally, they went to—where else?—Peoria, Ill., to see how the opinions played. Sixty Peorians were asked to sort the cards in order of preference, from those most reflective of their views to those least reflective. Then the subjects rearranged the cards to show how important each issue was to them.

1984 15th: Cragan and Shields fed the results into the computer and instructed it to write a speech based on the most prevalent opinions, complete with adverbs and adjectives. They pushed a button and out came the hypothetical candidate's carefully considered opinion on how best to handle U.S. foreign policy—for Peorians.

"The point," says Cragan, "is that you can take any idiot, parade him around the country for twelve months, and get him elected."



Jeff Loventhal—Newsweek

### Cragan and computer: 'My fellow Americans . . .'

public office is becoming more a matter of manipulating campaign symbols than dealing with substance. To prove their thesis, they set out to program the IBM-370 to write the "perfect" foreign-policy speech—one guaranteed, that is, to appeal to the most and offend the fewest in any given audience. "We figured that if we did the proper market-type research and programmed the computer to write a speech reflecting the findings, the speech would end up sounding pretty much like the genuine article churned out by a pack of polling-watching speechwriters," says John Cragan of Illinois State University.

**DRAMA:** To begin with, Cragan, 35, and partner Donald Shields, 34, of the University of Missouri-St. Louis, theorized that all a politician need do to get elected is recognize that voters generally subscribe to one of

manipulating symbols and back into the business of governing. To that end, their IBM-370 is about to churn out perfect speeches on energy, foreign policy and domestic policy. "When we publish these speeches in 1980," says Cragan, "we hope it will spark enough controversy for someone to ask the candidates why their speeches sound so much like our computer's. Maybe that will get them to say what they really think for a change."

So far, that message hasn't got through. Instead of coming clean, six political aspirants, including a candidate in a gubernatorial primary and a mayoral contender, have already called on Cragan and Shields for a little help from their computer. All were turned down—and lost their races.

DIANE K. SHAH with RICHARD MANNING in Chicago

rescue his father's failing business by overcharging hospitals for equipment. Huber now faces four years in jail and a fine of \$108,000. He does have one option: He can pay a fine of an additional \$500 or forfeit his corporate holding company to the government.

O changes: against public officials particularly odd twist: the "enterprises" involved is the government. Averted five Macon, Ga., police departments who took money and "carnal" to overlook prostitution and other activities. The criminal enterprise which they were connected was the vice Florida state judge Samuel Smith and for selling acquittals; his judicial was named as the enterprise.

In: Some judges are uncomfortable in creative use of RICO. In May, Judge Ross Sterling in Texas dismissed a indictment of five Texans accused of a swindle. "RICO was designed to get racketeers out of business, not to make racketeers out of businessmen," Sterling said last week. Atlanta Federal Judge Murphy dismissed part of a RICO suit against porn king Michael Theodor. The suit had forced Theodor to forfeit \$1 million in cash and jewelry and his \$4 million mansion if convicted. The law does not apply to what a criminal might have done with illicit profits. Murphy ruled that the law appears flawed in several ways. It is a broad language, which allows the government to collect a batch of minor offenses and call it general racketeering. "We like that if you have a job and send it to your property," says a prominent attorney. The government is going to use RICO to force a defendant to forfeit his property, says a prominent defense lawyer William Hundt. "The forfeiture provision—not often used—causes trouble. The statute does not precisely what happens when a racketeer is mixed with a legitimate business. The statute does not require racketeering to operate a business. It says: 'Nor is it clear how closely tied need be to the criminal enterprise to be to the criminal enterprise.' It says: 'The forfeiture provision shall apply to the criminal enterprise.' In Miami, two racketeers of the 'Black Tuna' case of smuggling 500 tons of marijuana into the U.S.—are arguing that the government has no right to seize a used car, three houses or a houseboat if the defendant is indicted.

Over its weaknesses, RICO gives the government an effective threat against racketeering crime. Justice officials, who have used RICO prosecutions, insist that every case carefully before prosecution. But they find white-collar criminals elusive. "The psychology of these types is that they're not going to go to jail, and if they are, they'll find a way out of it," says New York lawyer Martin. At the last, for white-collar criminals as well as gangsters, RICO has been used to even up the odds.

with ELAINE SHANNON in Washington, D.C., and JAMES T. LISIMONS in Chicago and bureau reports