

“THE CARTER COUNTRY CRYSTAL BALL”

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In November 1976, prior to the last election, the *Bulletin* ventured the opinion that Jimmy Carter would come out on top; it also felt that by mid-term his accomplishments would be minimal, unemployment would still be with us, foreign policy would be confused, inflation would have increased, the Carter smile would be less in evidence, and that people would be calling for a change in leadership.

We had no idea anyone would remember the predictions, but they did. In an item headed “Carter Country Crystal Ball,” Ken Hall, editor of the *New York County Medical Society Newsletter*, reprinted a portion of the article and congratulated the *Bulletin* on its divination.

It seems to be generally agreed now that Jimmy Carter has been an ineffective president. Already his reluctant, liberal supporters of press and TV, afraid that the ship may be sinking, are saying that the nation has lost confidence in his administration and are hinting that he should give up the idea of running for a second term. It is all reminiscent of the fall of 1973, when the press began to claim that an administration’s “credibility” had been completely destroyed and that the only solution was for President Nixon to resign. Nixon reacted negatively to such advice—he never questioned his own ability to lead; Carter’s retreat to Camp David last month to confer with a multitude of advisors was an admission that he does question his.

It is a bit early to be doing any crystal ball gazing about the next election, so we’ll make no prediction and offer only this observation: if the Republican Party, with at least three or four attractive candidates, can’t come up with a winner against the poorest bunch of Democratic hopefuls since George McGovern (Carter, Brown, Mondale, Kennedy) it had better disband and start all over.