For several years, I have been following, off and on, the careers of 8 United States Senators—in their home states and in Washington—with the thought that some day I might do some writing on the United States Senate. I first took up with one of those senators when he was running for reelection to the Senate in 1980, by travelling with him for a couple of days in his home state. He was reelected to the Senate; and I have watched and talked with him occasionally since then. Subsequently, this Senator decided to make a run for the presidential nomination in 1980; and I decided to follow that campaign, too, as best I could. So far, this description fits four Senators—Alan Cranston of California, Gary Hart of Colorado, Ernest Hollings of South Carolina and John Glenn of Ohio. I know what you are probably thinking: let it be Gary Hart, the live one. Well, let me put it this way. It's not Ernest Hollings. It's not Alan Cranston. But it's not Gary Hart either. It is John Glenn—alas, one of the dead ones. What I propose to do this evening is to look at the 1984 Democratic nomination race from the only perspective I have, the candidacy of a United States Senator, John Glenn.
As you can see,
/I have already slipped into the familiar metaphor of "running"
in "the race." But the nomination process is a particular kind of race. If you prefer the horse race metaphor
it is most like a steeplechase—a race with a succession of hurdles to surmount. If you fail to clear a hurdle, it is always difficult and often impossible to get up and continue. At the same time, there is an incentive to stay in the race, if you can, because contestants ahead of you may be unable to negotiate a hurdle later on. A steeplechase is essentially an elimination contest in which endurance matters more than speed, in which large numbers of the original contestants drop out and in which the eventual winner is more the then, survivor than the one with the fastest time. If, we view the nomination contest as one in which the aim is survival, we can ask ourselves, what does it take to survive this long and arduous process? Or we can ask,
what do the non-survivors lack that causes them to drop out? In writing about the 1980 primaries, David Broder commented, "It surely says something about the process that men as gifted and credentialed as (Howard) Baker and (John) Connally could be driven to the showers as early as they were." In that spirit, we can learn about the process from the failure of 1984's several non-survivors--like John Glenn--as well as from the success of one ultimate survivor, whoever that may be. Besides which, Glenn's candidacy had a very important impact on the race, first hurting Mondale in New Hampshire, then hurting Hart in the South.

Among the early non-survivors, the Glenn case is not only the most influential, it is the most puzzling. For Glenn, unlike Hollings, Askew, Cranston or McGovern, was once given an excellent chance, perhaps even the best chance, of being the ultimate Democratic survivor. When he dropped out on March 16th, the NYT reporter who had travelled with him described his campaign as "the most compelling sub-plot" of the nomination drama. "As recently as mid-February," he wrote,

Senator John Glenn was regarded as the most serious challenger to former Vice President
Walter F. Mondale and the Democrat with the best chance of defeating President Reagan. Today, having failed to be better than a weak second in the first dozen political tests of 1984, he withdrew from the race...

The same puzzle of unfulfilled promise had been recorded as Glenn approached each of his earlier political hurdles. Three days before the caucuses in Iowa, the Lieutenant Governor, a Glenn supporter said:

"The ironic part of it is that in a way, (Iowa) is Sen. Glenn's ideal constituency... If you look at polls of where Iowans are on the issues, those polls will model Sen. Glenn more than any other candidate. The campaign should be doing better." The day of the New Hampshire primary, the Democratic leader of the state's House of Representatives, a Mondale supporter, said "The natural inclination of NH is to be more philosophically attuned to John Glenn...but he didn't do it right."

And, the week before Super Tuesday, the Executive Director of the Alabama Democratic party said, "He had it all--the hero image, the conservatism, the lot. Something happened. Nobody can figure it out."

h, I thought

From my own contact with Glenn brought to the campaign immense personal strengths. He is very stable and very nice; he is courageous and careful; he has very strong beliefs about private virtue and public responsibility;
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From my own contact with Glenn brought to the campaign immense personal strengths. He is very stable and very nice; he is courageous and careful; he has very strong beliefs about private virtue and public responsibility;
he is large minded and fairminded; he has a rock hard integrity and a healthy ego which requires no periodic massaging. In short, John Glenn possesses what I have always taken to be the most important qualification for the presidency—character. So I, along with other observers, thought that he ought to have survived. He didn't... Why not?

To put it more broadly, what does it take to survive the nomination process? In the abstract, it takes appropriate resources; it takes effective strategies for using those resources; it takes a favorable context in which to work; and it takes a usable model of a campaign.

Resources, strategies, context and model are the four grand variables of every political campaign. By resources I mean the experience, the skill, the ideas, the attention, the supporters and the money which a candidate brings to the race. By strategies I mean decisions about the utilization of resources on matters such as positioning, organizing, advertising, and timing. By context I mean such conditions as the number of contestants, the sequencing of state selection process, the activity of the media, national and state demographics, national and state issue concerns and the national mood. Other

By a model I mean some guiding ideas about how the three ingredients should be put together if one is to have a successful campaign, some
overall notion of what a successful campaign will look like. I should like to puzzle, this evening, over a few of those ingredients as they affected the Glenn candidacy.

First, a matter of context—the sheer length of the nomination process itself. Informally, the nomination process goes on for three years before any actual voting for delegates takes place; and the formal selection period, state by state, is 3 1/2 months long. This feature forces us to think of nomination campaigns as occurring over time, as changing over time.

Successful campaigns will proceed over time through a succession of stages. In the first stage, the candidate acquires credibility. Credibility means being recognized, being taken seriously and being given some plausible chance of winning. In succeeding stages, the candidate parleys that credibility into increasing support and into improving estimates of his chances of winning. These improving estimates of his chances, are what we call momentum. And in a lengthy, sequenced, multi-stage process like this, momentum—particularly early momentum—is essential. For it is in the nature of campaign politics that over time, attention, money and votes flow toward candidates who have momentum and away from candidates who do not.
To employ the inescapable Glenn-like metaphor, candidate credibility fuels the lift off stage of a political campaign. Without it no campaign can get off the ground. Successive stages are booster stages; they supply momentum. Candidates who have gone through one or two booster stages are likely to survive—which is why the early delegate contests in Iowa and New Hampshire—as the case of Gary Hart demonstrates—are so important. By the same token, candidates who cannot generate any early momentum or who lose and cannot quickly regain momentum they once had—as the case of John Glenn demonstrates—cannot survive for long.
The essential arbiters of early momentum are the media.

During the three year informal, pre-voting period, the media tells the rest of us who is "doing well" or not "doing well." During the 3 1/2 month actual voting period, the media tells us who did or did not do "as well as expected." But the standards of expectations against which candidate performance is judged get set largely by the media themselves. So they set the rules and they keep score. The buildup of media expectations about John Glenn began with a rash of feature length articles and profiles in 1982 and 1983, with the intriguing theme of whether America's astronaut hero had "the right stuff" to become president. As sub themes, there were the inevitable comparisons between military heroes Glenn and Eisenhower, the forthcoming movie featuring Glenn's heroism and decency, the sense that these personal strengths plus a centrist political stance would make him Reagan's most difficult opponent. At a time when the leading candidates were old faces Ted Kennedy and Walter Mondale, the Glenn theme--hero as President--was especially attractive to the media given their
occupational need for fresh faces. Their attraction to Glenn seemed warranted by early polls showing his strength nationally—even though these polls measured little else except name recognition. Still, name recognition—especially favorable name recognition—was hard to come at by/that stage; it gave Glenn instant credibility, instant liftoff; and the media built up expectations based on it. They/cast Glenn, first, as the leader of the second tier of candidates behind Kennedy and Mondale, and later as the clear second place challenger to Mondale.

Serious media scorekeeping on Glenn began with his formal announce-
ment and—according to some sample headlines—proceeded over a ten-month period something like this:

April 1983 (WP) "Glenn with Hero's Send Off Launches Bid for Presidency"

July 1983 (NJ) "Democratic State Party Leaders See Race Even as Glenn Gains on Mondale"

August 1983 (WP) "Democratic Governors Show Increasing Interest in Glenn"
August 1983 (LAT) "Survey Finds Glenn Strong Against Reagan"

October 1983 (WP) "In Last 3 Months, Glenn's Fund Raising Outpaced Mondale's"

October 1983 (WP) "Glenn Encounters Frost in N.H."

November 1983 (WP) "Shakeup in Glenn Campaign Aimed at Shoring Up Weaknesses"

November 1983 (WP) "Glenn's Swing South Shows Gap Between Promise, Performance"

December 1983 (WP) "Glenn, Hoping to Make up for Lost Time, Reorganizes At the Top"

December 1983 (NJ) "Democratic State Party Leaders See Mondale Pulling Away from Glenn"

December 1983 (WP) "Avoiding Mistakes, Mondale Enters 84 With a Widening Lead: Glenn Has Fallen Back Since October"

January 1984 (WP) "Fund Raising Problems Force Glenn to Cut Staff"
As the media portrayed it, John Glenn had momentum in the summer and lost it in the fall. And there was supportive poll evidence to that effect. Stories in the late fall and early winter spoke of the campaign as "faltering", "slipping steadily", "losing ground", "struggling", "sagging", "weakening", "fading", "deteriorating", and in a "tailspin". Privately, Gary Hart told reporters that "The big story of the Iowa caucuses is not going to be Mondale and it is not going to be me. It's going to be the collapse of John Glenn. I mean all the way--right down the tubes." Yet despite all the evidence of a campaign in great difficulty, the media persisted, unanimously, in predicting a second place finish for him in Iowa. It was as if they had decided on a Mondale-is-the-frontrunner-Glenn-is-the-challenger scenario and were determined unrealistically to play that one out before changing their theme. Their high expectations did Glenn no service. In fairness, it must be said that the candidates, too, participate in this expectations game. Glenn's campaigners--even while they
wondered privately whether or not to abandon Iowa--publicly announced that they would finish second there. It produced a self inflicted wound. Yet they were, to a degree, trapped in the role of major challenger that the press had decreed for them from the beginning. To dispute this ten month long media scenario and its expectations would be to acknowledge a decline in their fortunes, thus discouraging lukewarm or prospective supporters and further contributing to a downward spiral of momentum. To go along with unrealistic media expectations, on the other hand, was to invite devastating media interpretation of the results. And that is what they got.

When Glenn came in fifth in the Iowa caucuses, and before a single voter in the United States had cast a single ballot at the polls, Jack Germond and Jules Witcover declared him dead, defeated by "expectations". They wrote,

Once again, the political expectations game has markedly altered a presidential campaign. Senator John Glenn of Ohio has been effectively eliminated as a serious competitor...not just because he finished down among the also rans, but because he did so when the political community and the press fully expected him to finish second, however distantly.
In the days immediately following Iowa, the national press stretched the vocabulary of failure to its limits in describing Glenn's performance as: (and I quote) "a stunning defeat", "a devastating blow," "a crushing and perhaps fatal defeat," "a stunning setback," "a poor showing," "a miserable showing," "a dismal showing," "a misstep," "a debacle," "the beginning of the end," "feeble," "embarrassing," "dreary," "disastrous," "a shellacking," "a burnout," "the political choke of the year," "a public and painful drubbing," "his last hurrah." Glenn's candidacy, they declared, was "collapsed in a heap," "crash landed," "clobbered," "on the ropes," "mortality wounded," "in deep deep trouble," "near collapse," "hemorrhaging," "the big loser," "down in flames," "wounded and humiliated." Of the campaign, they said "the bottom dropped out" of it, "the steam had gone out" of it, "its back is against the wall," it was in "a political-freefall" and "the worst fear had come to pass." One of the best reporters found it in "the final stages of one of the most spectacularly bungled presidential campaigns in modern American history." The media message was pretty clear. John Glenn
fallen at the first formal hurdle and would not survive. It was almost as if the media recognized that their expectations had been unrealistically inflated, that they knew what was coming, that they could not wait to pronounce the hero finished, clear him out of the way and get on with their next scenario—which, incidentally, would be another occupational favorite, the emergence of an underdog, "the stranger from the West." What they took away with such verbal vengeance, from Glenn, they bestowed with equal verbal vigor, on Gary Hart—the momentum necessary for survival. But that is another story. For now I mean only to highlight the lengthy and sequential nature of the nominating process, the necessity of early momentum for survival in such a process, and the media's role in affecting candidate survival.
The media hastened and recorded John Glenn's demise; but they did not cause it. The causes lay deeper—in the absence of a supportive constituency. And they lay deeper still—in the uncertain political skills of the candidate himself. Those will be the twin themes of what follows.

Turning to the matter of strategy—John Glenn had a plausible strategy for winning the nomination. His fundamental strategic premise was that he had the best chance to defeat Ronald Reagan and that the Democrats, wanting to defeat Reagan more than anything else, would make the pragmatic decision to nominate him. That estimate of his chances rested, first, on his strength of character and on the Boy Scout values which delineated that character. And it rested secondly on Glenn's centrist philosophical orientation—positioning him so as to best challenge Reagan's conservatism. Moreover, Glenn's centrism was future-looking in tone, in contrast to Reagan's
more backward-looking tone. Both the Glenn and Hart pollsters had determined that "Leadership for the Future" should be the dominant theme of their campaigns, given their reading of the national mood. Glenn seemed well suited to that theme. He had seen the future, had lived in the future, understood the future, was neither afraid of nor uncomfortable with it, and, indeed, welcomed it as an invigorating challenge. Thus his campaign slogan: "Believe in the Future again." He saw himself as a candidate of the future, not of the past. But he did not advocate a sharp break with the past. Thus his earlier slogan: "Old Values and New Horizons". He wanted to combine centrist ideas and a future-oriented thrust. So it seemed did the voters. Early polls showed

Glenn believed that the general election would be won in "the sensible center" and that the country would be best governed by someone from that same "sensible center". And he believed that for one or the other reason or both--i.e., that he could win or that he would make the best President--Democrats would nominate him. It was a plausible strategy--plausible but not self executing.
In fact, it was a particularly risky strategy. Risky, because its bottom line was Glenn's electability, and because that meant his survivability depended on a campaign performance that would produce early, continuous, convincing evidence of electability. It meant that should doubts about Glenn's electability began to form, the danger of an infectious downward spiral was very great. People are powerfully attracted to someone who looks like a winner. But the minute he looks like he might not win, people so attracted will bail out without a second thought, for there is no deeper rationale to keep them going. What Glenn offered to prospective supporters was himself—a man who could win. He may have been right. But he failed to produce the necessary evidence. And he got caught immediately following Iowa in a downward spiral that he could not reverse.
If the fundamental premise of the Glenn candidacy was his electability, the fundamental task of that candidacy was to build a supportive constituency. In approaching that task, Glenn was guided by his own previous campaign experience. Here we come to the matter of a model. Ohio, he said, over and over "is a microcosm of the nation" which, in his eyes, made his statewide Ohio campaigns the natural model for his national campaign. But, the Ohio results did not indicate very clearly just what constituency Glenn might construct in terms of political support within the Democratic party. In mid-November, when the subject of his running first came up in our conversations, he said,

I expect to begin making more speeches. Where it will lead, I have no idea. With Kennedy and Mondale on the left and with Hollings and Scoop on the right, I see myself somewhere in the middle. Exactly where that leaves me I'm not sure. But if you ask me, does this mean do I have a big organization in place, geared up to go, the answer is no. I don't know what will happen.

He was positioning himself, strategically, as a centrist in the party's ideological spectrum, and, presumably, would find his support somewhere
"in the middle". That "middle", of course, is more vague than the extremes. But Glenn's Ohio campaign experience had taught him to think of his political support in vague centrist terms. On the campaign trail in 1980, I asked him who supported him. He answered,

I suppose you could start with the Democrats. (But) We found that in order to get the vote I did in some counties (in 1974) I had to have gotten at least 50% of the Republican vote. So I'd have to say we have support all across the board.

And when a reporter on that trip noted that Ohio voters, when polled, liked him but could not say what he had done, Glenn answered,

I don't care if I'm not known for one particular issue.... If I do a good job across the board and people feel that I do a good job on the whole, then I'd be satisfied.

He thought of his political support, in Ohio, as across the board support based upon an across the board record.
In a presidential nominating race, however, it is risky for a candidate to think of his support in vague centrist terms. People who participate in nominating politics, we know, are their party's activists—more knowledgeable, more connected to organizations, more issue-oriented, more ideological, and less centrist than the rest of the party or than the general electorate. The Iowa caucus goers, for example, were found to be more liberal, better educated and more citified than the Iowa Democrats as a whole or the Iowa electorate. Nomination voters are not an across the board group nor are they looking for an across the board record. A candidate will have trouble surviving the nomination process without finding some committed core constituency among these highly motivated nomination voters. Successful candidates usually have what we call a natural constituency—one based on some common bond, ideological or regional or associational, a constituency that is identifiable, ready made and waiting for him. McGovern and the anti-war people, Carter and the southerners, Mondale and organized labor,—even Hart and the yuppies—are recent Democratic party examples. John Glenn, began with no such identifiable natural constituency.
And he had only the vaguest idea where he might find one. The picture he drew of across the board support in his general election contest was little help. Nor, interestingly enough was the model of his Ohio nomination campaigns. For he had fought two Democratic primary elections--losing in 1970 and winning in 1974. But when I asked his 1974 campaign manager, soon to become his presidential campaign manager, just who supported Glenn in his winning 1974 nomination fight, he answered.

I hate to say this, but it's the truth--the people. He could go around the party organization and the labor unions and establish contact directly with the ordinary voter. He had no base whatsoever--not anywhere--within the party organization.

Campaigning in Iowa, in November, Glenn talked exactly the same way. Reporters asked him about his lack of identifiable group support in terms of endorsements.

We've studied very very carefully the voting patterns of people back in Ohio [with regard to that.] And you don't find that kind of close correlation between what organizational heads recommend and the voting patterns of their membership. So early in this campaign I set out to speak to the people of this country across the board.
"What about the labor?" he was asked.

In Ohio, I was not always the choice of organized labor. They've supported me well, but when I first ran, I had their opposition... We overcame that by doing just what I was talking about. We went to the rank and file and talked to them. Some of those areas where they put in their major effort against me were some of the areas where I took the biggest vote. So we're doing the same sort of thing nationally.

These Ohio-based views of his prospective nomination supporters, as "the people" or "the people of the country across the board" or "the rank and file" or, as he often called them "mainstream Democrats"--gave absolutely no hint of who it was who might be expected to fight, bleed and die for him in the presidential race.

His perceived nomination supporters were, indeed, indistinguishable from his perceived general election supporters. That suggested he might run his nomination campaign as if it were a general election contest. And that is exactly what he and his advisers did. They adopted the view that the supportive constituency they sought to build was "the constituency of the whole." And the Glenn campaign became an effort to bring this undifferentiated "constituency of the whole" to life. In Iowa it was
thought to consist of 20,000 - 30,000 people who never go to causes; in N.H. it was thought to consist of Yankee independents, in Alabama and Georgia it was thought to consist of patriotic moderates.

In Iowa they did not show up; in N.H. they voted for Gary Hart; in the South they supported Ronald Reagan. Of the South, the region where Glenn believed his centrist views would produce his most solid nomination support, one veteran pollster said "John Glenn has the lowest hard core support we have ever seen."

Whether or not he could have built a nomination constituency working from a different model we cannot know. But by working from an inappropriate campaign model, he did not give himself a fair chance.

Glenn never surmounted the weakness inherent in his "across the board" Ohio Senate model or its national version as "the constituency of the whole."

Here, perhaps, is one way in which senatorial experience may affect the presidential candidacies of its members. In this view, it may have been Gary Hart's great strength that his controlling campaign model was not his Senate campaign experience in Colorado but rather his Senate campaign, as it was filtered through the McGovern presidential campaign of 1972.
"I learned a lot in 1972," said Hart, "and I think I've applied it to this race." Thus Hart's model was basically a presidential nomination model--featuring a supportive constituency well defined in generational and socio-economic terms, a nonideological, anti-establishment message directed to that constituency and an intensive early organizing effort by a volunteer army recruited from that constituency. Moreover, Hart took himself out of the centrist swamp by pitching his campaign along a completely different dimension--a generational one. Not left-right, as he said, but past-future. It enabled him to find a lot of centrists without labelling them as such. And it is not strange, therefore, that the largest number of former Glenn supporters have gone to Hart.

For Glenn, the building of a centrist constituency proved very difficult. But his constituency building tasks were made doubly difficult because he is not, by nature a constituency builder. An exceptional politician might have built a centrist constituency. But John Glenn is not an exceptional politician. He is not by nature a politician at all. Politics, for him is a learned profession. He has learned it, witness his 1974 primary comeback from a 1970 primary
comeback from a 1970 primary defeat, and his record breaking reelection victory in 1980. But he is not a natural. He is a natural patriot. He is a natural public servant. But he is not a natural politician. The basic reason, I think, is that he came to politics very late in life—after a long career in the military. He was 53 when he was elected to his first public office. Only 2 members of the present United States Senate gained their first elective office at a more advanced age than he. Walter Mondale was 32, Gary Hart 38 (or maybe 37) when they were elected to their first political office. And each had had a rich political experience even before that. Political experience tends, at least, to develop coalition building instincts and skills. Glenn's marine-astronaut experiences did not.

Politics is an other-directed business. The most effective politician blends inner strengths with skills that enable him to reach toward others. In Glenn's pre-political experiences, as a marine fighter pilot, as a test pilot, and astronaut, he performed alone. He never was placed—as Eisenhower had been—in command of others; from whom he had to win loyalty and support.
He relied upon supportive ground crews, but he could take their support for granted. He did not have to ask for it. "The right stuff" was his, not theirs. Similarly, with public adulation. He orbited the earth alone and he received public acclaim for his action. He did not have to ask for it. In explaining why he went into politics, he has always said, "I didn't want to do it as an ego trip--I had enough of that to last me the rest of my life." Having started in politics with maximum recognition by others, he never had to reach for it. And, therefore, he never internalized certain outward reaching political skills.

When you follow him around, you notice a lack of instinct for the bread and butter routines of politicking. Let me give a small example. On my first trip to Ohio, he gave a let's-not-be-complacent pep talk to the political rally of Boilermakers Lodge 85 in Rossford. He got little reaction during the talk, received a routine round of applause at the end, got down off the podium and got halfway out of the union hall. The MC went to the mike, thanked him for coming and said that Glenn was once a plumber too. When Glenn heard that he shouted "That's right, I was
a plumber." He turned, ran back to the podium, jumped up on it, and ran
toward the mike. The MC said "You don't have to come back." Glenn grabbed
the mike and said "My dad was a plumber in New Concord. I spent my summers
digging holes for septic tanks and I hated every minute of it." The audience
laughed. "I was the pipe threader and reamer and cutter; and I cut, threaded
and reamed miles of pipe. And that was before you had machines. That
was hard going." The audience cheered. Glenn waved, jumped down off the
podium and left in a heightened mood of good feeling. A natural, instinctive
campaigner would have made that obvious connection at the very beginning
of his talk and built a sense of identification with his listeners—the
more so since Ohio's unions had never been strong supporters of his.

In reaching to audiences of this sort, Glenn needs all the help he can
give himself. For he has not developed very effective public communication
skills. He has a speaking style that is stiff, mechanical and unexciting.
He has difficulty conveying spontaneity or imagination to those he seeks to
reach; he has difficulty making his enthusiasms their enthusiasms. He
gets very few applause lines—one or two per speech when I travelled with
him in Iowa, Mississippi, Louisiana and Nevada. His listeners may like him
or respect him; but they are not moved to follow him. A southern pollster, commenting on Glenn's public performance there said "There are only three things that really count for much in politics: emotion, emotion, emotion... John Glenn has not been able to stimulate much emotion at all."

There are, of course, other ways to stimulate emotion besides speech-making. But in a media age, with a media natural in the White House, Glenn's lack of speech making skill is a constituency-building handicap. In the televised debates, which played a central role in this year's contest, Glenn was often less spontaneous, less nimble, less thematic than some of his colleagues. His performance ranged from pretty good to pretty poor.

In the all-candidate Iowa debate, particularly, he hurt himself—winning an unhelpful front page headline in the next day's Des Moines Register: "McGovern fared well, Glenn came off poorly in the debate..." and winning equally unhelpful national newspaper assessments such as "robot like", "feeble", "flat", "sleepy", "dull", "benign and bemused", "passive and purposeless", "uninspiring", "inarticulate", "lackluster", and "a disaster". The adjective which stuck, frequently, to Glenn's public communication efforts was "boring"—which caused Glenn to quip in one debate that "I may
be dull, but not boring". The first commandment of the television era is: "Thou shalt not be boring." A constituency building politician disobeys it at mortal peril.

Ten years of service in the Senate did not, I think, substantially alter the constituency building prowess of the marine-astronaut who entered it. That is because the modern Senate is a highly individualistic institution. Every Senator does what he or she wants to do there, without being forced into any mold. John Glenn was a successful loner when he got to the Senate and he has operated there, too, more as a loner than a coalition builder. He has not actively courted his colleagues internally nor the organized Democratic party constituencies externally. His lonerism derives not, I think from any personality trait, but, rather from an ingrained work habit—the lengthy, intensive, detailed examination of issues that interest him. His studiousness and his knowledge have earned him the ear and the respect of his colleagues, as a Senate expert on the scientific-technological aspects of foreign policy, defense policy and education policy. His foreign policy opinions—on SALT II, on arms sales—count in Senate deliberations; but they are typically cast in
practical, technical terms rather than emotional, popular terms. His
great contribution to nuclear policy was his authorship of the nuclear
non-proliferation act. But that legislation is a lot less politically
popular than the nuclear freeze, which he supports, but does not lead.
In domestic policy, his voting record tilts clearly liberal. But he has
not been a leading, recognizable advocate of any liberal cause. So he
has not developed good working relations with liberal Democratic groups--
labor, blacks, women, environmentalists, Jews, peace groups. In sum,
neither his style nor his views provide the glue that puts together Senate
calentions. Indeed, there remains, in Glenn, an apolitical, civics book
instinct, which looks askance at such political arts as logrolling, vote
trading, arm twisting, deal cutting, and publicity seeking.

I want to accomplish something in the Senate...
(But) I don't think about tooting my own horn.
Several times I've had it happen that I've won
a big battle, on the Senate floor, come back to
the office all excited about my victory and yet
never even told my press secretary about it. I
have been very poor on the PR aspect of the job.
My attitude was that the press would pick up
whatever I did, that they should pick it up. Then
I would be amazed to find that nobody back home knew
what I had done...I didn't think that was part of my job.
In six years, he never sent out a single newsletter to his constituents.

Legislatively, as well as electorally, Glenn prefers problem solving activity to majority building activity. As I say, the Senate indulges the one as much as the other. It did not markedly alter the long-standing apolitical instincts of John Glenn.

But it is precisely the lack of such instincts that gives Glenn much electoral appeal. When you follow him, you notice that in informal encounters with non-politicians, he gives of himself to others with warmth and spontaneity. He works county fairs like everybody's back fence neighbor; he signs autographs patiently and cheerfully no matter how busy. Close up, people act like they feel the hero's magnetism. But the more a setting is overtly political and the more politicians there are around, the more he becomes rehearsed in action and reserved in emotion. He performs best and most naturally as a retailer in non political settings; he performs poorest and least naturally as a wholesaler in political settings. Watching him open his Toledo headquarters, one campaign aide said,
(In 1974) we had to kick his ass every minute to make him campaign the way he should. He doesn't stroke people. He doesn't create excitement. It's hard to keep people working for him. They just fall away. He's a great guy and great Senator; but he's not a politician. He's a hero. Look at him over there signing autographs. He'll never be beaten.

His recent biographer says "There are two John Glens"—the one whom everybody outside politics likes and trusts and the one whom politicians see as a political. The way I see it, that is correct. He is a man with great strength of character. But character never built a constituency. Political skill builds a constituency. And Glenn/ a man of uncertain political skill.

Let me close by discussing three matters of campaign strategy that faced Glenn, and how he dealt with them.

One was the problem of timing—when should Glenn commit himself to the race. For over two years he went around the country testing the waters.
His posture was that he was thinking seriously about running but had made no decision. For most of the time that was true. Glenn is characteristically careful and slow in making up his mind; like the pilot he still is, he works through a checklist before acting. And he had been unseasonably late in entering both his 1970 and his 1974 Senate races. By the time of the June 1982 Democratic mini convention, however, his staff and friends said he had decided to run. But he would not commit himself till ten months later. He did not think there was any hurry.

Talking about it last November, he explained,

We just sat down and tried to figure out how long it would take us to mount a campaign and the number we came up with was 14 or 15 months... It was part of our thinking that I didn't have the problem of name recognition that some of the other candidates had. If you had gone down the street in some town outside of Colorado and asked who Gary Hart was, they would have probably said he was a football player or something. I didn't have that problem. People knew who I was. My problem was that people didn't know my record. We figured 14 or 15 months would be just about right to get that across.
I believe this was a fundamental miscalculation concerning the time needed to mount a presidential campaign; and I believe that this first decision, about timing, was the biggest mistake of the Glenn campaign. Even more so because it was the one campaign decision over which they had the most control.

In Glenn's own words, they faced two tasks, one organizational and one presentational, i.e., "to put everything together" and "to get (my record) across." They did not give themselves time enough to accomplish either—given the need for early momentum and the inherent difficulty in mobilizing a centrist constituency. I would not argue that with more time he would have won the nomination. I would argue that with more time, he would have given his strategy a fairer chance to succeed.

As far as "putting everything together" was concerned, from the beginning to end, the Glenn campaign was plagued with damaging organizational problems. Had Glenn started earlier, the damage could have been minimized.

The first problem was simply that, when the media turned its spotlight on his organization, there was none. For 2 1/2 years while Glenn criss-crossed the country testing the waters, he had no nationally or politically experienced press secretary on his staff. And such campaign staff as he had was his Senate staff; and it was they who organized his extensive activity
at the June 1982 Democratic mini-convention. There was no national
staff in place, therefore, when the media decided to scrutinize the
Glenn candidacy. And they decided to do that when Kennedy's decision to
drop out propelled Glenn unexpectedly into second place. Thinking of
Glenn as something of a political amateur, they began by paying special
attention to his organization. They found it to be so unprofessional
and rudimentary as to cast serious doubts on Glenn's judgment, his
skills and his prospects. That early stereotype never left the calculations
of the media scorekeepers. The Kennedy withdrawal was the first and the
most serious uncontrollable event of the entire Glenn campaign. For Glenn
had planned to sit comfortably in third place for a long time before
emerging as the underdog challenger to one of them. He was not prepared
to be a second place candidate; and he turned out not to be an effective
one. Gary Hart executed Glenn's third place strategy, waited for Glenn
and Mondale to damage each other and then replaced Glenn as the alternative
to Mondale. Perhaps Glenn's strategy should have been to remain the
second place alternate to Mondale and thus target Hart, not Mondale, as
his opponent.
Another organizational problem flowed from Glenn's slowness in deciding how to blend his amateurish Senate staff with the national, political professionals who joined the campaign. The internecine warfare between these two groups—"the Ohio gang" and "the hired guns"—was not settled until one month before the Iowa caucus. The settlement came far too late to repair the damage. Had Glenn begun a campaign much earlier than he did, these problems would have surfaced, been confronted and real organizational energy might have been directed to the field. Pursuing, as they were, a "constituency of the whole" strategy, they had always planned an exceptionally strong media campaign. But their internal conflict affected their decisions about how much to add by way of organization. They began by loosely organizing some twenty states; and only later decided to concentrate on the early or front loaded states. Hart and Mondale started organizing Iowa in 1982. Hart's early start enabled him to survive three different Iowa campaign managers and still have six months of continuity at the end. Glenn's campaign did not settle on their Iowa organization till a month before the caucuses. Hart spent twice as many days in Iowa as Glenn. (60-32) And Glenn—a good retail politician—averaged only
one day a week in Iowa and in the two months preceding the caucuses. After
Iowa, the State Chairman said "Glenn seemed slow to appreciate the value
of organization in the state. There are three basic rules to winning Iowa:
organization, organization, organization. Glenn broke all three." A key
Iowa supporter said "We were late in organizing and we never caught up.
Early is everything in Iowa. And we were always late." Those observations
were the inevitable end product of the candidate's first strategic decision
on timing.

A second strategic problem for the candidacy was the presentation of
self, the creation of a public persona. This may seem an unlikely
problem for an authentic national hero. But it was precisely the hero
image that created the problem. So absorbing and so dazzling was his
astronaut accomplishment, that he could not move beyond it to create a
public persona as an experienced leader and potential president. For
a man who was universally known as a good United States Senator, and
who was driven in large part, by the conviction that he would be a
better President than his competitors, this imprisonment was a huge
handicap. His ten years of service in the Senate were eclipsed by his
five hours in space. The media did not help him. They invested heavily,
as we saw, in the horse race aspects of Glenn-the-challenger's campaign;

and when they did not, they gave far more emphasis to his astronaut performance
than to his Senate performance. They did not scrutinize his legislative
record. They did not ask what kind of president he would be. Every cartoon
pictured him in a space suit, in a space helmet, in a capsule, on a rocket,
or in outer space—never in the U.S. Senate and never in a political
context. Even the flattering movie, The Right Stuff only served to
resolidify his image as our astronaut hero. The movie illustrates Glenn's
dilemma. Highly publicized as a story of "How the future began", it should
have given Glenn, at least, the future-oriented persona he wanted, and the
support of the future oriented voters he sought. But it didn't. Though
critically acclaimed, it flopped at the box office for lack of interest
by the most future oriented of the voters—the young. For them, it was a
movie about the past; and whatever John Glenn did, it was 22 years old.

One reason for this reaction, I think, is that the future with which John
Glenn associates himself is technologically defined. And it is rooted in
the past. Glenn's deepest policy passion is reserved for improved and
increased research and development. The future to which young voters aspire is philosophically defined. It promises a break with the past. And is best articulated by someone without a sharply defined past. It was Hart's new ideas which attracted student and Yuppie support, not Glenn's "Right Stuff".

Glenn never quite figured out how to deal with his astronaut problem. And it may well have been insoluble—something he could neither live with nor live without. There were, perhaps, two ways to handle it. The first would have to start very early, campaign hard and stress his post-astronaut experience. That is, in fact, what he did in Ohio.

When I first ran for the Senate, in 1970, he recalled, whenever I would speak and then ask for questions, some kid would invariably yell out and asked me how I liked (drinking) the Tang. They thought of me as an astronaut. It took four years of steady campaigning in Ohio to change that to where it came up once in a while but not constantly.

His success in changing his public persona brought him victory in 1974. But it took a long time. And the transition is still incomplete in Ohio. In 1980, it was striking how many autographs he signed. "It adds 15 minutes
to every stop," said his campaign manager. "Still it's not as bad as it was in 1974. He's a little more the Senator now and a little less the astronaut." An early campaign start would have helped him change these proportions in the presidential race, too.

The other possible solution was to find a way to blend his astronaut experience and his political experience thematically so that they would complement one another.

Glenn moved in this direction late in the campaign. Up through Iowa, he downplayed his astronaut past. He hardly mentioned it in his speeches.

He would invoke the "let's set goals and go for it" spirit of the Kennedy era, but not his personal role in it. He refused to go to see the movie. He worked "to get my record across", but excluded his space exploit from that record. After Iowa, he came out of the closet. He began to speak with pride about a time when he laid his life on the line for his country.

He stressed the value of learning by experience—both the horrors of war and the calculations of war. And he linked his personal experience to the need for stability, steadiness, coolness and courage in a president who lives close to the nuclear button. The media scorekeepers found him to be
more comfortable, more at ease with himself, more in character than at any time in the campaign. But it was too late to change the image. "Our biggest job in New Hampshire" he said, "is dealing with this idea of experience." On the day of the N.H. primary, 62% of the nation's Democrats could not say anything--favorable or unfavorable--about John Glenn. And more than a third could not place him ideologically. He had failed to achieve a distinctively public persona.

Which leads me to the final problem I wish to discuss--the problem of Glenn's message, an idea or set of ideas that would go beyond the man and help define the man. The problem here was an intellectual one--and not the easiest one at that. A centrist position is inherently difficult to sharpen or focus or encapsulate in a form that attracts, excites and holds voter allegiance. It tends to issue, instead, in an amalgam of moderate, pragmatic ideas that end without a theme or a thrust. Again, the task may require a special kind of intellect--a configurative turn of mind. John Glenn tends to think in linear, not configurative ways--he thinks naturally about how to get from here to there, but not about how things fit together. His amalgam of ideas included: a strong defense,
compassionate social spending, skepticism of past special interest spending, future looking educational programs, reduction of the deficit through taxation, an arms control program, and a forward looking spirit which says this country can do anything if it sets goals for itself, identifies and solves problems. This amalgam, this "across the board record" never got worked into a recognizable theme or into a recognizable version of the Democratic party's tradition. And it never generated the excitement that either of those configurations would bring. But he was plugging away with them in the fall of 1983 when, fairly suddenly, he altered his message and in so doing altered the course of his campaign.

He decided to go on the attack against the front runner Walter Mondale; and he launched into a drumbeat of criticism which escalated right up through the Iowa caucuses. It was highlighted for the nation in the first N.H. debate, where he precipitated a shouting match with Mondale. In speeches and in his media advertising, he accused Mondale of being bought by special interests, controlled by kingmakers, weak on defense, engaged in illegal spending practices and, eventually, a liar. This strongly negative campaign thrust was widely credited with hastening his loss
of momentum in the fall and his February defeat in Iowa. So much so, that after Iowa, he stopped it as abruptly as he had begun it in October. Again, it was too late. He dealt heavy damage to Mondale, but it was Hart who reaped the benefit. Glenn only crippled himself by muddying his All-American, Boy Scout, good guy image with what observers described as "nasty", "bitter", "shrill", "harsh", "mean", and in general "out of character" attacks.

Why he turned his campaign around like this is open to speculation and is probably complex. After a summer of polling which showed him defeating Ronald Reagan, the fall's trial heats found him falling behind—thus undermining his electability rationale. He had not yet been able to give his issue amalgam a single positive thrust. Yet he wanted, somehow, to differentiate himself from Mondale. His first salvo at "the disastrous, failed policies of the Carter administration" was a not carefully thought out response to Mondale's attacks on him for his support of Reaganomics and for not being "a real Democrat". But he persisted. Why? He did so, partly, I think, because he is a person of combative instincts—
old magnet tail as they called him in the Marines. And he got caught up
in the rhythm of charge and counter charge. But he persisted, too,
because no one told him not to. He did not have travelling with him in
his "road show", or nearby, anyone who knew him long enough and well
enough and cared enough about his essential strengths of character to
tell him that his attacks were at variance with his essential character,
that they could only hurt him and that he must stop it. The person
who should have been there to protect him, his long time aide, William
White, was in Washington fighting turf battles with the staff he had hired.
The "hired guns" who urged Glenn to keep up the attack may have given
advice that was perfectly sound for the other politicians they had
advised over the years. But not for John Glenn. And such is the
limitation of the professional cadre of political consultants who hire
themselves out to campaigns without an intimate acquaintance with "their"
candidate. John Glenn is not your average politician. He is still very
much an amateur and a good guy. And he has to run that way, for better
or worse. If the public is buying OK. If not OK. His negative campaign
against a well liked opponent tarnished his personal image, gave support
to the idea that he was in fact not a good Democrat, blotted out the
positive aspects of his message and, altogether, left Iowans without an
attractive rationale for supporting him. So they didn't. And it was over.

In hindsight, the Glenn campaign was a campaign without a constituency
or a constituency builder. It created problems for itself in its failure
to understand the difference between general election politics and
nomination politics. It faced three strategic problems with which it could not cope—it started too late, it failed to
create a public political persona, and it failed to devise an attractive
Glenn message. /was not well served by the media. The campaign was not well
staffed. But in the end, the failings are the failings of the candidate
himself. A really good candidate can overcome a bad campaign. And
John Glenn turned out not to be a really good candidate. Does that mean
he would not have been a good President—as he thought he would be, and
as I thought he would be? Does the nomination process provide us with a
good test of what it takes to be a good President? Is there a better test?
That, I suppose, is a fitting subject for another time.