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Sal Kahley

9.00 - announcements
and take Q's

12 Noon (?) come
back with answers.

The New York Times

WASHINGTON BUREAU
1920 L STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
(202) 293-3100

Dear Ron:

Don't let the blind, mindless, irrational, cynical troops get you down. Assure them you are a veto-proof press secretary/ and that you intend to keep on streaking.

Maggie
maggie

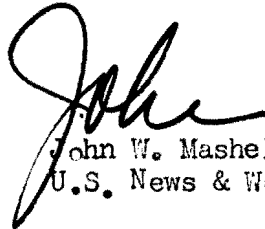
June 27, 1975

Ron:

I think one way not to improve press relations is to have meetings with selected ~~reporters~~ such as the one which took place Thursday night at 5 p.m.

Howard Norton was in the press room, available on the spot if the ~~press~~ secretary had a message he was putting out.

I think this "selection" procedure is a bad one and should be discontinued.



John W. Mashek
U.S. News & World Report

PRESS ROOM
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 27, 1975

Ron:

I have one suggestion about the briefings: you might read all the announcements you have before taking questions. I think it would have the effect, in many cases, of keeping the briefing from getting sidetracked on peripheral events that come up in the early announcements.

For instance, if you had announced the Callaway appointment at the start of the briefing last week, I think all the questions about private meetings would not have come up at all or at least would have been disposed of quickly. The questions would ^{have} ~~XXXX~~ focused on the more important matter of Callaway's selection. And the briefing would have gotten over more quickly since reporters would have wanted to go file the significant story about Callaway.

On an unrelated subject, I think the follow-up questions have ^{largely} ~~XXXXXX~~ outlived their usefulness. Most of the follow-ups seem to restate the same question, which is unnecessary, or ask a completely different question, which is not the idea of what a follow-up questions was supposed to be.

Fred Barnes

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday 8-30-75

Ron:

Herb Kæin called today to get a fill-in on how today's briefing went and what we accomplished at Camp David. I gave him a rundown on both. He said he'd try to come up with ~~some~~ some suggestions and would call you later in the week. As you can imagine, he's sympathetic ^{etic} to the problem.

JWH

6/27

RON:

I am convinced the atmosphere at the briefings would be dramatically improved if they were open, without restriction, to all media, including film and electronic cameras. There are other ways of handling housekeeping details and off the record material without compromising your qualms (as stated to me over the past months) about these matters. ~~Imagination~~

Secondly, and I gather you are more and more doing this, I suggest you do not wait for questions on material you consider important, but simply volunteer it; especially if no questions on the subject come up.

Socolow

June 27, 1975

Ron, my dear--

Here, informally are my views about the Press Briefings.

I do not want you to feel badly nor do I want you to resign.

It would be a very terrible thing if you should make any restrictions on the reporters. Remember not just your administration is involved but you are making precedents. Freedom is far more important. If some of our great liberals among the press who are now calling for you to impose restrictions would just copy Thomas Jefferson, they would be quiet and endure other reporters' questions whether they like it or not.

I have had some little experience as a government public relations person and more years experience in watching them. I belong to the school of thought that a government public relations person should be as helpful as possible, always available, and that he should advise his superior that he owes an answer to the public. The other school of thought is that the public official should not be available, should be selective in whom he sees and whom he favors, should only give out an answer if he wants to do so and has no responsibility in this matter. There are at times in government some men on the inside of a staff who have little conception of the responsibilities of a public official to the people, so they advise pursuing the latter course.

I see nothing wrong in asking you to check reaction of the President. You seem to resent this or else perhaps some one has advised you to avoid such requests.

I would appreciate it if you would develop more background on the news and the upcoming issues. You have a need to be better informed on Congress and government. If some one points out to you a development in the news, then you should reply by saying "I do not know the answer but I will try very hard to get it for you right away." I feel that if you did this you would solve most of your problems by preventing them.

The questions and answers should of course be continued. Do not let a little band of wicked men induce you to do otherwise. Such men are of small minds and do not really represent any one but themselves. Please, no umpires. Let no one persuade you to curb Les Kinsolving or Sarah McClendon or John Osborne or Peter Lisagor.

I would like to add that the President and yourself work for the people. Somehow or other in this government--and not just at the White House, either--some people have been trying to put over the idea that government information should be kept from the masses. Government against People. That is the real issue today. And it is destroying this government.

It is my responsibility and yours to see that this government survives. Every day we have our part to play.

With sincere good wishes, I am

Very truly yours,

Sarah McClendon

Ron:

Press reaction to the change in briefing locations is very good. I spoke to several reporters after the briefing and not one of them wanted a return to the lecturn and podium. The only suggested improvement was Jim Weighart recommending that you sit in a chair with a small table beside it to hold the ash tray, water and file folder. I think you should stick with the table for awhile. The consensus of press opinion of those to whom I spoke was that the change was definitely a positive one. John Maschek and Jim Naughton were supportive. John said we ought to do away with the lecturn and podium all together, but did agree that we needed it for formal briefings. Another reporter was quick to note that Helen Thomas seemed to object to the informality because it tended to decrease the we-they atmosphere which she seems to like so well. There were some who muttered about the change being "superficial," but they were in the minority.

I have one suggestion to make re Tom DeFrank's piece: call Walt Rodgers in and say you don't agree with Newsweek's list of heritors. Whether you do or not, you'll still make some points in an area where we can use them.

JWH

Press Office Staff Meeting

[6/28/75]

Saturday, June 27, 1975

Laurel Lodge

3:15 - 5:45 pm

Present:

Those attending morning meeting, plus spouses of the staff, for the first part of the meeting

Ron opened the session by saying that some spouses were attending the afternoon meeting. They were invited to let them know what their spouses go through at the office.

The President believes everyone should have a vacation. If he does, he performs better. You should sign up for a week or two off, and let Bill Greener know when you want to be gone.

Jim Shuman is reorganizing the news summary and briefing book for the President's press conferences. We need to talk about press conferences and about the President's image.

President's Image

We need to give attention to a series of fetoes which were sustained in Congress which portray the President as a strong leader; however they are portrayed by the President's opponents negatively, as the President being against people, against jobs, etc.

Jim Shuman started the discussion by calling attention to two negative articles on the President in newspapers. We should in daily briefings and contacts with the press and in forums for Presidential speeches and statements stress the point that what the President is doing is being done for strong economic reasons. For the Federal government to step in would affect the economy in ways over a long period that would be damaing.

Jim Shuman, in preparing the President's briefing book, has access to the President's thinking and the way he expresses himself. He can draft answers based on the facts of the matter and influence the President's wording that way.

After President vetoed bill in each case except the Strip Mining Bill, it has gone back to Congress, been reworked and an acceptable and meaningful bill has come back out, which the President has signed. The President is aware of this.

This point should be made by Ron and others subtly-- "getting out the line". The President could say in his signing statement, something like "once again Congress has been responsible for bringing back a reasonable bill."

We have a chance to communicate the philosophy of government which is limited which realizes it can't do everything for everybody. In daily contact with press, if you can present this in a subtle way, it doesn't make the President look like a 1930's Republican.

Someone has to put this in rhetoric. It has to be said in a number of ways -- planted to columnists. One problem is that the President is giving speeches and has nothing to say. A good example is the NAACP speech Monday.

It is hard for speechwriters to give the President new, fresh rhetoric and ideas. There seems to be the philosophy developed of not throwing money away. We must take risks in doing speeches to give new material.

They need new, fresh thinking relevant to today's problems and today's political mood. That kind of thinking is not all tied together -- it is somewhat risky but there is a high possibility of success and high rewards.

Bob Goldwin had a good point. He said it can be argued that the President has old, tired, free enterprise policies. But it can be agreed the country sees that now is the time that these policies are working.

A good example is the Hugh Sidey piece on normalcy and the Tom Brokaw interviews in Iowa.

The Press Office has had the opportunity to get our ideas included. We have written parts of speeches. We are given chance for input into speeches. We need to get ideas in to work.

We should portray the President as a courageous decision maker who makes decisions not popular at the time. This theme could be used in the year-end list of accomplishments. Also highlighted should be the slow approach to the economy.

We could say the President has definite ideas which are now timely.

The New York Daily News and other newspapers are doing their year-end pieces now. We need to get going on material and get this organized.

The Cabinet reports on accomplishments are due on Thursday.

On the subject of vetoes, the President has vetoed 33 bills - 6 have come back in better form. We should concentrate on high visibility ones, and also be careful since some bills the President signs go beyond what he said our boundaries would be.

Let's get out that the President wants to do the right thing. Congress has proposed wrong things. We don't need to be defensive on it.

The idea of wanting to get the government out of things is right in line. We don't need to be defensive. He's winning people over.

In the long range, the President's association with Bicentennial events is another problem. He needs to be involved in long term themes: where America is coming from, where it wants to go.

The President should identify himself with the spirit of the nation. How does he do it? By accepting 100,000 events in his book? People in country are very excited by their local events commemorating the Bicentennial. The President needn't go to all of them.

The President should go to 4 or 5 events because he does it in the spirit of America. Themes, not events should be the determination.

We will check into Adam Clymer's idea of an historian at the White House.

BRIEFINGS

Ron started the discussion by asking for ideas on what's right and wrong with how the briefing works. Jack has prepared a memo outlining the areas of thought. Everyone has read the memo. We don't intentionally want to irritate the press corps by letting briefing times slide. We use the excuse of getting prepared, and we are too prepared for the questions not asked. Let's get a flat starting time and stick to whatever time we have announced.

Everybody agrees we need daily briefings of some sort. How do we control them? If we ask the departments to take technical questions, attendance will slack off, and we spend the rest of the day getting reporters together with people in the departments. We now spend 6 hours a day on preparing for the briefing. This takes away from our other responsibilities.

One reporter suggested someone should go through the press room informally early in the morning to find out the areas of interest.

Ron as Press Secretary should spend his time on key things, not getting extra guidance. If the staff moves out and gets substance and brings it together, we'll alleviate Ron's having to do that.

If we go to a fixed briefing time and don't have key issues, we can go out and say we're not prepared. We can have the reporters give their questions to Larry, Bill and other staff unless it is a big issue.

Reporters will accept it is the truth if we say we have not had time to prepare on that. We should know about items the night before that will be questions the next day. Don't wait until the next morning.

The two briefing system in the morning was proposed by some reporters. Someone would go out at 9 or 9:30 and get rid of the routine announcements. Whatever questions can be answered then should be answered. Questions that can't be answered should be checked for answers and given at the 11:30 or 12 o'clock briefing. Two-a-day briefings should be looked at as another opportunity to get the President's word out to the PM papers.

If we lock ourselves to a system, it's better for a 10:30 briefing with routine announcements released at 9:30 a.m. The schedule with lots of details could be available the night before. Jack or Bill G. could go out and test the waters with the first briefing. The drawback is that the antagonism is greater if we can't go on as scheduled.

It doesn't matter what time the briefing is if we do it at the same time every day - they are happy with the 11:30 time, if we stick to it.

If we post things at the same time every day even the one-man bureaus will drop by to see if anything was released affecting their area.

Upto now, we have used the system of important things being posted in the morning and routine things in the afternoon.

Announcements would not necessarily be in the briefing transcript, since the weekly compilation of Presidential documents is really the official record of items released by the White House.

Bill Roberts has suggested that we do a daily compilation of press office releases at the end of the day. We are now doing that in one form of the cover sheet for the briefing listing our releases, but it would be an excellent idea to do an end-of-the-day sheet on everything released so no one could complain they didn't know we released something.

Proposed timing for making material available each day:

10:30 am	Posting of: Very detailed schedule for the day Routine announcements
11:30 am	Daily briefing by Ron (or Bill G. if Ron is tied up in meetings) Ron comes in if finished before briefing concludes, and carries on with information he has
3:30 pm	Posting of any items not ready for morning briefing
5:00 pm	Summary of everything put out today

Every posting is the responsibility of Jack Hushen.

Maybe Ron should wander into the briefing room between 3:30 and 4 pm each day. If he made it periodic, he could informally answer questions then. The press might save their questions for then.

Perhaps we should reinstate the policy we had previously of having something positive at the beginning of each briefing. That practice was a good one, and has fallen by the wayside. We could start by saying "The President was pleased this morning....."

One suggestion from a report was that the press is not given Ron's viewpoint, but that Ron stick to the facts and get those out without his opinion intertwined.

We would still be getting the facts out in a positive manner. It would also work well by starting an answer saying, "well you know.." and give two paragraphs of a low-key "lecture". Don't criticize, but state the facts very positively. The President believes this and this. Give them a deeper, more informative idea of the President's views.

Another area is that we need to fight harder for what we want from the President in meeting with him each morning. If we had done that with the Rockefeller Commission report, all of our problems on whether it would be released could have been alleviated. We need to tell the President when the answer he gives isn't sufficient, and we need further information. The President doesn't mind. Let's be more forceful in presenting our views to him, and press him a little when we know what avenue the questions will take. Helen Thomas has said Press Secretaries are afraid to talk to the President and ask him the necessary question. There may be some truth to that.

There are too many staff people in Ron's morning meeting with the President. Lately it has been used for Congressional suggestions from Marsh, or Hartmann suggestions for appointments. The Press Secretary should meet with the President without other White House staff in there -- preferably alone. He could then check whatever facts he needed to after that discussion, with others on the Senior staff. If the President had to be consulted after discussions with senior staff, he could call the President. Maybe that would waste the President's time - it's better for senior staff to be there.

It is imperative that when the Press Secretary gets Presidential decisions, he feeds it into the system, to get it accomplished. An example of this not being done was the way the situation was handled where Jerry Warren was the President's representative to the Eugene Pullium funeral.

It would probably be a good idea to have one other staff person in Ron's meeting with the President for just this purpose - to implement the decisions the

President makes, and also for coordinating the President's instructions. This person (Cheney or Rumsfeld) would just be an observer to discussions of press matters, and not have the power to veto what the President and Ron decided.

If the briefings were in a more informal setting, they would be less hostile. We could create a less formal setting by putting a platform in the center of the long wall by the colonnade, which would eliminate rows and rows of reporters, and would make the atmosphere more in a semi-circle. It should be elevated so Ron could be seen - there could be a small riser. Ron could use a stool and lavalier microphone, with the podium off to the side. Or he could sit by the entrance door, on a table, with a lavalier mike. This would encourage informality.

Informality could also be accomplished by reducing the number of aides that follow Ron into the briefing. There should only be two -- the others should sit in Jack's office and listen so they would hear when they are supposed to provide information.

Monday we could do things the routine way, and announce the new procedure. Tuesday would begin the new procedure, and the new logistical set-up.

Ron should maintain control of the briefings. He can turn to a different side of the room if hostile questions arise from the malcontents on one side. It could control a little the fact that some reporters use briefings as ego trips if he could turn away from them.

Audio taping and broadcast use of briefings:

The briefing is a way to get the President's message out, as Jack says in his memo. We need to get all the free time we can during the campaign because of the new campaign laws. Need to use it as an opportunity to "get out the line". However some kind of control needs to be used over its release to prevent editing and piecing together segments to distort the contents or meaning.

Peer pressure would be brought to bear if someone like Kinsolving used reporters questions the wrong way on the recording. Fred Barnes started a new thing by criticizing reporters questions in the piece he did in the Star.

One point is if we are trying for informality in briefings, and then tape them, they must be more formal. The two objectives are incompatible.

The briefings must be organized subtly - they can't be in a truly informal setting. Ron must have it in his mind for every word and every question that he controls the briefing, and how it would sound on actualities.

We will take time out of the schedule each day this week to go over the briefing transcript, along with listening to the tape to see what would happen if it were recorded and edited by radio reporters.

If we have two areas in the briefing room -- one for formal briefings and one for informal briefings, won't the press feel like we are trying to cram things down their throats by choosing who we place in the different set-ups?

The press will ask what happened at Camp David? Ron can say one of the things that was discussed and considered was at the end of the briefing we could do portions for sound and film.

Monday we could say before the briefing starts: "I know you're wondering what we talked about at Camp David, and here is one thing: We have had frequent requests for sound and film of briefings. We are receptive to requests for tapes of briefings.

This will give the radio people more money - because they will have actualities. CBS now asks almost every day for recordings.

Maybe we should be subtle instead - let the word out that if they want some tapes of some topic, we are receptive.

Another idea would be Ron could do for sound and film after the briefing, the topic of interest, instead of allowing taping in the actual briefing. One mult could be used for both radio and television. The wire reporters could watch the proceedings. It would be controlled so it wouldn't turn into another briefing.

The Press Office schedule must fit together with the new briefing schedule. Ron doesn't feel like he has enough information when he goes into the Senior Staff meetings in the morning - he needs more information on the announcements for the day, and our plans for the schedule. We should have all that is done in the 8:30 meeting concluded before the Senior Staff meeting at 8 a.m. so that Ron can discuss it there.

Everyone could come in at 7:30 to discuss the day's activities. The morning notes would have arrived at 7:15 am from the News Summary office. John Carlson would come in at 7:50 after his meeting to brief Ron on what to expect in that area for the day. All the morning reading should be done by that time.

The clippings would have to be done by then. Larry Brock (the summer intern) should come in at 6 a.m. to get the clippings and overnight wires done by the earlier time.

The rest of the morning could then be used for suggestions of input into what the President does, and to concentrate on major points. We should be raising flags and flagging trouble spots. More could be concentrated on this area.

At 8:30 at the conclusion of the Senior Staff meeting, Ron could then give a report on what went on in Senior Staff, and the staff should have answers ready on the questions that were discussed between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. We'll identify areas that need further discussion with the President and senior staff, and lay out the answers we already have. We need to have the right questions and the right follow-up questions. This meeting needs to be more disciplined and productive.

It is difficult following the briefing not to relax a little and take the accumulated miscellaneous phone calls. We need to get busy preparing answers for whatever questions we know will come up the next day in the briefing - start right on.

Ron emphasized we are falling down on our advisory role to the President as to when he should do things for the best press coverage, etc. That area needs to be concentrated on considerably more.

Our questions to the President daily drive him to make policy. Rumsfeld looks to us to raise these flags. We must do better in this area.

Another thing to emphasize is that we all need to be tougher and stop taking pat answers. Don't take crap. The Senior staff needs to take time to give us proper answers. We are the White House's face to the public. That is an important role - as important as any other in the White House. We are one of the nine senior offices in the White House. We are the largest staff. We need to have cooperation.

Saturday June 30

[6/28/75]

10 am session

Been in place 9 or 10 mths.

Changes for better have been made.

Now 6 mths. old. Now on plateau.

What do we do now?

Inherited pres office system.

Have made some changes. More we can do?

all regret Jerry will be leaving.

Think of what Jerry went through when
he was there, and things now not so bad.

Jerry will give ideas:

Jerry:

No way anyone can know what go through
until do it yourself.

Highly honored and unique situation
just as subject to personal problems, etc.
but have to go further.

No way can create ideal man with temperament
for job. Must be created in job.

Overriding everything else great opportunity.
Don't have to live down Lou Ziegler.

Didn't create him.

Create own set of circumstances

Let everyone else do that



Drawing attention to past only struggles
Change conditions that were there.

Have it unaffected by slugs & arrows.
All follow his lead to not take it personally.

after elephant cartoon on front of Star
showed it slipping down step. It called
elephant. Perfect - defanged elephant.

Professionalism is keyword.

Debra quote: Pres secretary least prepared.
Spends time on that feeds people
with him and by him.

When have meetings, remember when getting
information from contact, share
information with each other. Pres secretary
has not have time for details. No gets
mood. Staff person has to take abuse.
Follow through anyway.

Improve situation by detailed information.

are malcontents who will do anything they
can to make lives miserable. Isolate
them and let their peers pressure them.
Don't make them worse.

3 types: cruel & sick
stupid

heart in right place but....

Humor important. Lessons of all-times
humor (example Butz: bad but not that
bad, you can't get 1 wrong out of
12.)

~~But~~ after cover-up raised by Mc Gray June 6,
Ron made association in mind.
Reporters didn't.
Didn't need to associate it.

Now different ballgame, different circumstances

Professionalism > 2 things to do.
Confidence

Pres Secretary now has better access ^{to TT} than
any Pres Secretary since Baggett.
When sticky subject raised, say
something ~~but~~ instead of "I don't know."
That will come back to haunt you.

Get confidence by:

Reduce briefing book to 1/8 size.
Knowing how it, makes you relax.
Get confidence from staff, not knowing answer
is in briefing book.
Facial expressions - ~~see~~ through them can
tip off ~~you~~ ^{my} looking for soft spot.

-4-

Lessons of Past

Recent flap-off showed us danger of falling into trap: us against them.

Don't need to cater or demean yourself. Can't allow us against them to set in.

See people around TT not as strong as you looking things out that are damaging.

If accused of charges that can't be substantiated, forget it.

Many times when things conveniently slipped mind, will not work.
(Connally meeting)

Very few times to say "I don't know."
Guys on phone can say "I'll check."
Small but important distinction.

When Pres Secretary shows someone statement about to read and staff not sure, should not hesitate to talk about it.

In Washington Govt and pres missing opportunity to strengthen.

Get rid of little nagging stone

Put heat on agencies to ferret out facts
for embarrassing information.

Can't let guys off with pat answers.
Have to pin them to wall.

Don't make girls press officers. Not
paid for it.

In dealings with agencies if they are
sure put out information - get out facts.

Open Administration does not mean no
secret meetings. Means will talk freely.
Can't restrict it.

Staff has to be used. Ferret out information.
Can't take ~~out~~ information. Have to look
at it, think about it, is it right?

Low Common point. Through courtesies
Press officers could make a reporter
write a misleading story. Courier
made good point of civility and
reasonableness.

Best way for this to see civility happens
is for staff to set example. Will
embolden John Osborne, Don Bacon,
Frank Couriers to see it. Don't have
to set them up.

Encouraging signs:

Editorials in major newspapers.

No knee-jerk reactions

When you say something and it's true and you try to stick with it, people will believe you. Example: credibility in dealing with economy.

Source stories coming out of U.D. which are well founded and well thought out are good. Let positive stuff come out.

Staff can be better used:

8:30 meeting, waste of time.

Key deputies should come with questions & answers. If basic reading, not done, delay 15 or 20 min. Should know pressure points.

Should be thinking about meeting, what is it designed to do?

Parasitics:

Most important thing ~~that~~ ^{staff} ~~Parasitic~~ ^{Secretary} can do is get hands dirty. Every one has to do everything. Know what everyone does.

Can't live on past successes. Never entirely finished with problem or issue. Don't desist.

Should involve Margita and her staff. They have definite things they do for it. Not farm club. Have much to do on their own. Talk to groups. Helps build mood in country.

John Carlson works beautifully with Margita's staff.

Legal approach to adversary relationships
not good definition.

Needs to be different approach.

Professional relationship - skepticism that is healthy.

Raspberry column. Unlearned lessons of Watergate.

Communications Between Offices: Upper, Lower.
Margita

Jack & Larry take calls so Ron & Bill can do more work

Jack:

Information not going upstairs to downstairs.
Ron & Bill do contact work & reporters know where information is.
Give responsibility - divide it up in different areas.

Resource person during day to take calls.

Internal communication have to be worked on
Copies of announcements ^{in buffers} have to be given
to all.

Copies of memos to R.V. - should give
copies to ~~speakers~~ ^{speakers}
talking to Press.

Larry

Key to knowledge of whole operation is
8.30 meeting. That is stepping point
for day. Describes meeting.
Have agenda for that meeting.

① Go through Senior staff meeting

② Get in again through day

5 p.m. meeting to plan next day -
maybe with Greener.

Change in physical arrangement of lower
press office.

Girl at door to not answer phone.
Knows everything. Can answer question
so not so congested.

Change location of xerox machine.

Put desk facing door to screen queries.
Recording helps cut ~~fast~~ calls and traffic
with routine queries.

- 9 -

Guidance given to everyone - report it and give
copies to everyone.

How often is Ron asked questions he doesn't know about?
2% of time

Briefing information: Ron over-prepared in topics,
under-prepared in depth under each topic.

Bill will look into reconstruction of lower office
Jack will see everyone in upper office gets copies.

Make more use of assistants in briefings:

Call assistant to podium to answer?

If don't want to go further, expect sitting
there.

Taperecording of briefing?

Memos of senior staff guidance - Ron dictated?

Scheduling news conferences and speeches:

One major news event each day

Scheduling meeting - who goes from Pres Office?

Red Cooney working with Cheney +

Rumsfeld bypassing

Memo - Monday - on Pres office representation

Red should state in Senior Staff

and for cooperation in advance planning

Road trip

In city major anchorman @ TI

W.H. conferences --

Policy of announcing trips.

Red + Guy Jones + Cheney discuss a plan.

Get set on it.

Red goes on pre-advance

Get ball, draft memo to TI

If approved, team goes out.

New circumstances, things worked out.

Reporters ~~in~~ requests for interviews

letters to Ron - nice so, but special

interests on trips

Pre-trip publicity.

critical letters afterwards - Eric makes call

to find out.

Good press hits for publicity.

Pre-trip low-key salesperson.

again come back advising if need ^{help} from
Illinois, use Margita.

Bob Mead

Not every press conference on TV
Meetings need input

In upcoming campaign show him as guy
he is: decent - good image

Teleprompter for short film clips, etc.
for him to get used to it.

Visual effects?

It makes sense in his day where Bob
works with him.

Campaign:

Local issues

local pres

use of statements

Including pres office on AFI.

Key in with political experts

you would gather local press in one end
of press area. Bring it over and
introduce them.

Pres office input into scheduling,
Departments used to get issues,

Margita:

Relationship between campaign press office +
W. H. Press office.

Real dangers if campaign press office
doesn't know who it goes to at W. H.

Rules have to apply on publications,
Co-ordinated through one person.

Margita will do memo. This week.

Recommendations for people in Press office.

IT's announcement for campaign.

Surprise element important.

Impact on people in buying room
writing stories. Shows it cared
enough to come down.

July 7 or 8 come to Buying Room
without prior announcement
with Mrs Ford, Pitts, David Packard,
Bo Callaway.

Have Bo, committee to lunch at
White House to talk about it.

Bo Callaway → 50 reporters - political
meet for Q. E. A.

avoid blitzing networks for Sunday Show
use on morning shows.

Harlow + Lind.

Callaway - play biggest audience.
Send Callaway suggested press schedule
along with reporter

[6/28/75]

PRESS OFFICE STAFF MEETING

Laurel Lodge - Camp David
Saturday - June 30
1975

10:15 am - 12:35 pm

Present:

Ron Nessen	Bill Roberts
Bill Greener	Tom DeCair
Jerry Warren	Bob Mead
Jack Hushen	Eric Rosenburger
Larry Speaks	Jim Shuman
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Overriding everything else is that we have a great opportunity now in the press office. We don't have to live down Ron Ziegler. We didn't create him. We can create our own set of circumstances. Let others then make the comparisons. Drawing attention to the past only strengthens them. The thing to do is to change the conditions that existed then.

The President has been unaffected by the slings and arrows. We should all follow his lead to not take things personally.

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It is important to share information with each. When you attend meetings, and when getting information from contacts, remember that everyone needs that information. The Press Secretary does not have time for details. He gets the mood of the situation from the person providing information. It is up to the staff to get the details, even if it means taking abuse from other White House staff members who say they have discussed this with the Press Secretary. Explain that he has the mood - you need the details. Follow through and be thorough.

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When the Press Secretary shows someone a statement about to be read, and the staff member is not sure it is the right thing, the staff member should not hesitate to talk about it to be absolutely certain that it is the thing to do, and that the information is correct.

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Post

6/25

~~15 yr Report~~

Camp David

Miam Raspberry

The Unlearned Lesson of Watergate

Some items in this folder were not digitized because it contains copyrighted materials. Please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library for access to these materials.

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[6/28/75]

Afternoon Session

3:15

Some spouses attended afternoon meeting.
Invited to let them know what spouses
go through at office.

Believes everyone should have vacation.
Performs better. Sign up for a week off
with Bill Greener.

Jim Schuman is re-organizing News Summary
and briefing back for II's Press Conference.

Needs of series of notes which were sustained
Portray II as strong
but ...
L. ...

Schuman:

Carl Albert re. II "c / ...
...
-1976,

Telling that local level
that Republicans don't want
associated @ Nat'l Repub. party.
Should in ... contact @ ...
...
... done ...

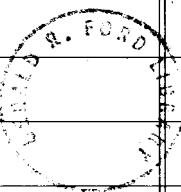
economic ~~making~~ reasons for Fed. 2
" - / affect economy - 9
" - / P 1/2 1/10

Nissen: 6 IT's G. In 13 2u' directly be
E - p - 6, - / ~~IT~~ directly be
IT to his mind / thinking.

Brunner: after he vetoes - 2 9 0 ^{except stay. money?} has
you back to Congress, acceptable bill
has come back out in meaningful
way and signs that.
IT is aware of this.

Jay: ✓ / ✓ by Nissen subtly. " - 2 1/2 1/2,"
- 2 1/2 1/2 me has either passed
bills, ~~IT~~ IT could say "once again
Congress & responsible for bringing
back reasonable bill."

Shuman: In communicate philosophy of government
limited release it can't do
anything
In daily contact with press if spec
is given in subtle way, doesn't
- 8 him looks like 1930's
Republican.



Brunner: someone else to have ~~IT~~
shelving

Shuman

Has to be said in a number of ways. Planted by columnist
! problem is giving speeches but he has nothing to say.

Jerry:

Hard for speechwriters to give it new, fresh rhetoric & ideas. Seems to be philosophically developed - of not throwing money away. NAACP speech - "it's not a risk involved."

Shuman

Fresh thinking relevant to the political mood - P & S
Thinking not all tied together -
→ risky to try success and high rewards.

Jerry:

Bob Goldwyn had good points, I agreed P Co. is old, tired for enterprise policies. Can be agreed country sees now is time they are working.

Shuman:

High Sidney piece on normally and Brokaw - interview in Iowa. As a result of these meetings send memo to Kennedys on input for change.

Ron: Have had to forget idea in. Have written parts of speeches. Need to get ideas into work.

Larry: Could portray it as courageous decision maker that of decisions not popular at time. Could be used in year end list of accomplishment. Also slow approach to economy.

Ron: Says it has definite ideas which are new timely.

Jack: New York Daily News + other doing year-in stories now. Need to get this organized.

Mary: Cabinet reports due Thursday.

Carlson: On vetoes. Vetoes 33 bills - 6 have come back. Concentrate on high visibility ones. Be careful if goes beyond what we said we could do.

Shuman: ~~It is~~ it is a ~~big~~ big ~~issue~~ issue ~~to be~~ to be dependent on it.

Ron: They're right in line wanting to get government out of things. Don't be defensive. He means

people over.

Shuman: In long song, associated @ Bicentennial
Long term: where America coming from, where
wants to go.

JW: IT identify in with spirit of nation.
Does it by accepting 100,000 events in book
ARBA. People in localities very excited
about bicentennial. IT is go to all.

Shuman: IT to 4 or 5 events become done
in spirit of America. Themes
not events.

Ron - do of E to ~~the~~ Adam Clymer idea
of historian at W.N.

Bicentennial events from now on.

Briefing

Ron: of of a what's right and wrong
① ~~what~~ how it work. Get idea.

Jack: Prepared memo. It is to irritate press
corps by letting briefings slide. Use excuse
of ~~the~~ getting prepared. Too prepared.

Set flat starting time and stick to it, whatever time get started.

Ron: Everybody agrees need daily briefing some sort. How do we control?

Jack: If ~~put~~ ask departments to take technical questions, attendance will slack off. Spend rest of day getting reporters together with people.

Ron: 6 hrs. a day on briefing. Takes away from other things.

Margate: I replace Hunter \rightarrow ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
interest. \rightarrow ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

Jack: Ron 9:45 ✓ E ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
 \rightarrow extra guidance.

✓ Briefings used as ego trips.

Shaver: If people move out and get substance and bring together will alleviate.

Jack: If go to fixed briefing time and don't have key issue, can go out / say not prepared. Then question to Larry, Bill & ...

unless something big.

Steve: will accept because frank. "I have not had time to prepare on that."

I know about item night before. Delay til next morning.

RN: 2 briefings & 5 — prepared by some. Go out at 9 or 9:30 / 8:30 routine announcements.

Whatever question can be answered then. Question can't answer after briefing
↳ 11:30 - 12:00, to get answers and get answers for 12:00. shot 2-a-day briefing, another to get it's word out to PM papers.

Jerry: If ~~to~~ lock yourself to system, better for 10:30 briefing @ routine at announcements released at 9:30 am. Schedule with lots of detail available night before.
~~for~~: Say 10:30 briefing. nothing more. Jack or Bill go out and test waters.

Drawback Antagonism if can't go on schedule.

Ports ~~should~~ things ^{pass} ~~deploy~~ ^{9:30} ~~from~~ ^{and} ~~5:00~~ ^{pm} each day. Learn 1 man ureau will come over

Up to now important things in morning - routine
in afternoon.

~~Does~~ Would announcement be in Manuscript?
Not necessarily.

Weekly compilation of Trial Document.

Should do daily compilation of # pres office
at end of day. Bill R. suggests.

John - request
Jack to have type

10:30 Postcard - [REDACTED] ^{all things would have been in} Detailed schedule +
^{action announcements - trip etc.}
11:30 Daily briefing by Ron (for Bill if Ron busy)
3:30 Postcard ^{Summer}
~~End of day~~ ^{5:00} ~~Review~~ of everything put out
Today

Every postcard responsibility of Jack.

John C:

Maybe Ron wanders into briefing room
between 3:30 and 4:00 pm. If ~~not~~
~~it~~ make it periodic can answer questions.
They'll save to ask informally then.

Larry: Former policy of having something positive
worked. Has gone by wayside. Was
Very good. "It very pleased the woman."

Tom:

Also worked well - start answer by not
answering but saying "well you know"
and ^{low-key} lecture. Answer question by 2 paragraphs
of full answer

Don't criticize, but stating facts very
~~in detail~~ ~~at~~ ~~of~~ positively. The
IT believes this:

Give them deeper, more information
of IT's view.

Ron: need to ~~be~~ ~~right~~ ~~at~~ IT's ^{in meetings with} ~~view~~ ~~work~~
fight harder for what went with
positively. If had done that @ Rock.
Cramer report, all ^{points} could have been alleviated.
Tell IT when things are going bad and need
to get question to him. IT doesn't mind
be more forceful in presenting views
to him. IT doesn't mind.

Too many people in meeting @ IT.
Get all you need from Marsh &
Tudensday in senior staff.
Then can go and check @ them afterwards.

Get meeting @ IT back to real purpose.
(not for Congressional suggestions
or Workman schedule item).
Pres. Su. should meet with IT alone.

J.H.: If talk to IT, then phone sides and have to
change - go back to IT. Waste time?

Jerry: Temperature to feed into system when
get decisions ^{from IT} need to feed into system.
for getting down

Don maintain control of crowd.
Can turn to different side of room from
malcontents.

Audio taping & broadcast use of briefing
↳ to use of on Jack's ———
Free flow of information
Peer pressure to hear if Kinsley uses reports
questions.
Fred Barnes ~~has~~ started new thing.
Criticizes reporter question.

Man If insert informality, then can't formally
by on tape.

You must organize subtly - can't in informal
setting. Must be in Room would be
controls briefing.

Time this week each day to post morning
briefing transcripts + ~~to~~ tape it.

Core. If have 2 areas - one for planning, 1
informal - will see feel
examining down throat!

Will ask what happened at camp, down
no more # 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Announce Mon 2/9
Here is what our thing was, frequent request
requests for type of buying

Give them more money for actualities

Should be subtle - let word out that
if want something we as reception.

Daily P.O. schedule will fit together with new buying schedule.

Don't want when I go to staff have
announcements or activities. Would like
7:15 am morning
7:30 - 8:00
RN
Carlson at 7:50 am
102, 2 - 12.

Use summer items for overnight wires.

Need to use morning for suggestions.

8:00 - 8:30
other read clips
8:30 - 9:00
Ron, Bill, Len
Jack, Margita
from staff

will identify areas need to go to
St. staff + IT for answer
Lay out answers already
Everyone says what has to be discussed
with IT. Right question +
right follow up question
delete what we have answers to.



Jim: ~~long~~ - one of ' v ' 1/2 on 7 2 - - - - -

Ron: 5 1 2 3 4 5 = one 7 8 9 10

Jim: Not mutually ~~to~~ incompatible

Ron: Questions drive ITs to make policy.
Rumsfeld look to us to raise these flags.

Ron: All need to be tougher and stop taking pet answers.
Don't take crap. Have to take time to give us answers.
We are the W.N. face to the public.

~~Jim~~

Value of Press office is getting

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 26, 1975

MEMORANDUM TO RON NESSEN

FROM: JACK HUSHEN *JH*

SUBJECT: Topics for Discussion at Camp David

As I mentioned the other day, our operation seems to have hit a flat spot in our relations with the press corps. This is due to a variety of factors, to which both sides have contributed, but a summer offensive might serve to convince the newsmen that we really are trying to assist them. I have set forth in outline form some ideas which I think have merit in this area. Also enclosed in this memo are some items for discussion about the internal operation of the office.

1. Briefings should start at 10:30 a.m. and should be held every day except when the President is travelling.
 - a. Reporters are never sure just when the briefing will start even when we tell them in the morning. And, when it slips past noon, they really get irritated because their time is being eroded by what they think is an inconsiderate Press Secretary -- and they don't like it.
 - b. Late briefings reduce coverage of Administration positions because afternoon papers do not makeover like they used to and second day stories are usually very abbreviated because of the play given by evening TV news shows and morning papers.
 - c. After nine months as Press Secretary, you have a solid foundation of knowledge about Administration positions. Therefore, you really need very little preparation, but when you finally brief, you are about as well prepared as the President is for one of his press conferences. Too much staff time is spent anticipating questions that never get asked -- as you know and complain about. If a question were to come up during the early briefing that you weren't ready for, you could easily say that you

didn't have time to check it. We have a good record for responding to left-over questions before the day is out.

- d. You do not need to see the President before you brief, primarily because you are well versed on Administration positions. On days that you were not able to see the President before briefing, you would have a natural fall-back position on certain questions: You'd like to check with the President before responding to a particular question. As it is now, we have no fall-back position because we supposedly have anticipated every question, talked with all senior aides and had a lengthy discussion with the President.
- e. Don Rumsfeld may be in favor of fewer briefings, but nothing gets the press corps' back up quicker than the feeling that you are ducking them. Our image as an open administration has been fading, partially due to the strong impression that the President's communicator would rather not communicate, given a half-way legitimate excuse to cancel a briefing. The press' image of you as their lever into the Presidency and the White House is under attack and needs shoring up. The benefits of not briefing do not begin to match the eroding of the office's reputation, to say nothing of how it reflects on the President.
- f. On days when a press conference is scheduled, or other events are crowding up the schedule, Bill Greener (or myself) could be the briefer. The newsmen would automatically know that the news quotient would be reduced and therefore would cut off the briefing quicker, but by having a deputy available, it would at least allow for housekeeping questions -- which are important to the wires and the regulars.
- g. By starting at 10:30, you'll find that most reporters are even less prepared than they are at 11:30. For one thing, they won't have time to sit around the briefing room reading the Post and the Times for an hour waiting for the Press Secretary. We can probably do a better job of anticipating their questions under that kind of schedule than we do now.

- h. In conclusion, I think you would score solid points by announcing that you have adopted an earlier and daily briefing schedule. If we are the open Administration we say we are, let's be out there every day finding out what's on the public's mind.

II. Briefings should be made available to all networks for audio taping, but Press Office permission must be obtained before airing actualities.

- a. The use of actualities will put more Presidential positions and statements on the air in the words we want to use even though it will be in the Press Secretary's voice. This is an area that is ripe for exploitation.
- b. Virtually every radio station in the country subscribes to one of the nine network news services which cover the White House full time: ABC, CBS, NBC, Mutual, Westinghouse, Storer, UPI Audio, AP Radio
- c. Networks must understand in advance that while the entire briefing may be taped, nothing could be aired without the express permission of the Press Secretary. This would have to be an iron-clad agreement because there will be times when the nets really want to air something that makes the White House look like it is run by bumbling amateurs, and they will have to accept our decision without a lot of argument.
- d. This could be the forerunner of a similar program for video coverage. We are also missing the boat in this area, but not as much as the radio actualities.
- e. It would give the Administration a better chance to market its other spokesmen -- the Lynns, Zarbs, Simons, Cannons, etc. who, for the most part, labor in anonymity. They could take a more active role in the briefings.
- f. As we get into the campaign, we will be looking for ways to market our message free -- due to the strictures of the Campaign Act. Radio actualities are an excellent way of doing this.

III. Improve information liaison within Press Office and between Press Office and other key departmental spokesmen.

- a. The lower press office is less knowledgeable about White House activities now than it was two months ago, which reduces its usefulness.
- b. The reason most of the phone calls go to upper office is that newsmen quickly learn who has information to impart.
- c. A remedy for this situation would be to divide up areas of responsibility so that the entire professional staff is more involved in White House activities. This made a significant improvement in the flow of information at the Justice Department when this type of operation was set up there. Where possible, the specific individual will act as a spokesman for the White House in that area.
- d. Assign responsibility to certain upper staff members for talking daily with press spokesmen at Defense and State to stay more on top of problem areas and breaking news stories.
- e. Personnel actions should be discussed informally with staff members before being announced generally. The more the action affects the whole staff, the more the whole staff should be consulted. -- or advised privately -- before the final decision is made. This can be a real morale builder, if handled properly.

IV. The Press Secretary should form his own "kitchen cabinet" or "transition group" to obtain a different perspective than the staff can supply.

- a. The Press Office seems to be slowly moving away from press corps, and such a move should tend to reverse that direction. The meeting with the newsmen after the Vladivostok trip, for instance, was of immense benefit in restoring the office's credibility with the press corps.

- b. The Press Secretary will get a better idea of the job that he -- and his staff -- are doing. Also, it will give the press a sounding board and might tend to diffuse some of the criticism.
- c. Membership should be limited to no more than five or seven persons drawn from the following areas:
 - 1. Persons covering the White House who are personal friends. This could only consist of one or two people.
 - 2. Former associates at NBC (one or two).
 - 3. Former press secretaries (one, if possible).
 - 4. Newsmen who formerly covered White House who you know well. (one or two)
 - 5. Close friends whose judgement you trust. (one)

List should be discussed with staff before final selection to insure best candidates. Names will not be disclosed publicly.

- V. Press Office assistance for state dinners should cease. Mrs. Ford's Press Office should handle entire event.
 - a. Arranging coverage of these dinners takes up a large amount of time that could be better spent on West Wing problems.
 - b. Dinners require staff member (usually Bill Roberts) to wear a tux to each event, even though he is never invited to any of the festivities and usually can't leave before 1:00 a.m.
 - c. Press coverage is limited to a pool and the East Wing can handle it with a minimum of effort.
 - d. The Press Office does all the work for the arrival ceremony.

VI. Press Secretary should operate with self-imposed limits on certain areas of discussion.

- a. Press Office prides itself on being responsive, but we may be too responsive.
- b. Too many White House reporters depend solely on the briefings for their livelihood, so they will try to get all their answers from the Press Secretary.
- c. With the frequency of Presidential Press Conferences, Press Secretary should make greater use of phrase: "That's something you'll have to ask the President about."
- d. Reporters will accept a shut-off comment such as: "That's not a subject that I will discuss from this podium." At the best, they will have a story that you refused to discuss it, but at worst, a misstatement, may force us to issue a clarification that compromises an Administration policy or initiative.
- e. There is no way the Press Office can answer all the questions posed, so Press Secretary should not worry about not engaging in a particular line of questioning.
- f. Answers to questions that are developed during the briefing should contain all relevant information -- or held until conclusion of briefing. (John Connally visit is case in point.)

V. Other items that need to be discussed:

- a. Resolution of NSC-Press Office contact situation.
- b. A replacement for Ed Savage. (Press is complaining that they have no one to talk to for foreign policy background).
- c. Daily announcements should be xeroxed for lower press office personnel.

[6/28/75]

Press Office Staff Meeting

Saturday, June 27, 1975

Laurel Lodge

3:15 - 5:45 pm

Present:

Those attending morning meeting, plus spouses of the staff, for the first part of the meeting

Ron opened the session by saying that some spouses were attending the afternoon meeting. They were invited to let them know what their spouses go through at the office.

The President believes everyone should have a vacation. If he does, he performs better. You should sign up for a week or two off, and let Bill Greener know when you want to be gone.

Jim Shuman is reorganizing the news summary and briefing book for the President's press conferences. We need to talk about press conferences and about the President's image.

President's Image

We need to give attention to a series of fetoes which were sustained in Congress which portray the President as a strong leader; however they are portrayed by the President's opponents negatively, as the President being against people, against jobs, etc.

Jim Shuman started the discussion by calling attention to two negative articles on the President in newspapers. We should in daily briefings and contacts with the press and in forums for Presidential speeches and statements stress the point that what the President is doing is being done for strong economic reasons. For the Federal government to step in would affect the economy in ways over a long period that would be damaing.

Jim Shuman, in preparing the President's briefing book, has access to the President's thinking and the way he expresses himself. He can draft answers based on the facts of the matter and influence the President's wording that way.

After President vetoed bill in each case except the Strip Mining Bill, it has gone back to Congress, been reworked and an acceptable and meaningful bill has come back out which the President has signed. The President is aware of this.

This point should be made by Ron and others subtly-- "getting out the line". The President could say in his signing statement, something like "once again Congress has been responsible for bringing back a reasonable bill."

We have a chance to communicate the philosophy of government which is limited which realizes it can't do everything for everybody. In daily contact with press, if you can present this in a subtle way, it doesn't make the President look like a 1930's Republican.

Someone has to put this in rhetoric. It has to be said in a number of ways -- planted to columnists. One problem is that the President is giving speeches and has nothing to say. A good example is the NAACP speech Monday.

It is hard for speechwriters to give the President new, fresh rhetoric and ideas. There seems to be the philosophy developed of not throwing money away. We must take risks in doing speeches to give new material.

They need new, fresh thinking relevant to today's problems and today's political mood. That kind of thinking is not all tied together -- it is somewhat risky but there is a high possibility of success and high rewards.

Bob Goldwin had a good point. He said it can be argued that the President has old, tired, free enterprise policies. But it can be argued the country sees that now is the time that these policies are working.

A good example is the Hugh Sidey piece on normalcy and the Tom Brokaw interviews in Iowa.

The Press Office has had the opportunity to get our ideas included. We have written parts of speeches. We are given chance for input into speeches. We need to get ideas in to work.

We should portray the President as a courageous decision maker who makes decisions not popular at the time. This theme could be used in the year-end list of accomplishments. Also highlighted should be the slow approach to the economy.

We could say the President has definite ideas which are now timely.

The New York Daily News and other newspapers are doing their year-end pieces now. We need to get going on material and get this organized.

The Cabinet reports on accomplishments are due on Thursday.

On the subject of vetoes, the President has vetoed 33 bills - 6 have come back in better form. We should concentrate on high visibility ones, and also be careful since some bills the President signs go beyond what he said our boundaries would be.

Let's get out that the President wants to do the right thing. Congress has proposed wrong things. We don't need to be defensive on it.

The idea of wanting to get the government out of things is right in line. We don't need to be defensive. He's winning people over.

In the long range, the President's association with Bicentennial events is another problem. He needs to be involved in long term themes: where America is coming from, where it wants to go.

The President should identify himself with the spirit of the nation. How does he do it? By accepting 100,000 events in his book? People in country are very excited by their local events commemorating the Bicentennial. The President needn't go to all of them.

The President should go to 4 or 5 events because he does it in the spirit of America. Themes, not events should be the determination.

We will check into Adam Clymer's idea of an historian at the White House.

BRIEFINGS

Ron started the discussion by asking for ideas on what's right and wrong with how the briefing works. Jack has prepared a memo outlining the areas of thought. Everyone has read the memo. We don't intentionally want to irritate the press corps by letting briefing times slide. We use the excuse of getting prepared, and we are too prepared for the questions not asked. Let's get a flat starting time and stick to whatever time we have announced.

Everybody agrees we need daily briefings of some sort. How do we control them? If we ask the departments to take technical questions, attendance will slack off, and we spend the rest of the day getting reporters together with people in the departments. We now spend 6 hours a day on preparing for the briefing. This takes away from our other responsibilities.

One reporter suggested someone should go through the press room informally early in the morning to find out the areas of interest.

Ron as Press Secretary should spend his time on key things, not getting extra guidance. If the staff moves out and gets substance and brings it together, we'll alleviate Ron's having to do that.

If we go to a fixed briefing time and don't have key issues, we can go out and say we're not prepared. We can have the reporters give their questions to Larry, Bill and other staff unless it is a big issue.

Reporters will accept it is the truth if we say we have not had time to prepare on that. We should know about items the night before that will be questions the next day. Don't wait until the next morning.

The two briefing system in the morning was proposed by some reporters. Someone would go out at 9 or 9:30 and get rid of the routine announcements. Whatever questions can be answered then should be answered. Questions that can't be answered should be checked for answers and given at the 11:30 or 12 o'clock briefing. Two-a-day briefings should be looked at as another opportunity to get the President's word out to the PM papers.

If we lock ourselves to a system, it's better for a 10:30 briefing with routine announcements released at 9:30 a.m. The schedule with lots of details could be available the night before. Jack or Bill G. could go out and test the waters with the first briefing. The drawback is that the antagonism is greater if we can't go on as scheduled.

It doesn't matter what time the briefing is if we do it at the same time every day - they are happy with the 11:30 time, if we stick to it.

If we post things at the same time every day even the one-man bureaus will drop by to see if anything was released affecting their area.

Upto now, we have used the system of important things being posted in the morning and routine things in the afternoon.

Announcements would not necessarily be in the briefing transcript, since the weekly compilation of Presidential documents is really the official record of items released by the White House.

Bill Roberts has suggested that we do a ;daily compilation of press office releases at the end of the day. We are now doing that in one form of the cover sheet for the briefing listing our releases, but it would be an excellent idea to do an end-of-the-day sheet on everything released so no one could complain they didn't know we released something.

Proposed timing for making material available each day:

10:30 am	Posting of: Very detailed schedule for the day Routine announcements
11:30 am	Daily briefing by Ron (or Bill G. if Ron is tied up in meetings) Ron comes in if finished before briefing concludes, and carries on with information he has
3:30 pm	Posting of any items not ready for morning briefing
5:00 pm	Summary of everything put out today

Every posting is the responsibility of Jack Hushen.

Maybe Ron should wander into the briefing room between 3:30 and 4 pm each day. If he made it periodic, he could informally answer questions then. The press might save their questions for then.

Perhaps we should reinstate the policy we had previously of having something positive at the beginning of each briefing. That practice was a good one, and has fallen by the wayside. We could start by saying "The President was pleased this morning....."

One suggestion from a report was that the press is not given Ron's viewpoint, but that Ron stick to the facts and get those out without his opinion intertwined.

We would still be getting the facts out in a positive manner. It would also work well by starting an answer saying, "well you know.." and give two paragraphs of a low-key "lecture". Don't criticize, but state the facts very positively. The President believes this and this. Give them a deeper, more informative idea of the President's views.

Another area is that we need to fight harder for what we want from the President in meeting with him each morning. If we had done that with the Rockefeller Commission report, all of our problems on whether it would be released could have been alleviated. We need to tell the President when the answer he gives isn't sufficient, and we need further information. The President doesn't mind. Let's be more forceful in presenting our views to him, and press him a little when we know what avenue the questions will take. Helen Thomas has said Press Secretaries are afraid to talk to the President and ask him the necessary question. There may be some truth to that.

There are too many staff people in Ron's morning meeting with the President. Lately it has been used for Congressional suggestions from Marsh, or Hartmann suggestions for appointments. The Press Secretary should meet with the President without other White House staff in there -- preferably alone. He could then check whatever facts he needed to after that discussion, with others on the Senior staff. If the President had to be consulted after discussions with senior staff, he could call the President. Maybe that would waste the President's time - it's better for senior staff to be there.

It is imperative that when the Press Secretary gets Presidential decisions, he feeds it into the system, to get it accomplished. An example of this not being done was the way the situation was handled where Jerry Warren was the President's representative to the Eugene Pullium funeral.

It would probably be a good idea to have one other staff person in Ron's meeting with the President for just this purpose - to implement the decisions the

President makes, and also for coordinating the President's instructions. This person (Cheney or Rumsfeld) would just be an observer to discussions of press matters, and not have the power to veto what the President and Ron decided.

If the briefings were in a more informal setting, they would be less hostile. We could reate a less formal setting by putting a platform in the center of the long wall by the collonade, which would eliminate rows and rows of reporters, and would make the atmosphere more in a semi-circle. It should be elevated so Ron could be seen - there could be a small riser. Ron could use a stool and lavalier microphone, with the podium off to the side. Or he could sit by the entrance door, on a table, with a lavalier mike. This would encourage informality.

Informality could also be accomplished by reducing the number of aides that follow Ron into the briefing. There should only be two -- the others should sit in Jack's office and listen so they would hear when they are supposed to provide information.

Monday we could do things the routine way, and announce the new procedure. Tuesday would begin the new procedure, and the new logistical set-up.

Ron should maintain control of the briefings. He can turn to a different side of the room if hostile questions arise from the malcontents on one side. It could control a little the fact that some reporters use briefings as ego trips if he could turn away from them.

Audio taping and broadcast use of briefings:

The briefing is a way to get the President's message out, as Jack says in his memo. We need to get all the free time we can during the campaign because of the new campaign laws. Need to use it as an opportunity to "get out the line". However some kind of control needs to be used over its release to prevent editing and piecing together semgents to distort the contents or meaning.

Peer pressure would be brought to bear if someone like Kinsolving used reporters questions the wrong way on the recording. Fred Barnes started a new thing by criticizing reporters questions in the piece he did in the Star.

One point is if we are trying for informality in briefings, and then tape them, they must be more formal. The two objectives are incompatible.

The briefings must be organized subtly - they can't be in a truly informal setting. Ron must have it in his mind for every word and every question that he controls the briefing, and how it would sound on actualities.

We will take time out of the schedule each day this week to go over the briefing transcript, along with listening to the tape to see what would happen if it were recorded and edited by radio reporters.

If we have two areas in the briefing room -- one for formal briefings and one for informal briefings, won't the press feel like we are trying to cram things down their throats by choosing who we place in the different set-ups?

The press will ask what happened at Camp David? Ron can say one of the things that was discussed and considered was at the end of the briefing we could do portions for sound and film.

Monday we could say before the briefing starts: "I know you're wondering what we talked about at Camp David, and here is one thing: We have had frequent requests for sound and film of briefings. We are receptive to requests for tapes of briefings.

This will give the radio people more money - because they will have actualities. CBS now asks almost every day for recordings.

Maybe we should be subtle instead - let the word out that if they want some tapes of some topic, we are receptive.

Another idea would be Ron could do for sound and film after the briefing, the topic of interest, instead of allowing taping in the actual briefing. One mult could be used for both radio and television. The wire reporters could watch the proceedings. It would be controlled so it wouldn't turn into another briefing.

The Press Office schedule must fit together with the new briefing schedule. Ron doesn't feel like he has enough information when he goes into the Senior Staff meetings in the morning - he needs more information on the announcements for the day, and our plans for the schedule. We should have all that is done in the 8:30 meeting concluded before the Senior Staff meeting at 8 a.m. so that Ron can discuss it there.

Everyone could come in at 7:30 to discuss the day's activities. The morning notes would have arrived at 7:15 am from the News Summary office. John Carlson would come in at 7:50 after his meeting to brief Ron on what to expect in that area for the day. All the morning reading should be done by that time.

The clippings would have to be done by then. Larry Brock (the summer intern) should come in at 6 a.m. to get the clippings and overnight wires done by the earlier time.

The rest of the morning could then be used for suggestions of input into what the President does, and to concentrate on major points. We should be raising flags and flagging trouble spots. More could be concentrated on this area.

At 8:30 at the conclusion of the Senior Staff meeting, Ron could then give a report on what went on in Senior Staff, and the staff should have answers ready on the questions that were discussed between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. We'll identify areas that need further discussion with the President and senior staff, and lay out the answers we already have. We need to have the right questions and the right follow-up questions. This meeting needs to be more disciplined and productive.

It is difficult following the briefing not to relax a little and take the accumulated miscellaneous phone calls. We need to get busy preparing answers for whatever questions we know will come up the next day in the briefing - start right on.

Ron emphasized we are falling down on our advisory role to the President as to when he should do things for the best press coverage, etc. That area needs to be concentrated on considerably more.

Our questions to the President daily drive him to make policy. Rumsfeld looks to us to raise these flags. We must do better in this area.

Another thing to emphasize is that we all need to be tougher and stop taking pat answers. Don't take crap. The Senior staff needs to take time to give us proper answers. We are the White House's face to the public. That is an important role - as important as any other in the White House. We are one of the nine senior offices in the White House. We are the largest staff. We need to have cooperation.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 26, 1975

MEMORANDUM TO RON NESSEN

FROM: JACK HUSHEN

SUBJECT: Topics for Discussion at Camp David

As I mentioned the other day, our operation seems to have hit a flat spot in our relations with the press corps. This is due to a variety of factors, to which both sides have contributed, but a summer offensive might serve to convince the newsmen that we really are trying to assist them. I have set forth in outline form some ideas which I think have merit in this area. Also enclosed in this memo are some items for discussion about the internal operation of the office.

1. Briefings should start at 10:30 a.m. and should be held every day except when the President is travelling.
 - a. Reporters are never sure just when the briefing will start even when we tell them in the morning. And, when it slips past noon, they really get irritated because their time is being eroded by what they think is an inconsiderate Press Secretary -- and they don't like it.
 - b. Late briefings reduce coverage of Administration positions because afternoon papers do not makeover like they used to and second day stories are usually very abbreviated because of the play given by evening TV news shows and morning papers.
 - c. After nine months as Press Secretary, you have a solid foundation of knowledge about Administration positions. Therefore, you really need very little preparation, but when you finally brief, you are about as well prepared as the President is for one of his press conferences. Too much staff time is spent anticipating questions that never get asked -- as you know and complain about. If a question were to come up during the early briefing that you weren't ready for, you could easily say that you

didn't have time to check it. We have a good record for responding to left-over questions before the day is out.

- d. You do not need to see the President before you brief, primarily because you are well versed on Administration positions. On days that you were not able to see the President before briefing, you would have a natural fall-back position on certain questions: You'd like to check with the President before responding to a particular question. As it is now, we have no fall-back position because we supposedly have anticipated every question, talked with all senior aides and had a lengthy discussion with the President.
- e. Don Rumsfeld may be in favor of fewer briefings, but nothing gets the press corps' back up quicker than the feeling that you are ducking them. Our image as an open administration has been fading, partially due to the strong impression that the President's communicator would rather not communicate, given a half-way legitimate excuse to cancel a briefing. The press' image of you as their lever into the Presidency and the White House is under attack and needs shoring up. The benefits of not briefing do not begin to match the eroding of the office's reputation, to say nothing of how it reflects on the President.
- f. On days when a press conference is scheduled, or other events are crowding up the schedule, Bill Greener (or myself) could be the briefer. The newsmen would automatically know that the news quotient would be reduced and therefore would cut off the briefing quicker, but by having a deputy available, it would at least allow for housekeeping questions -- which are important to the wires and the regulars.
- g. By starting at 10:30, you'll find that most reporters are even less prepared than they are at 11:30. For one thing, they won't have time to sit around the briefing room reading the Post and the Times for an hour waiting for the Press Secretary. We can probably do a better job of anticipating their questions under that kind of schedule than we do now.

- h. In conclusion, I think you would score solid points by announcing that you have adopted an earlier and daily briefing schedule. If we are the open Administration we say we are, let's be out there every day finding out what's on the public's mind.

II. Briefings should be made available to all networks for audio taping, but Press Office permission must be obtained before airing actualities.

- a. The use of actualities will put more Presidential positions and statements on the air in the words we want to use even though it will be in the Press Secretary's voice. This is an area that is ripe for exploitation.
- b. Virtually every radio station in the country subscribes to one of the nine network news services which cover the White House full time: ABC, CBS, NBC, Mutual, Westinghouse, Storer, UPI Audio, AP Radio
- c. Networks must understand in advance that while the entire briefing may be taped, nothing could be aired without the express permission of the Press Secretary. This would have to be an iron-clad agreement because there will be times when the nets really want to air something that makes the White House look like it is run by bumbling amateurs, and they will have to accept our decision without a lot of argument.
- d. This could be the forerunner of a similar program for video coverage. We are also missing the boat in this area, but not as much as the radio actualities.
- e. It would give the Administration a better chance to market its other spokesmen -- the Lynns, Zarbs, Simons, Cannons, etc. who, for the most part, labor in anonymity. They could take a more active role in the briefings.
- f. As we get into the campaign, we will be looking for ways to market our message free -- due to the strictures of the Campaign Act. Radio actualities are an excellent way of doing this.

III. Improve information liaison within Press Office and between Press Office and other key departmental spokesmen.

- a. The lower press office is less knowledgeable about White House activities now than it was two months ago, which reduces its usefulness.
- b. The reason most of the phone calls go to upper office is that newsmen quickly learn who has information to impart.
- c. A remedy for this situation would be to divide up areas of responsibility so that the entire professional staff is more involved in White House activities. This made a significant improvement in the flow of information at the Justice Department when this type of operation was set up there. Where possible, the specific individual will act as a spokesman for the White House in that area.
- d. Assign responsibility to certain upper staff members for talking daily with press spokesmen at Defense and State to stay more on top of problem areas and breaking news stories.
- e. Personnel actions should be discussed informally with staff members before being announced generally. The more the action affects the whole staff, the more the whole staff should be consulted. -- or advised privately -- before the final decision is made. This can be a real morale builder, if handled properly.

IV. The Press Secretary should form his own "kitchen cabinet" or "transition group" to obtain a different perspective than the staff can supply.

- a. The Press Office seems to be slowly moving away from press corps, and such a move should tend to reverse that direction. The meeting with the newsmen after the Vladivostok trip, for instance, was of immense benefit in restoring the office's credibility with the press corps.

- b. The Press Secretary will get a better idea of the job that he -- and his staff -- are doing. Also, it will give the press a sounding board and might tend to diffuse some of the criticism.
- c. Membership should be limited to no more than five or seven persons drawn from the following areas:
 - 1. Persons covering the White House who are personal friends. This could only consist of one or two people.
 - 2. Former associates at NBC (one or two).
 - 3. Former press secretaries (one, if possible).
 - 4. Newsmen who formerly covered White House who you know well. (one or two)
 - 5. Close friends whose judgement you trust. (one)

List should be discussed with staff before final selection to insure best candidates. Names will not be disclosed publicly.

- V. Press Office assistance for state dinners should cease. Mrs. Ford's Press Office should handle entire event.
 - a. Arranging coverage of these dinners takes up a large amount of time that could be better spent on West Wing problems.
 - b. Dinners require staff member (usually Bill Roberts) to wear a tux to each event, even though he is never invited to any of the festivities and usually can't leave before 1:00 a.m.
 - c. Press coverage is limited to a pool and the East Wing can handle it with a minimum of effort.
 - d. The Press Office does all the work for the arrival ceremony.

VI. Press Secretary should operate with self-imposed limits on certain areas of discussion.

- a. Press Office prides itself on being responsive, but we may be too responsive.
- b. Too many White House reporters depend solely on the briefings for their livelihood, so they will try to get all their answers from the Press Secretary.
- c. With the frequency of Presidential Press Conferences, Press Secretary should make greater use of phrase: "That's something you'll have to ask the President about."
- d. Reporters will accept a shut-off comment such as: "That's not a subject that I will discuss from this podium." At the best, they will have a story that you refused to discuss it, but at worst, a misstatement, may force us to issue a clarification that compromises an Administration policy or initiative.
- e. There is no way the Press Office can answer all the questions posed, so Press Secretary should not worry about not engaging in a particular line of questioning.
- f. Answers to questions that are developed during the briefing should contain all relevant information -- or held until conclusion of briefing. (John Connally visit is case in point.)

V. Other items that need to be discussed:

- a. Resolution of NSC-Press Office contact situation.
- b. A replacement for Ed Savage. (Press is complaining that they have no one to talk to for foreign policy background).
- c. Daily announcements should be xeroxed for lower press office personnel.