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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 28, 1975

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

RON NESSEN

FROM:

JIM CONNOR

Your memorandum of August 27 concerning the new format for the White House Conferences was returned in the President's outbox with the following notation:

" Wonderful -- I like our format and let's do it at every opportunity. "

cc: Don Rumsfeld
Jerry Jones

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 27, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

The new format for the White House Conferences has impressed even Helen Thomas! See the attached column -- especially the bracketed paragraphs.



RON NESSEN

Attachment

cc: Don Rumsfeld

*Wonderful.
I like our format &
let's do it at every opportunity.*

A085 Z

HFR 8-29

A B

P29WINDOW 8-27

ADV FOR PMS FRI AUG 29

(600)

WASHINGTON WINDOW

(COMMENTARY)

IN LOVE WITH CAMPAIGNING

BY HELEN THOMAS

UPI WHITE HOUSE REPORTER

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- "I LOVE A GOOD POLITICAL CAMPAIGN," SAID PRESIDENT FORD.

"I LIKE TO CAMPAIGN," HE ADDED TO THREE TELEVISION REPORTERS WHO INTERVIEWED HIM RECENTLY IN MILWAUKEE.

AND FORD MEANS IT AND HE SHOWS IT WHEN HE'S OUT ON THE ROAD. HIS WHITE HOUSE AIDES REFUSE TO CALL IT CAMPAIGNING BUT THE PRESIDENT, NO MATTER, IS MAKING POINTS IN HIS HEAVY TRAVEL SCHEDULE AND IS GETTING TO GLAD-HAND PEOPLE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

OBSERVERS NOTE THAT MORE AND MORE OF THE GRASS ROOTS POPULATION ARE TURNING OUT AT THE AIRPORTS AND ON THE CITY STREETS TO SEE THE PRESIDENT. MUCH OF THE PUBLIC RESPONSE IS DRUMMED UP BUT THERE IS ALSO A NOTICEABLE RISE IN PEOPLE WHO COME OUT TO SEE FORD BECAUSE HE IS THE PRESIDENT.

THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT FORD ENJOYS HIS PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH THE PEOPLE HE IS MEETING ALL OVER THE COUNTRY AND THERE WILL BE MANY MORE TO COME. OVER THE NEXT TWO MONTHS, HE IS EXPECTED TO HIT SOME 14 STATES AND SOME 20 CITIES IN A SERIES OF SPEECHES AND APPEARANCES WHICH WILL GIVE HIM POLITICAL EXPOSURE.

BUT HE ALSO IS LEARNING A LOT.

THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCES ON DOMESTIC POLICY WHICH ARE BEING HELD AROUND THE COUNTRY ARE AN EDUCATION FOR FORD. HE HAS OPENED UP THE FORMAT TO PERMIT HIMSELF TO BE QUESTIONED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE AND SEEMS TO THOROUGHLY ENJOY IT.

MANY OF THE QUESTIONS ARE HARD HITTING, REFLECTING CRITICISMS ON HIS POLICIES ON THE ENVIRONMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT AND FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION. BUT HE TAKES THEM ALL IN GOOD SPIRIT, USUALLY NOT GIVING AN INCH AND IN THE END THE QUESTIONER SEEMS QUITE SATISFIED THAT HE HAS AT LEAST BEEN ABLE TO ASK THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES HIMSELF FOR THIS VIEWS.

IN REALITY, FORD HAS TRANSPLANTED THE PRESS CONFERENCE FORMAT TO THE PEOPLE. THERE IS SOME CRITICISM THAT THERE ARE LIMITATIONS ON WHO ACTUALLY GETS TO ASK THE PRESIDENT A QUESTION, BUT THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS WHICH PICK THE PERSON TO POSE A QUESTION TO FORD ARE WIDELY REPRESENTATIVE OF A CROSS SECTION OF THE AREA.

FORD APPEARS TO COME ACROSS BETTER IN THE GIVE AND TAKE THAN HE DOES WHEN HE IS PUTTING FORTH HIS VIEWS IN A FORMAL SPEECH. THERE IS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF COMPETITIVENESS AND COMBATIVENESS AND AT THE SAME TIME A DEMOCRATIC ASPECT THAT HE IS WILLING TO LISTEN AND EVEN POSSIBLY FOLLOW THROUGH IF A LOCAL PROBLEM IS PRESENTED TO HIM.

IT'S A NEW STYLE OF CAMPAIGNING. FORD ALSO HAS ADOPTED A PROCEEDURE OF GRANTING LOCAL TELEVISION INTERVIEWS TO REPORTERS AT AIRPORTS FROM HIS DEPARTURES FROM THE BIG CITIES. MOST OF THE QUESTIONS HE IS HIT WITH COVER AREA PROBLEMS AND HE HAS SHOWN ON SEVERAL OCCASSIONS THAT HE HAS BEEN PRIMED ON THE REGIONAL TOPICS OF THE DAY.

SO FAR, THE WHITE HOUSE IS NOT CALLING IT OUT AND CAMPAIGNING. AS PRESIDENT, FORD IS IN DEMAND FOR APPEARANCES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

PRESS SECRETARY RON NESSEN TOLD REPORTERS THAT IT'S NOT ALL A GRAY TRAIN FOR THE INCUMBENT, THAT HE HAS DISADVANTAGES IN THAT HE IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR EVERYTHING HE SAYS AND DOES.

BUT ONLY TWO INCUMBENTS HAVE BEEN DEFEATED IN THIS CENTURY AND PEOPLE ARE WONT TO GIVE THE PRESIDENT THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT.

NESSEN SAYS THAT FORD WILL NOT ACTUALLY BEGIN TO CAMPAIGN UNTIL THE FIRST OF THE YEAR BUT UNTIL THAT TIME COMES ALONG THERE IS A REASONABLE FACSIMILE THAT FORD IS MANAGING TO DRUM UP SUPPORT AND POSSIBLY VOTES WITH THE PEOPLE AROUND THE COUNTRY.

ADV FOR PMS FRI AUG 29

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