

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 23, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR:       RON NESSEN  
FROM:                   BOB MEAD *BM*  
SUBJECT:                Reasoner Interview with President Ford

On Saturday morning, October 26, I will accompany Harry Reasoner, two film crews and producers to Camp David via automobile for the Presidential interview to be aired on "The Reasoner Report". I have made the necessary arrangements with Lt. Commander Todd and Camp Commander Dave Miller. The proposed scenario follows with no specific times at this point, depending on President Ford's scheduled departure.

Saturday Morning (if President's departure is scheduled from White House)

Reasoner meets President Ford and family at Helo Pad

(after greeting, Ford family is driven to Aspen Lodge)

President and Mr. Reasoner begin walk from Helo Pad and start interview by walking path to Aspen Lodge

(Note: interview will have to be stopped and started along way to allow film crews to reposition along path. This will be done with minimal delay)

President and Mr. Reasoner arrive in front of Aspen Lodge

(fish pond will still be stocked and both may stop here, before going inside)

The walking part of the interview stops at this point. While the film crew set up for further interview in Birch Lodge, the President may wish to have a private lunch with Mr. Reasoner in Dogwood Lodge. After lunch the President and Mr. Reasoner go to Birch Lodge for the final section of the interview.

If the President arrives at Camp David on Friday night, the walking portion of the interview can be started at the "Y" in the path between the helo pad and Aspen Lodge.

NOTES:

For walking interview, both parties will have wireless mikes attached. ABC will deliver these microphones on Friday afternoon, and I will turn them over to TSD for keeping until Saturday morning at the time of the interview.

A list of names will be turned in to Commander Todd, Mr. Keiser and Camp Commander Miller of those who will participate. The film crews, from Washington, are now accredited with White House credentials. The entrance gate will receive a list of car descriptions and license plates and a marine guard will accompany ABC to the administration parking area. The base will provide technical assistance and power needed.

We are asking cooperation from base personnel and secret service agents accompanying the President to remain out of picture range during the filming for aesthetic purposes.

On behalf of the President, the Camp is presenting Mr. Reasoner with a blue Camp David jacket to wear, as we expect the President to be wearing one in an informal setting.

Mr. Reasoner has been provided with a history of Camp David (attached) for reference. The President will be provided a biography of Mr. Reasoner for his information.

I will meet with ABC officials on Friday to establish security ground rules and where filming is not allowed, per agreement with Commander Todd.

cc: Terry O'Donnell  
Lt/Cmdr Todd  
Dick Keiser

FYI: Mr. Reasoner usually drinks dry martinis up, with a twist, but during lunch drinks one beer.

## CAMP DAVID HISTORY

Camp David was originally constructed as one of the three Demonstration Recreation Camps in a ten thousand acre tract of the Catoctin Mountains which was purchased by the Department of the Interior for a National Park. Three camps, Misty Mount, Greentop, and Hi-Catoctin, were built in 1937, 1938, and 1939 respectively, with WPA and CCC workers, utilizing local timber and stone. Approximately two and one-half million board feet of blighted chestnut and local oak trees were felled; rustic light fixtures were fabricated in the blacksmith shop from scrap iron. This rustic character is still reflected by the Camp, with many cabins still retaining parts of this original construction.

In April 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt, seeking a spot away from the humidity and pressure of Washington, selected Camp Hi-Catoctin as the site for the Presidential Retreat. Following this decision, the entire Catoctin Park area was declared a security area and O. S. S. trainees and a detachment of Marines were stationed in Camps Greentop and Misty Mount for this purpose. Construction of the main lodge and minor work required to support the President was completed during the summer. The facility was first used by President Roosevelt in July 1942.

After the successful attack on Tokyo by Jimmy Doolittle and his pilots, President Roosevelt named the secretly cloaked camp "Shangri-La" in honor of the mythical location from which he said the bombers were launched. The President frequently visited the Camp during the remaining years of his administration, holding conferences with his wartime advisors and relaxing away from Washington. He was visited at "Shangri-La" by Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden on several occasions, and received the reports of the initial invasion of Italy and Normandy while resident at the Camp.

In 1947, Camps Misty Mount and Greentop were returned to the Park Service and again made available for use by school, scouting, and organized civic groups. In 1948, the area was divided into two sections with that portion north of Maryland Highway 77 designated as Catoctin Mountain National Park, while the remaining portion of the original tract was returned to the State of Maryland and designated Cunningham Falls State Park.

President and Mrs. Truman seemed to prefer the seashore to the mountains and did not use "Shangri-La" extensively; however, the Camp was frequently in use by members of the staff during his administration.

Shortly after his inauguration, President Eisenhower visited the Camp and was immediately taken with the Camp, subsequently renaming "Shangri-La" to "Camp David" in honor of his grandson, David Eisenhower. President Eisenhower used Camp David frequently through the next eight years. While recuperating from his heart attack in November and December 1955, President Eisenhower drove to Camp David from his Gettysburg farm to preside at meetings of the Cabinet and National Security Council. Following major renovations in 1957 and 1959, President Eisenhower used the site to meet and confer with several heads of government. Prime Minister Harold MacMillan was a guest in March 1959, and again in October 1959, followed by President Lopez Mateo of Mexico in October 1959. President Lleras Comargo of Columbia and President Charles DeGaulle of France visited the Camp in 1960. The historic visit by Chairman Nikita Krushchev of the USSR in September 1959, resulted in the coining of the phrase, "Spirit of Camp David" to describe the Soviet-United States detente resulting from the conference held in Aspen Lodge.

President Kennedy and Mrs. Kennedy relaxed at Camp David on frequent occasions. Mrs. Kennedy and the children remained for extended visits and stabled their personal horses on board for use during their visits.

President and Mrs. Johnson used the Camp for conferences and relaxing with large groups of friends. President Johnson resumed the practice of receiving foreign heads of government at Camp David, entertaining Prime Minister Lester Pearson of Canada in April 1965 and Prime Minister and Mrs. Harold Holt of Australia in June 1967.

President Nixon and the entire First Family used the Camp almost continuously. It was a favorite place for relaxation, a change of pace, and also for informal working sessions. Conferences and meetings were frequently held in both Laurel and Aspen Lodge.

Several Foreign Heads of State, including Prime Minister and Mrs. Gorton, President and Madame Pompidou, Chancellor Willy Brandt, President Tito and Madame Broz, President and Mrs. Medici, President and Mrs. Echeverria, Prime Minister Heath (twice), President and Mrs. Houphouet-Boigny, President and Mrs. Ceausescu, and of course, General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev of the Soviet Union (the June 1973 visit which led to even stronger detente between the Soviet Union and the United States), were Presidential guests at Camp David.

Following the historic Apollo XIII, Apollo XIV, Apollo XV, and Apollo XVI, as well as SKYLAB I, II, and III missions, the astronauts and their families were guests at Camp David.

Camp David and its role in the history of the nation is widely known and the preservation of its rustic beauty and solitude and the improvement of service and convenience to the President and his guests continues to be the primary goal of the Staff.

#### PRESENT APPEARANCE

The natural appearance of Camp David has changed little since its original construction. The cabins are still the original rustic board and batten construction, stained or painted a moss green hue. The native woods have been maintained wherever possible, and the only completely open areas on the Camp are the lawn in front of Aspen and the helicopter landing field. Every effort is made to maintain the natural beauty of the Camp and its buildings.

#### CAMP OPERATIONS

In continuation of the policy established by President Roosevelt when the crew of the Presidential yacht was used to man Shangri-La, Camp David is staffed by Naval personnel. The Navy Staff consists primarily of "Seabees" for operation of Camp facilities, although the crew compliment includes essential administrative, logistical and service support personnel. Marines from the Marine Barracks, Washington, D. C. provide security for the Camp. A detachment of the White House Communications Agency provides radio, telephone and communications center support. The Camp is a military installation, commanded by the Camp Commander directly under the Military Assistant to the President. Bookings and arrangements for Camp David are handled by the Naval Aide to the President.