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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 14, 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR: Ricki Seidman

FROM: Dee Dee Myers

SUBJECT: Follow up on Normandy Trip

I have met with members of the press corps and my own staff in an effort to correct some of the problems we had on the recent European trip.

A fundamental problem expressed by almost everybody is that logistically we're trying to more with less.

The President is attempting a very full and ambitious schedule that requires complicated logistical movements. Yet, we have tied our own hands. The White House has gone from having the resources of a Travel Office with 125 years of experience in global travel to press advance kids whose only background is motorcades and RONS on the campaign trail.

In addition, for all the hard work that Anne Edwards does day in and day out, it is clear to everybody that she is overwhelmed in her current capacity. The Press Advance operation desperately needs help. She not only has to worry about her regular responsibilities, but has assumed much of the functions of the Travel Office as well.

Let me detail several solutions:

*** Strengthening Press Advance:**

We simply must devote more resources to the Press Advance office. The current level of experience and competency is not up to Presidential muster. The ideal solution would be the hiring and training

of a permanent team of press advance staffers that know the drill, now the press corps' personalities and idiosyncracies, and can handle themselves in the spontaneous situations that arise on the road.

This is essential. We must strengthen and expanded this key department. At minimum, there needs to be a payment or subsidizing mechanism to attract quality people to do the job on a random basis. For years, the White House has had a pool of people on retainer who could be called upon to go on trips. We should re-visit this with Phil et al. and try to enhance the quality of people working on press advance.

*** Over Scheduling:**

It is clear that President Clinton has a much fuller and challenging schedule than his two predecessors. From jog duty in the morning to late night OTRs, the press are working 20 hour days covering his every movement.

While taking into account that the President and his schedule come first and foremost, it is important to note that even when he is down, the press pool is always on standby. Some consideration must be given to how the President's schedule effects the press corps.

If possible, can we institute "blackouts" when we know the President will not be jogging or not going out for the evening. This would allow the press to go back to their hotels and wash up, grab a bit to eat, and get some rest. This is a small but important part for the press corps' overall sanity on these long trips.

Also, if we schedule a middle of the trip (maybe the fourth night) down evening, we could give the press a chance to catch up on some sleep or enjoy the local city. This may be impossible but padding the schedule can provide both the President and the press a chance to catch their breath.

*** Simplify Logistics:**

When scheduling the President's movements, a 10 minute helicopter ride for him translates into a 2 hour bus ride for the press. I will re-dedicate

myself to work with Anne to determine what press movements are possible and which ones are simply too ambitious or complicated to even attempt. Hopefully, the press schedules for future trips will correspond to the President's in a more workable fashion. Let's work together on determining how much is "too much" in planning these elaborate movements.

*** Advance Notice:**

A firm and final schedule for the President in advance of the trip is essential. Even though last minute changes on the road are inevitable, opening events at the last minute causes more stress and difficulty than they're worth (the Seminarians event in the Vatican for example). The press rather have a firm schedule they can plan off of, than increased exposure to the President.

*** Hotels:**

The Press are used to staying in certain fashionable hotels when traveling in foreign cities. Yet, in Rome they were bumped from their hotel of choice, the Excelsior, in part because Administration staff took up much of the available space. While this may not be the most important concern, being in the same hotel as the filing center and avoiding 45 minute shuttle rides in the morning, as well as the press corp's comfort, should be noted in the trip's planning. Let's work with the RONS on getting the press corps the best available accommodations.

*** Travel Desk:**

In a lot of ways, the Travel Office is at the heart of our problems. For years, the press were used to getting things a certain way and now they're not. While most of the events on the trip were executed flawlessly, in between there were many press movements that simply were not realized.

A solution would be to have a Travel Office staffer establish a "desk" for each city the President visits. Almost like a travel agent, the "travel desk" would be a constant and established presence who deals solely with transportation issues, like press shuttles, helicopter movements, hotel

manifests, and trouble shooting. This person has to be seasoned and experienced. If someone loses their bag--they call the "travel desk".

Oddly, this "travel desk" or dispatcher does not currently exist. Let's work on placing a "travel desk" in every city in advance of the press corps, to work with and be a part of, the advance team. The "travel desk" will establishing themselves as a permanent fixture in the press filing center with a complete grasp of all the movements and logistics for their city.

Most of the issues raised encompass an important part of the overall communications equation for the President's overseas travel. Obviously, it's in our interest to have a satisfied and content press corps that's able to cover the events of the President's trip in a non-frenzied and professional manner. While this goal may be near impossible, it may be worthwhile to sit down with Anne and Mark to go over these ideas, and any you have, to ensure the planning for the G-7 trip goes as smoothly as possible.

Thanks.