

The original documents are located in Box 1, folder “Administration-Wide Communications Review - Draft Outline, October 7, 1971” of the Stanley Scott Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 7, 1971

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Date 5/25/01 By W/HM

MEMORANDUM FOR:

DES BARKER
JOHN GRINALDS
STAN SCOTT ✓
VAN SHUMWAY
AL SNYDER

FROM:

BILL HORTON

SUBJECT:

Draft Outline of General
Report

Attached is a very rough outline reporting on the general conclusions and recommendations emanating from our communications review. Although the outline indicates tabbed materials will be attached, these have not yet been developed. I envision that a variation of this report will be submitted to the Advisory Committee.

Naturally, we will not finalize such a general report until all of the Department reviews are completed. However, I believe it is useful to have this outline in order to target our efforts for the remainder of the project. Consequently, I would appreciate your thoughts on (1) the validity of the major conclusions and recommendations and (2) any major conclusions or recommendations which have been overlooked. Also, when drafting this report I will certainly need assistance in the various sections, especially those pertaining to the electronic media and minority media.

Attachment

Bill



October 7, 1971

ADMINISTRATION-WIDE COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW:
INITIAL OUTLINE

I. Purpose and conduct of study

- A. Under Herb Klein's guidance the White House has developed and tested many techniques to effectively communicate the President's initiatives and achievements.
- B. The purpose of this project is to upgrade the Administration-wide public affairs activities by:
 - 1. Transplanting these skills to the Departments and major Agencies and
 - 2. Establishing procedures for coordinating the Administration-wide communications activities.
- C. A secondary purpose was to establish strong working relationships between new members of the White House Communications staff and recent PAO appointees in the Departments. PAO's in six of the nine Domestic Departments have been appointed since the beginning of the year, and in most cases they have recruited new staffs.
- D. The study was conducted by a team of communications specialists -- Des Barker, Van Shumway, Al Snyder, and Stan Scott -- coordinated by Bill Horton.
- E. Because of the number of Departments to be covered and the press of normal responsibilities, no Department was covered in depth. Rather,

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the study was focused on the Department level public affairs operations, with the objective of identifying only the major improvement opportunities and taking action upon these.

II. Major areas reviewed

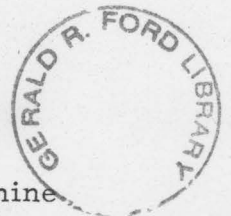
- A. The Department public affairs offices are expected to be competent in handling routine matters such as daily press releases, issuing publications, responding to inquiries, and providing information to the general public. These involve reacting to inquiries and events.
- B. In contrast, the White House team reviewed the Departments' ability to identify and capitalize upon opportunities to report on the President's stewardship as indicated by the following four criteria:
 - 1. Whether the communications output highlighted leadership and Administration-wide initiatives. Rather than putting across their message as part of the President's team, the Departments are tempted to promote solely their own image and programs
 - 2. Whether the public affairs offices have the ability to maximize their communications effectiveness by:
 - a. Systematically anticipating problems and identifying opportunities
 - b. Orchestrating the various communications resources to generate widespread coverage and
 - c. Planning the release of news to bury or highlight the item as desired.
 - 3. Effectiveness in servicing the media -- the writing press, electronic media, and minority media.



4. Effectiveness of support operations such as mailings, speakers bureau, scheduling Departmental spokesmen to achieve maximum media impact, and writing speeches and talking papers.

III. Conclusions

- A. A summary of the conclusions and recommendations for each Department is attached at Tab A.
- B. In addition to the specific conclusions, there were four ^{major} weaknesses observed in virtually every Department. These are discussed below.
- C. With few exceptions, in informing the public about major decisions and initiatives the Departments do not highlight Presidential leadership.
 1. This conclusion is based upon a sample of news releases, radio and TV feeds, and house organs.
 2. Also, much of the output is programmatic informing the public or specific groups about a program or how to take advantage of its benefits. There is little reporting on stewardship, i. e., what the President, the Administration as a whole, or the Department is doing to warrant the public's confidence and tax dollars. Similarly, there is too little reporting on the rationale for or results of Presidential initiatives.
 3. Examples of the problem follow:
 - a. During September press releases from each of the nine Departments referred to the President only _____ percent of



the time. Naturally, the President should not be associated with negative information or minor items. Consequently, the Departments were asked to identify their major releases. Of these, only _____ percent mentioned Presidential involvement or leadership. (Content analysis to be performed).

- b. HUD prints one monthly magazine, a weekly newsletter, and a monthly "house newsletter." In a selected sampling of recent issues, only five of the 47 features in the publications contained any mention of the President or the Administration. Similarly, in the HUD two-year report discussing Departmental achievements, the President was not even referred to other than mentioning that the report was occasioned by the end of the first two years of the Nixon Administration. The HUD communications plan for Operation Breakthrough has no mention of Presidential involvement or leadership in this major initiative.
- c. Although Agriculture has the most prolific and competent production of radio and TV feeds, few of them have highlighted the President's leadership in the past. (Content analysis to be performed).
- d. The objectives for HEW's new communications planning system are solely oriented toward the Department rather than the President or the Administration as a whole.



e. A refreshing counter exception -- demonstrating what can be and should be done -- is the Commerce Department-instigated communications plan for highlighting achievements of the Office of Minority Business Enterprise. In the plan itself and in the sample releases, the President is given due credit for his leadership in this area.

4. PAO emphasis on the Departmental emphasis is to be expected perhaps because the public affairs officials serve at the pleasure of the Secretary. (Only one is a Presidential appointee.) Consequently, to combat this tendency, the Department Head must make clear to the PAO's that due emphasis on Presidential leadership is expected and required.

D. Due to lack of planning, the Departments tend to react to day-to-day events rather than seeking out opportunities and timing releases to gain the desired effect. Also, although the Department PAO's exercise reasonable control, they usually fail to orchestrate available resources to amplify major stories.

1. In only _____ of the Domestic Departments was there any comprehensive communications planning for handling major initiatives.
2. In none of the Departments is there an attempt to systematically look ahead to anticipate possible communications problems. Similarly, rather than planning news releases for maximum or minimum effect as desired, the Departments typically released



the news releases on a day-to-day basis rather than planning ahead how to achieve the desired effect.

3. Of the major releases in September, the Departments systematically amplified only _____ percent (amplification analysis). This poor record occurred in spite of the fact that the Departmental PAO exercise strong control over the various resources (control analysis).

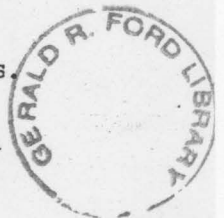
E. With one exception, the Departments are uniformly weak in liaison with electronic media.

1. Except for Agriculture, all of the Departments service the electronic media through audio-visual units rather than news services units. Typically the news services units are exclusively print-oriented. There are two basic problems with this approach:

- a. The audio-visual professionals are preoccupied with films, exhibits, etc., rather than servicing the electronic media. Basically, they are production-oriented rather than marketing-oriented catering to the timing, technical and contents of the radio and TV stations.
- b. In the audio-visual units, electronic media liaison representatives are out of the news flow so that they cannot readily spot opportunities to serve the electronic media even if they were so motivated.



2. As a consequence, except for Agriculture, no Department has a full time professional working exclusively on serving the needs of the electronic media (check). Consequently, except for spotty Spotmaster service, most of the Departments do not develop TV and radio feeds. In fact, several of them do not even re-write press releases for use by the electronic media rather than the print media.
3. In contrast, Agriculture with a staff of six electronic media liaison professionals in the Office of the Secretary level has an extensive and very effective electronic media program.
 - a. For the TV side, there are five major types of program services provided on a regular basis. One of these, the half-hour program "Across the Fence" is syndicated to over 100 TV stations.
 - b. For radio USDA provides four different tapes weekly and has a well utilized daily Spotmaster service.
 - c. A weekly Farm Broadcasters Letter is published which summarizes significant developments in the field plus provides news of farm broadcasters and their activities. Also, radio scripts are sent out each month featuring a variety of short items on consumer subjects.
4. No other Department comes close to this overall initiative in providing a regular public service radio and TV programming to



local stations. Yet, local stations, in an effort to meet FCC public programming requirements are eager to accept shows of this type.

5. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to tie into the daily TV feeds to local stations by the networks, the Newsweek service, and the NAB. Similarly, more could be done to tie into the UPI daily radio feeds (Al is checking on this point).

F. Liaison with minority media is generally poor.

1. Most Departments have not assigned responsibility for servicing minority media to a specific individual.
2. Generally, the Departments have little knowledge of the technical requirements of minority media and have little sensitivity as to what Administration achievements and general information would be of interest.
3. Labor is a notable exception to this generalization and provides a good example of what can be done.
4. In addition, the minority media would welcome in-depth feature materials and photos of top and middle grade minority personnel. While this form of journalism requires extra effort and imagination, the payoff would be substantial. It is important that the middle grade appointees be highlighted in addition to the top minority spokesman such as Arthur Fletcher. This rounds out the picture and reinforces the Administration's progress in reporting minority employees.



IV. Recommendations

A. To overcome the problems cited above, there should be two basic thrusts:

1. Closer liaison between the White House and Departments to ensure that the Departments have a clear understanding of what is expected by the White House in carrying out their day-to-day communications activities.
2. Helping the Departments to upgrade their communications capabilities and to capitalize upon communications opportunities.

B. The liaison between the White House and the Departments should be strengthened in the following ways:

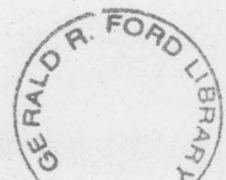
1. Since the Departmental public affairs officials are responsible to the Department Heads, it is important that the Department Heads take the lead in asking the Departmental public affairs officials to highlight the President's leadership and involvement in communicating initiatives. Consequently, this subject should be discussed at a Cabinet meeting with the President talking about the need for closer liaison in general between the White House and the Departments. Perhaps this should be accompanied by a briefing stressing the need for highlighting the President and taking an Administration-wide perspective. The briefing would also outline in general terms the steps described below.
2. The top public affairs officials should be given a similar briefing but in greater detail.

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3. The Departments will be asked to submit comprehensive communications plans for major initiatives. These will define the basic objectives to be achieved, the target audiences and the primary themes to be stressed. They would cover all facets of a comprehensive communications program, e.g., press conferences, TV appearances, speakers, background briefings, mailings, color events, etc. (See Tab B for planning guidelines).
4. In addition to their reports on speaking engagements and regional activities, each Department would be asked to submit a report on the following (Reporting formats at Tab C):
 - a. A synopsis of major public affairs events over the forthcoming three weeks (weekly).
 - b. Minority media activities (monthly).
 - c. Possible major public affairs problems beyond three weeks and what is being done about them (monthly).
 - d. Ideas for highlighting the President's leadership or his involvement in Departmental affairs (monthly).
 - e. Progress and results of implementing the communications plans described above (monthly).
5. The White House should periodically monitor samples of Departmental communications output (e.g., press releases, TV and radio feeds, and publications) to determine whether they contain the desired perspective highlighting the President's leadership.



6. To support the greater exposure by Departmental spokesmen (discussed in subsequent sections) the White House should supply speech inserts and questions and answers on the major issues and the Administration initiative. The Departmental spokesmen will then be more effective and hopefully be less reluctant to exposing themselves to question and answer sessions in background briefings, press conferences, TV talk shows and the like.
 7. Departments will be provided with lists identifying those major TV programs and editorial boards which ought not be contacted without White House clearance. (They will also be provided with lists of regional TV shows and smaller newspapers which they will be encouraged to contact on their own initiative.) Coordinating the Administration-wide contact with these major forums is necessary to ensure the most appropriate Administration spokesman is selected to discuss the most pressing issues and to avoid duplication or competition between Administration spokesmen.
- C. The following steps will be taken to upgrade the Departments' communications capabilities:
1. Electronic media liaison: Each Department will be required to establish an electronic media liaison unit within its news services operation.



- a. Depending on the need, this will consist of at least one experienced, well qualified professional to service the electronic media and to produce radio and TV feeds.
 - b. This individual should be given support by the audio-visual sections for appropriate production assistance as well as the sub-Agency public affairs offices to provide material and ideas for radio and TV feeds. If needed equipment and facilities are lacking, these should be acquired.
 - c. Al Snyder will work with the Departments to establish this operation and to determine what kind of radio and TV services best fit their news opportunities and their electronic media clientele.
2. Minority media: An appropriate public affairs professional in the news services units should be designated by each Department as being responsible for minority media liaison. Under Stan Scott's guidance, these individuals should develop and execute plans for carrying out this responsibility.
 - a. The individuals designated by the Departments should be given a training session by Stan Scott on the techniques most useful to the minority media (e. g. , two-page press releases, feature stories on middle and upper echelon minority appointees, and extensive use of photos of minority appointees, minority mailing lists, etc.)



- b. Drawing upon Departmental representatives, Stan should develop an Administration-wide communications strategy for the minority media. This would include such points as:
 - Target audiences, including lists of minority papers, magazines, TV and radio stations; metropolitan areas with large concentrations of minorities, etc.
 - Inventory of programs of particular interest to minority audiences.
 - Techniques which should be used by public affairs offices to gain the most mileage with minority media.
- c. The Departments should report monthly to Stan Scott on the usage of the techniques and to the extent possible, on the results achieved.

V. Coordination with OMB study

- A. In carrying out the President's directive to eliminate all self-serving public relations activities, OMB officials have reviewed four Departments in depth and are in the process of defining more precisely what a self-serving activity is.
- B. In the interim a budget procedures memorandum has been issued to the budget officials stipulating that no increases in the public affairs budgets will be allowed, and that any obviously self-serving public affairs activity should be brought to the attention of the program coordination division.



C. To ensure that the Departments are not given conflicting signals on the two projects the following steps will be taken:

1. Appropriate OMB officials will be kept informed generally on the organizational and technical directives being given to the Departments.
2. Any written directives given to the Departments will be reviewed, especially any definitions of self-serving activities.

VI. Implementation of recommendations

- A. Because some fundamental changes have to be made in most of the Departments, full implementation will take some time.
- B. An implementation plan should carry out the recommendations and initiate the Departmental reform attached at Tab D.

