Richard Nixon Presidential Library
Contested Materials Collection
Folder List

Box Number	Folder Number	Document Date	No Date	Subject	Document Type	Document Description
10	44	9/21/1970	☐	White House Staff	Memo	From RN to Haldeman RE: the possible purchase of a television network. 1 pg.
10	44	12/18/1970	☐	White House Staff	Memo	From RN to Haldeman RE: last minute invitations for a White House party. 1 pg.
10	44	11/30/1970	☐	White House Staff	Memo	From RN to Haldeman RE: Billy Graham and the religious vote in 1972. 1 pg.
10	44	12/4/1970	☐	Campaign	Memo	From RN to Haldeman RE: setting up a meeting between Haldeman, Moore, Safire, and Kissinger on election tactics for 1972. Handwritten notes added by unknown.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 21, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR

Bob Haldeman

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As you know, a number of people have been dabbling around with the idea of trying either to purchase one of the television networks or to set up another network -- Billy Graham, Tom Dewey, etc., have been talking about this. I am inclined to think that we ought to get a very responsible person to make a hard check on this to see if there is any possibility of pulling it off. Would you give it some thought and give me a recommendation.

December 18, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR H. R. HALDEMAN

FROM : THE PRESIDENT

If it is not too jammed, I would like to include the Chief Justice for the evening tonight at the White House. Just call him informally and ask him to drop over for a family party. Also, (and neither of these is a must) the Freemans could be invited because Frost is staying with them. The Freemans are not really necessary, although it would be a nice gesture since they are leaving Washington right after Christmas for London. The Chief Justice would be a very good one to include because our other guests would be impressed by seeing him there.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 30, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: H.R. HALDEMAN

FROM: THE PRESIDENT

On the political front, it is important to start an early liaison with Billy Graham and his people. He was enormously helpful to us in the Border South in '68 and will continue to be in '72. But, we need to have someone in charge of this organizational activity at an early date. For example, in going after our breakthrough on the Catholic front we have to remember that our primary source of support will be among the fundamentalist Protestants, and we can probably substantially broaden that base of support.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 4, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: H.R. HALDEMAN

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like for you to have a meeting at the earliest possible time which is mutually convenient with Moore, Safire and, at least for part of the meeting, with Kissinger, due to the fact that he will have to play a major part in implementing the ideas I will include in this memorandum, and meeting with him will be part of the educational process in getting the point across to him.

As I have indicated in a number of my memoranda to you in the last two weeks, I have reluctantly concluded that our entire effort on the public relations front has been misdirected and ineffective. I want to be sure to separate the problems. We <u>have</u> gotten across the idea that the White House is efficient at the "process" in both the NSC and Domestic Council organizations - probably the best that the White House has had for many years and that, all in all, we have a very competent group of operators in the White House. The net result of this operation has been to create the impression among average voters - an impression which is gleefully underlined time and time again by our opponents in the press, that we are an efficient, crafty, cold, machine, both in operating the government and all of our political activities. This impression has been underscored by the backgrounders which have been held by our top White House people. They are basically efficient - no nonsense kind of people who are self-conscious when they talk about anything which is human, warm, or personal in character.

Ray Price and others have been absolutely correct in pointing out that effeciency and competence have precious little effect in determining whether Presidents are re-elected. There is a mystique which goes far beyond that which has to do with basic elements of character and, due to the fact that we have had no one on our staff who understood public relations, we have been utterly deficient in creating that mystique.

What the average person wants in his President differs, but it is a combination of some of the following factors if we are to judge reactions to previous Presidents. Johnson was thought of as a man of many faults, but one personal factor that did get through, time and time again, was that he was "the hardest working President" we had had in the White House in many years. This was created not only by his personal style, but by his staff constantly hammering that point out.

Harry Truman - whose popularity rating, incidentally, was, except for the time immediately after Roosevelt's death, and the time immediately after he won in 1948, well below 50%, and usually fell below 40% - will be remembered in history as one of the more successful Presidents, not because of what he did - the Marshall Plan - the Atomic Bomb - etc., but because he had "courage - guts - an outspoken devil-may-care attitude".

Kennedy's record in foreign policy as Kissinger points out, over and over again, was an utter disaster. His "charm" saved the day for him. Eisenhower, of course, was a bigger figure than life when he went into the Presidency, but he justifiably, in the Presidency, was known as a warm, kindly, fair man. If you talked to members of his staff this is really mythology in a sense, because while this was his public impression, he was distant and all business - military in a sense - with the members of his staff, except possibly for very close intimates. I remember Eisenhower once told me that he simply couldn't abide the idea of "praising" members of the Cabinet and members of his staff who were simply "doing their duty". That also was his attitude with regard to Members of Congress who he felt, when they were supporting him in tough battles, were simply doing their duty. Of course, his staff wrote letters for his signature, arranged some stag luncheons and a breakfast now and then, and he handled those with great charm and great warmth. But, he had very little use for them, I can assure you.

As I have indicated to you in an earlier memorandum, the image of RN which comes across, if we study in depth the mid-summer Derge poll and the recent Gallup poll, as well as those parts of Harris that we have any reason to believe, boils down to three main points 1) he

is doing the best he can in a hard job; 2) he is at least trying to get us out of the war; 3) he is a cautious, careful man.

None of these qualities will have much effect in terms of re-electing the President. That is why pollsters and even columnists, as fair as Dick Wilson, point out that the President's support in the country is quite thin and quite shallow. In fact, our Yale editor who worked with the Wall Street Journal during the summer put his finger on it when he said that the hard-hats were a little embarrassed about their support of RN, because they didn't really know quite why they approve of him. Basically, they were marching for him because they were against his opponents, rather than because they were for him.

The lessons out of all of this I have touched on in a variety of previous memoranda, but I am trying to summarize the whole thought in this one.

On the issue side, for us to fail to get across anything more than "he's doing his best to get us out of Vietnam" is almost unbelievable. I will admit that through our regional backgrounders we have impressed people by the fact that we are "businesslike, have a good process, are doing our best to change things, etc.," but this does not develop support among average people. It is not what Presidents do, but the aura of the office, the mystique that is built up around them that develops that sixth sense among voters which generates support when times are tough, or in times of crisis, as well as in other times and (this is very important) support that is simply not based on the fact that "we ought to support our President".

There are innumerable examples of warm items - the way we have gone far beyond any previous President in this century in breaking our backs to be nicey-nice to the Cabinet, staff, the Congress, etc., around Christmastime in terms of activities that show personal concern, not only for them, but for their families. For example, the Church Service, every other person who comes through that line practically gets tears in his eyes when he thanks us for allowing them to bring their children to church. I have yet to see any columnist write this, and I of course doubt that anybody will because none of us really have the capacity to get it across, (due to the fact that we are "slightly embarrassed to say such things"). There are such little things such as the treatment of

household staff, the elevator operators, the office staff, the calls that I make to people when they are sick, even though they no longer mean anything to anybody, the innumerable letters I have written to people when they have fallen on bad days, including even losing an election. I doubt if any President in history has ever written somebody who has lost an election. But I write to them in terms of their families and how hard they had worked, etc. Here we have an ironical fact. Ehrlichman is constantly bugging me that I am going to have to see the Cabinet more and the sub-Cabinet more. And Flanigan, of course, is after me to see the members of the agencies. No President could have done more than I have done in this respect and particularly in the sense that I have treated them like dignified human beings, and not like dirt under my feet.

On a small note, I called Fred Cialles the other night who was going under the knife for a cancer operation, which will probably end his life. Fred Cialles has had it in Chicago politics but he has been my friend for years. I didn't tell anybody about the call and won't, but I put his nurse on also, and urged her to give a lift to all the other patients, but that was the most important thing she could do. Rose will remember an incident where I took dolls out to a couple of children at a hospital, when I was presiding over the Senate, who were dying with leukemia. We deliberately didn't have publicity. The hand-written letters that I wrote to Mrs. De Gaulle after DeGaulle's death and the hand-written note I wrote to De Gaulle when he was defeated, are examples. All of this must be handled subtly and under no circumstances am I going to sit down with anybody and start telling them all the good deeds I have done. Again, such things, to be believable, have to be discovered, and one of the great factors that should be emphasized is that the President does <u>not</u> brag about all the good things he does for people. In this connection, I have never yet seen a story out with regard to the White House staff, including particularly secretaries, telephone operators, and others who make quite a few boo-boos, with all their effeciency. Never in my whole public career have I ever balled out a subordinate. In fact, I have told my top people to save them the embarrassment because I knew they would feel worse about the mistake they had made, than I would. In the whole field of warmth - the thrust should be not only jokes, glad-handing, back-slapping, etc., simply these small human acts of kindness which will mean an awful lot to people. Again, here is an area of utter failure on our part. In talking on this point, it would not be amiss to point up some of the things Mrs. Nixon, Julie and Tricia do - parties that they have had for the underprivileged. Of

course, these have been somewhat publicized, but the nice things that they do. Day to day, Pat is gracious to the most unbelievable yaggle (?) of visitors that has ever crossed the threshold of the White House. They rave about it after they are here - nothing gets through to the press on this, due to the fact that we have people that are, as I have said earlier, self-conscious about talking about such matters and who would prefer to talk about "how many were there", "how many bon-bons did they consume," who or what, etc." - all of which is utterly useless in terms of building up the kind of mystique which is so important.

Having spoken of the White House events, one great plus is that this is a happy White House - one where the First Family has made it everybody's house. I have hit the theme over and over again - this house belongs to the people. I have used the Latin phrase to people over and over again "Esta en su Casa", which means, "whenever you are here you are in your own house". Of course, the brilliant events that we have planned, the brilliant "verse" has simply not gotten through in any adequate capacity. This, of course, is a major public relations failure because this is the kind of thing that even the type of people that are on our White House staff would feel comfortable in getting through. It is pure brash public relations, and has nothing to do with feeling, warmth or emotion.

On a secondary level, the line that the President always takes the heat and never shifts the blame should get out. There is incident after incident where this has been the case. Where the Son Tay incident, of course, being the most striking. Incidentally, one that tended to the warmth section. What other President would have called Moynihan after he made the terrible mistake leaking the story about the "benign neglect" to the New York Times. It hurt us badly, but I reached him in Boston and told him not to worry about it. There is incident after incident where this has happened. Again, I will utterly decline to tell people in the morning all the good deeds I have done but there are enough people around who know of such incidents who simply have to get together and work them out. Another addenda with regard to warmth, is when I learned that Alex Butterfield's daughter, Susan, was sick - had been badly injured. I told Alex to bring her in to the office even though I knew she would be embarrassed about her appearance.

With regard to the whole warmth business, a very important point to underline is that we do not try to broker such items. We allow them to be discovered. For example, I would be horrified at the idea of putting out the fact that I called some mothers and wives of men that had been killed in Vietnam shortly after I met with the POW wives. Incidentally, on the warmth deal, the fact that after the Ohio State Game I called the Coach at Purdue - a team that had lost 8 games this year, and where the Coach is probably on the way out, and told him how I felt he had done an awfully good job under terribly difficult circumstances. This I did not put out and did not try to broker.

This memorandum is not intended to start a program to build up the President as something he is not. It simply is intended to get across a more balanced view of what he is, and particularly to get away from what the staff is obsessed with - process, effeciency, etc., which I know is not intended by the staff, and which actually builds them up, but which has very little effect in building the President up.

To sum up, what is needed is to get across those fundamental decencies and virtues which the great majority of Americans like - hard work, warmth, kindness, consideration for others, willingness to take the heat and not to pass the buck and, above all, a man who always does what he thinks is right, regardless of the consequences (he would rather be a one-term President doing what is right, rather than a two-term President doing what is wrong), and just plain guts and courage. In almost two years, none of this has gotten across, except in a script here and there, or a phrase or a paragraph or two in articles that are now obscure in magazines like LOOK, LIFE, etc. I realize that the immediate reaction to this memorandum will be to go through the files and try to dig out a column by Sidey or an excerpt from Kissinger's interview in LOOK, or something else of that type to prove that all of these things have been covered. What is important however, is that whatever may have slipped into a column, or an article, or even a television broadcast, from time to time, has not had any impression, any lasting impression, on the public consciousness. This is the primary failure of the public relations side of my first two years, and the irony of it is, of course, that we have gained the liability of being known as a "PR-obsessed Administration" and have been less successful in PR than in any other area of undertaking.

I would like for you to discuss this, as I have said previously, with Moore, Safire, and even probably Price, although I don't know that he would be able to contribute anything solid in a meeting where there is talk rather than submission of written memoranda, but at least you might try. I have mixed feelings about whether Finch should be there and even possibly Rumsfeld, although I would lean against Rumsfeld since he is such a practical, no-nonsense type and probably slightly for Finch because he will see these points. Under no circumstances have Klein or Ziegler until after you have had your first meeting because it is going to be necessary to talk very frankly and even brutally about their performances (particularly Klein's) in discussing this matter.

I must say, as I write this memo I guess I am writing it more for the record than for any implementation of action. I realize that we have an insurmountable wall of indifference and opposition in the media and it is just possible that there is no way to get this across. Above everything else these points will not be gotten across by gimmicks and you must lean hard on Safire on this. I think this is where I differ with Ehrlichman in some respects, because he feels that the way you get this across is by obviously pushing out to a Negro Jr. College, or doing something else with great flash and publicity. What we must do, I emphasize above everything else, is to plan to get out these things primarily through backgrounder stories, television programs, etc., but above all, the subtle, personal quality must come through in a way that people "discover" them, rather than in a way where we force them down their throats. I guess this is where our whole PR effort has failed so seriously. Where issues are concerned - in processing all these pragmatic things - it is essential to "force it down their throats", but where the personal qualities are concerned, they must come through in an entirely different way, or they simply will not be believed. After you have thought about this a bit, and talked with the group I have mentioned, I would like to talk with you further about what plans, if any, have been developed to correct this situation.

One addenda, I realize that you will wonder why Kissinger is to be included. The reason is that he will love sitting in on such a meeting. He will keep it absolutely confidential, he will not contribute anything on how to get the ideas across, but, above everything else, he is our big gun in the area where we have had our greatest success, and while he does not know it, he is the one who has been measured the favorite.

I think by this time you will see what our casts and directions are for the future. I am sure that the group you will be talking with can think of some other things, but let me try to give you some guidance as to what not to do and what to do.

We simply have to get away from these interminable discussions that Kissinger, Shultz, Ehrlichman, et al are having with members of the press on "process". What we have to realize is that members of the press write "process" because they know it is dull and that it does us no good from a standpoint of developing public support (when I say they know it is dull, it is not dull for the intellectuals who read an editorial page that is totally dull for the average person - he isn't interested in how something is done, he just wants it done).
Some assets that we might be able to develop and have failed to develop are these:

1. As I have tried to say for the last twenty-two months, it is time to get across the fact that this President works at the job. I would agree with you that perhaps the criticism of San Clemente, Florida, Camp David, is limited to a few. But on the other hand, we are not getting the positive across and the reason we're not getting the positive across is because the visits to San Clemente, Camp David, and Florida appear to be vacations - relief from the job. I again respectfully urge that ways be found to point out that the President works late at night, gets up early in the morning, doesn't have lunch, writes his own speeches when he can, spends interminable hours listening to dullards discuss subjects on which he has forgotten more than they will ever know, etc., etc., etc.,. This has not gotten across in any poll that I have seen and if we don't get this across we have really dropped the ball.

2. A second strong point in which there is absolutely no excuse for not getting across a plus is the simple word courage - the November 8 speech, the Cambodia speech, not to mention things which we cannot disclose what we have done like Jordan. For examples of courage, which go far beyond anything Johnson or Kennedy can point to, except for possibly Kennedy's Cuban Missile Crisis decision. I realize that a couple of articles have come out - the one in LOOK and two or three columns on this point - but the courage part - the personal dimension is utterly submerged by the blizzard of words on process. What people are interested in is "what kind of a man is the President", not how he does his job. The reason that Kissinger, Ehrlichman, Shultz, et al, see it the other way is that they basically are highly intelligent men who do realize that process is all-important

and that 100 years from now political scientists will praise us for our process. But what they don't realize is that processes are relevant terms ~~with~~ developing Presidential support is critical at this time.

Related to courage is the simple point which harks back to Truman "this President does what he believes is right, regardless of consequences. Here we point out my decision when I over-ruled the Cabinet on family security, my decision in the postal strike matter and a number of others I am sure a few of you should be able to think up if you search your memories. People like to think that their President doesn't give a damn about politics - that he is only interested in the country and will risk his political future in doing what he thinks is right. For example, the strongest part about Cambodia which would have left a lasting impression for Kent State was the simple statement that "I would rather be a one-term President doing what I thought was right, than be a two-term President doing what I thought was wrong. I deliberately did not suggest it because I realize that perhaps for except for Kissinger, Haldeman and myself, nobody supports what we did in Cambodia even within our own intimate staff, but that statement is a powerful statement which was made once and now is forgotten by the great mass of American people (along this same line the refusal of the President to cater to Jews, Negroes and other minority views simply for their votes, is a powerful argument which should be made in a very sophisticated way but it needs to be made).

A further point related to courage is "boldness" whether it is family security, Cambodia, the Sontay raid, or what have you. We have several examples of stepping up to a hard one and hitting it, not ducking it. Precious little has come through in the press on this point.

We now come to some of what Ray calls the "Head of State" mystique and which will not appeal to Henry and the other more tough, hardheads but which does have great appeal to people.

I speak first of the simple idea of warmth. I don't mean by that that we want to get away from the fact that the President is reserved, dignified, etc., but there are innumerable incidents of warmth which have not come through. Now here I want to emphasize a point which will go against what Safire would like - everybody wants me to sit down and talk to members of the staff in a puffing way about how "nicey nice" I have been to members of the staff. That is not the way to do it. If warmth is to be believable it must be discovered, and at this stage there are many examples.

Two thoughts occur to me with regard to themes to be emphasized which I will again include in this memorandum. One is the restoration of dignity in the White House and the conduct of the Presidency in every respect, and the other is the restoration of prestige for the United States abroad. This, again, is a subtle, personal point that cannot be made simply by putting on a poll, but one that is constantly emphasized by Kissinger, by talking about problems abroad and by our domestic staff in talking about problems at home. The dignity theme can, incidentally, be related to the White House worship services. The prestige theme should be related to the fact that RN is now the major world leader, his receptions abroad, etc.

On another theme related to a point covered earlier in the memo, you might find out that RN carrys over his thoughtfulness in regard to people that are down as well as when they are up by his telephone call to Trudeau when Trudeau was under very savage attack in Canada. Trudeau at a dinner held for a Joint American-Canadian Commission a week ago, proposed a very warm toast to RN and, in doing so, related his reaction to this call. He said that he was tremendously moved by it and he wondered if the situation had been reversed whether he would have been so thoughtful as to call RN, and remarked that he was afraid that on reflection that possibly he might not have. Here again, the theme must be gotten through that RN does not do these things simply for the publicity because he feally feels something and does it on the spur of the moment. His call to Trudeau and his call to Pompidou and his trip to New York for Pompidou were done on the spur of the moment without clearing with State Dept. or his own staff, and frankly over the objections of most in State, and over the objections of most of his own staff. One thing we have not adequately made an asset out of is that I have made decision after decision on small and little things - many which have turned out to be right - that have been over the objections of most of the people on my own staff and certainly over the objections of people in the departments, part State and Defense. My trip to New York for Pompidou was a spur of the moment decision over the objections of virtually everybody in Washington and most of the people in State and of course the political people who said it would outrage the Jews. It was the right thing to do and had a good effect. My invitation by hand-written note to both DeGaulle and to Ayub Khan to make their trips to the United States as private citizens after they were defeated is in the same vein. Neither of these things has become public but there would seem to be no problem to let them become public at this point. My invitation to McCormack and calls to him as well as other Democrats when they come on hard times might be of interest. For example, when McCormack's staff came under investigation and later his top man was indicted I called him and told him that I realized how difficult this must be for him and that I wanted him to know that I had complete confidence in his own integrity. There are many other incidents of this type that Rose and other staff members if they will search their memories would be able to bring up. Don't ask me to try to do it. What I am saying here is that "these are <u>public</u> events, which illustrate the <u>private</u>

and consequently a completely sincere attitude of the President toward his political opponents, and particularly toward those who may have come on hard times as well as those who are being honored as Presidents always honor those who happen to win the first prize.