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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
September 28, 1969

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Hold

MEMORANDUM TO H. R. HALDEMAN
FROM: Patrick J. Buchanan
RE: Letters to the Editor

The only truly successful and enduring Letters operation I have ever seen was Buchanan-to-Whitaker-to the Advance Men which operated in 1967. I would call Whitaker, who would call his advance men and we all would write letters on the same subject to a national publication. For example, we flooded Time Magazine with RN Man of the Year letters one year -- and did well. Another time, some six of the seven letters printed in one LOOK issue were our team's attacks on an anti-RN article.

That operation worked because the Advance Men were far above average in intelligence and ability; they could write a good letter, and more important, they were part of a close knit existing organization that was geographically as diverse as the country. Still, even with this, all we did effectively was to gang up on a single article in the national press, and do it occasionally.

I would recommend the following steps:

1. Chairman Morton should sent a specific directive to all state chairmen, asking that they establish a monitoring committee in their state of local television and local press and that these "monitors" write regularly to their local tv and local radio and local press, arguing the Administration's positions, and attacking when attacked.

2. Each of these state chairmen should report to an officer of the RNC the names of the men and women on their State Monitoring Committees and writing groups, who would then also become members of the RNC national letter writing team. We could send these groups all RN's statements, all GOP publications which they could use as background for writing letters.

3. In doing this, the thing has to be non-secret, it has to be de-centralized, and we have to rely on the individuals in the states to carry it out themselves in their own local area. (When I say public, I mean it cannot be clandestine as was our Advance Man team -- because to be effective all over the country you are going to have to involve dozens of new and strange people, and something of that magnitude is certain to be public.

4. Now, at the National Committee, I would hire full time for this one purpose only, a young fellow who can write fairly well -- who would be responsible for overseeing the state operations (which simply have to run on their own steam, for reasons detailed later) and for conducting the rifle shots at specific egregious attacks on us. My experience with this is that we simply cannot rely on the average volunteer: you cannot designate the project to somebody as a part of their responsibility. Volunteers don't produce and if this is a part of somebody's assignment, invariably it winds up as the thing he first discards when he is pressed.

This fellow, who would key the whole thing, should be paid very well -- in my view. This is the reason. You can't expect a sharp, incisive letter to the editor to come out of the typewriter of an ordinary party worker.

In fact, if the kind of talent needed to write first rate publishable letters exists at the National Committee, he is doing something of far more importance to them than writing letters to the editor. This, again, is one of the problems. If somebody has what it takes to write first rate letters to the editor, the last thing you will find him doing is writing letters to the editor. This is why, if we are serious about this, we are going to have to hire a GUY WITH SOME BRAINS, knowledge and ability and pay him.

5. As I see it, this fellow who oversees the state operations, also spends most of his own day writing letters to national publications on various articles -- he should have, at hand, a list of some 30 "names" which he can use as signatures on the letters -- people who will let him do it, and who will take the heat. (One of the central problems is finding people willing to either write letters or let you write one for them. But these names are indispensable; otherwise, we are going to end up writing a lot of anonymous stuff, which will end up in the waste basket at the daily press.

6. This fellow, once appointed, should be made privy to the President's morning news summary; and he could on the basis of that be able to fire off letters to the major

papers protesting this and that, or commending this and that.

7. The fellow should collect from the State committees all the carbons of all the letters they write -- but more important, clippings of the letters they get published. He could send these back out to encourage other letter writers and to show them the type of things that get into the press.

8. The fellow should maintain a file of "printed letters" which he drafted himself and which others around the country drafted and on which he should report fortnightly to an administrative fellow in Haldeman's shop.

WHAT CAN'T OR SHOULDN'T BE DONE

1. While Buchanan can and should, in the interests of speed, draft single shot letters to the editor of a particular publication which the President might want right away -- we simply have neither the time nor the manpower to produce "20 letters to the New York Times" on some editorial. There are time when the President wants a particular point gotten across to some individual -- and when a single letter can do the job. Don't hesitate to call when this comes up. But, again, we cannot run an operation out here of getting five, six and seven letters on the same subject to a national publication; it is simply not cost effective to pay me an exorbitant salary to spend the day in that kind of writing.

2. We simply lack the necessary control to administer day-to-day operation from here. (As you know, we set something up along the above lines at the RNC, but without constant attention and ram-rodging, it peters out, because everybody has something else to do.

3. Sometimes the President makes recommendation on letters to be written, which may not be the best way to handle it. For example, "twenty letters to the Times" is really a waste of time. We would be better off getting someone prominent to send one -- it would have a better chance of being printed. Have you ever seen the Times print twenty letters disagreeing with their position on some subject? A day spent on those twenty letters would be a day wasted. Secondly, we should not be sending any large numbers of letters out of D.C. to out-country papers -- that is why I sent two, rather than six, letters to Conrad on his good cartoon. If he, at the L.A. Times got six letters from D.C. on a cartoon he did in L.A. a week ago -- he might get the impression the letters were rigged.

In this business, I am a believer in quality, not quantity. The one letter we shipped out on EMK and sent to Time, to Newsweek and the Washington Star ran in all three publications. One sharp thought is worth ten pages of B.S. in the business.

RECOMMENDATION:

Call in Morton, impress upon him the tremendous importance RN attaches to the operation. Get some top-flight, maybe \$15,000 a year man (we can forget it, if you get somebody who can't write, or hasn't really got something on the ball): put him in charge. Don't keep it secret. Order state parties to set up committees, and report the names of their members to the contact man at RNC. Instruct Magruder or some ramrod here to keep in weekly touch with this guy --- to call him at once when RN recommends action on some article. (This guy could use the phone to call his own people). Let the guy know that the President is concerned about his stuff (there is a problem here of getting RN attached to such a project, but if the guy is sharp enough and is being sent the daily summary, he should be secure enough.)

I can see a group set up nationally called Republican Correspondents, consisting mainly of housewives with time on their hands, who could be tied together with their own newsletter, their own identification card --- competing with each other all over the country in letter writing. I can visualize the framework --- but it cannot be run as a parttime job; and it cannot be run out of Room 122 of the EOB.

Another suggestion: There was a woman in California who used to spend her days writing letters to the editor for RN all over the country; some of the best I have seen. Rose probably remembers her name; she would be my choice of the one who wrote the letters, though she may be too sweet a little old lady to ramrod the thing from the RNC. Most important, it has to be a project apart, with the blessing and solid backing of the Chairman, with paid competent staff.

(I will be sending along another memo on the monitoring of the TV networks, and the five major markets. You can't let amateurs or volunteers be given responsibility for doing the kind of job on these tv shows that we do for the President on the network news; you couldn't rely on them to make judgments which we could use; only to raise some hell.)