

Selling of a President: Publicity Expands Under Ford

BY JOHN HERBERS

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WASHINGTON, March 16—When President Ford goes to South Bend, Ind., tomorrow in another effort to sell his energy and economic plan to the country, the region will be subjected to one of the most thoroughgoing public relations campaigns ever generated by the White House.

Several hundred business, labor and community leaders will be addressed by the President and other Administration officials, with the technique varying from the soft sell of Mr. Ford to the hard sell of William J. Baroody Jr., the White House aide who organized the South Bend conference and similar ones in other regions.

Governors, mayors, editors and other opinion makers will be entertained, persuaded and listened to in a one-day blitz.

This is only one aspect of a White House public relations campaign that is unsurpassed by any in previous Administrations.

Public Liaison Office

Mr. Ford, in the seven months that he has been in office, has retained, though altered, all of the public relations functions formed by President Nixon, and he has greatly expanded the Office of Public Liaison, headed by Mr. Baroody. The office provides White House access to thousands of people every month.

Through Mr. Baroody's office the public is told about what is going on in the Ford Presidency—this provides a highly sophisticated means of selling the personality and policies of Mr.

Ford, who is struggling to demonstrate his leadership ability without the political base that new Presidents usually enjoy as a result of having been elected. About one-fifth of some 500 people who serve on the President's personal staff are directly involved in some form of public relations. Before the rise of the strong Presidencies of Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon, the White House public relations apparatus consisted of speech writers, photographers and a handful of people in the press office.

An Extra Dimension

In Mr. Baroody's view his office has added a dimension to Mr. Ford's effort to make the White House more open and has given business, labor, veterans, academics, farmers, professionals, youths, minorities and others the same access to the White House as Congress and the news media.

Some critics of the Administration have charged that this access is more weighted to the business interests than others, and Ralph Nader, the public interest advocate, has filed suit to force the White House to open the meetings between officials and private interest leaders to news coverage. The White House has opposed the suit on the ground that open coverage would prevent a frank exchange of views. The regional conferences are open to the public, but the content of the White House meetings is rarely disclosed.

There are four main divisions of the White House public relations staff: EDITORIAL OFFICE. Before the Nixon Administration

Presidential speechwriters worked informally out of the White House counsel's office and performed other duties as well. Now they are highly specialized, more numerous and formally organized under Robert T. Hartmann, Counselor to the President.

Mr. Hartmann occupies an office in the West Wing of the Executive Mansion. The editorial office, with about 40 employees, is situated in the Executive Office Building and is headed by Paul A. Theis, the executive editor whom Mr. Ford brought from the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee.

Mr. Theis heads a staff that includes six speechwriters—Milton A. Friedman, John J. Casserly Sr., Robert Orben, Aram Bakshian Jr., Kaye Pullen and Fred Bird—and other specialists. The office turns out a constant stream of speeches, messages, proclamations and letters that keep the mimeograph machines humming and the President supplied with speeches and remarks as he addresses meetings around the country.

The speechwriters, most of whom are in their 40's or 50's, are specialists according to the policy and subject matter. Mr. Orben, whom Mr. Ford recruited from show business, writes humorous passages for example.

The simple language and commonplace tone of the Ford speeches is the result of painstaking work to make them conform to the President's style. Each speech, before being cleared, is revised through a complicated process

during which it must receive the approval, by initials on a printed form of a dozen or so officials under Mr. Ford. PRESS OFFICE. Ron Nessen, the press secretary, says the office he oversees has been reduced from 58 persons under Mr. Nixon to 45. However, there are now more people in

high position than before, and some of the functions and personnel are so scattered that it is difficult to tell what the significance of the reduction is. Mr. Nessen has two deputy press secretaries—John W. Hushen and Gerald L. Warren—and eight assistant press secretaries. The main function of the press office is to provide information on the White House to the news media, but Mr. Nessen also uses it on a daily basis to promote the President and his policies, which is a traditional practice.

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS. A Nixon innovation that many people believed Mr. Ford would abolish, the communications office has been continued under Mr. Warren, who was Mr. Nixon's day-to-day spokesman in the last year of his Administration. It was set up to get the President's point of view across to editors, broadcasters, and other opinion makers outside Washington and to coordinate public relations policies throughout the Administration.

Mr. Warren, a former city editor of The San Diego Union, is carrying out those functions, but in a more relaxed manner than Ken W. Clawson, a combative Nixon defender, did in the past. Mr. Warren works closely with Mr. Baroody and sets up conferences, in the

White House and across the country, with writers, editors and news specialists, in which officials explain Administration policies.

He also arranges for Administration officials to appear on television, makes selective mailings of White House papers to news outlets across the country and monitors newspapers from throughout the country. He says that if he spots an editorial unfavorable to the President and thinks it is based on misinformation, he will call the editor and send information that presents the Administration's views. "I think this is more effective than leading them down with mass mailings," Mr. Warren said.

Mr. Warren also holds regular meetings with public relations heads of all the executive-branch departments and agencies to coordinate and make consistent the Administration's policy line throughout the Government. PERSONAL PHOTOGRAPHER TO THE PRESIDENT. The title is misleading because David H. Kennedy, the President's personal photographer, in addition to snapping the President's picture in almost every official and public act, heads an office of five photographers who serve Vice President Rockefeller and Mrs. Ford, as well as the President and his assistants.

These are still pictures. Thousands of feet of movie film of the President and of White House events are rolled every day by the Army Signal Corps. The enormous cost of processing all of the film is hidden in the Federal budget. Photography has increased



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Members of the White House speech writers staff—a major component in current public relations campaign—at a briefing given by Dick Kaiser, third from right in light suit, chief of the White House Secret Service detail.

as a White House operation under Mr. Ford because he is more active in public functions than was Mr. Nixon and because Mr. Kennerly is constantly with him. Mr. Kennerly also has made the President available to a number of outside photographers because White House officials believe that his personality comes through in pictures, and that this is his best "selling point." Many photographic essays of

the President have been published in the last seven months and others are scheduled.

These public relations divisions do not include the press office for Mrs. Ford, headed by Sheila Weidenfeld, or other public relations officials who serve such Presidential agencies as the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Telecommunications Policy.

The sophistication and extent

of the White House public relations operation was underscored recently when a long-time assistant to Vice President Rockefeller found in his office a device that would permit him to replay any portion of any recent television network newscast that pertained to doings at the White House.

The Rockefeller assistant, who thought he had seen everything, was impressed by that.