

Below a Trip's Even Surface

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MADRID, Oct. 2 — Much that lies below the smooth surface of a Presidential trip does not find its way into the communiqués: the careful planning, the inevitable foul-ups, the attitudes of the faceless thousands who turn out for the motorcades, the motives of the President and the subtle and sometimes poignant differences that set him apart from the men he meets.

Take, for instance, the matter of people.

An old baseball fan put it well: "It was a long run for a short slide." The crowds gather interminably in the morning. Pushing, shoving, gently prodded (in the case of Yugoslavia and Spain) by their Governments, which close the offices and the schools and give them a half-day off.

The President arrives and passes, and they leave. Within minutes the million or so who crowded downtown Madrid today were gone, their presence an instant memory. Buoyed by the memory, the dignitaries rush on to other functions but the multitudes have been swallowed by the city and by their lives.

The responses of those who watch are more individualistic than the dignitaries suppose.

In Spain there was nostalgia from an old man: "The first one of them I saw was when Alfonso XIII came back from England with his bride in 1926." From another a touch of native cynicism: "This must have cost a lot, but Nixon will see Franco. And Franco will give him a brainwashing and make money out of it."

In Zagreb, Yugoslavia — only yesterday, although it seems months past—there were memories of a different sort. The magic and mystery of John F. Kennedy still exercise a powerful pull for the young and they do not associate the war in Vietnam with him or with his brother Robert.

Of President Kennedy a student said: "I liked his policies: I don't like Vietnam. I believed him."

Yet they turned out to see President Nixon, of whom they said they knew little but respected as a symbol of America. Newsmen interviewed many of them in Zagreb. All said—fumbling for words—that America still meant promise.

A young man, asked whether the Communist Government allowed him to read anything he wanted, quickly produced a textbook in which he had heavily underlined the Declaration of Independence.

Though preoccupied with diplomacy since the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser, Mr. Nixon's entourage has not lost sight of the political profit to be gleaned from an overseas journey.

In Yugoslavia, for instance, the President shook hands

whenever he could "shake" Marshal Tito.

With his host along, Mr. Nixon's motorcade sped rapidly through the streets, in part because the Yugoslavs are so security-conscious. But when Marshal Tito returned to his residence, the President plunged back into town, drew a crowd and produced the television coverage he likes best.

Stops on the tour are arranged for maximum surprise effect. There was no notation on the official schedule handed to the White House press that Mr. Nixon would buy a cup of ice cream from a picturesque little store in Kumrovec, the Yugoslav leader's birthplace, because the White House wanted the gesture to seem uncontrived.

But the Yugoslavs were forewarned, and White House advance men visited the site a week ago, pacing off the street and setting up possible camera angles. Cold rain dimmed the attraction of ice cream, however, and washed out the planned "spontaneous" episode.

There is at least one man in the entourage who has a positive version of the usefulness of the press—Mr. Nixon. As he left Marshal Tito's birthplace, he tugged his reluctant host down the street, saying as he pointed at the press buses: "I have 50 publicity men down there. We've got to put this place on the map."

White House officials still insist that the President has been thinking about this trip since August, but a good deal of evidence suggests hasty planning and last-minute decision.

The Yugoslavs and the Italians told American reporters that they were not officially informed of the arrival time until the weekend before the official White House announcement on Sept. 15. Members of the United States Embassy here say they had been told that something was in the wind but felt certain only when they noticed Air Force One, the Presidential plane, circling the Madrid airport a few weeks ago, and testing approach patterns. The plane usually makes one and sometimes two trial runs.

Innkeepers had little time to prepare, and in Belgrade, press and officials alike were scattered all over town. In Italy a helicopter scheduled to take reporters and dignitaries to the carrier *Saratoga* unaccountably took off and flew halfway to the ship without its passengers. In Belgrade, American newsmen wound up following a Tito motorcade.

Such incidents are small, of course, compared with the mishaps that used to befall Mr. Nixon's predecessor, whom Hugh Sidey of *Life* labeled "Lyndon B. Magellan" after he hauled his staff around the world in four days at Christmas, 1967, and ended up circling over Turkey for hours while his staff frantically tried to complete final

arrangements for a visit to the Vatican.

Mr. Nixon's arrangements people are usually letter-perfect. Their lapses this time into normal human inefficiency merely lend more circumstantial evidence to the strong suspicion that after hijackings by the Palestinian guerrillas on the Labor Day weekend and the gradual unraveling of the American peace initiative in the Middle East, the President decided on a personal show of force along the Mediterranean and ordered his people to get things ready in a hurry.