

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 9, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: AL HAIG  
FROM: RON ZIEGLER  
SUBJECT: Press arrangements for the China trip

The following is intended to point out the requirements and potential scope of press coverage for the President's trip to China, and to raise questions regarding that press coverage that should be answered at the earliest possible date so that planning can proceed.

Press coverage of the China trip can be divided into three categories:

1. Television Coverage  
Including live network television coverage and network television film coverage
2. Reporter Coverage  
Including the writing press, television and radio journalists
3. Photo Coverage  
Including still photographers, independent and television film coverage other than U.S. television film coverage

Each of these categories is addressed separately -- starting with the most complex -- television coverage.

TELEVISION COVERAGE

In order to determine the requirements for television coverage, we must determine to what degree the President's trip should be covered by television.

- Will the President's entire trip to China be available for live coverage (obviously in a controlled, organized way)?
- Will the President's trip be open only to extensive television film coverage?
- Will the President's trip be open to only limited television film coverage?

Whatever the decision, the networks have agreed to handle a substantial part of the television coverage of the President's trip on a pool basis, but of course would also want to undertake to provide a limited amount of unilateral coverage.

The networks' desire is to provide live coverage of the entire Presidential visit to China, transmitting it direct to the United States and other parts of the world. The decision regarding live coverage requires careful consideration. If live coverage is permitted, it could have profound impact on the American people and the world, and due to the isolation of China for the past twenty-five years would take on the drama similar to live coverage of the moon walk.

Live coverage would involve the transport to Mainland China of extensive electronic equipment and a fairly large contingent of network personnel.

THE REQUIREMENTS ARE OUTLINED BELOW:

- A ground station (which must be erected in a clear area to operate properly -- preferably in a large field near the airport). The ground station can be contained easily in a 50' x 100' area, but there must be a clear space around it so the 20' "locater dish" can have line of sight to scan for the satellite.
- The location near the airport would be helpful in controlling the movement of the network personnel, and would provide for control and security.
- A communications center which would include
  - videotape facilities
  - a small 3-camera studio
  - three small mobile units
  - editing room
  - two telecine chains for film
  - network pool headquarters
  - work space

The communications center would require 13 rooms:

Video tape facilities	20' x 20' room
Studio	25' x 40' room
Control room	15' x 20' room
Telecene and transmission room	20' x 20' room
Processing room	20' x 15' room
Film editing room	2 10' x 10' rooms
Pool headquarters	4 10' x 10' rooms, and 1 10' x 20' meeting room
General News room	Approximately 20' x 30 room

This facility, of course, if necessary, would be constructed by the networks, or perhaps it could be placed and built within a hangar if available.

It is estimated that the ground station weighs 50,000 pounds. This does not include generators, should the networks have to provide their own power to operate the ground station. (A television power generator is a small truck in size).

All the other technical equipment mentioned above other than the ground station would weigh approximately 60,000 pounds. (All of the equipment would be flown into Mainland China by the networks on commercial air carriers and arrangements for this would have to be worked out.)

#### Network Personnel Requirements

89 people would be needed to erect and man the network pool facilities providing for live television coverage.

26 men representing the network pool production center would need to be on sight 3 weeks in advance of the President's visit to make preparations.

12 men would have to be in China approximately 2 weeks prior to the President's visit in order to set up the ground station.

The rest of the 89 would have to be on sight in China anywhere from 10 days to a week prior to the visit.

In addition to the above pool personnel, each network would want to have:

18 people in China approximately 3 weeks in advance to set up their unilateral news operation.

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Another 15 going in 7 to 10 days prior to the visit.

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Finally, each network request that they have 12 people accredited on the press plane. These would be the basic reporter-cameramen engineer teams.

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In summary, this is 45 people per network, or a total of 135. Combining that with the 89 network pool personnel, the total number of network personnel to provide the coverage as outlined above would be 234.

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Comment: This I know sounds like a massive intrusion of personnel and equipment into China. However if properly coordinated, controlled and handled, it could be accomplished with a minimum of difficulty.

It should be pointed out that on Presidential visits to other countries such as Romania, Yugoslavia, France, Italy, similar arrangements were set up for live coverage, although they are seldom if ever seen by White House staff personnel moving with the President. So these are not unusual requirements, and indeed this would not be an unusual setup when compared to other countries. However we are obviously dealing with a unique situation in relation to the visit of the President to the Peoples Republic of China. These personnel would need accommodations somewhere in the Peking area.

But I would like to emphasize to you that the vast majority of these people are not reporters or correspondents, but production technicians who would not be in any way directly associated with the Presidential party or the reporting press contingent. And for emphasis I would like to point out that in your consideration of the numbers involved here, you do not lump the production technicians together with the number of reporters and correspondents who will be covering the trip. This will be dealt with later in the memo.

Other Options for Television Coverage:

Although the following options would be far less desirable than that outlined above in terms of coverage impact, television coverage could be handled on the following basis?

- Film coverage only -- i.e. no electronic or live coverage
- Establish ground station capabilities to transmit the film and other studio matter (direct reports from China) by satellite. Under this procedure the number of television pool personnel could be cut from about 89 to about 55. The work space requirements outlined above in the discussion of live coverage would be basically the same.
- Film coverage only with arrangements made for courier planes to fly film into either Seoul, Tokyo, or Hong Kong. This option would of course result in dramatic cutbacks in equipment, although the network television pool would still need considerable work space and manpower. The individual network request as outlined above would remain basically unchanged in both of these options.

Comment: This last approach is the least desirable. It would eliminate almost entirely the immediacy and drama of the President's visit. It would also place because of time differences severe limitations on the amount of broadcast material that the networks could move back to the U.S. in time to service not only the news broadcasts but the many options being planned by all three networks.

#### REPORTER COVERAGE

The requests of news organizations from around the world to cover the President's trip to China are substantial. We are in the process of logging and categorizing these requests. We are also determining those news organizations from other countries that currently have bureaus in the Peoples Republic of China and would only accommodate such bureaus on a limited basis.

However that aside and looking only at the U.S. press corps, it is hard to concede that the President could visit China and receive the extensive world-wide coverage that I believe is desired without a reporter contingency of at least 50. This would be, in my view, the minimum and indeed would be a highly selective list. On most foreign Presidential trips we have had at least 200-250 reporters.

The 150 reporters would of course be controlled, well disciplined and headquartered at a central press location. They would not need to move in masse with the President whenever he went, or all be involved on the scene with the President at any one time.

OK  
J  
9/11/71

### Accommodations for reporter coverage

In order to accommodate the basic reporter contingent which would include the ~~X~~50 mentioned above, those covering the visit from established bureaus in China or going to China on their own, the follow would required:

- . An extensive press center -- preferably a large auditorium which could accommodate large numbers of working tables, telephones, international telegraph transmittal center, and photo transmittal lines (to transmit still photographs). All should be contained at one centralized press center. Preferably the press center would be located close to the press hotel and sleeping accommodations.
- . Bus transportation and equipment trucks for transport of baggage, cameras and other gear and also be needed. Ideally, interpreters would be on hand at the press center together with representatives of the Peoples Republic of China Foreign Ministry, to answer routine questions and generally assist with the press requirements.

### STILL PHOTOGRAPHERS AND REEL PERSONNEL

It is estimated that we would take along approximately 30 still photographers and independent newsreel film, which would consist of United States reels and photographers and also perhaps reels and photographers from other countries such as France, Germany, Italy, and Canada.

### I. SLEEPING ACCOMMODATIONS

Approximately 475 sleeping accommodations will be needed for the press party. This would include everyone -- technicians, reporters, cameramen, photographers. Obviously there is no problem if the press have to double up or even triple up. If possible however they would prefer individual rooms.

Comment: The opinion that the President's trip to China can be covered by a small one-man network pool film crew and correspondent, and a small hand-picked reporter pool group of, say 25, is not realistic. When I say not realistic, obviously coverage would result, but the impact of the trip in terms of scope, immediacy, drama and history in my opinion would substantially be reduced.

II. QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED:

1. How do we and how do the Chinese visualize press coverage of the visit? What do we want to accomplish in terms of press coverage?
2. To what extent will press coverage be controlled? For example, will we want to dictate what can be and cannot be transmitted live if live transmission is agreed to? Obviously we will control camera locations.
3. How does the Peoples Republic of China visualize handling press accreditation and entry into their country by the world press?
4. Will previously unaccredited correspondents be allowed into China in advance or will those going in for the visit have to accompany the Presidential party in one of the press planes?
5. How will the Peoples Republic of China handle the press from countries that have relations with them, and who in turn have news bureaus in China? (In my view, a central press center is the answer.)
6. Depending on what television is agreed to --
  - Will the television personnel as outlined above be permitted to enter China as requested?
  - Will it be possible for U.S. flag commercial air charters to fly equipment into China?
  - Will the Chinese provide an open space near the airport?
  - Will ground transportation be available for hire such as trucks, cars, buses, etc.?
  - Will local labor and interpreters be available for hire?
  - Would adequate power be provided at a cost of course, or would generators be required?
7. Can adequate sleeping and eating accommodations be provided for 475 technicians, reporters, cameramen etc. as discussed above?
8. Do we plan to issue a communique?

III. OTHER POINTS

Press Charter Aircraft

Even if we cut from the optimum number as suggested above, it is almost imperative that at least two press planes accompany the President to China.

What would the Chinese attitude be to this?  
Would they resent 747's and will the airport accommodate 747's? (We could get by with 707's)

It is essential that two people from my office and one communications expert go on any initial advance.

Can arrangements be made for follow-up advance to the initial advance at least two months prior to the visit, which would consist of at least eight network representatives, two representatives from the international telegraph service, and two representatives from my office to do an on-sight survey prior to the trip?