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OA/ID Number: 07137
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Folder Title:
Domestic Policy Council 1987 Review & 1988 Plans [binder] [2]

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
February 8, 1987

Bob,

I've attached copies of some previous papers discussing the Domestic Policy Process. Some of the relationships may have changed, but I suspect that the roles and process are basically unchanged - or at least they are supposed to still work as previously discussed.

Since the DPC and EPC were created by a press release, it would seem that any changes could be handled just as informally. Whether a press release or a memo were used, any changes could be reflected in a presidental statement reaffirming his commitment to an aggressive economic and domestic agenda as represented in his legislative message.

I would be happy to discuss this further or make necessary changes to my diagrams to reflect the current situation. Just give me a call. (I will try to come to the Mgmt and Admin Working Group Meeting on Friday at 11:00.)

Chuck.

• THIS WAS AN ATTEMPT TO ADD MORE FORMALITY TO OUR DPC PLNG PROCESS.

• ALTHOUGH NEVER FORMALIZED, THE PROCESS EVOLVED ALONG THESE LINES.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

24 September 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR DPC EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

FROM: RALPH C. BLEDSOE Ralph Bledsoe

SUBJECT: PLANNING AND MANAGING THE DOMESTIC AGENDA

1. During our recent Secretariat meetings, we have discussed the need for long and short term planning of the President's domestic agenda. Additionally, we have stressed the importance of actively managing each issue from its inception, through policy development, to implementation and follow-up of required action. The DPC calendar will serve as our basic planning and management document. However, effective results will require active input and follow-up by all members of the Executive Secretariat.

2. Conceptually, the planning process should begin within each agency, and should focus on issues which will require DPC and/or Presidential involvement within the next 3-5 months. Some issues may be self-generated by outside forces - others may be important items on the President's long term domestic agenda which have not been very actively pursued, to date. Potential issues should be defined in general terms using the DPC issue format previously provided (copy attached). Each issue should include appropriate management steps and an associated time table for successful policy implementation. Typical steps could be:

a. Issue identified and described (Issue format/paper)
b. Working group or agency meeting/report/briefing
c. Secretariat discussion
d. DPC discussion/recommendation
e. DPC meeting with the President
f. Initiation of legislative proposal or other action
g. Enactment of legislation or completion of required action

3. The DPC planning calendar will include weekly schedules over a 3 month period, monthly listings for the following 2 months, and a general listing for future events. Events will be grouped into categories which represent the major themes included in the domestic agenda for which the DPC is responsible. Key speeches, hearings, and other calendar events will also be integrated into the calendar. Appropriate events of this nature should be proposed by each agency. Prioritization and scheduling will be an important part of each DPC Secretariat meeting, and an updated calendar will be produced on a weekly basis or more frequently as required.

Option 1. (Re-state the option)

Pros:

- (Use "bullet" sentences to succinctly summarize pros and cons of Option 1.)
- (E.g.: Consistent with the President's position on ABC.)

Cons:

- etc.
- etc.

Option 2. (Repeat as above for all options)

Recommendation (optional)

(Specify recommendation if consensus exists, or list differing recommendations by departments or agency, as desired by them.)

DPC ISSUE PAPER FORMAT

(The following format is preferred for Issue Papers prepared for Domestic Policy Council consideration. In general, Issue Papers should be brief (no more than 4-5 pages), concisely worded, and present all contending viewpoints in a fair and forthright manner. Attachments may be used as necessary for further detail or tabular information.)

(Agency Letterhead)

(Date)

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL

FROM:

ISSUE: (Place in question form; e.g., What should be the Administration's Position on XYZ?)

Introduction

(Describe the nature of the issue, its current status, and events making action or attention by the Domestic Policy Council desirable at this time, including any congressional implications. Emphasize important time-frames or deadlines.)

Background

(Summarize past events and actions bearing on the issue, including any previous involvement and decisons of the President, Domestic Policy Council, Congress, Department and agency heads, etc.

Discussion

(Describe the positions of the key players or contenders. Carefully include all key arguments in summary form.)

Options

(List in 1-2-3 fashion the options for resolving the issue. Strive for the minimal number of viable options; more than three tends to be unwieldy. State options in the "Imperative," e.g.:

1. Support legislation that would ....
2. Take a neutral position on ....
3. etc.

DPC ISSUE FORMAT

(The following format should be used for describing an issue or topic, and requesting that it be placed on the agenda of the Domestic Policy Council.

Send to Dr. Ralph C. Bledsoe, Executive Secretary, Domestic Policy Council, The White House, Washington, D.C., 20500.)

PROPOSED ISSUE (or TOPIC) for DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL

TITLE: (State the short title of the issue or topic; e.g., Management Improvement Legislation, or Fair Housing.)

DESCRIPTION

(In one paragraph, concisely describe the issue to be resolved or topic to be addressed. Issues should be phrased as questions, e.g., What should the Administration's position and Congressional strategy be on XYZ? When possible, specify major options to be considered for resolution.)

BACKGROUND

(Summarize pertinent history and current status of the issue or topic, including any previous actions by DPC, decisions of the President, congressional action, etc.)

ACTION-FORCING EVENTS

(Explain current activities requiring resolution or attention by the DPC. Include names of key individuals, groups, committees, etc. Emphasize important time-frames and deadlines.)

PRESIDENTIAL ACTION NEEDED

(Explain the type of action to be requested of the President; e.g., approval only, issuance of an Executive Order, legislative veto, discussion only/no decision, etc.)

LEAD AGENCY AND CONTACT

(List the agency, official, title, and telephone of the individual who will working with the DPC Executive Secretary.)

REQUESTING OFFICIAL

(If different from above individual, identify the source of the issue or topic proposal.)

4. We will never eliminate the unplanned, critical issues which "hit" at the last minute. However, I hope we can strengthen our overall approach to formulating and implementing Domestic Policy by focusing our collective efforts on long range planning on a continuing basis.

5. As previously stated, Chuck Kubic will be the contact for DPC planning. He can be reached at 456-6520 (OEOB Room 235) if you have any questions on the planning process, or if you wish to input DPC issues into the planning calendar.

6. Thanks for your continued support.

Copy to: Mr. Meese
Mr. Kingon

• THIS WAS AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE PROCESS AND ROLES

• NEVER FORMALIZED, BUT CLOSELY DESCRIBED THE "STANDARD" PROCESS

29 November 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. BLEDSOE

FROM: CHUCK KUBIC

SUBJ: THE PRESIDENT'S DOMESTIC POLICY PROCESS

I am a firm supporter of the President's cabinet government system. In an attempt to diagram the current process for developing domestic policy, I created a model and a flow chart which I previously forwarded to you. My initial analysis overlooked the role of the Office of Cabinet Affairs. My revised charts are a little more "cluttered", but more accurately depict all of the "players". The new charts are attached for your review.

The strength of cabinet government lies in the full involvement of department/agency staffs in proposing, developing, and implementing the President's policy. Drawbacks, such as additional coordination and time delays, can be minimized by an effective organizational structure and an efficient decision process which is known and understood by all "players". These points are probably intuitively obvious to those who have operated within the Cabinet Council system since 1981.

However, given the fairly recent reorganization of the Cabinet Councils, the current involvement of new principals and staffs, and the completion of White House staff transitions, it may be time to examine the following:

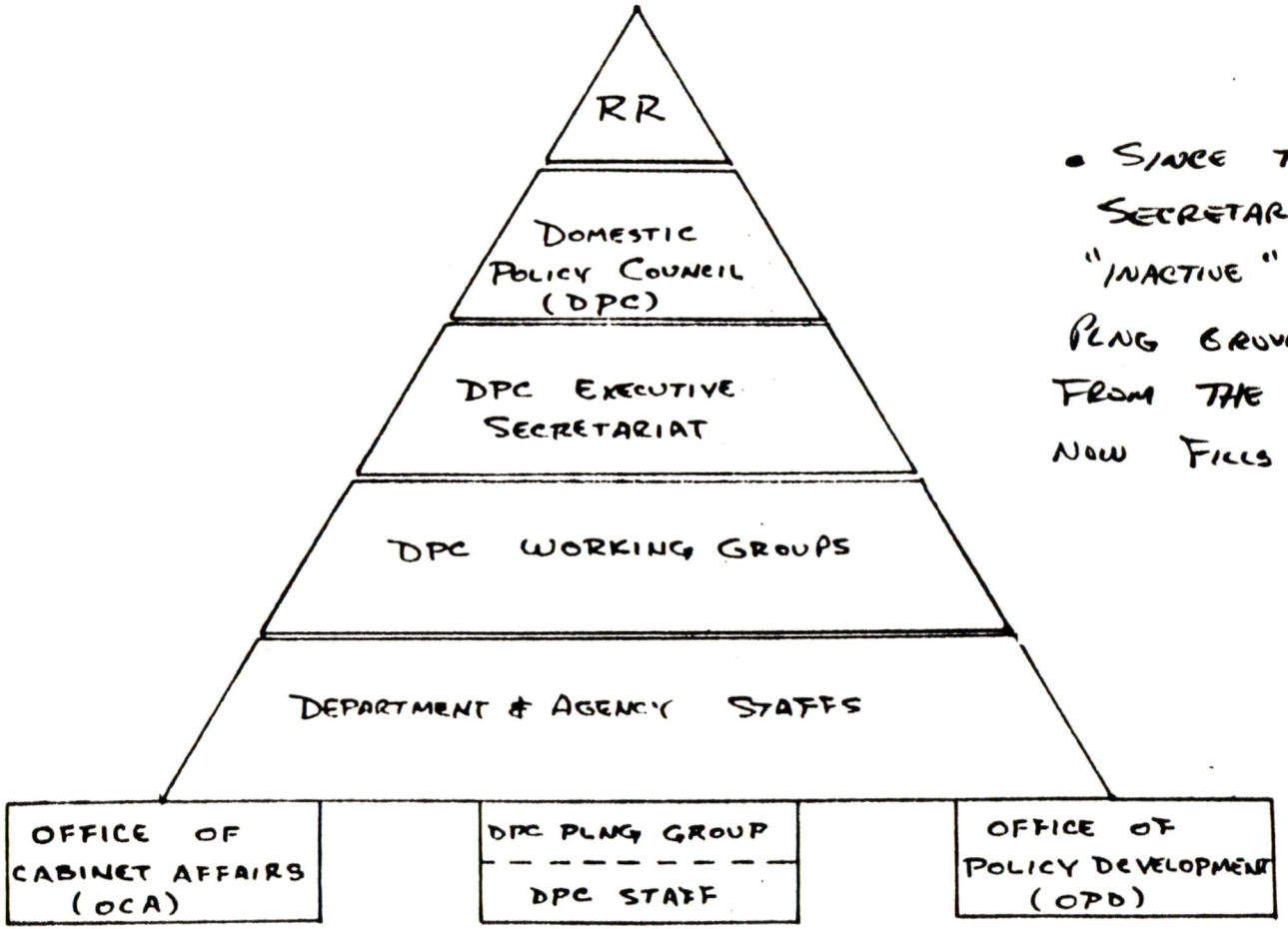
- How can both the White House and Department/Agency staffs become most productively involved in shaping and executing the President's domestic agenda over the next three years?
- How is the Domestic Policy process supposed to function? What are the proper roles for all participants?
- What actions should be taken to ensure that the Domestic Policy Council provides a useful forum to both Cabinet Officers/Agency Heads and Senior White House Staff?

I have reviewed the Jan 85 draft proposal which attempts to formally define the Domestic Policy process and which proposes organizational changes which ultimately developed into our current system. At this time, however, it would seem that such a formal document is neither necessary nor desireable. However, a simple memo with an organizational model and brief functional statements would serve as a helpful catalyst towards anwsering the questions posed above. Such a memo to DPC members would also emphasize their role in both policy development and implementation, and could strenghten the participation of their staffs in Working Groups and in the Executive Secretariat. It could also clarify the roles of the DPC supporting structure (OCA, the DPC staff, and OPD) without need for a more formal document.

If you desire, I will further develop and staff these ideas, and prepare a short, simple memo to the DPC members. This memo could be followed by discussions within each of the organizational elements.

THE PRESIDENT'S DOMESTIC POLICY PROCESS

CABINET GOVERNMENT PROVIDES "... A MEANS FOR DELIBERATE CONSIDERATION OF MAJOR POLICY ISSUES WHICH AFFECT THE INTERESTS OF MORE THAN ONE DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY."
- PRESIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM TO THE CABINET
MARCH 11, 1981



• SINCE THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT IS "INACTIVE", THE DPC PLNG GROUP WITH SUPPORT FROM THE DPC STAFF NOW FILLS THIS BLOCK.

• THIS IS THE SMOOTH INTO SHEET WHICH I PREPARED AND INFORMALLY DISTRIBUTED.

• ALTHOUGH THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT IS "INACTIVE", THE DPC STAFF ACTUALLY FULFILLS THIS FUNCTION!

December 1985

INFORMATION SHEET: The President's Domestic Pc

Philosophy

- The Domestic Policy process is structured to support Cabinet Government

  --White House and Department/Agency staffs are jointly involved in the policy development process

  --Issues which develop from a wide range of sources are properly analyzed, developed, and refined; divergent viewpoints are expressed in decision options

  --Policy is set by formal decision and action is initiated by Department/Agency personnel who were directly involved in policy development

Structure

- The Domestic Policy Council - Current Policy Development (Focus is within 90 day window)

  --DPC Senior Planning Group

  --DPC Executive Secretariat

  --DPC Working Groups

  --Department/Agency Staffs

- The Office of Cabinet Affairs - Coordinates formal communications between the Departments/Agencies and the White House

- The Office of Policy Development - Strategic Policy Development (Focus is greater than 90 days)

Responsibilities

- The Domestic Policy Council

  --Defines the Domestic Agenda
  --Formulates National Policy

- DPC Senior Planning Group

  --Plans the Domestic Agenda
  --Monitors issue development
  --Manages the Policy decision process

- DPC Executive Secretariat

  --Coordinates Policy proposals
  --Monitors Policy implementation

- DPC Working Groups

  --Frame Policy issues
  --Analyze supporting information
  --Develop Policy proposals and decision options

- Department/Agency Staffs

  --Propose Policy issues
  --Staff and support Working Groups
  --Implement Presidential Policy decisions

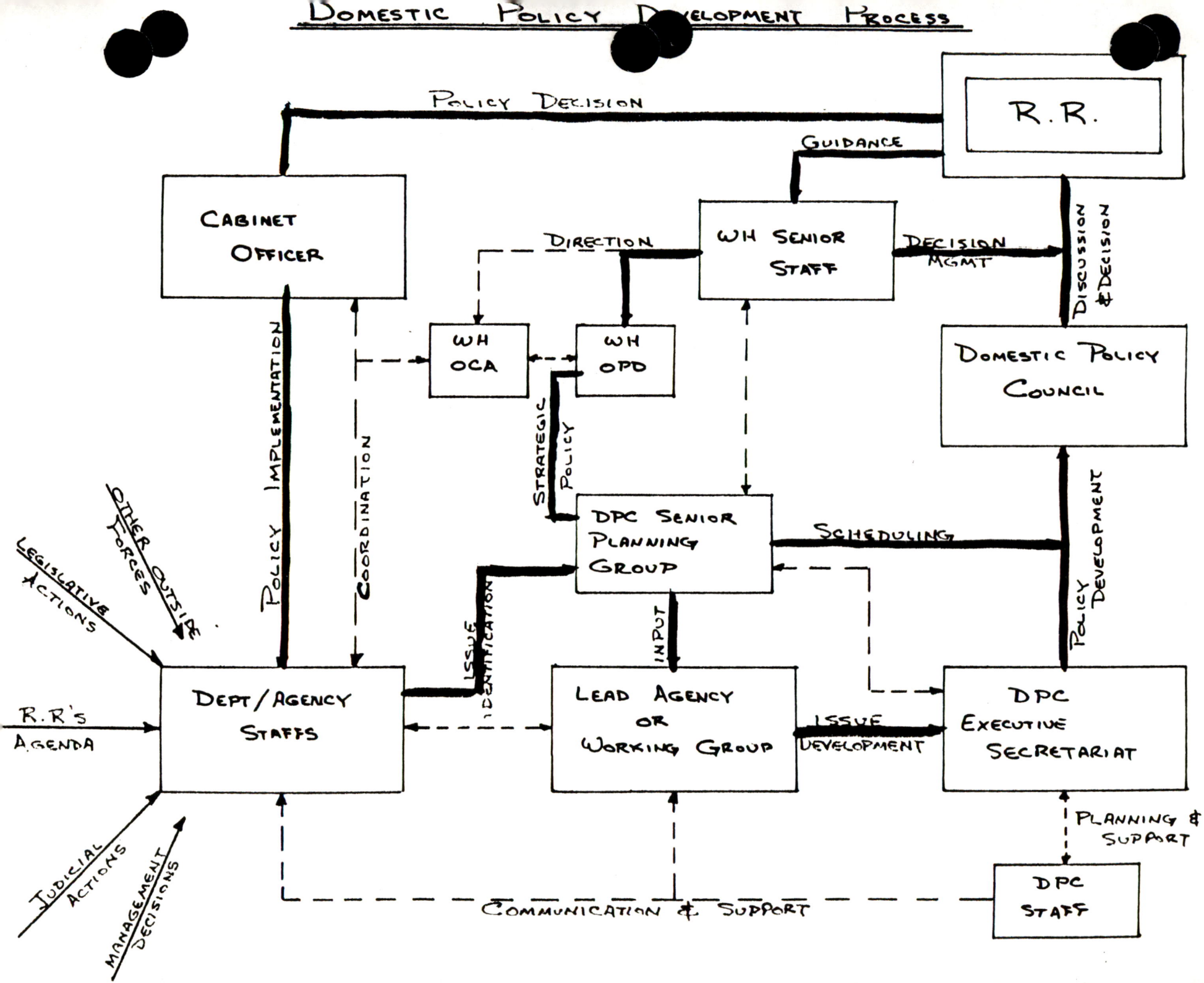
- The Office of Cabinet Affairs

  --Represents White House Senior Staff
  --Coordinates formal communications
  --Monitors Policy Development

- The Office of Policy Development

  --Articulates the Strategic Domestic Agenda
  --Provides Strategic Policy Development
  --Participates in DPC decision process

Domestic Policy Development Process



DOMESTIC POLICY REVIEW

January 1986

I. Executive Secretariat Review

- o The Domestic Policy Development Process
- o Recap of 1985 accomplishments
- o OMB presentation of budget-driven policy issues
  --1986
  --1987
  --1988-1991
- o OPD Strategic Policy Initiatives
- o Currently active issues
  --Decision implementation status
  --Working Group reports
- o Potential future issues
  --Agency reports

II. Domestic Policy Council Review

- o Recap of 1985 actions and accomplishments
- o Review of 1986 agenda
- o Presentation and discussion of long range initiatives

III. Presidential Review of Domestic Policy

BOB,
THIS WAS A PROPOSAL FOR A SERIES OF REVIEW AND PLANNING MEETINGS. IT NEVER MATERIALIZED - WE DID OUR WRITTEN ANNUAL REPORT INSTEAD.
CRA.

#1

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release February 26, 1981

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

The membership of each Cabinet Council has been finalized. The Cabinet Councils are designed to operate as subgroups of the full Cabinet, with the President presiding. Full Cabinet meetings will continue to focus on broad issues affecting the entire government and on overall budgetary and fiscal matters.

Cabinet Council procedures have been developed and endorsed by the President. The procedures are intended to create an orderly process for reviewing issues requiring a decision by the President.

The Cabinet Council procedures are:

* Each Cabinet Council will be chaired by the President.

* Each Cabinet Council has a designated chairman pro tempore who will guide the direction of the Council and will serve as the chairman of working sessions in which the President is not in attendance.

* An executive secretary will be appointed for each Cabinet Council from the Office of Policy Development. This individual, working with the Office of Cabinet Administration, will coordinate the activities of each Cabinet Council including the preparation and distribution of agendas and meeting summaries. This activity will be supplemented by a secretariat for each Cabinet Council, composed of the executive secretary, representatives of the member departments, and other personnel as needed, to prepare background materials, refine policy options and recommendations, and otherwise assist the Cabinet Council.

* Issues will be sent to Cabinet Councils by the Office of Cabinet Administration. Notification of such assignments will be communicated immediately to all Cabinet members to assure full opportunity to participate in consideration of each issue.

* Presidential decisions, made in or after Cabinet Council meetings, will follow full discussion by any Cabinet member who wishes to participate. Council meetings are open to any member of the Cabinet. Decisions will be reported to the full Cabinet as they occur. When full Cabinet review is required, the matter will be set for a meeting of the full Cabinet.

###

CABINET COUNCIL ON COMMERCE AND TRADE

Secretary of Commerce, Chairman Pro Tempore

Secretary of State

Secretary of the Treasury

Attorney General

Secretary of Agriculture

Secretary of Labor

Secretary of Transportation

U.S. Trade Representative

Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers

* The Vice President

* Counsellor to the President

* Chief of Staff

CABINET COUNCIL ON HUMAN RESOURCES

Secretary of Health and Human Services, Chairman Pro Tempore

Attorney General

Secretary of Agriculture

Secretary of Labor

Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

Secretary of Education

* The Vice President

* Counsellor to the President

* Chief of Staff

CABINET COUNCIL ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Secretary of the Treasury, Chairman Pro Tempore

Secretary of State

Secretary of Commerce

Secretary of Labor

Secretary of Transportation

Director, Office of Management and Budget

U.S. Trade Representative

Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers

* The Vice President

* Counsellor to the President

* Chief of Staff

CABINET COUNCIL ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Secretary of the Interior, Chairman Pro Tempore

Attorney General

Secreatry of Agriculture

Secretary of Transportation

Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

Secretary of Energy

* The Vice President

* Counsellor to the President

* Chief of Staff

CABINET COUNCIL ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Secretary of Agriculture, Chairman Pro Tempore

Secretary of State

Secretary of the Interior

Secretary of Commerce

Secretary of Transportation

U.S. Trade Representative

* The Vice President

* Counsellor to the President

* Chief of Staff

* Ex officio member

Exhibit #2

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Santa Barbara, California)

For Immediate Release April 11, 1985

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Today I am announcing the creation of two cabinet-level bodies -- the Economic Policy Council and the Domestic Policy Council -- to assist me in the formulation and execution of domestic and economic policy. I will chair both Councils. These two Councils will replace the seven existing Cabinet Councils and the Senior Interagency Group-International Economic Policy. The new entities will streamline policy development and decision making. Together with the National Security Council, they will serve as the primary channels for advising me on policy matters.

The Economic Policy Council will be composed of the Secretaries of State, Treasury, Agriculture, Commerce and Labor, the Director of Office of Management and Budget, the United States Trade Representative and the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors. It will provide advice to me concerning all aspects of national and international economic policy. The heads of the national security community departments and agencies and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs will participate in Council meetings whenever international policy or budget matters are discussed. In my absence, the Secretary of the Treasury will serve as Chairman Pro-Tempore.

The Domestic Policy Council will be composed of the Attorney General, the Secretaries of the Interior, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Energy and Education, and the Director of Office of Management and Budget. It will provide advice to me on domestic and social policy. In my absence the Attorney General will serve as Chairman Pro Tempore.

The heads of non-member departments and agencies will be invited to participate in either Council's deliberations whenever matters affecting their organizations are on the agenda. The Vice President and Chief of Staff will serve as ex-officio members of both Councils.

The new, streamlined decision making process enhances my commitment to cabinet government. It will provide for added accountability and efficiency in formulating and implementing policy.

# # #

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Santa Barbara, California)

For Immediate Release April 11, 1985

FACT SHEET

Economic Policy Council
Domestic Policy Council

In order to provide better policy coordination, formulation and implementation, the President today announced the creation of two new cabinet-level councils, the Economic Policy Council and the Domestic Policy Council, to advise him on economic and domestic policy issues.

The Economic Policy Council will consider those policy issues that are primarily economic in nature; the Domestic Policy Council will consider those policy issues that are not primarily economic in nature.

These new councils build on the President's commitment to cabinet government and to the inclusion of department and agency heads in the Administration's decision-making process.

General Features

The streamlined, consolidated system will help clarify responsibility and enhance accountability for formulating and implementing economic and domestic policy.

- The two new councils will replace the following:

  - Cabinet Council on Commerce and Trade
  - Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs
  - Cabinet Council on Food and Agriculture
  - Cabinet Council on Human Resources
  - Cabinet Council on Legal Policy
  - Cabinet Council on Management and Administration
  - Cabinet Council on Natural Resources and the Environment
  - Senior Interagency Group on International Economic Policy

- The Economic Policy Council, the Domestic Policy Council and the National Security Council will serve as the primary channels for advising the President on policy.

- The Vice President and the Chief of Staff will serve as ex-officio members of both the Economic and Domestic Policy Councils.

Economic Policy Council

The increasing interrelatedness of the U.S. and international economies illustrates the importance of establishing a process that will examine economic issues in a comprehensive integrated way. The Economic Policy Council will provide the President with a single entity to advise him on domestic and international economic policy.

Membership

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of the Treasury
The Secretary of Agriculture
The Secretary of Commerce
The Secretary of Labor
Director, Office of Management and Budget
The United States Trade Representative
Chairman, Council of Economic Advisors

Heads of the national security community departments and agencies and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs will participate in council meetings when international policy or budget matters are discussed.

Chairmanship

The President will chair meetings of the Economic Policy Council. In his absence, the Secretary of the Treasury, who will serve as Chairman Pro Tempore, will preside at meetings of the Council.

Responsibilities

The Council will have the responsibility for advising the President on all aspects of national and international economic policy, and for overseeing the coordination and implementation of the Administration's economic policies.

Staff

The staff of the Council shall be headed by an Executive Secretary who will report to the Chief of Staff through the Cabinet Secretary.

Like the current cabinet councils, the Economic Policy Council will rely heavily on interagency subcabinet level Working Groups. This will enable it to utilize fully the expertise and resources of the departments and agencies, and to provide a structure through which departmental initiatives can be considered fully.

Domestic Policy Council

The Domestic Policy Council will provide the President with a single entity to advise him on domestic and social policy. By focusing decision making and advice through a single channel for domestic policy issues, this will enhance the prospects for developing such policies in a comprehensive and integrated way.

Chairmanship

The President will chair meetings of the Domestic Policy Council. In his absence, the Attorney General, who will serve as Chairman Pro Tempore, will preside at meetings of the Council.

Responsibilities

The Council will have responsibility for advising the President on all aspects of domestic policy issues, and for overseeing the coordination and implementation of the Administration's domestic policies.

Staff

The staff of the Council shall be headed by an Executive Secretary who will report to the Chief of Staff through the Cabinet Secretary.

Like the current cabinet councils, the Domestic Policy Council will rely heavily on interagency subcabinet level Working Groups. This will enable it to fully utilize the expertise and resources of the departments and agencies, and to provide a structure through which departmental initiatives can be considered fully.

Overall Coordination

The White House Chief of Staff will have responsibility for ensuring that the activities of the National Security Council, the Economic Policy Council, and the Domestic Policy Council are fully coordinated. He will also have the responsibility for assigning topics to a particular Council.

# # #

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Santa Barbara, California)

For Immediate Release April 11, 1985

FACT SHEET

Economic Policy Council
Domestic Policy Council

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These new councils build on the President's commitment to cabinet government and to the inclusion of department and agency heads in the Administration's decision-making process.

General Features

The streamlined, consolidated system will help clarify responsibility and enhance accountability for formulating and implementing economic and domestic policy.

- The two new councils will replace the following:

  Cabinet Council on Commerce and Trade
  Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs
  Cabinet Council on Food and Agriculture
  Cabinet Council on Human Resources
  Cabinet Council on Legal Policy
  Cabinet Council on Management and Administration
  Cabinet Council on Natural Resources and the Environment
  Senior Interagency Group on International Economic Policy

- The Economic Policy Council, the Domestic Policy Council and the National Security Council will serve as the primary channels for advising the President on policy.

- The Vice President and the Chief of Staff will serve as ex-officio members of both the Economic and Domestic Policy Councils.

- Executive department and agency heads who are not

Economic Policy Council

The increasing interrelatedness of the U.S. and international economies illustrates the importance of establishing a process that will examine economic issues in a comprehensive integrated way. The Economic Policy Council will provide the President with a single entity to advise him on domestic and international economic policy.

Membership

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of the Treasury
The Secretary of Agriculture
The Secretary of Commerce
The Secretary of Labor
Director, Office of Management and Budget
The United States Trade Representative
Chairman, Council of Economic Advisors

Heads of the national security community departments and agencies and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs will participate in council meetings when international policy or budget matters are discussed.

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Chairmanship

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Overall Coordination

The White House Chief of Staff will have responsibility for ensuring that the activities of the National Security Council, the Economic Policy Council, and the Domestic Policy Council are fully coordinated. He will also have the responsibility for assigning topics to a particular Council.

# # #

THE PRESIDENT'S DOMESTIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

A Presentation to the
OPM "Administration of Public Policy" Seminar
Denver, Colorado

March 24, 1986

INTRODUCTION

Good Morning! I trust that everyone had a boring weekend and that your're all happy to be "back in school" on Monday morning!

As I looked over the many interesting topics in your program in preparation for this presentation, I thought that maybe I should be on the "listening side" rather than than the "talking side" at this seminar. And now, as I look out over this room and see the wealth of experience assembled here, I'm even more convinced that I may be able to learn more today than I could hope to teach.

I'm sure that many of you have a great interest in our Domestic Policy. This morning I hope to pass along some information on Presidential decision making and to stimulate group discussion on the policy process as well as several domestic issues.

My presentation will be organized into three main parts:

- Presidential Decision Making and the Philosophy of Cabinet Government;
- Developing Domestic Policy; and,
- An Overview of current Domestic Issues.

If we have time, I would also like to focus on one specific domestic issue which should be of interest to all of you:

- Management and the FY87 Budget.

I encourage you to ask questions during the presentation, and I will set aside time for discussion at the end of each topic.

PRESIDENTIAL DECISION MAKING AND CABINET GOVERNMENT

Background

Congressional decision making is often called translucent because of its open nature. (Of course, that's if and when decisions are actually made!) After a few days on the hill, an observer can easily begin to recognize the Congressional system and understand their decision making process. Presidential decision making, on

...ther hand, is sometimes viewed much more "mysteriously" - ..., in large part, to the "closed door" nature of most ...idential meetings. But I also think that this impression is ...to the significantly different approaches which recent ...idents have taken towards policy development. I hope to ...ll some of the "mystery" this morning.

...importance of Presidential decision making is probably ...itively obvious to most of you. But it takes on an even ...ater significance when the President's "center stage" role is ...sidered within our democratic system which is solidly based in ...e principle of division of power. Although many have said that ...President only has the power to persuade, it is essential ...hat he and his advisors recognize the true weight of their ...fluence, understand the factors which impact their decisions, ...d proceed in a thoughtful, preplanned manner.) I'm ~~reminded of the newly assigned Captain of a battleship.~~

~~(insert battleship joke)~~

~~In all seriousness,~~ Presidents ~~also have to watch for reefs and lighthouses.~~ ~~Their~~ decisions cannot usually be made by starting with a clean slate and a free hand. Decisions are often influenced by:

- Campaign promises;
- The decisions of previous Presidents; or,
- Unforeseen external events.

Decisions must also be made recognizing implementation constraints directly impacting the executive branch such as:

- Congressional use of budget and oversight powers to directly influence the actions of Cabinet Officers;
- The influence of constituencies who feel that they should be represented by Cabinet Departments and major Agencies; and,
- The large, complex executive branch supporting structure which must be called upon to implement policy decisions, i.e. all of us!

In his book Presidential Decision Making, Roger Porter discusses three basic strategies which recent president's have followed to organize the pattern of advice which they receive from their immediate staff and from executive departments and agencies.

(Roger served on the Economic Policy Council during the Ford Administration and until last year was the Director of the Office of Policy Development for President Reagan. I think his book is available in the Center library for those of you who want to pursue this topic a little further.)

Executive Secretary of the

Although the three basic decision making strategies are not mutually exclusive, they can be categorized as: Adhocracy, Centralized Management, and Multiple Advocacy. Let's briefly look at the characteristics of each of these approaches:

Under Adhocracy, there are very few regular or systematic channels to provide advice to the President. Instead, the President often distributes assignments and selects whom he listens to and when. Different advisors may be given competing assignments to develop an initiative. Random distribution of assignments and responsibilities can often result in "turf" battles. (FDR created considerable internal chaos using this approach; LBJ tried this strategy with mixed results.) Adhocracy often emerges in the early weeks and months of a new administration as the principle officials learn about each other and begin to govern after months of campaigning. As its name implies, Adhocracy relies on ad hoc groups and arrangements, and usually operates under the direction of advocates. The degree of departmental participation depends upon the individual who organizes the information for the President and will vary considerably from issue to issue. Recent examples of policies developed by advocates using this approach are: the Carter energy program developed by James Schlesinger; the welfare reform proposals which Joseph Califano also developed for President Carter; and the Carter tax reform proposals developed by Michael Blumenthal.

Centralized Management emphasizes heavy reliance on the White House staff and the Executive Office of the President. Ideas, proposals, and department recommendations are filtered by these staffs before they are presented to the President. This approach usually grows from a desire for analysis and recommendations from individuals who share the President's perspective. In this system, the President's staff not only closely manages the flow of communications between the departments and the President, but, "in theory", it also provides neutral, objective analysis, and structures policy alternatives to transcend departmental parochialism. This approach began to dominate the Nixon White House, and resulted in reduced reliance upon the Cabinet and considerable staff growth as the President's advisors attempted to duplicate and compete with the analytical depth of the various departments and agencies.

By contrast, Multiple Advocacy is an open system designed to systematically expose the President to competing arguments and viewpoints with well defined policy options. Positions are personnally presented by the advocates themselves. However, chaos is avoided by a well defined process which is managed by an "honest broker" who ensures that all interested parties are represented and that the debate is structured and balanced. This approach emphasizes careful weighing of views, and is based on the philosophy that the best method for developing policy is an orderly, systematic and balanced competition of ideas. The

...st broker and his staff do not serve as biased intermediaries ...ween departmental advocates and the President; but, they are more than just gatekeepers. They seek to promote a genuine ...petition of ideas, to broaden the range of options or ...ngthen inadequately represented viewpoints, and, in short, ... work to ensure due process and quality control.

... decision-making approaches have certain advantages and ...mitations and Presidents have made versitile use of all three ... time to time. However, given proper staff behavior and ...ntinuity (and sometimes that's asking a lot!), multiple ...vocacy presents several significant advantages:

- All points of view are represented and alternative courses of action are fully explored;

- Policy is developed within the context of the political forces which will later impact its successful implementation; and,

- The President's influence is strengthened throughout the executive branch by a process that mobilizes resources more systematically than does adhocracy and more completely than does centralized management.

There's no doubt it - Multiple Advocacy requires teamwork! It relies heavily upon a stable core of senior advisors and principle advocates who are willing to share responsibility for collectively providing the President with:

--breadth and depth in his decision making

--over an entire range of issues

--in broad policy areas.

But Multiple Advocacy works! The President's success to date is in no small part due to his basic decision-making philosophy and its supporting structure.

Philosphy

The President's Domestic Policy process was developed around the principles of multiple advocacy and is structured to support Cabinet Government.

- The White House and the Department and Agency staffs are jointly involved in the policy development process;

- Issues which surface from a wide range of sources are properly analyzed, developed, and refined on an interagency basis;

- Divergent viewpoints are expressed and debated internally and issue papers are prepared with competing decision options;

- Policy is set by formal decision after cabinet level discussion; and,

- Policy is implemented by Department and Agency officials who were directly involved in policy development.

The First Term - The Cabinet Council System

(Use viewgraphs to describe the President's previous cabinet council system.)

- The Cabinet Council system, which was utilized during the first term, can be described by the following key points:

- It was a high-level management tool to provide, as the President stated, "... a means for deliberate consideration of major policy issues which affect the interests of more than one department or agency."

- The full Cabinet was consulted for government-wide issues. However, seven Cabinet Councils were established in the key policy areas of: Commerce and Trade; Economic Affairs; Food and Agriculture; Human Resources; Natural Resources and Environment; Legal Policy; and Management and Administration.

- Each Cabinet Council was chaired by the President, had a Chairman Pro Tempore of Cabinet Rank, and included selected Agency Heads and White House Officials.

- The Councils included the Vice President, the Assistant to the President for Policy Development, and the Chief of Staff as Ex Officio members.

- Each Council had an Executive Secretary to manage the process and serve as an "honest broker".

- The Councils allowed the President to function as the "Chief Executive Officer" of a "corporate styled" government.

- New issues and problems were anticipated and "crisis" issues were handled within an established framework with White House and Agency officials operating as a team.

Second Term - The Domestic Policy Council

On April 11, 1985, the President announced the creation of two cabinet-level bodies to assist him in the formulation and execution of domestic and economic policy.

The Domestic and Economic Policy Councils replaced the seven Cabinet Councils with the intent of streamlining policy development and decision making.

- The two new councils together with the National Security Council constitute the primary channels for advising the President on policy matters. The budget system also provides a parallel process for addressing issues which are primarily budget driven.

- From the President's perspective, however, the shift did not represent a major change since policy decisions were presented to him in substantially the same manner as under the Cabinet Council system.

- The Domestic Policy Council is chaired by the President and provides him with a single advisory group on domestic and social policy. The Attorney General serves as the Chairman Pro Tempore. Other members are:

  --The Secretary of the Interior
  --The Secretary of Health and Human Services
  --The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
  --The Secretary of Energy
  --The Secretary of Education
  --The Director of the Office of Management and Budget

  The Vice President, the Chief of Staff, and the Assistant to the President for Policy Development serve as Ex Officio members of the DPC. Other interested Cabinet Officers and Agency Heads attend DPC meetings when they have an interest in specific issues.

- The Council staff is headed by an Executive Secretary who fulfills the role of "honest broker" and reports to the Chief of Staff through the Cabinet Secretary.

- The DPC relies heavily on interagency subcabinet level Working Groups to fully utilize the expertise and resources of the departments and agencies, and to provide a structure through which department initiatives can be fully considered.

DOMESTIC POLICY PROCESS

Approach

The strength of cabinet government lies in the full involvement of departments and major agencies in proposing, developing, and implementing the President's policy. Drawbacks, such as additional coordination and time delays, can be minimized by an effective organizational structure and an efficient decision process which is known and understood by all "players".

- The President is very sensitive to the contributions which line officials from the departments and agencies can make in the decision-making process.

- He wants to get advice directly from the people who have a stake in the issue without filtering by White House intermediaries - even if this approach requires competing views to be debated in front of him at council meetings.

→ Key Issue

- In addition to council discussions, the President also likes to review issue papers which outline options and their associated advantages and disadvantages before making a decision.

- A primary objective of the decision making process is to array before the President, in a simple and direct manner, all of the information he needs to make an informed decision. The process ensures that everyone gets his day in court.

- Once the decision-making process is completed and policy is established, the President then expects all officials in his Administration to fully support his final decision.

Structure

- Three principle groups within the White House staff are actively involved in the Domestic Policy Process.

  (Use viewgraph showing organizational elements)

- The Office of Policy Development is a small group of senior analysts and advisors who report to the Assistant to the President for Policy Development. They focus on strategic policy development and generally work on issues or initiatives which will surface several months in the future. Once they have developed a specific proposal, it is input into the Domestic Policy Council process in much the same way as a proposal from a department or agency. Similiarly, OPD staffers participate in analyzing and shaping department and agency proposals as they proceed through the DPC process.

The Domestic Policy Council generally focuses on current policy development and manages issues which will be ready for discussion and decision within a 90 day planning window. The council staff is headed by an Executive Secretary (my boss - Dr. Ralph Bledsoe) who manages the council process. Most of the information gathering, issue analysis, and development of options is performed within interagency working groups which generally include Assistant Secretaries supported by their respective staffs. Issue papers are physically prepared by the Working Groups and are presented to the DPC for review, discussion and decision.

The Office of Cabinet Affairs focuses on day-to-day issues and decisions and coordinates all formal communications between the Departments and Agencies and the White House. They provide a single formal point of contact between the White House and Cabinet Staffs.

Summary of Responsibilities

- The Office of Policy Development

  --Articulates the strategic domestic agenda
  --Provides strategic policy development
  --Participates in the DPC decision process

- The Office of Cabinet Affairs

  --Represents the White House Senior Staff
  --Coordinates formal communications
  --Monitors policy development

- The Domestic Policy Council

  --Defines the domestic agenda
  --Formulates national policy

  --Directs issue-oriented Working Groups which:
    --Frame policy issues
    --Analyze supporting information
    --Develop policy proposals and decision options

  --Works with Department and Agency Staffs which:
    --Propose policy issues
    --Staff and support Working Groups
    --Implement Presidential decisions

Policy Development and Implementation

- Once issues are identified as appropriate agenda items for consideration by the DPC, they are usually channeled into one of the topic-oriented standing Working Groups, or a special short-term Working Group may be established to handle an issue in a more specific topic area that requires specialized inter-agency analysis.

Working Groups will generally meet several times a month, depending upon the urgency of the issue, and will report back to the Council once they have developed specific options and, hopefully, a consensus recommendation. Sometimes Working Groups which are handling more complex issues, schedule a series of presentations to the DPC over the course of several months. Other issues are "finalized" more quickly and Council decisions are obtained within a matter of weeks (or even days in extremely urgent cases).

- In most cases the Chairman Pro Tempore will convene the Council without the President for the initial discussion of an issue. In some cases, where a general consensus exists for a particular course of action, policy can be set by the Council without meeting with the President. This approach is consistent with the Administration's philosophy of making decisions at the lowest responsible level within government.

- If differences exist after thorough analysis and discussion, competing options are framed by the interested parties with their respective pros and cons and presented to the President personally and in a written issue paper. In many cases, alternative implementation strategies and the politics associated with a particular issue are also weighed in the Council before a final decision is made.

- The President's time is a valuable commodity. But, as Chairman of the Council, he is an active participant in DPC decisions. As I indicated earlier, true cabinet government facilitates unconstrained debate between alternative points of view before the final decision is made by the Chief Executive.

- But, the best policy decision in the world is worthless if it cannot be effectively implemented. Once a DPC decision is made, the charge to implement it is handed back to the lead agency which originated the proposal. If they "did their homework", the Council probably supported their position and they should have a "head of steam" to sustain them in initiating the required action. If their proposal was modified, they can feel satisfied that they were active participants in the policy development process, and that they are now charged to implement the sense of the Council and the decision of the President.

- Whether administrative or legislative action is required, the President's decision-making process allows objections within the Executive Branch to be made and hopefully resolved before a decision is made and action is initiated. Although the upfront work may take time and sometimes prove difficult, experience has proven that it is better to work out the problems first, and to then approach implementation with a unified Administration position and the full support of the President.

DOMESTIC ISSUES

America's Agenda for the Future

- The President's message to the Congress following the State of the Union address outlined the key domestic issues facing our government in the months and years ahead.

  (Refer to the fact sheet for any discussion or questions)

- The message had four broad themes:

  --Preparing for a decade of economic growth;

  --Defining our values for a modern age;

  --Advancing the technological era; and,

  --Expanding the family of free nations.

- The major topics included under the two domestic themes were:

  --Education

  --Welfare

  --Health

  --Justice and Public Safety

  --Personal Freedom

  --Environment

  --Federalism

  --Technology

- At this point, I'd like to focus on those issues which are of greatest interest to the group. Perhaps we could start with a few questions and stimulate a more general group discussion. I'll try to focus on facts and process and leave the political debates for those who are "diligently toiling" in Washington.

MANAGEMENT AND THE FY 87 BUDGET

Introduction

We have some time left, and as I mentioned earlier, I think it would be interesting to talk a little bit about an issue in which the DPC is deeply involved - improving government management.

- President Reagan may be unique among recent Presidents in his personal interest in making government work.

- You may be familiar with his Management Improvement Program - Reform 88 - which was launched four years ago. This management effort continues and is now being expanded.

Budget Decisions

- This year, OMB has taken another major step forward in management improvement by developing the FY 87 budget as an integral part of a government-wide management decision making process. This process is designed to focus on our Federal bottom line - effective government within a balanced budget - in a manner similar to every major corporation in America.

- Management decision rules were used to structure a theme oriented FY 1987 budget which cuts across agency lines. These decision rules can be simply stated by a series of questions:

  "Is this a function that the Federal government should be performing?"

  "If not, by whom should it be accomplished?"

  --"By another level of government through devolution or Federalism?'

  --"By the private sector through asset sales, privatization, or contracting out?"

  --"Or maybe it shouldn't be performed at all - should it be just merely terminated?"

  "If, on the other hand, this function should be accomplished by the Federal government:"

  --"Is it presently being performed at the right level, or should it be expanded, contracted, or frozen?"

  --"Also, can it be accomplished more cost-effectively as a result of reducing waste, fraud, and abuse; productivity improvements; efficiency enhancements; or changes in program delivery?"

These rules were used to shape this year's budget and they will also be used to develop the FY 88 budget next year. I'm sure that this approach wiil become the subject of many discussions and political debates in the months ahead.

Reform 88

- An expanded Reform 88 effort will also be undertaken in the months ahead to support management's ability to make budget decisions based upon better information and improved teamwork throughout the departments and agencies.

- But looking back, Reform 88 achievements to date are truly noteworthy:

  --$63 billion in cost avoidance was realized by stopping waste, fraud, and abuse.

  --125 million copies/year of publications have been eliminated.

  --Streamlined regulatory processes have saved 500 million hours/year.

  --Cash flow management reforms have reduced costs by $3.2 billion over 6 years.

  --332 accounting systems will be reduced to one per agency by 1990.

  --134 payroll/personnel systems will be reduced to 12 by 1992.

  --And these are just a few examples. There are also many more past and soon to be realized accomplishments.

- The Reform 88 expansion will focus on total management rather than administrative systems. There are thousands of individual projects included in the expanded program. However, three key priorities are: budget/financial accounting reform, credit management, and productivity.

- Budget/financial system reform:

  --Despite the use of "decision rules" and this year's "theme oriented" approach to budget development, the budget still does not adequately reflect program plans across agency lines.

--Our Federal government needs a real financial management system which ties the budget process into the financial accounting system to facilitate programmatic follow-up.

--We also need to introduce a capital budget within our current budget to improve management of our capital investment decisions.

--OMB will be working with the agencies to correct these problems.

- Credit Management:

--The Federal government is the largest financial intermediary in the United States. It is allocating credit, directly or indirectly, worth around a trillion dollars.

--The major needs to be addressed in this area are:

  --Stressing credit management rather than just getting the loans out;

  --Developing an overall credit policy; and

  --Getting proven private sector tools into the hands of agency managers.

(Refer to OMB briefing for questions on specific initiatives)

- The President's Productivity Improvement Program:

--In a July 31, 1985 message to Congress, the President announced a new government-wide program to improve productivity 20% by 1992 in selected high-priority functions. More recently, on February 25th, he signed an Executive Order directing agencies to develop productivity improvement programs.

--The purpose of this initiative is to improve the quality, timeliness and efficiency with which Federal services are delivered to the public by becoming more productive, more cost-conscious and more quality-conscious at all levels of government service.

--Agencies will set their own goals and will <u>focus on results</u> - not process.

--Agencies will be required to establish policies which make it clear that productivity improvement is everyone's job, and that those who contribute and participate in problem-solving will be rewarded.

--Achieving the President's goal will make a substantial contribution to deficit reduction. But, properly achieving this goal will also demonstrate to the American public that while the Federal government is serious about cost cutting and efficiency, we will also maintain high-quality and timely services.

--The Domestic Policy Council will be deeply involved in the numerous policy decisions supporting this program. But, the President's challenge is clear - he is asking all of you, the leaders and managers of our government, to work with him and his top managers to achieve better government.

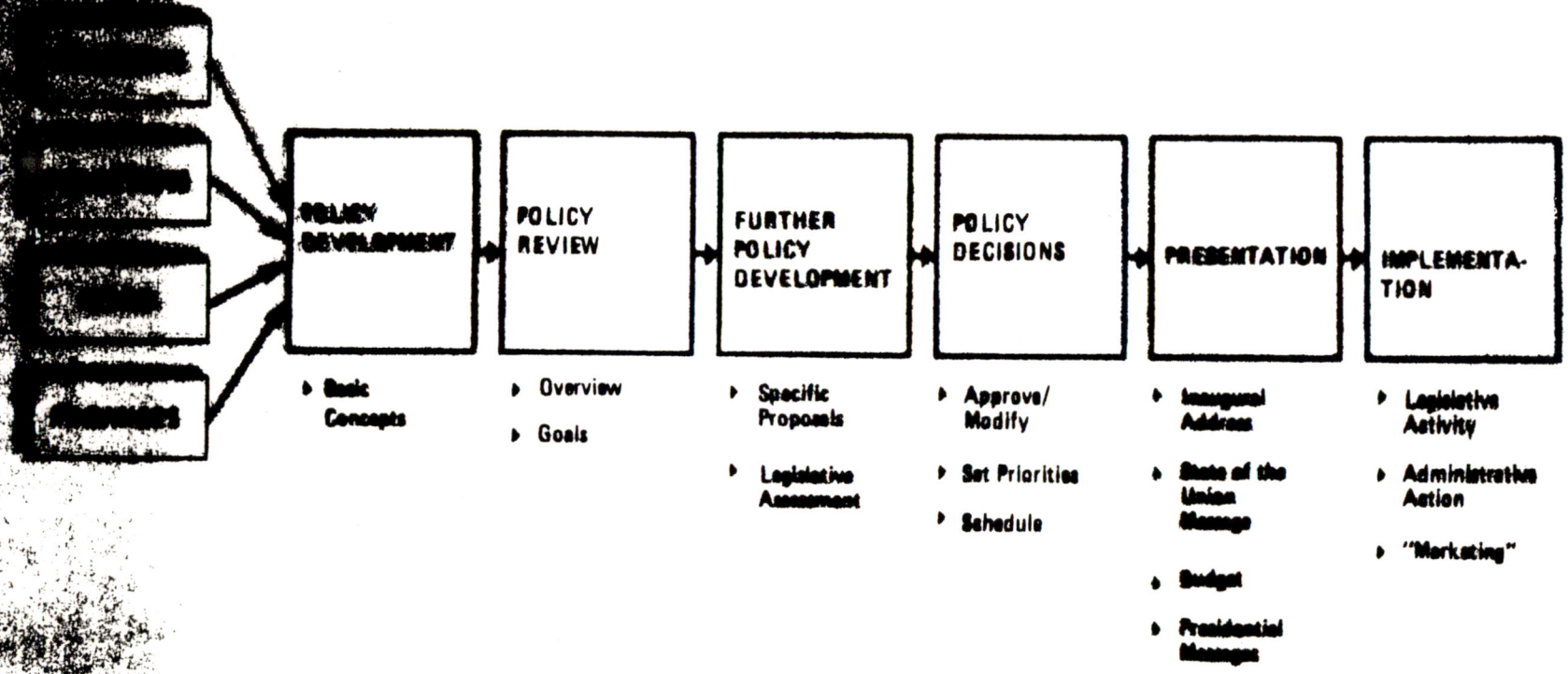
--As the President said in his first inaugural address: "It is not my intention to do away with Government, it is rather to make it work."

And with that inspiring quote, it's time for me to stop.

I think that we still have time for a few more questions.

I would like to close by thanking all of you for your attention and participation. I would also like to express my appreciation to OPM and the Western Executive Seminar Center for inviting me here to speak today. Good luck to all of you and enjoy the rest of the week.

PLANNING PROCESS



[redacted]

2D TERM

[redacted] ADMINISTRATION

[redacted] ENVIRONMENT

DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL

[redacted] ECONOMIC POLICY COUNCIL

[redacted]

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Santa Barbara, California)

For Immediate Release April 11, 1985

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Today I am announcing the creation of two cabinet-level bodies -- the Economic Policy Council and the Domestic Policy Council -- to assist me in the formulation and execution of domestic and economic policy. I will chair both Councils. These two Councils will replace the seven existing Cabinet Councils and the Senior Interagency Group-International Economic Policy. The new entities will streamline policy development and decision making. Together with the National Security Council, they will serve as the primary channels for advising me on policy matters.

The Economic Policy Council will be composed of the Secretaries of State, Treasury, Agriculture, Commerce and Labor, the Director of Office of Management and Budget, the United States Trade Representative and the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors. It will provide advice to me concerning all aspects of national and international economic policy. The heads of the national security community departments and agencies and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs will participate in Council meetings whenever international policy or budget matters are discussed. In my absence, the Secretary of the Treasury will serve as Chairman Pro-Tempore.

The Domestic Policy Council will be composed of the Attorney General, the Secretaries of the Interior, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Energy and Education, and the Director of Office of Management and Budget. It will provide advice to me on domestic and social policy. In my absence the Attorney General will serve as Chairman Pro Tempore.

The heads of non-member departments and agencies will be invited to participate in either Council's deliberations whenever matters affecting their organizations are on the agenda. The Vice President and Chief of Staff will serve as ex-officio members of both Councils.

The new, streamlined decision making process enhances my commitment to cabinet government. It will provide for added accountability and efficiency in formulating and implementing policy.

# # #

December 1985

INFORMATION SHEET: The President's Domestic Policy Process

Philosophy

- The Domestic Policy process is structured to support Cabinet Government

  --White House and Department/Agency staffs are jointly involved in the policy development process

  --Issues which develop from a wide range of sources are properly analyzed, developed, and refined; divergent viewpoints are expressed in decision options

  --Policy is set by formal decision and action is initiated by Department/Agency personnel who were directly involved in policy development

Structure

- The Domestic Policy Council - Current Policy Development (Focus is within 90 day window)

  --DPC Senior Planning Group

  --DPC Executive Secretariat

  --DPC Working Groups

  --Department/Agency Staffs

- The Office of Cabinet Affairs - Coordinates formal communications between the Departments/Agencies and the White House

- The Office of Policy Development - Strategic Policy Development (Focus is greater than 90 days)

Responsibilities

- The Domestic Policy Council

  --Defines the Domestic Agenda
  --Formulates National Policy

- DPC Senior Planning Group

  --Plans the Domestic Agenda
  --Monitors issue development
  --Manages the Policy decision process

- DPC Executive Secretariat

  --Coordinates Policy proposals
  --Monitors Policy implementation

- DPC Working Groups

  --Frame Policy issues
  --Analyze supporting information
  --Develop Policy proposals and decision options

- Department/Agency Staffs

  --Propose Policy issues
  --Staff and support Working Groups
  --Implement Presidential Policy decisions

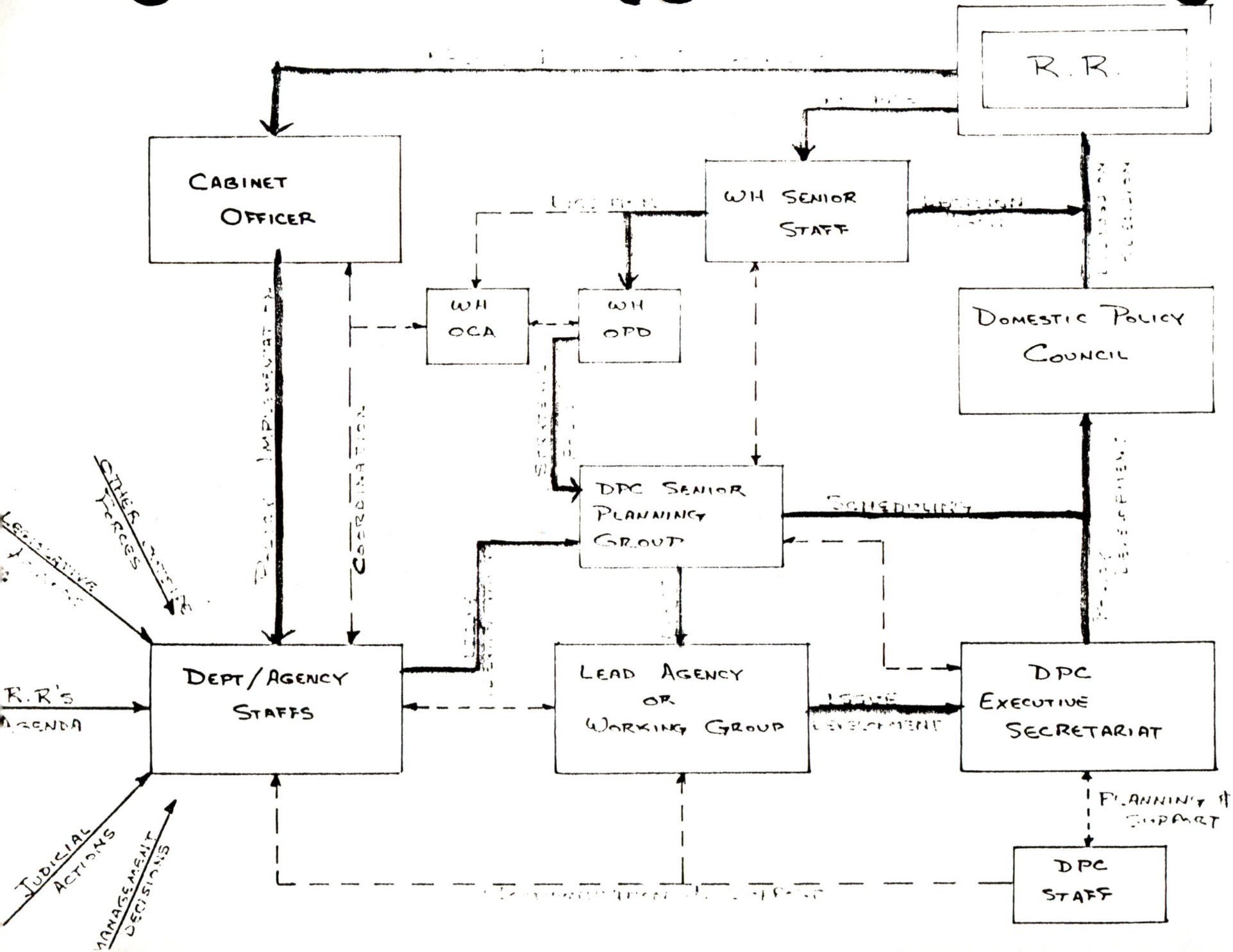
- The Office of Cabinet Affairs

  --Represents White House Senior Staff
  --Coordinates formal communications
  --Monitors Policy Development

- The Office of Policy Development

  --Articulates the Strategic Domestic Agenda
  --Provides Strategic Policy Development
  --Participates in DPC decision process

DOMESTIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



January 15, 1985

DRAFT

ORGANIZATION FOR PRESIDENTIAL DOMESTIC POLICY

BACKGROUND

For the President's second term, we must improve the White House domestic policy-making processes and mechanisms.

The President should receive the best possible support and advice from the White House staff. And, domestic policies, once decided, should set in motion actions to achieve the President's policy agenda.

Follow-through at the White House level is heavily dependent on two factors -- accountability and adequate staff resources.

- o Focused accountability is vital for providing the President with well-developed domestic policy options, and for ensuring follow-through.

  Currently, accountability is diffused and shared among several White House officials and offices, including:

  - The Counsellor to the President
  - Assistant to the President for Policy Development
  - Director, Office of Cabinet Affairs (OCA)
  - Director, Office of Policy Development (OPD)
  - Director, Office of Planning and Evaluation (OPE)
  - Director, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
  - Several offices under the Chief of Staff

- o As with national security policy development, sufficient staff resources and structure are needed to support domestic policy development with the quality, depth, and continuity of staff necessary to assist the officer accountable.

  White House staff resources for domestic policy development are not sufficient or sufficiently focused organizationally. OPD's FY 1985 appropriation is for 45 full-time permanent and 5 temporary employees, for a total of 50 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees. (The OMB FY 1986 proposal is for 42 FTP and 2 temps, for a total of 44 FTE slots.) Of the 50 FTE positions, 34 FTP and 4 temporaries are currently on board. The vast majority of these are allocated to other activities within the White House.

  - 2 to the Office of the Counsellor
  - 4 to the Office of Planning and Evaluation
  - 4 to the Office of Cabinet Affairs
  - 3 to the Drug Policy Office
  - 2 to the Office of Policy Information
  - 1 to the Public Liaison Office
  - 4 to special OPD projects

DRAFT

Of the remainder, 4 are in OPD administration and 14, including secretarial personnel support the seven Cabinet Council areas (economic policy, commerce and trade, natural resources and environment, human resources, legal policy, food and agriculture, and management and administration.)

Thin staffing cannot provide the "critical mass" necessary for across-the-board domestic policy formulation in support of the President.

o Cabinet Secretaries must be involved in recognition of their legitimate roles as principal policy advisors to the President. Multi-agency interests are involved in practically all major issues.

Cabinet Councils currently assure top-level agency participation and multi-agency coordination. However, some officials take their Cabinet Council roles more seriously than others, with the result being uneven performance among the seven Cabinet Councils.

PROPOSAL FOR MANAGING PRESIDENTIAL DOMESTIC POLICY

It is strongly urged that a White House structure for domestic policy be formed as originally intended by the statutory authority that created the Domestic Council (now the Office of Policy Development). For more on the Domestic Council system, see the attached description of the Nixon-Ford Cabinet Level Structures.

The proposed domestic policy structure would be comparable to and organizationally parallel with the NSC. In the NSC model, accountability for White House policy development, coordination, and follow-through is focused in the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. Sufficient staff resources are provided to assist him, along with effective linkages to responsible Cabinet officials without necessarily impinging on their other organizational relationships to the President. (For more information, see the attached description of the Assisant for National Security Affairs.)

1. Assistant for Domestic Policy Affairs

It is recommended that a position, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Affairs, be established, to replace the Assistant for Policy Development. The duties and resources of the following offices would be transferred to him:

- Policy functions of the Counsellor to the President
- Office of Policy Development
- Office of Cabinet Affairs
- Office Planning and Evaluation
- Office of Policy Information
- Policy functions of other appropriate offices

The duties of the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Affairs would be to:

- o Develop, coordinate, and implement domestic policy as approved by the President.
- o Staff and administer a new Office of Policy and Cabinet Affairs.
- o Manage the Cabinet and Cabinet Councils support system.
- o Ensure that policy discussion papers are prepared and distributed in advance to Cabinet and Cabinet Councilparticipants.
- o Disseminate Presidentially approved documents through a Domestic Policy Decision Directive System.

Domestic Cabinet Secretaries under this arrangement will continue to serve as the President's principal policy advisors in their respective areas, and thus be collectively and individually responsible for the formulation, and execution of approved policy.

Selected Cabinet Secretaries will continue to serve as Chairmen Pro Tempore of Cabinet Councils, working closely with the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy and with OPCA. Cabinet Council Working Groups will continue to provide working-level expertise and executive secretariat support. The Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Affairs will be an ex officio member of each Cabinet Council. Cabinet Council outcomes will continue to be selectively channeled into Cabinet deliberations.

Duties and responsibilities above should be formally assigned by the President in a Domestic Policy Decision Directive.

2. Office of Policy and Cabinet Affairs (OPCA)

It is proposed that a new White House Office of Policy and Cabinet Affairs (OPCA), be formed by combining OPD, OCA, OPE, OPI, and Drug Policy. OPCA should manage the policy decision process for the President, and maintain a Domestic Policy Directive System for follow-up.

OPCA should be composed of 50-75 FTE's exclusively devoted to the support of the Assistant to the President and for the operation and management of the Cabinet Councils.

3. Cabinet Council Restructuring

It is proposed that the Cabinet Council system be streamlined by creating fewer, but stronger Cabinet Councils. Slightly

larger secretariats should exist in OPCA, along with dedicated agency-level secretariats for improved responsiveness and support. The suggested configuration would reduce Cabinet Councils from seven to four, as follows:

- o Economic and Trade Affairs (CCET), includes CCCT's responsibilities, and anticipates creation of a Department of International Trade and Industry.

- o Natural Resources and Environment (CCNRE), includes CCFA's responsibilities.

- o Human Resources and Entitlements (CCHRE), emphasizes importance of entitlement structural reform in all agencies).

- o Management and Legal Policy (CCMLP), emphasizes policy aspects of management; provides continuity with Ed Meese as logical Chairman Pro Tempore).

A streamlined, active Cabinet Council system will further strengthen OPCA and top-level agency support in the Presidential decisionmaking process.

4. Domestic Policy Directives and Follow-Up Systems.

The current domestic policy process produces a large number of Presidential decisions. Some are made in meetings of the Cabinet or Cabinet Councils, others in White House Senior Staff meetings, and other forums.

Systematic procedures are needed to clearly communicate Presidential decisions, designate officials responsible for carrying them out, provide additional guidance as necessary, and follow up to ensure action on the President's directives.

The attached Chart depicts a proposed program decision process that will produce Presidential decision Directives and required follow-up actions to ensure that Presidential policies are being implemented.

The proposed Presidential Directives would be brief, numbered, signed by the President, addressed to the official(s) responsible for action, and be managed by the proposed Office of Policy and Cabinet Affairs (OPCA). OPCA would also establish appropriate monitoring systems for evaluation of implementation of the Directives.

NIXON-FORD CABINET LEVEL COUNCILS

Nixon Cabinet-Level Councils

Significant changes regarding the Cabinet's role in managing domestic affairs occurred in Richard Nixon's presidency. Early in his term, he formed five major Cabinet-level bodies:

- the Council for Urban Affairs
- the Council for Rural Affairs
- the Environmental Quality Council
- the Cabinet Committee for Economic Policy
- the Council on International Economic Policy

These were later dismantled.

A Domestic Council consisting of Secretaries other than State and Defense, was established by statutory reorganization plan in 1970 to integrate the Cabinet groups and, in Nixon's words, to serve as a "domestic counterpart" of the NSC. The Domestic Council staff was to provide support for Cabinet-level groups in major policy areas. Ultimately, the Domestic Council evolved into a mechanism which shifted the balance of power to the White House staff and away from Cabinet departments. The Domestic Council staff began to work with interagency task forces, bypassing Cabinet officers, and became increasingly involved in routine departmental operations.

In 1971, Nixon proposed an Executive Branch structure to merge eight departments in four "super-cabinet" departments: Natural Resources, Community Development, Human Resources, and Economic Affairs. Congressional pressure made him promise to maintain the autonomy of the Agriculture Department. Congressional opposition and the distraction of Watergate killed the entire proposal.

Ford Cabinet-Level Entities

Gerald Ford retained the Domestic Council, but established new Cabinet-level entities: the Economic Policy Board (EPB) and the Energy Resources Council. The EPB was responsible for a broad range of domestic and foreign economic policy issues, and met more than 500 times in just over two years. Ford used the EPB for economic policy making and attended a significant number of its meetings. President Ford considered the EPB to be an effective policy council, and a sustained, comprehensive, and successful collegial attempt at advising him on economic policy matters.

THE ASSISTANT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

In considering the establishment of an Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Affairs, it is useful to examine the role and duties of the Assistant for National Security Affairs and the National Security Council.

The NSC includes as statutory members the President (Chairman), the Vice President, and the Secretaries of State and Defense. Advisers are the Director of Central Intelligence, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other offcials as appropriate. The function of the Council is to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to national security.

The duties of the Assistant for National Security Affairs are defined in a Statement By The President, issued January 12, 1982. In consultation with the regular members of the NSC, he shall:

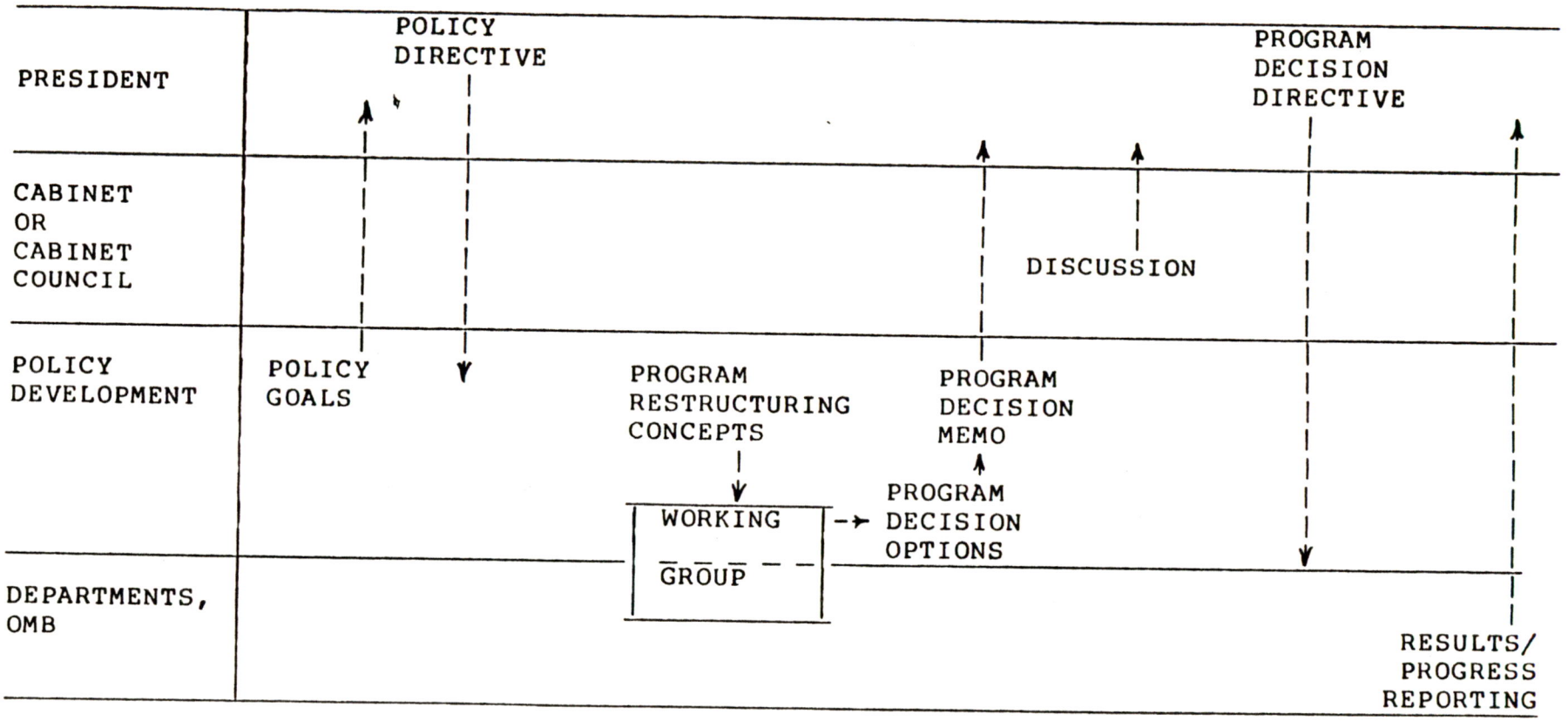
- Develop, coordinate and implement national security policy as approved by the President.
- Determine and publish the agenda of NSC meetings.
- Ensure that the necessary papers are prepared and -- except in unusual circumstances -- distributed in advance to Council members.
- Staff and administer the National Security Council.
- Prepare and, after approval by the President, disseminate decision documents.

The Statement designates the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and Director of Central Intelligence as the President's principal advisors on foreign policy, defense policy, and intelligence policy, respectively. As such, they are responsible for the formulation of policy, and for the execution of approved policy in their respective areas.

The Statement also establishes "Senior Interdepartmental Groups," or SIGs, in each area, chaired by the Deputy Secretaries and Director of Intelligence, respectively, to provide working-level capability and permanent secretariat support. The Assistant for National Security is a member of each SIG whose products are channeled by him into the deliberations of the NSC. SIGs are provided with additional support through specialized regional and functional interagency groups.

The NSC staff is composed of some 70 FTE's, and provides continuing support to the activities of the NSC.

PROGRAM DECISION PROCESS



Six Who Also Serve, Albeit Invisibly

By Dick Kirschten

The Iran-contra scandal may have dropped the poll ratings of President Reagan and Vice President George Bush, but at least it has kept their names and those of the Administration's top national security policy makers in the headlines.

But it has meant a virtual news blackout for other agency heads, many of whom had already been fighting a losing battle against anonymity. If public exposure is a politician's lifeblood, the Reagan Cabinet as a whole is badly in need of a transfusion.

Even before the Iranian arms affair began to unfold in November, the names of Otis R. Bowen, John S. Herrington, Donald P. Hodel, Richard E. Lyng, Samuel R. Pierce Jr. and even Malcolm Baldrige had scarcely become household words. Those individuals, of course, are all Cabinet Secretaries. But despite their prestigious titles, chauffeur-driven cars, $88,000-a-year salaries and other privileges, they have all but disappeared into the depths of their plush and cavernous offices.

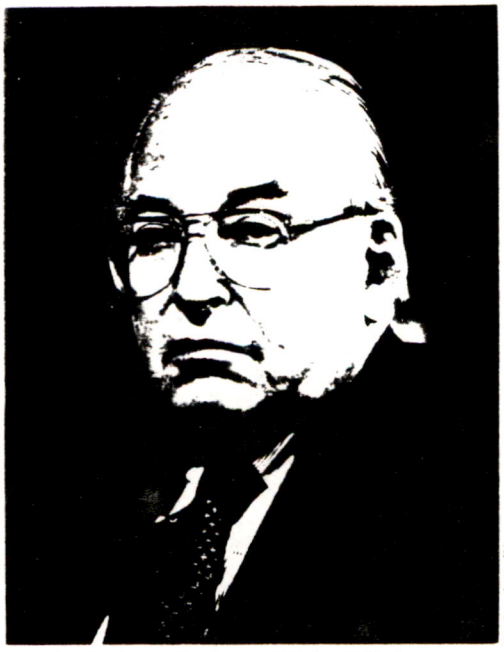
The low visibility of these "second-tier" officials stems in part from their personalities, but to a much larger degree, it has to do with the nature of their jobs. The Cabinet, having grown large and cumbersome over the years, no longer fits an earlier era's definition of being a small circle of presidential confidantes.

With 13 Cabinet-level departments—7 of them added since 1900—plus a half-dozen or more other officials accorded Cabinet rank by the President, it requires more than 20 chairs to seat a full-fledged Reagan Cabinet meeting.

As a result, said senior White House aide Alfred H. Kingon, only a small subgroup of "first-tier" Cabinet officers commands real influence with the President. The dominant players are Secretary of State George P. Shultz, Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger and, until his illness, CIA director William J. Casey, in the realm of national security policy; Treasury Secretary James A. Baker III, in economic affairs; and Attorney General Edwin Meese III, in the area of domestic legal and social issues.

"The others tend to be what I guess you'd call supporting cast," Kingon explained. "They have their own agencies and they surely run them. But because they don't interact here very much, they are not exposed to the White House press corps. And [as far as celebrity is concerned] that makes the difference."

Three second-tier Cabinet Secretaries, William J. Bennett at Education, Bill Brock at Labor and Elizabeth H. Dole at Transportation, have managed to avoid anonymity—Bennett because he aggressively pursues publicity; Brock and Dole, largely because they were well known to the press before taking posts in the Cabinet.



Richard A. Bloom

Agriculture Secretary Richard E. Lyng
He's part of the "invisible" Cabinet.

Kingon said that Bennett and Dole in particular are adept "outside marketeers and salesmen of their positions," while relying heavily on strong deputies and inside staff organizations to tend to the day-to-day management of their departments. "Bennett is an ideologue and a good one, and Elizabeth has a wonderful public relations sense," Kingon said.

Observers offer a variety of explanations for the "disappearance" of other Cabinet members. Interior Secretary Hodel is seen infrequently in Washington because of extensive travel West of the Mississippi, where most of his agency's business is done. The programs overseen by Pierce at the Housing and Urban Development Department are not matters of high priority to the White House, and he has not been aggressive about trying to alter that situation.

Behind his "country doctor" facade, Health and Human Services Secretary Bowen is seen as a shrewd operator committed to a pet project providing a solution to the problem of catastrophic health care costs.

Commerce Secretary Baldrige, resigned to a lesser role than he once envisioned, remains an important player on trade. "There's just no way the Secretary of Commerce is going to be the lead negotiator or the lead architect of trade policy," Kingon said. "Mac is an executor of trade policy. His reorganization plan had some merit, but it just was not destined to be in this Administration."

Energy Secretary Herrington and Agriculture Secretary Lyng similarly have been consigned to supporting roles, little known outside the constituency groups with which they work.

Celebrity, of course, can be a relative thing. A poll conducted for the President last fall included a question designed to ascertain the relative popularity of individual Cabinet members. The winner, by a wide margin, was Treasury Secretary Baker.

Like most Republican political surveys these days, the poll sampling included a goodly share of religious fundamentalists, and a follow-up survey deduced that the Treasury Secretary had been mistaken for television evangelist Jim Bakker, who pronounces his name the same way.

The most compelling reason for Cabinet obscurity, however, is that that is usually the way the White House wants it. In 1979, President Carter purged his Cabinet of well-known figures. When he left office, his team included such names as Duncan, Goldschmidt, Hufstedler, Klutznick, Landrieu and Marshall. Reagan's lineup is every bit as famous.

Cabinet Power

The Reagan Administration is evolving a form of Cabinet government in which great authority is given to the few Cabinet Secretaries with their own activist agendas.

BY RONALD BROWNSTEIN AND DICK KIRSCHTEN

It's a conceit of every incoming President that he will be the first to use his Cabinet for something other than ceremonial photographs. That sort of vague good intention is usually discarded at about the time that the first Cabinet member blunders before a congressional committee and stumbles onto the evening news.

President Reagan has stuck with at least the structures of Cabinet government much more diligently than virtually any of his predecessors. In the first term, Edwin Meese III, then Reagan's counselor, erected an inelegant structure of seven domestic policy Cabinet councils that eventually collapsed under its own weight.

But last spring, when White House chief of staff Donald T. Regan rebuilt the system into two new and streamlined councils—one for economic policy, the other for all other domestic policy—to join the National Security Council, the wheels started turning again. And now, in the sixth year of the Reagan presidency, groups of Cabinet members are still taking agency cars over to the White House about once a week, holding meetings, signing off on papers, debating issues before the President and handling some of the government's routine business.

"The system works because this President likes to delegate, likes to both read papers and hear the issues debated in front of him," said a White House official. "He prefers a fair amount of deliberation in the process and to have things work up to him. That's his style of handling policy."

But power in the Reagan Administration, like those before it, does not flow neatly through the carefully cut channels of debate. The Cabinet councils are a system for making domestic policy, but not the only one or even always the most important one, particularly in the first term.

"Every Cabinet member dealt with the Cabinet council differently," said former Agriculture Secretary John R. Block, now president of the National American Wholesale Grocers' Association. "I used it when I thought it would help me. But when you got into trying to decide specific policy on the council that nobody else [outside of your department] understood or cared about, you were better off clearing it with one or two people at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)."



Richard A. Bloom

Attorney General Edwin Meese III
He heads the Domestic Policy Council.

This Administration has never established Cabinet government in the textbook sense, where Cabinet members collectively mull and influence important decisions. But in its second term, many observers say, the Administration is evolving another form of Cabinet government in which the White House's role in shaping policy and setting an agenda is receding and in which greater authority is being given to a few Cabinet Secretaries with activist agendas of their own.

"The Administration has moved heavily from being a presidentially controlled government to being more of a Cabinet government in that sense," said a Republican political consultant with close ties to the Administration. "Now the idea is, 'Let's get all of the Cabinet members to control those agencies.' "

What's missing in this arrangement, critics inside and outside the Administration maintain, is a creative approach for adding specific new proposals to the highly generalized "Reagan agenda." White House officials say the agenda flows naturally from Reagan's evident and long-standing interests—reducing government domestic spending, rolling back regulation, spending more on national defense. "There is only one guy here who was elected, and that's Ronald Reagan," said a top White House official.

But to many conservative critics who want the Adminstration to push more aggressively during its final years, that's not enough. Thus many of the same people who railed against the pragmatists in the first term are now

moaning, in the words of a critic, about the "mice" holed up around chief of staff Regan "who don't have an agenda and are suspicious of anybody who does."

THE FIRST SYSTEM

When Reagan took office on Jan. 20, 1981, he promised to use the Cabinet agencies to make decisions, and in Meese he had a lieutenant with the flow chart frame of mind needed to flesh out those impulses. Based on Meese's proposal, Reagan in February established five Cabinet councils: on economic affairs; commerce and trade; human resources; natural resources and the environment; and food and agriculture. The next year, he added councils on legal affairs and government management.

Meese's conception was that policy would bubble up from the councils, through the full Cabinet, if necessary, and to the President for final decision. In Meese's view, the wing of the White House under then-chief of staff James A. Baker III would be responsible for implementing the policy by dealing with the press, Congress and constituency groups.

Several of the Cabinet councils, though, never really got off the ground. Only the economic affairs council met very frequently, and critics in the White House liked to gibe that the council held hundreds of meetings to reach only a handful of important decisions.

On Meese's flow chart, it all looked logical. In practice, the system became very complex for the officials trying to navigate through it. Trade issues swirled through the economic affairs council, chaired by then-Treasury Secretary Regan; the commerce and trade council, headed by Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige; a statutory Trade Policy Committee, chaired by then-U.S. Trade Representative Bill Brock; and a National Security Council (NSC) senior interdepartmental group that Regan also headed. "There were just too many groups involved in trade issues," Baldrige said in an interview.

Not only was the system cumbersome, but over time, many participants came to see it also as irrelevant. In the first regime, the Baker wing of the White House considered the Cabinet council system a sideshow, uninvolved in the actual creation of policy.

In the view of Baker and his deputy, Richard G. Darman, implementation was policy. And in practice, Baker's White House Legislative Strategy Group, together with OMB director Dave Stockman, set virtually all significant domestic policy in the first term. "There were many instances where the Cabinet councils were sitting around discussing things and Stockman couldn't make the meeting because he was on the Hill negotiating a settlement of the exact same issue they were discussing," said a former White House official.



Richard A. Bloom

Treasury Secretary James A. Baker III
He chairs the Economic Policy Council.

It was clear to many participants that the councils lacked decision-making power. "We were aware that neither the Cabinet council nor the Cabinet itself could actually make the decision," said William A. Niskanen Jr., a member of the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) from 1981 and its acting chairman from July 1984 until he left the Administration the following March. "And at most, when there were votes taken, that was just to represent the views at that particular level. . . . After the social security fiasco in 1981 [when cuts in benefits were proposed], Baker's distrust of the policy people on both substantive and political grounds grew enormously. That led Baker to assert a much larger role."

First-term officials say it was not unusual for Baker and Darman, together with Stockman, to ignore or overturn Cabinet council decisions. Agriculture Department officials learned that the hard way on the 1985 farm bill. The department had worked through 1984 in the food and agriculture council, building a case for its idea of the right bill. Then in December, OMB came up a bill imposing much sharper cuts in federal commodity price supports.

"Then the Cabinet council system broke down," said agricultural consultant William G. Lesher, who was assistant Agriculture secretary for economics at the time. "Stockman and others had their ideas of what should be a farm bill versus the working group's idea. Much to our chagrin, that persuasion won out."

THE NEW SYSTEM

Meese's somewhat tangled system didn't fit into any of the management theories Donald Regan brought to the White House. In April 1985, Regan rolled the seven councils into two with cleaner lines of authority: an Economic Policy Council, chaired by Baker (who had become Treasury Secretary) to handle all economic policy, and a Domestic Policy Council, chaired by Meese (who had become Attorney General) to handle all other domestic policy.

In the Regan command structure, these councils are seen as playing several valuable functions. The system modulates the pace of routine issues coming into the White House and allows aides to keep a handle on issues that are coming up, even as they keep their distance from most of them.

White House officials also see the Cabinet council meetings as sessions that boost morale, let Cabinet officers get to know the President's staff and make everyone feel that they are on the same team—the way President Eisenhower used Cabinet meetings.

The Cabinet councils also serve as a convenient forum for handling normal interagency conflict. Trade disputes, which occur within the Administration as frequently as between nations, come through the Economic Policy Council, pitting the more protectionist forces at Commerce and the Trade Representative's office against the free traders at the State and Treasury Departments. Several trade issues have come to the President for his decision, however, after the council was deadlocked on split votes.

And the system has been used to prevent things from happening; it's a tool for bottling up issues in interagency study. "It is a funnel to keep to a minimum the decisions coming out of the executive branch," said Paul Light, director of studies for the National Academy of Public Administration.

Government officials can find it as difficult as outsiders to locate issues once they have disappeared into the process. At an early June hearing before the House Science and Technology Sub-

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(continued from p. 1583)

committee on Natural Resources, Agricultural Research and Environment, David T. Kingsbury, an assistant director of the National Science Foundation, was asked how soon the Domestic Policy Council would approve regulations for testing and licensing genetically engineered products.

Kingsbury, who headed the council working group that developed the proposal, responded: "Unfortunately, to, I think, the frustration of all of us, we are not members of the Domestic Policy Council, and we don't know what that process is.... And so we're as frustrated as you are in terms of expecting its release. We had anticipated its release prior to this hearing." (Reagan approved the new policy two weeks after Kingsbury's testimony.)

But just as in the first term, the system is not always the forum for making policy; it remains very much open to short-circuiting. The issues that come into the process for decisions are supposed to be those that the White House staff believes either require interagency cooperation or are important enough to merit the President's attention.

But some of the second term's most important projects have developed outside of the Cabinet councils. Baker has successfully resisted any council involvement with his pet initiatives: the plan to realign international currency exchange rates, his initiative on international debt and the push for tax reform, which he took over in 1985 from Regan.

Baker has consulted with Secretary of State George P. Shultz (who in the Nixon Administration helped to build the currency regime Baker is trying to dismantle) and with Regan on the international initiatives. When necessary, Regan has set up meetings for Baker and deputy Treasury secretary Darman to brief the President. But Baker has made it clear to others who have expressed interest in discussing the issues in the Economic Policy Council that Treasury doesn't want any help.

That attitude has occasioned "some grumbling," a White House official said. But no one has successfully forced Baker and Darman to loosen their secretive style of operation. "These guys had a system in the White House that worked," said a Republican consultant close to Baker. "They kept things to themselves, they didn't let a lot of people know what's going on. They figured if they could get to the President, wire the Hill, that's enough. At Treasury, they operate the same way."

The debate over affirmative action requirements for federal contractors has also spilled outside of the orderly Cabinet council system. Originally, Meese tried last summer to sell the President directly on his proposal to eliminate numerical requirements, setting off complaints that he had attempted what a White House aide termed an "unconscionable" end run of the process. Then Meese's proposal, staunchly resisted by Brock, the current Labor Secretary, was pushed back into the system and was heatedly debated at a Domestic Policy Council meeting last October that reached no consensus.



Richard A. Bloom

Cabinet affairs chief Alfred H. Kingon
He can influence the councils' agendas.

The usual process after a Cabinet council meeting is for the staff under Cabinet affairs director Alfred H. Kingon to prepare a decision memorandum to the President. This short memo (usually only two or three pages) briefly summarizes the major arguments for and against a proposal, includes the views of relevant White House offices—such as legislative or political affairs—and presents the President with all of the options discussed at the meeting. Once he gets the memo, Reagan can either make the decision based on the paper, ask for more written information (which happens rarely) or call a Cabinet council meeting to hear more debate before deciding.

For months, the Justice Department has been eager to see the affirmative action issue presented to Reagan, confident that his basic opposition to employment quotas would bring him down on their side. But the White House staff decided not to send the President a decision memo. Instead, Regan ordered up a series of private meetings between Meese and Brock, with himself as referee, to try to narrow the gap. Now, a White House official said, the issue is "on hold" while the Administration awaits the Supreme Court's decisions in two major affirmative action cases.

"At some point, either these fellows are going to make enough progress to make a modification of views, or there will remain a divergence and we will just have to hand the paper to the President and let him decide," the official said.

White House officials say that handling of both affirmative action and the Baker initiatives are unusual exceptions to the normal process. But the exceptions may be as important as the rule. What they suggest is that the Administration's skillful bureaucratic players thrive in whatever system is created, using them to achieve goals they would have figured out some other way to reach in a different system. Baker has been able to keep his prize projects out of the hands of potential adversaries, such as Shultz and Council of Economic Advisers chairman Beryl W. Sprinkel. Brock has been able to fend off Meese on the affirmative action hiring guidelines. *(For a report on how the Administration developed a policy on liability insurance, see box, pp. 1586-87.)*

"No matter how the system is physically organized, the facts an individual Cabinet officer or his or her organization can muster and their clarity and persistence have more of an effect on the outcome than the organization itself," Baldrige said.

THE POWER SHIFT

When Baker and Meese were given control of the new Cabinet councils, it was widely expected to elevate them to a "Super Cabinet" status. To some extent, that has happened.

Baker has used his control of the Economic Policy Council to increase his say on trade issues and to play a role in agricultural issues, such as last year's legislation to restructure the ailing Farm Credit System. Meese, who at first was prone to using his Domestic Policy Council for more philosophical discussions, has gotten a shot at the remarkably diverse issues that come through that council, ranging from acid rain to organ transplants. But both Baker and Meese have focused most of their energy on running their own departments.

The simplified system was also ex-

pected to strengthen Regan's direct control over policy, establishing him as a choke point for issues going to the President. White House officials can use several steps in the Cabinet council process to get a handle on issues. Regan and Kingon can pull issues in for Cabinet consideration, control the schedule and ask agencies for more information before sending options on to Reagan. "Don Regan, more than anyone else, has the authority to say this issue has to be dealt with by the Cabinet council," said Becky Norton Dunlop, senior special assistant to Meese for Cabinet affairs. "And he does that on a regular basis."

Most significantly, he also gets in an informal last word on policy with Reagan when he chooses to. "Regan often sits alone with the President and talks quite a bit," a White House official said. "No one knows what he says."

Still, there is a widespread view among those who watch the Administration closely that the White House's direct influence on policy has declined since the first term. The organizational vocabulary assigns White House officials the same role as in the first four years: Regan's aides still distinguish policy from implementation, and still reserve the latter for themselves through the Legislative Strategy Group headed by Regan.

But in the Regan regime, White House officials insist—and other government officials agree—the West Wing staff is less likely to reshuffle policy decisions proposed by the agencies or the Cabinet. That does occur—Regan recently rejected as inadequately justified the recommendation of an NSC group to build a fourth space shuttle. *(See box, pp. 1584-85.)* But that is rare; this White House, which is noticeably light on aides with a strong background or even a keen interest in substantive policy formulation, is more circumspect than its first-term predecessors.

"I think there has been a Cabinet reincarnation," said a top White House official. "And I think it's good. You've got some of your greatest resources [in your Cabinet officers]. Why replicate it?"

More than respect for the Cabinet is involved: The White House has relatively little firepower available on issues. From the time Reagan moved into the Oval Office, no one has ever bothered to turn on the lights at the White House's Office of Policy Development. Martin Anderson, the first domestic policy adviser, had personal influence with the President but only a weak organization to support him and was temperamentally unsuited for bureaucratic infighting. His immediate successors, Edwin L. Harper, and the job's current occupant, John A. Svahn, have played even smaller roles.

"There is really very little domestic policy in this Administration that is not budget-driven," said Stuart E. Eizenstat, who held the policy job in the Carter Administration. "OMB has really taken over the [policy adviser's] function."

Until he left government, Stockman was a prodigious force on domestic policy. But his successor, James C. Miller III, has had difficulty establishing his credibility, particularly on Capitol Hill but elsewhere in the Administration as well. A White House official defended Miller, saying that "OMB has a role, a big role. Jim is different than Stockman; Stockman has this incredible knowledge of the minutiae in the budget. But Jim is much friendlier, much less cantankerous." Some key Administration officials, though, believe that because of OMB's perceived weakness, the initiative on the budget has passed to Congress.

Many conservative critics complain that initiative is something noticeably lacking in Reagan's second term. On paper, the Administration's issue agenda is supposed to rise through the Cabinet council system to the White House. But "the reality is that policy doesn't naturally well up through committees," said presidential scholar Richard E. Neustadt, a professor of public administration at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

In practice, Presidents have invariably found that the White House staff is the only central force that can set an agenda for an Administration. The current White House staff is starting to get cuffed around the ears for allegedy failing to do so. "There is nobody around Regan to set an agenda," said former CEA chairman Niskanen, now chairman of the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank in Washington.

Pointing to the White House-ordered welfare reform studies percolating through working groups of the Domestic Policy Council and to the catastrophic health insurance plan being studied at the Health and Human Services Department, White House officials reject those characterizations. What they are trying to do, they argue, is to keep the focus on Reagan's basic goals. "What we've got to do is generate ways to implement the policy goals and directions of Ronald Reagan," said an official. "The problem with Jimmy Carter was that he was directional; he wasn't guided by any underlying principle. He would start one way, then go another way, then yet another." But another White House official acknowledged, "The only weak link in the system is generating new ideas here."

To some extent, this was inevitable, given Reagan's predisposition to undoing existing programs rather than launching new ones. After almost six years of struggle with Congress on the budget, and after battles in the regulatory agencies with environmentalists and labor groups, the Administration has probably undone just about everything it can expect to undo.

With the White House less aggressive in setting the Administration's policy tone, many observers say, authority has passed to the few Cabinet Secretaries with aggressive programs of their own. To those observers, Reagan's second term is characterized by a few isolated areas of intense activity—Baker on international economics, Shultz on foreign policy, Meese on some social and legal issues—surrounded by vistas of uninspiring steady-state management.

The result of this subtle power shift is a form of Cabinet government. It is not the kind of Cabinet government usually associated with that term—a regime of interactive discussion, collective influence on major decisions. But it is a style of running the country that for better or worse, gives the Cabinet officers greater leeway to pursue their own agendas, with less aggressive interference by the White House staff. □



Shepard Sherbell/Picture Group

Meese assistant Becky Norton Dunlop
She works with him on Cabinet affairs.



DAVID BURNETT/CONTACT

MR. POWER

Attorney General Meese is Reagan's man to lead the conservative charge.

By John A. Jenkins

IN HIS CORNER OFFICE AT THE JUSTice Department, a private sanctum guarded by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents, Edwin Meese 3d, the 75th Attorney General of the United States, has surrounded himself with symbols of the power he wields: a Border Patrol pistol; a United States marshal's badge; miniature police cars and helicopters. The office says much about the way Meese sees himself, for its motif reflects not so much the lawyer in Meese as it does the hard-nosed lawman: America's top cop.

Just outside his door hang two Herblock drawings, portrayals of Meese as the beady-eyed zealot. "Oh, they're just a couple of funny cartoons," Meese says. Yet it is clear that these two caricatures, and some others like them on the walls of his outer office, mean much more to him — they are a symbol of how he has made his presence felt in 19 months as Attorney General.

If the next two years produce the conservative transformation in judicial precedent that the Ronald Reagan Presidency has promised but so far not delivered, much of the credit must go to the 54-year-old Meese. The most prominent loyalist from the Reagan California days still in the Administration, Meese has taken center stage in an ideological debate that previously lacked a credible point man within the Government. Now it has one: pornography or drug smuggling, abortion or school prayer, the Attorney General's legal agenda is the President's political agenda. "His instincts are Ronald Reagan's instincts," Fred F. Fielding, the White House counsel during the President's first term, says of Meese.

For Meese, the path has been a tortuous one, muddied by infighting at the White House and nearly broken up altogether during his long confirmation hearings by allegations of earlier wrongdoing. But the strength of Ed Meese is perseverance. An iron-willed partisan with a polemical, confrontational style, he is also the quintessential available man, an ambitious loyalist who defines himself through the approbation and acceptance he receives. That combination of loyalty, availability and ambition are essential elements in the rise of Meese, giving him power and access unequaled in the Reagan Administration.

Meese frequently sees the President a couple of times a day, offering counsel on matters ranging far beyond his duties at Justice. "Often, just privately, I'll see him for a few minutes here, or a few minutes there," says Meese. "Sometimes I'll ride in the car with him to someplace."

Besides serving as Attorney General, Meese is chairman pro tem of the President's Domestic Policy Council, comprising the director of the Office of Management and Budget, the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers and five Cabinet officers in addition to Meese. He also attends meetings of the National Security Planning Group, the handful of top foreign policy and national security advisers that devised last summer's "disinformation" campaign against Libya.

But it is what he has done at the Justice Department that will be his legacy, for Meese has returned the department to a political role it has not played since the Nixon Administration. Prior to him, the post-Watergate Attorneys General — men with names such as Saxbe, Levi, Bell, Civiletti and Smith — offered a subdued leadership. But Meese has quickly steered the department back to the political arena, shaping it into a reflection of how he sees himself — boldly, morally conservative. In the process he has become its most forceful leader since Robert F. Kennedy.

"This department will be fiercely independent in . . . upholding the law," Meese promised at his ceremonial swearing-in in March 1985. "But this is not inconsistent with conscientiously and vigorously implementing the President's philosophy, which is in the mainstream of today's American political thinking."

Since then, Meese has played a key role in judicial nominations and has publicly chided the Supreme Court for decisions he disagrees with. In turn, he has experienced the unprecedented public rebuke of two sitting Justices, William J. Brennan Jr. and John Paul Stevens.

While conceding that Meese "has every right to assert his own perception of what justice is," Burt Neuborne, professor of law at New York University, who until recently was the legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union, calls the Attorney General's views "disastrous."

"He is genuinely committed to the proposition that if a majority of the electorate expresses itself on a particular sub- *(Continued on Page 89)*

John A. Jenkins lives in Washington and has frequently written on legal matters for The New York Times Magazine. His article on Supreme Court Justice William H. Rehnquist appeared in March 1985.

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MEESE

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ject, that majority should not be held in check by the courts," says Neuborne of Meese. "By crippling the courts, he would sacrifice effective protections of individual rights and radically transform society into a majoritarian tyranny.

"The only bright spot in all of this, is that so far he has been able to achieve so little. His rhetoric has far outstripped his effectiveness."

Over the last several months, I had five interviews with Meese, in which he talked about the Supreme Court, about his perception of the roles of judges and the police, and about his efforts to change the Justice Department. He also discussed his confirmation ordeal, his close friendship with Ronald Reagan, and the death of his son — all of which have profoundly affected him.

Because of his blunt, feisty outspokenness, the public perception of the Attorney General is often devoid of the humanizing nuances. But Meese says he is baffled by that image. "I would ask you to go through all the press conferences I've had since I've become Attorney General, and all the interviews I've given," he says. "I would defy you to find statements or collections of statements that would give rise to the kind of caricature that too often is created of me."

In person, the Attorney General exudes genuine warmth. His suite of offices is energized by those waiting to see him — F.B.I. Director William H. Webster leaves as an interviewer enters; a group of law-student interns mill about, photographer in tow, to memorialize their moment with Meese; trusted aide William Bradford Reynolds is in the anteroom. But Meese is not preoccupied. He clearly relishes the interchange with his questioner. His gaze is direct and he speaks with certitude.

I AM NOT BY NATURE an unduly combative person," Meese says. "I believe in persuasion rather than mortal combat. And to the extent that people are trying to use me as a target for attack, possibly the reason is that I have stood very strongly for the objectives and the priorities and the principles and the philosophy of the President. He stands just as strongly as I do. But when you're the President, you're not as vulnerable to attack."

Yet Ed Meese rarely misses an opportunity to tackle head-on those who disagree with him. "To withdraw because there's opposition on the other side," he says, "to back down in the face of that would be cowardice."

When he works hard to see that judges nominated to the Federal bench will share the Administration's philosophy about such matters as abortion, school prayer and federalism, Meese calls it "getting the best people." When someone criticizes an appointee, that is "partisan politics."

"That's the combination of a party being out of power and being enraged by the fact that Ronald Reagan will be selecting as high a percentage of the judiciary as he is," the Attorney General says. "The fact that it's an election year, and the fact that you just have some people who like to politicize things."

Meese calls Jefferson B. Sessions Jr., whose nomination for an appeals-court judgeship was rejected in June by the Senate Judiciary Committee, "a very courageous prosecutor." There was a fierce debate over the attitudes of Sessions, a United States Attorney from Mobile, Ala., toward blacks; Meese says it was "a campaign of ideologues."

Meese believes that Daniel A. Manion, who narrowly won Senate confirmation in July as an appeals-court judge, was also unfairly singled out. "If his name had been Smith or Jones," Meese contends, Manion wouldn't have been opposed. "But he was a lightning rod for these ultraliberals, because his father had been connected in some way with the John Birch Society. Anything in which the John Birch Society was involved in was seized upon by the ultraliberal groups to be a basis for politicization."

But at the suggestion that he has politicized the Justice Department, or that he has favored conservative interests over any others, Meese whistles. "That's an exaggeration," he says. "I've spoken out on some issues which I think need to be aired. But I don't think that there's anything partisan about my comments on the Constitution."

Meese says: "We've tried to find the kinds of judges that should be acceptable to any group. If you look at the judges who have had difficulties, I mean, how can you do better, or get a more acceptable person, than a man who has got 15 years of distinguished service on the Supreme Court to be appointed Chief Justice? How can you get a better person, or a more acceptable person, than a man like Nino Scalia, who has got an impeccable record in a variety of ways: as a practicing lawyer, as a teacher, on the appellate court? I think you can't find two more qualified people in the history of Supreme Court appointments."

MEESE TAKES from a folder on his desk several sheets of paper that together constitute his blueprint for change at the Justice Department. He has drawn up these documents so that he can clearly focus on the task at hand.

In a two-page outline entitled "Policy Goals," he has neatly encapsulated his agenda. There are the usual priorities that any Attorney General would have — controlling narcotics trafficking, terrorism and public corruption — and there are others which are innocent-sounding euphemisms for the conservative political course that the Attorney General has embarked on.

"Total nondiscrimination policy," for instance, stands, among other things, for an end to racial quotas benefiting minority groups, an Administration goal that was directly repudiated by the Supreme Court in its last term. Meese, however, has not given up on it.

"Preservation of constitutional values" encompasses some of the most important issues on the Reagan Administration's social-policy agenda, including leaving to the states the issues of abortion reform and prayer in the schools. "Religious liberty" means going to court, as the department did this summer, to defend the Roman Catholic Church against the loss of its tax-exempt status when another church-related group contended it was engaging in political lobbying and campaigning in opposition to legal abortion — activities the tax exemption does not permit.

Meese believes that even in defeat there is still glory in losing for a good cause. That is why he was willing last spring to use a relatively triv-

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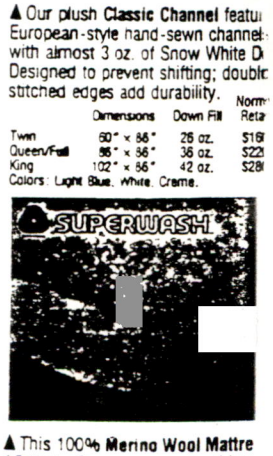
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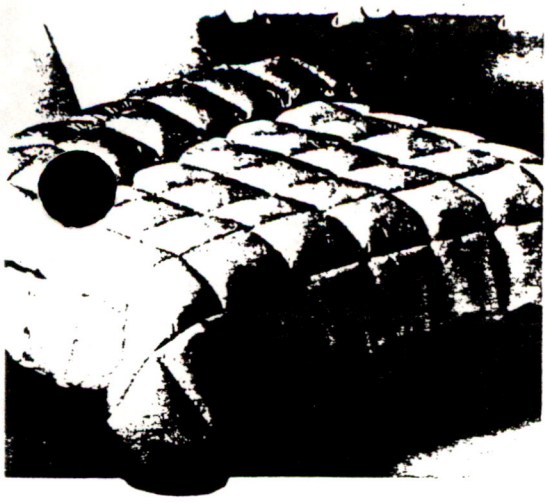
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MEESE

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ial case to ask the Supreme Court to overturn its 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion — even though the constitutionality of Roe hadn't been an issue in the case and even though the High Court had specifically reaffirmed the Roe decision three years earlier. The department lost its case, 5 to 4, but then-Chief Justice Warren E. Burger switched camps, questioning for the first time the wisdom of the Roe decision. "We got one step closer," Meese says.

Similarly, he sees the Justice Department's defeat earlier this year in three affirmative action cases as hinging on a mere technicality. Though conceding that the Court directly repudiated his contention that quotas can be used only to aid specific, identifiable victims of discrimination, Meese says that "even in losing, there was acquiescence by the Court that the point we were making should be the end result, someday. They just said we're not ready to do that yet."

The biggest victory of the term, Meese says, was the Supreme Court's upholding of the Georgia antisodomy law — a case the Justice Department wasn't even involved in. "We don't have to be in a case to get our view across," Meese says. "The point of view that we've been making — that the Court should not supersede its judgment for the judgment of the states — was vindicated in that case."

Another of the Attorney General's innocuous-sounding policy goals is to "promote truth in the courtroom." But what Meese really wants is the total repeal of the Supreme Court's 1966 Miranda v. Arizona decision, which requires the police to inform suspects of their constitutional rights, and its 1961 Mapp v. Ohio decision prohibiting the introduction of evidence obtained without a valid search warrant.

These two rulings have, according to Meese, "inhibited truth in the courtroom." He maintains: "They have cast aside probative evidence for non-truth-finding reasons. Neither Mapp nor Miranda helps any innocent person. They only help guilty people. I think if you look at all the cases, the only evidence that ever's been excluded is evidence of guilt.

"Obviously, in taking public positions, I don't have the time, or the audience, to go into legal subtleties. But I think the average man in the street understands what it means if the truth about criminals is excluded from the courtroom. And when the Mapp and Miranda cases are explained to most people, they understand that they are less safe from criminals. That's not hard to figure out."

According to Meese, "there are better ways" to avoid the police abuses that the two decisions were meant to counteract. One, he says, is, "videotaped confessions, so there will be no possible way that you could have coercion or any intimidation by the police." But he adds, "The best way, frankly, is with well-trained, well-disciplined, well-supervised policemen."

Since his youth — when his father, a clerk at the Oakland police court, would come home and regale him with stories about the cases he'd heard that day — Meese has had a fascination with police work. His sympathies are with the cop on the beat who wants to nab the culprit, and he seems genuinely perplexed by the judicial concern about police misconduct. "Most of the time," he says, "the officer is not acting illegally."

To Meese, lawyers and judges are the ones who argue the technicalities. "I wouldn't want to be a judge," he says; not even the Supreme Court would interest him. "That's the one thing I've absolutely ruled out. For me, the job of being a judge, on whatever bench, would be much too confining for anything I would really enjoy."

Meese is proud of the stand he has taken against judicial activism. A judge's job, he insists, isn't "to decide how the police officer's going to act — his function is to find the facts.

"You may want to argue on what should be the niceties," he says. "But if you take my approach, and the approach of most people in law enforcement, the more evidence you get in, the more likely you're going to find the truth, which ultimately should be the end result of the courtroom process."

TO "IMPROVE THE MANagement" of the 62,500-employee Justice Department, Meese is centralizing policy planning and budgeting under the control of a few trusted deputies. To implement his policy goals, he has organized key executives into small teams whose job it is to focus on Administration priorities. Meese and six top aides, including F.B.I. Director Webster and Assistant Attorney General Reynolds, comprise the "command group" that meets every morning at 8:10 to map strategy. Another group, chaired by Meese's new Deputy Attorney General, Arnold I. Burns, matches the department's budgetary resources to its priorities. A third group, headed by Reynolds, does strategic planning because, Meese explains, "I wanted a group of people who were not involved with the day-to-day issues to look to see where the justice system and the department ought to be five years from now."

Of Meese's aides, the 44-year-old Reynolds is probably the best known. Reynolds retained his position as Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Civil Rights Division after the Senate Judiciary Committee last year refused to confirm him as Meese's new Associate Attorney General. Reynolds has been the Justice Department's most uncompromising foe of racial quotas, and he continues to play a key policy-making role within Meese's inner circle. He has also kept up the attack on the Supreme Court, last month accusing Justice Brennan of possessing "radical" views that threaten individual liberty.

Meese, who says he has not read the speech in which Reynolds made his charges, refused to comment on it. "I don't know any reason why I should particularly read it," he said. "People give speeches all the time in the department here."

T. Kenneth Cribb Jr., 38, is the Attorney General's closest aide, and probably the least-known outside of the department. A one-time national director of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, the oldest conservative student organization in the country, and a consultant to the Heritage Foundation, Cribb served on Meese's staff at the White House and followed him to the Justice Department. Now, as the Attorney General's counselor, Cribb stays in the background and receives almost no publicity.

(Continued on Page 96)

MEESE

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ye[redacted]erves as a link between these and conservative [redacted]est groups.

"I am a source of information for the Attorney General about people who want him to entertain their views," Cribb says. "I am sometimes asked to attend meetings to make his views known, and to report back to him."

During Meese's long confirmation battle, Cribb sat behind Meese every day that he testified. One Senate staff member swears they even dressed alike, so that "from behind the dais they just sort of melded together." At the White House, a "principals only" rule was imposed to keep Meese from bringing Cribb into the weekly meetings at which judicial nominees were chosen.

"Ken Cribb is kind of my principal personal assistant," says Meese. "He's an additional set of arms, legs and, particularly, brains."

In Cribb's view, the debate ov[redacted]icial activism still ha[redacted] years to run: "The pu[redacted]iscussion has been s[redacted]y this Attorney Gene[redacted]. it takes a generation for day-to-day politics to catch up with ideas that are first expressed in a philosophical context. For example, the politics of the 1960's were the result of philosophical ideas first expressed in the 1930's. So what we're saying now will be important for generations to come."

An inveterate note-taker and maker of charts and diagrams, Meese likens his role at Justice to being atop a well-regimented corporate structure. During his tenure at the White House, however, where his Cabinet-level staff job of counselor to the President gave him responsibility for seeing to it that each department hewed closely to the President's policies, Meese found himself part of an organization beset by jealousies and infighting. The battle among the President's top advisers was frequently waged through the press, and it [redacted]Meese's reputation t[redacted]red the most.

[redacted]as supposed to for-[redacted] policy and James [redacted], the chief of staff, was supposed to make the trains run on time," one White House aide recalls. "But he never really got the policy-development syndrome. You'd go through a meeting thing had been decided, and then absolutely nothing would happen. The uncertainty led to internecine fights, and ultimately the policy development got done elsewhere."

Meese now strongly defends his record at the White House, saying that he "established what is generally looked upon as the strongest Cabinet system of any President in modern time."

He was, however, outflanked by Baker, who took the White House policy-making role for himself. But Baker's credentials were suspect among conservative factions. Baker had been George Bush's Presidential campaign manager. He hadn't even registered as a Republican until 1970. This closet moderate couldn't be the conservatives' friend in the White House. But Meese could.

"It turned out that Baker was the pragmatist, the doer," says a former Reagan Administration official. "But he was also the one the conservatives tended to scream about. They thought he was breaking the faith. And Meese became the person who conservatives turned to. He filled a vacuum. He became, in essence, what other conservatives *thought* he was — what they *made* him into. He became the darling of the conservatives."

Paul D. Kamenar, executive legal director of the conservative Washington Legal Foundation, describes the relationship between the Justice Department and conservative interest groups as "conscious parallelism."

"It helps the department when we come in as an amicus curiae taking a more extreme viewpoint," Kamenar says. "That way *they* can't be called extremist."

ED MEESE WAS born and raised in Oakland, Calif. "I was born in 1931, in the Depression," Meese says. "Our family never had a lot of money. This was never a big thing to my folks, and never a big thing to us." At the age of 10, he and his three younger brothers published their own weekly neighborhood newspaper and put the $6.40 they earned from it toward war bonds. He was valedictorian of his public high school class and the winner of a Lions Club speakers' contest. He notes with pride that all four of the Meese boys went to college. "My folks made a lot of sacrifices so that we could," he says.

He traveled East for the first time in 1949, to attend Yale, where 60 percent of his 1,123 classmates had graduated from elite Eastern preparatory schools. Meese, having been awarded a last-minute scholarship that he now calls "a fluke," was virtually the antithesis of the typical Yale student, but he found a niche for himself with a slew of extracurricular activities: debate team; Political Union; a religious club; freshman crew; manager of the track team; librarian at his residential college.

Among his notable qualities were an abiding loyalty to even casual acquaintances, and his energy and enthusiasm for almost any task. Two of Meese's younger roommates at Yale recalled recently how he took an almost parental interest in them, patiently teaching one to play bridge and helping another to get into a Yale society.

"He was naïve," recalls Maxwell K. Dickinson, a former roommate of Meese's and now a Florida stockbroker. "He didn't look under rocks to see what was bad about everything. He wasn't jaundiced. He never had bitter things to say. I don't remember anything ever disappointing him."

After graduation, Meese returned to California and started law school at Berkeley, finishing in 1958, after a two-year interruption to serve as an artillery officer in the Army. He joined the Oakland District Attorney's office just out of law school, and was still there a few years later, when Sanford H. Kadish, a Berkeley law professor, recruited him to help teach a clinical law program.

"I needed someone who was actually working in the field," Kadish remembers. "Ed was willing. He was very reliable. Always did what he was supposed to do. Genial. Likable. There was a softness and a gentleness to him, no sharp edges to his personality.

"Ed didn't have profound political convictions. He was your average, diligent young fellow from an average Republican background, and he might have continued in just that way, except that his attractiveness led to opportunities. He became an ally of people who had very profound political beliefs, and he assimilated those beliefs."

There is a disarming simplicity to the way Meese characterizes his relationship with the man who has given him, or helped him get, just about every important job he has had during the last two decades.

"Well, I guess the way I'd describe it, we have worked together closely for almost 20 years," Meese says of Ronald Reagan. "We are good friends. And we are people who, by and large, without any real effort on my part to do this, come up with the same viewpoint on most issues, pretty much totally independent of each other."

Privately, White House chief of staff Donald T. Regan has bridled at Meese's easy access to the President. But anyone who has ever attempted to cut Meese off has ended up the loser. Always, the President stands by him.

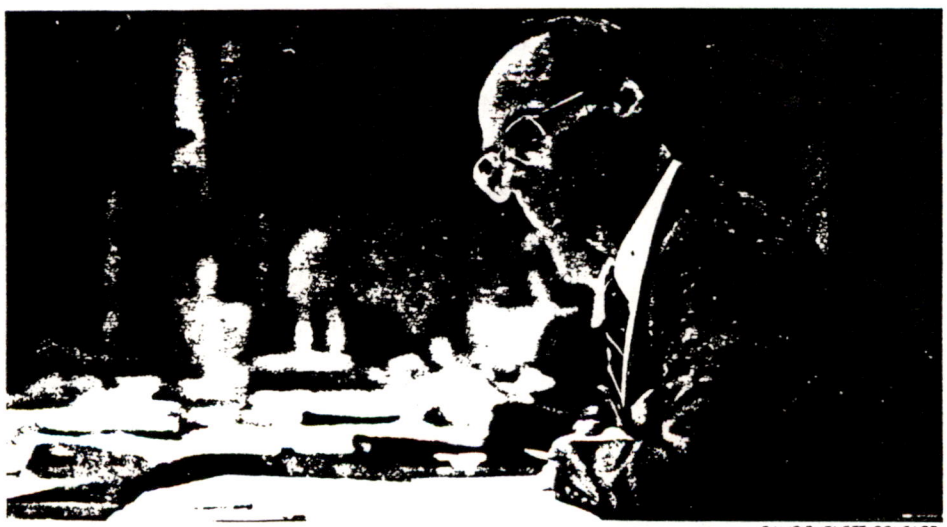
The two first met in Sacramento. Reagan was the newly elected Governor of California, and Meese was a young deputy district attorney from Oakland with a penchant for publicity. Campus turbulence in the 1960's had already given Meese his first big break: he had directed the arrest in 1964 of 761 protesters at the University of California at Berkeley. In 1966, he testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee that the Berkeley organizers of an early antiwar group were giving "aid and comfort to the enemy" and that penalties of $20,000 and 20 years in prison wouldn't be inappropriate if the group carried through with plans to march on an Army induction center.

Meese signed on as the Governor's extradition and clemency secretary but soon transformed the job into that of Reagan's legal-affairs adviser, and within two years was his executive secretary, the highest staff job. He was the capable, loyal aide who reduced complex problems to a few clear choices for his boss to choose from.

When Reagan left office in 1974, Meese moved to the San Diego suburb of La Mesa. After a year with Rohr Industries Inc., a manufacturer of aerospace components, he started a law practice; his main clients were the Reagan precampaign committee called Citizens for the Republic, and the state Chamber of Commerce.

In 1977, Meese began teaching at the law school of the University of San Diego, a small private school. He also became director of the law school's Center for Criminal Justice Policy and Management. During his three-year tenure with the center, which was financed by conservative groups, Meese published three papers, two dealing with police-press relations and a third on child abuse.

The Attorney General no



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MEESE

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looks upon his days in San Diego wistfully. "We had a beautiful home," he says. "I had a good job. I had the ability to do three things: teach, direct the criminal justice center, and practice law on the side. And, economically, we were doing very well. So it was an ideal situation. I would have been very happy to stay there."

It is easy to understand how Meese could romanticize his time in San Diego. It had been a charmed existence compared to what awaited him in Washington.

Besides the infighting at the White House, there were financial problems brought on by carrying two big mortgages. Unable to sell his home in La Mesa for 20 months, Meese had nonetheless purchased a new house in McLean, Va. He fell 15 months behind in his payments on the California residence, but two savings and loan officials who oversaw Meese's account looked the other way. Both later got Federal jobs, as did a La Mesa businessman who arranged a $70,000 loan — later forgiven — to a buyer to facilitate the purchase of Meese's house. Questions were also raised, among other things, about Meese's stock trading and whether he obtained special treatment from Government agencies for businesses in which he had an interest.

It was such goings-on that led his predecessor at Justice, William French Smith, to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate Meese. When Meese has occasion to mention Smith now, it is almost never by name. He is "my predecessor" the same way a candidate might refer to "my opponent." The investigation was an election-year liability for Ronald Reagan, but he stuck by his friend as he always had before, and Meese — who denied any wrongdoing — was eventually cleared. In March 1985, 13 months after he was first nominated, he was sworn in as Attorney General.

One of his lieutenants remembers how his boss tried to laugh off the ignominy during one of his first staff meetings. "Not such a bad record," Meese had quipped, "nominated in February, confirmed in March."

Meese does not like to discuss the year he spent in limbo, a period when Justice Department morale sank perceptibly. But it is clear he was deeply affected by it. He calls the confirmation battle "an unfortunate byproduct of the ultrapartisan politics that's practiced by some people here. But I don't think you're ever going to change people. There are just some people who believe in political character assassination, and it's unfortunate that they get elected. It's one of the sad parts about any political system."

Of this time, Meese now says: "You always have days when you wake up and say, 'Why are you doing this?' I told the President that if he at any want to proceed. He insisted just absolutely the opposite. He wanted me to go through with the thing. It was that kind of support. I felt a commitment to him. I wanted to carry out what the President wanted me to do."

In the summer of 1982, Meese's 19-year-old son Scott, the middle of three children and a sophomore at Princeton, was killed in an automobile accident. Meese and his wife, Ursula, were devastated by the tragedy. "It's the worst thing, obviously, that's ever happened to us," he says now, his eyes welling up. "And I think I was just fortunate to have a lot of very good friends who were helpful at that time, including the President, who was extremely helpful and supportive. The President and Nancy Reagan."

Meese holds dear the traditional values that his relationship with the Reagans embodies. In his own mind, the Justice Department is an extension of those values, providing law enforcement that is not just vigorous but, he says, "compassionate" as well. As Meese sees it, that means protecting the average man from crime, from pornography or even his own Government. And he has no doubt that the people who really matter are behind him.

"The law enforcement community has labored for many years being the scapegoat for the increase in crime, while having to take a lot of court decisions which have been inimical to effective law enforcement," he says. "I have gotten a tremendous response from the law enforcement community because I am willing to speak out on issues which are key to protecting the public." ■

Solutions to Last Week's Puzzles

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Decision Making in the White House: How Well Does It Serve the President?

Quite well, according to Reagan aides who say their system is designed so that Cabinet advisers "feel closer to him than they do to their departments."

BY DICK KIRSCHTEN

In an efficiently run corporation, board meetings begin and end on time. So it is in the businesslike Reagan White House, where the President's senior aides start their daily routine at 7:30 a.m. with the first of five meetings, tightly scheduled at half-hour intervals.

On a recent Thursday morning, Edwin L. Harper and Roger B. Porter, the newly named top executives of the White House Office of Policy Development, broke away from the 8:30 management meeting in the office of presidential counselor Edwin Meese III and hurried through the corridors of the West Wing to take their seats at the big mahogany conference table in the Roosevelt Room.

There, promptly at 8:45, Treasury Secretary Donald T. Regan convened the 82nd meeting of the Cabinet council on economic affairs, by far the busiest of the policy forums in President Reagan's collegial advisory system. The agenda, as characterized by Regan afterward, ranged from "macroeconomics to minutiae." The discussion, he said with some understatement, was "pretty lively" and reflected sharp concern about "what's going on out there" in the economy. The meeting ended punctually after an hour.

The economic affairs group is one of six Cabinet councils, in addition to the statutory National Security Council, through which policy options flow to the Oval Office. For non-security issues, the recently reorganized Office of Policy Development manages the meetings, agendas and papers that lead to presidential decisions. Under Harper and Porter, the office is expected to be more mindful of strategic considerations involved in implementing policies.

The Cabinet, however, remains a central part of the policy machinery, and the recent working session of the economic affairs council was well attended. As the Treasury Secretary called the group to order, the cluster around the coffee urn in the southwest corner of the Roosevelt Room quickly dispersed. Sitting at the center of the table, Regan was flanked by Agriculture Secretary John R. Block and U.S. Trade Representative Bill Brock. Facing him across the table were Office of Management and Budget (OMB) director Dave Stockman, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige and Council of Economic Advisers chairman Murray L. Weidenbaum. They were soon joined by Vice President George Bush.

To Regan's right, around the end of the table, sat White House communications director David R. Gergen (on hand because a reporter was present), Harper and Porter. Also at the table was deputy Energy secretary Willard Keith Davis, filling in for his boss, James B. Edwards. Lining the walls of the room, beneath oil portraits of Theodore Roosevelt, on and off horseback, and of Franklin D. Roosevelt, were a dozen or more lesser officials, who with but one exception, were all male.

Regan moved crisply through his agenda, occasionally interjecting brief quips or questions. At one point, he deferred to Porter, who also serves as the executive secretary of the economic affairs council, to bring out a point that had been bypassed in the presentation of one of the working papers.

The council members were outspoken and openly disagreed with some of the conclusions put forward. During one presentation, life appeared to be imitating art as several Cabinet officers took sharp issue with a speaker who happened to be standing in front of a bronze statue, *Our Vanishing Wildlife*, which depicts a bison being attacked by wolves.

When issues are deemed ripe for presidential attention, Reagan will chair a council or full Cabinet meeting to hear the views of his advisers. During his first year in office, he led three-dozen Cabinet-level policy meetings.

In the case of the concerns raised at the Treasury Secretary's recent working session, a different avenue was pursued. Regan, in a subsequent interview, said he returned to the White House the next afternoon and, "for half an hour, with graphs and charts and the like, I gave the President a briefing on the condition of the economy." Among those present were Meese, Stockman, Weidenbaum and James A. Baker III, the White House chief of staff.

EVOLVING ROLES

Significantly, the advisers who joined the Treasury Secretary in the Oval Office for the most part have been active not only in shaping policy but also in lobbying for public and congressional support for the President's economic program. Regan, for example, participated several weeks ago in the presidential discussions with congressional leaders about the problem of the Administration's proposed budget deficits.

As the Administration faces up to the challenges of a tough second year—most notably the economy's failure thus far to respond to its medicine—there is increasing recognition in the White House that policy cannot be shaped in a political vacuum.

At the outset, although it may have been overstated in press accounts, Meese and Baker appeared to divide the White House neatly into a "policy side" and an "implementation side." Meese was to be in charge of both foreign and domestic policy development, with the emphasis on Cabinet involvement rather than strong White House issues staffs. Baker, a more experienced Washington hand, was to be responsible for the political and public

relations strategies needed to enact the President's programs.

In fairness, both Meese and Baker have always acknowledged that their missions are closely interrelated. In fact, along with deputy chief of staff Michael K. Deaver, Meese and Baker have worked closely together and kept apprised of one another's daily activities.

The first year did not produce rave notices for the policy side of the White House. Meese's top lieutenant for national security affairs, Richard V. Allen, failed to achieve a dominant role, became the subject of an embarrassing investigation and finally was let go. In the process, Meese was bypassed in the national security chain of command. Allen's successor, William P. Clark, reports directly to the President rather than through Meese.

On the domestic side, policy development assistant Martin Anderson, who also reported through Meese, resigned to return to academic pursuits. Anderson had been admired by senior White House staffers for his straightforwardness and devotion to philosophical principles, but a highly placed aide described him as "the most ineffectual domestic policy adviser ever in the White House."

The rap against Anderson was that he lacked both the instinct and the inclination to play the pragmatic bureaucratic game. "Marty had the comfort of never having to compromise, but he paid the price of never getting anything done," a colleague said. "If he'd chosen to be a bit more forceful, he could have been influential."

MORE FOR MEESE?

With the departure of Anderson, who long has been regarded as a guiding intellectual force behind Reagan's philosophy of government, many Administration insiders see an enlarging—or at least a more visible—ideological role for Meese. "My role has been reduced," Meese told *The Washington Post*, "to what it was intended to be in the first place."

"Ed helps remind the President of who he is and why he was elected," a well-placed Reaganite said. "With Marty gone, Ed's role becomes all the more critical if this Administration is really going to achieve change," he said.

In recent months, Meese has indeed spent increasing time on the speech-making circuit, articulating the principles upon which Reagan's initiatives are based and taking issue with the President's critics, including the press for its coverage of his economic program.

Even among White House aides who have been most critical of Meese's attempts to organize the presidential policy-making process, there is respect for his role as a personal adviser to Reagan. "Meese is sharp and quite capable of good analytical reasoning," an associate said. "He understands the Ronald Reagan philosophy in the abstract, but unlike some conservatives, Meese knows how to translate it into programmatic terms. He relates well with Reagan personally and is an exceptionally able counselor at the conference table."



The Cabinet council on economic affairs is by far the busiest of the policy forums in President Reagan's collegial advisory system. It has held nearly 100 meetings since the beginning of the Reagan Administration.

By choosing Harper to replace Anderson, Meese not only has opted for a more experienced manager but also has chosen a key member of the OMB inner circle that, to date, has been a driving force in developing Reagan's domestic policy. In addition to his service as Stockman's deputy at OMB, Harper has been a regular at the 8 a.m. White House senior staff meetings, thanks to his dual appointment as assistant to the President.

In shifting full time to the policy development office, Harper significantly has been included as a member of the legislative strategy group, headed by Baker, which plays a vital role in shaping and adapting policies in response to legislative and other political pressures. Anderson was an infrequent participant in the strategy group's sessions, a factor that diminished the importance of the policy office in the eyes of many observers.

In taking control of the Office of Policy Development, Harper has made several modest structural changes. He has named Porter to be his deputy with the title of office director. Edwin J. Gray, the former director, has been placed in charge of a new entity, the office of policy information, and will report directly to Harper. The new assistant to the President for policy development has also standardized the titles of four senior staff members who serve as executive secretaries of the Cabinet councils; each of the four has become an assistant director of the White House policy office. One of the four is assigned to two of the councils, and Porter continues to head the staff of the economic affairs council.

Both Harper and Porter have worked in the White House before. Harper served in the first Nixon Administration as assistant director of the Domestic Council under John D. Ehrlichman. He shared an office suite with Anderson, who 10 years later recruited him from an executive post in private industry in his hometown of St. Louis to serve on a policy task force for Reagan's 1980 campaign.

Porter served during the Ford Administration, first as a White House fellow and then as the executive secretary of the Economic Policy Board, headed by Treasury Secretary William E. Simon. He is the author of a 1980 book on presidential decision making, based on the experiences of the Ford policy board, and he quickly applied those skills in organizing the Cabinet council on economic affairs in the Reagan Administration. He also holds a Treasury Department appointment as counselor to Regan.

In an interview, Harper, taking care not to disparage the efforts of his predecessor and good friend Martin Anderson, predicted a more assertive regime in the new White House policy office. "I think you will see differences in personality as well as differences in the times and the kinds of policies that will come up," he said. "So I think the shop will definitely have a different cast to it. I'd characterize it as being active in response to what's here today and in anticipation of things we can see coming up in the next couple of years."

While his staff will continue to support the Cabinet council system, Harper

Reagan Turns to Experienced Mechanics. . .

President Reagan is discovering that dismantling a mechanism as complex as the federal bureaucracy requires the skills of experts who are well versed in the ways that the government's parts are interconnected.

In his second year in office, the President is relying less on the California crowd that advised him on the campaign trail and more on some pragmatic mechanics who know the nuts and bolts of federal policy making.

The leadership of Reagan's White House domestic policy staff has been shifted to a pair of quiet, hard-working students of government with ties to the Midwest who wasted little time finding their way into the power circles of Washington during the Nixon and Ford Administrations.

St. Louisan Edwin L. Harper, Reagan's new assistant for policy development, replaces Martin Anderson, one of Reagan's principal philosophical mentors who has returned to his academic post at Stanford University. Roger B. Porter, who spent his early boyhood in Iowa, is the new director of the White House policy office, replacing Edwin J. Gray, a California journalist who was a press secretary for Reagan in Sacramento.

Harper, 40, grew up in St. Louis and attended Principia College just across the Mississippi River in Elsah, Ill. As he puts it, he qualified for his "academic union card"—a doctorate in political science from the University of Virginia—in 1968. While earning that degree, he lectured on government and the presidency at Rutgers University and at the Brookings Institution.

His campus theories were quickly put to the practical test. He took a job with the old Bureau of the Budget in 1968 and the following year was named a special assistant to President Nixon and assistant director of the Domestic Council.



Roger B. Porter

Reflecting on his experiences in the Nixon White House, Harper said the Domestic Council, directed by John D. Ehrlichman, did not serve to broaden the base of presidential decisions. "Issues would come up through one decision-making path. It was basically one Cabinet member dealing with the White House staff and the President, with the President not always feel-

stressed that that role would be secondary to their work in the policy development office. He noted that many issues affecting only a single agency do not logically come before the Cabinet councils. "Yet it would be appropriate to have some outside analysis, and that would be done by this shop," he said.

Both Harper and Porter said they expect to make better use of the White House planning and evaluation office, from which little has been heard thus far. The planning office is headed by Richard S. Beal, a close associate of Reagan's political pollster, Richard B. Wirthlin. It is hoped that intelligence from Beal's operation can help the policy staff assess the implications of developing issues for the Administration's evolving political strategy.

In addition to meetings of the White House legislative planning group, Harper will also be a regular participant at the Monday update luncheons with the President that are designed to apprise him of coming developments and help keep him up to speed on subjects he is likely to be asked about during press conferences and other public appearances.

The policy office, however, is not likely to increase in size. It will continue for the foreseeable future with a complement of about two dozen professionals, less than half the size of the Domestic Policy Staff in the Carter Administration.

The man who still has the most to say about the evolving role of the presidential policy staff is Ed Meese, the outwardly unflappable chief constable of the Reagan White House. Meese stands between Harper and the President in the official pecking order and thus has the last word about the office's operations.

Among professional staffers who have labored in the presidential chain of command for more than a year, Meese remains a distant and puzzling figure. One staffer labels him an "enigma." Another, John T. McClaughry, who has quit the policy staff to consider running for the Senate in Vermont, declared, "Ed Meese was more a rumor around here than a reality."

McClaughry said the policy office has suffered from incompetent management, poor use of personnel and lagging morale. Resorting to hyperbole to make his point, he said, "They've got special assistants to the President loading Coke machines around here."

In a recent interview, however, Meese projected his finest, most jovial "all's well" manner. The conversation took place during a week in which many Cabinet members were beginning to come unglued over the soaring deficits projected in Reagan's fiscal 1983 budget and their feared effect on an already sick economy. It was a week in which press reports questioned whether the President was listening to his top advisers.

NO REGRETS

The interview began with Meese's observation that Cabinet government is working well, "as a matter of fact, better than a lot of people had anticipated." It ended with his being asked if there was anything he wished he had done differently during the first year. "I can't think of anything, quite frankly," he replied.

In between, Meese acknowledged that press reports have been critical of his management of White House policy development. "I've never quite understood them because I've never seen any basis for them," he said. "I think that most of the things that have happened here have been a result of the policy side of the house."

Much more than in earlier talks, however, Meese underscored the overlapping of White House functions and the need to integrate staff activities. "People have to understand that you really have three phases; one is the development of the issue . . . , then you have the decision pro-

. . . To Tune Up the White House Policy Engine

ing that he needed a meeting with the Cabinet officer. . . . A lot of people didn't feel that they got their day in court, their opportunity to try to persuade the President."

Harper left the White House in January 1973, moving to the Philadelphia area, where he held high executive posts with the INA Corp. and with Certain Teed Corp. Five years later, he returned to St. Louis to become a vice president of Emerson Electric Co.

In President Reagan's Administration, Harper's first assignment was as deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget, where he was placed in charge of the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency with the mission of rooting out waste, fraud and abuse in the government.

On Feb. 5, Harper was named to succeed Anderson as Reagan's adviser for policy development.

Porter, 35, is an academic superachiever who has mastered the behind-the-scenes governmental processes that do much to control the timing and format of high-level policy discussions. He has acquired a reputation for enforcing deadlines and for insisting on the staff work necessary to produce the crisp position papers vital to policy deliberations. Porter is known for getting papers done on time and circulated in advance of meetings. If he thinks the quality of a paper is subpar, as often as not he'll take charge of the rewriting.

The son of a college professor, Porter was born in Provo, Utah, and attended Brigham Young University, where he was a varsity tennis player and graduated summa cum laude. He was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, a teaching fellow at Harvard and in 1974 was appointed as a White House fellow.

In the Ford Administration, Porter served as executive secretary of the influential Economic Policy Board.

With the election of Jimmy Carter, he returned to Harvard to earn his doctorate and teach at the Kennedy School of Government.



Edwin L. Harper

cess . . . and then you have implementation."

Meese insisted that the decision phase—the new one in his explanation, where policy making and strategy overlap—is essentially a "Cabinet process" in which the President listens to competing arguments before making up his mind. He conceded, though, that "once he's indicated a tentative decision, there often may have to be consultations with Congress or he may call for additional information." He said that Reagan on rare occasions calls in individual advisers for further talks before arriving at a final decision.

These additional steps may well involve non-policy aides, said Meese, "but you don't have a rump session of White House staffers that sit around the President's desk when he makes that decision." He added that "the basic thing" that sets the Reagan Administration apart from many prior ones is the opportunity afforded Cabinet members to make their views known before a decision is made in White House channels.

Meese agreed that policy initiatives ultimately announced by the White House often include drastic 11th-hour alterations. Reagan's New Federalism proposal in this year's State of the Union message is a case in point. "That's an example of something that was developed through the Cabinet system to a certain point," Meese explained. "And then, as it became more bound up in the budget process here and in the legislative strategy aspect," further big decisions were made.

The presidential counselor conceded that "the packaging and tailoring . . . were done in the legislative strategy group." Not all Cabinet members or, for that matter, members of the White House policy staff were overjoyed with all aspects of the complex federalism proposal that finally emerged. The plan is undergoing revision and some unraveling as the White House negotiates with state and local officials. *(See NJ, 2/27/82, p. 356.)*

It should be pointed out that appropriate Cabinet officials are usually included in the legislative strategy maneuvers orchestrated by Baker and his top aides. When budget and tax policy are at issue, as in the New Federalism, Stockman and Regan are key figures in the legislative group. Meese and now Harper are included, too.

The case can be made, and Meese is quick to make it, that "the legislative strategy group is dominated by policy people." Just to make sure that the policy people see it that way too, Meese has asked his deputy, James E. Jenkins, to conduct a "management review" of the process. Jenkins, who is a former colleague of Meese in Reagan's California administration, has conducted interviews with Cabinet members and senior policy development staffers in the White House.

Meese said he intends to analyze Jenkins's findings to see if further mid-course corrections are called for. But he cautioned, "Don't expect any major changes; there has been nothing so far to indicate that."

A POLITICIZED OMB?

There may be some changes, however, in the extent to which OMB dominates the policy process in the months ahead. The budget remains a conspicuous topic, but it no longer is the issue the Administration is most comfortable talking about. Attention-grabbing initiatives in the areas of civil rights, federalism and foreign affairs are beginning to bring other agencies to the fore.

The start-up of the Reagan presidency was a heady time for OMB. With the

economic program at center stage, the professional staff basked in the immense clout wielded by its new director. Stockman was a hard taskmaster, and as a former Carter budget aide put it, "OMB was running the government as never before." Budget examiners shed their anonymity and fought in the front lines on Capitol Hill, leaving their personal imprints on the budget-cutting reconciliation bill.

Now, however, both the budget agency and its director are under fire. The 1983 budget estimates are ridiculed as lacking credibility. The deficit projections—$98.6 billion in 1982, $91.5 billion in 1983—are shocking enough, even if they are not underestimated. While Stockman remains a driving intellectual force in the Reagan command structure, he is left with the thankless task of arguing within the Administration for tax increases and defense cuts that the President opposes. The travails of Stockman, as recounted last winter in *The Atlantic Monthly*, have not abated. Moreover, some within the Administration believe he is too intensely preoccupied with the budget and not sufficiently concerned about the need to spur private-sector recovery.



Presidential counselor Edwin Meese III still has the most to say about the evolving role of the White House Office of Policy Development.

Within OMB, by almost all accounts, support for Stockman remains high. He is respected for his quick mind, his grasp of budget details and his long hours. The professional staff, which prides itself on loyalty to the Administration it serves, enjoys freedom from the non-intrusive, scaled-down policy staff in the Reagan White House.

Anderson was personally involved in the first year's budget considerations, but neither he nor his staff played a strong role in the decision process. By contrast, W. Bowman Cutter, executive associate OMB director in the Carter Administration, recalled that during his tenure, "OMB felt that the Domestic Policy Staff was too pervasive, too concerned with short-term political considerations and that some of its junior people were not too capable."

In the absence of a White House policy staff to interject political or strategic considerations, some observers feel that Stockman and his inner circle of advisers may have damaged OMB's institutional credibility by politicizing the budget process. James R. Schlesinger, who served as acting budget director under Nixon, has charged that a "serious blow" has been struck against OMB.

Writing in *The Washington Post*, Schlesinger railed against budget projections that he described as "preposterous." He added: "The OMB, unloved but broadly respected for its integrity, has long been a government pillar. It's debauchment represents the needless wastage of social capital."

Dale R. McOmber, a veteran budget official who retired last year after working on the initial Reagan budget revisions, cautioned that such criticisms should be taken with a grain of salt. "There is a bit of that, but I would not go as far as Schlesinger went," McOmber said in an interview. "He made some mistakes in his facts, and he always leaps to the conclusion that OMB is being politicized."

McOmber added, however, that Stockman, because he is intelligent and sure of himself, is less affected than other directors by arguments made by the professional staff. "He will direct what estimate is to be used," McOmber said. "I do know that the staff feels directed and plays a lesser role in providing ideas. Stockman dominates the ideas that come out of OMB."

For brainstorming purposes, Stockman reportedly has relied upon a small group of personal aides that includes executive associate director Donald W. Moran, special counsel Michael Horowitz and economist Lawrence A. Kudlow as well as Harper until he left for the Office of Policy Development. Joseph R. Wright Jr. has moved from the Commerce Department, where he was deputy secretary, to fill the deputy's post vacated by Harper. Senior career officials, if consulted less, have nonetheless generally supported most of Stockman's budget-slashing initiatives, in McOmber's estimation, and also feel that he has fought the good fight in trying to persuade Reagan to keep the budget more nearly in balance.

NOT 'GOING NATIVE'

If "politicization" is taken to mean the imposition of Reagan's philosophical values throughout the federal government, his aides have no quarrel with the term. A highly placed Administration official put it this way: "This is not a benign President who lets a Dave Stockman run free. This President should not be misunderstood; he is tough enough to do what's necessary to bring about change."

Meese notes that the Cabinet council system, which he devised, is intended to keep agency heads within the White House orbit. "The difference in this presidency," Meese said, "is that Reagan has used his system so that the Cabinet members all feel closer to him than they do to their departments. And he gives them a lot of opportunity to remember that."

The presidential counselor said that thus far the plan seems to be working. He said he sees no signs of the Reagan Cabinet "going native," the term used to describe officials who become captive to the concerns of their departmental constituencies and begin to balk at marching orders from the White House.

In theory, the Cabinet council system avoids duplicative efforts and turf battles by, in Meese's words, "trying not to have a big White House staff." He said the Office of Policy Development's main task is "to provide additional information when it is needed and to develop policy that isn't going to come out of some other source." He stressed, however, that primary reliance is on the resources in the agencies. "We're not going to build up a mini-Labor Department in the policy office to study manpower training, nor are we going to have our National Security Council staff pattern themselves after a little State Department."

There are now six Cabinet councils: commerce and trade, economic affairs, energy and natural resources, food and agriculture, human resources and legal policy. Each is chaired by the President, but when meeting for working sessions, they are led by their chairmen pro tem: the Secretaries of Commerce, Treasury, Interior, Agriculture and Health and Human Services and the Attorney General. *(See NJ, 7/11/81, p. 1242.)*

The chairmen pro tem, working with the White House Cabinet affairs office and senior aides on the policy develop-

ment staff, set the agendas for the council meetings and supervise the preparation of the working papers that form the basis for council discussions. As many as 10 Cabinet members, plus the Vice President and top White House staff personnel, sit on each council. However, all meetings are open to the entire Cabinet, all of whom receive advance notice of meetings and attend freely when they have an interest in an item on the agenda.

The Treasury Secretary's economic affairs council, which has held more than 90 sessions since the President took office, meets the most often, averaging two to three sessions a week when Congress and the President are in Washington.

In an interview, Regan noted that there is an economic component to just about every issue. A representative list of some 60 agenda items ranges from foreign trade and the problem of the Polish debt to a myriad of internal issues. Technical questions involving labor, management and just about every sector of the economy appear on the list. So do the big-picture items such as how the Administration's tax and budget policies influence prospects for recovery from the recession.

"It was good for you to see the shades of opinion that are expressed within the Cabinet council for economics," Regan told a visitor to one of the meetings. "We go over the whole thing. There are many who think that this [Administration] is a closed society, that [differing] points of view are never expressed, that people don't really tell Ronald Reagan stuff. Well, they do."

The Treasury Secretary added that the council's busy schedule of meetings, always held in the White House, "keeps people from becoming too parochial." Among the advantages of "having them come to council two or three times a week is as much to inform as to discuss," he said, adding that the meetings help other Cabinet officers to see how their problems fit in with other viewpoints and the larger set of concerns facing the Administration as a whole.

The council system also draws the Cabinet into the consideration of strategy for dealing with Congress. Regan's group, for example, has recently been debating options for an Administration position on a proposal currently gaining favor on Capitol Hill to amend the Constitution to require that the federal budget be balanced.

The sorting out of the White House policy process over the past few weeks and the emergence of new personalities could go a long way to smoothing some of the frictions that had developed between the Meese and Baker operations—including, at one point, a spate of rumors that Meese's days in the White House were numbered.

LOOKING AHEAD

Harper is regarded by Administration insiders as a Meese loyalist, despite the fact that he served first as a deputy to Stockman, who is closely associated with the initiatives undertaken by the Baker legislative strategy group.

In point of fact, however, Harper came into the Administration with few ties to either Meese or Stockman. Prior to the 1980 Reagan campaign, Harper had never met Stockman, and his acquaintance with Meese amounted to "shaking hands with him once at the 1976 Republican convention," where Harper was deputy director of the platform committee.

During the campaign, Harper's activity consisted mainly of participation in a task force on spending control headed by Caspar W. Weinberger, now Defense Secretary. After the election, Harper took a two-month leave of absence as a vice president of the Emerson Electric Co. to work with Anderson in the policy development office of the transition team. It was during that period that he met Stockman and that the idea of becoming the OMB director's deputy was explored.

Meese said he chose Harper to succeed Anderson in part "because he knows OMB and knows how we can tap their resources" and also because of "his skills and experience in management, his knowledge of policy and his obvious commitment to the Reagan philosophy." The counselor's confidence in Harper involves stepping away from reliance on people closely involved with Reagan in California and moving in the direction of Washington experience.

Harper's subsequent selection of Porter as his deputy, rather than Gray, a longtime California Reagan aide, clearly was a step in the same direction. Porter has worked closely with Stockman, one of the key members of the Regan Cabinet council, and has been one of the most active members of the policy development staff.

If Harper, as expected, becomes a member of the so-called core group of legislative strategists, the Meese and Baker sides of the White House will have been much more successfully integrated than before. Besides Baker, Meese and Harper, that group will include presidential assistants Richard G. Darman and Craig L. Fuller and legislative affairs chief Kenneth M. Duberstein.

Harper and Porter, who was formerly a fellow faculty member with Darman at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, expect to be able to work harmoniously with Baker and his aides while at the same time upgrading the professional performance of the Office of Policy Development. The role of the office, as seen by Porter, is twofold: "to serve as an honest broker in assuring that all views are fairly presented to the President, but also to control the quality of the analysis" of options available to Reagan.

As Regan put it: "The President is a busy guy, and we don't want to impose upon his time. We want to make sure he gets enough information, but we don't want to involve him in too much minutiae. There are some things we can resolve ourselves."

Meese, who remains at the top of the domestic policy hierarchy, agreed that there are limits to the President's time and the amount of detail that he can deal with. The Cabinet, working with the restructured White House staff, still has a lot to chew on in an election year in which Reagan is presiding over an extremely dyspeptic economy.

Nevertheless, Meese said, "the President does not want his aides to rationalize competing views by diluting them to the lowest common denominator. That's not always good. This is a President who likes basic information and then makes his decision rather than having everything predigested for him." □



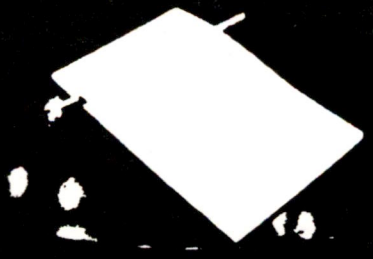
Treasury Secretary Donald T. Regan, head of the Cabinet council on economic affairs, says the council's busy schedule "keeps people from becoming too parochial."

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Cabinet Power



Domestic Policy Council Sprints . . .

Last October, with the insurance industry hollering about an incipient liability insurance crisis and Congress responding in ways that dismayed his aides, Attorney General Edwin Meese III did what government officials confronted with situations of complexity and adversity usually do: He created a working group to study the problem.

Because several agencies have at least a nominal claim on the liability issue, Meese formed a Tort Policy Working Group under the Domestic Policy Council, the Cabinet-level body he chairs that was set up to formulate noneconomic domestic policy. Consulting with White House aides, he assigned representatives of 10 agencies and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to the working group. Officially, the group's charge was broad, but its essential responsibility was clear: to propose ways to ease the crunch in the availability of liability insurance.



Shepard Sherbell/Picture Group

Justice Department's Robert L. Willmore
He was tort group's executive secretary.

Just short of five months later, at a Domestic Policy Council meeting, President Reagan approved the working group's proposals to establish a federal product liability law. The proposals were far more dramatic and fundamental than anything that either the Reagan Administration or Congress had proposed in four previous years of intermittent grappling with the issue.

As bureaucracies move, that sprint to decision was the equivalent of a four-minute mile. In that sense, the Cabinet council did what it was supposed to—quickly funnel options on a fast-moving issue from an interagency group to senior officials and the President for their approval.

"It was not a study group," said Robert L. Willmore, a deputy assistant attorney general in the Justice Department's Civil Division and executive secretary of the Tort Policy Working Group. "Its role was to be a policy-making organ of the Cabinet council."

But neither the Cabinet council nor the working group was really the key policy-making instrument. In its operation, the working group demonstrated a basic rule of government: "In any Administration, no matter who is the President, somebody who knows what they want is going to do better than people who have only a vague idea," as an Administration official dissatisfied with the working group's report put it.

The product liability policy was not, in fact, written by the interagency group but instead by the few key players most interested in it: Willmore; his boss Richard K. Willard, assistant attorney general in charge of the Civil Division; and Douglas A. Riggs, general counsel at the Commerce Department. They were the people who knew what they wanted to do about product liability law. The policy they drew up traversed the Cabinet council process, but lightly, like a pebble skipping over a lake. The interagency working group's role was essentially to ratify their decisions, and the Cabinet council was used to put an Administration imprimatur on what the working group had accepted.

The concentration of decision-making power in a few hands helped the Administration not only to move quickly but also to issue a precisely focused policy. Compared with the product liability legislation sponsored by Sen. Robert W. Kasten Jr., R-Wis., that Congress has been considering for the past several years, the Administration proposal "has a crisper purpose: to retrench the law and save defendants money," said Victor E. Schwartz, counsel to the Product Liability Alliance, a manufacturers' and insurance industry group.

Kasten's earnest attempts to write federal answers to dozens of intricate liability law questions smothered his bill in complexity, Administration officials felt. Early on, they decided to take a broader approach.

The working group issued eight proposed changes in product liability law that were generally welcomed by manufacturers and insurance industry officials and roundly condemned by consumer groups and trial attorneys. Among the most controversial were proposals to eliminate the doctrine of joint and several liability, limit punitive damages in liability cases to $100,000, cap fees to plaintiffs' attorneys and make it more difficult for people claiming injury from a product to prove that the manufacturer was legally at fault.

In part, the working group was able to move so briskly to such a sharply defined position because it was building on several basic decisions that were made in the first Reagan term after considerable internal squabbling.

The Administration was not forced to focus on the issue until the spring of 1982, when Kasten began to move toward introducing his legislation. Kasten invited Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige to testify that March, and Baldrige, who had spoken sympathetically of a federal effort before, was widely expected to endorse Kasten's efforts.

"However, at the 11th hour, concerns arose within the Administration that such testimony was premature," Baldrige recounted in an internal memo that summer to Meese, who was then counselor to the President. "As a result, I limited my testimony to an endorsement of the congressional inquiry itself." The Administration decided to look at the issue more thoroughly before committing itself, and in April of that year, the old Cabinet Council on Commerce and Trade, which Baldrige chaired, established a working group to study Kasten's legislation.

As a matter of philosophy, many Administration officials

. . . To Liability Insurance Decision

were uncomfortable with the large sums that juries were awarding against corporations in product liability cases. But such cases have historically been decided under state law. Imposing federally legislated changes on state tort law seemed to many officials "inconsistent with the Administration's policy of 'new federalism,' " Baldrige wrote to Meese.

The pressures arising from this fissure forced intense debate throughout 1982. Eventually, most Administration officials came around to the view of Kasten and the insurance industry that federal intervention was warranted. That fall, the Administration endorsed Kasten's bill.

But Kasten was unable to get his bill through Congress—in 1982 or in the years that followed. Though he revised the legislation several times, he could not overcome implacable opposition from trial lawyers and consumer groups, who maintained that the legislation unfairly benefited companies that had injured consumers by selling them defective products. In 1982 and 1984, Kasten's legislation was cleared by the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee but did not make it to the Senate floor. Last year, Kasten hit the end of the road when the committee, on an 8-8 vote, rejected his latest version of the bill.

It was the failure of Kasten's bill that brought the Administration back into the game. Kasten's continual efforts to attract moderate support for his legislation distressed some Administration officials, who considered each revision of his bill to be less of an improvement on existing law.

After Kasten's bill was defeated, the Administration was left with alternatives it liked even less. Throughout 1985, as the difficulty in obtaining liability insurance mushroomed into a "crisis," the only legislative alternative drawing any breath was the proposal by Sen. John C. Danforth, R-Mo., to create a no-fault administrative compensation system as an alternative to litigation for people who contended that they were harmed by hazardous products. Such a system was anathema to several Administration officials, who believed that only parties proven at fault should be required to pay compensation.

Administration officials assumed they had to work quickly. "We knew Danforth was moving, and if we wanted to play, we had to hurry," Riggs said. The working group split into eight task forces, but two handled the bulk of the work; Riggs chaired one that examined product liability law, and Willmore chaired one that studied the problems firms and localities were having obtaining insurance.

The process moved swiftly and was tightly held. The task forces did not consult with outside groups or try to assess the climate in Congress. Most of the work was divided between Commerce, which analyzed the insurance industry's health, and Justice, which examined the state of tort law. Together, principals from both agencies hammered out the reforms in a report that Willmore's working group issued.

This centralized system left some of the other working group members feeling left out. An Administration official said that the draft proposal was distributed to the working group only at the start of the meeting at which it was to be discussed. "There was no notice, no real opportunity to discuss it, though certain very preliminary observations were made," the official said. "The report wasn't really altered in any way. Wherever the issues had been sorted out, it had been sorted out before we got there. It became pretty clear that our views weren't really being solicited."

Riggs acknowledged that "some people did complain" about the process. But, he said, "some of the people who complained were distracted by other business. There was no reason at all why other people would not have had knowledge of the document and the concepts in it."

The working group sent the recommendations on to the Domestic Policy Council, which held two meetings before bringing in Reagan on March 17. At each stage, dissenting officials raised the same objections. Skeptics questioned the cap on punitive damages ("The fact is the number was just pulled out of the air. There was no empirical data to support it," said an official), the limits on plaintiffs' attorneys' fees (which the Council of Economic Advisers and some White House officials considered to be price fixing) and whether federal legislation preempting state tort law was consistent with the Administration's oft-stated belief in federalism.



Shepard Sherbell/Picture Group

Commerce Department general counsel Douglas A. Riggs
Some people complained about the working group process.

But the Justice and Commerce Departments were staunch in their support of the working group's proposals, and there was no one in the Administration committed to seriously fighting them. Reagan approved the council's request to send Congress legislation embodying the working group's proposal, and on April 30, Kasten introduced the Administration's product liability bill (S 100). Consumer groups and trial lawyers immediately dismissed the bill as a bailout for the insurance industry.

Six weeks later, the Senate Commerce Committee began marking up a bill that did not at the outset embrace the Administration's proposals for fundamental reform. The unambiguous statement the Administration had produced by bringing only a few voices to the table was fading into the din as Congress let the rest of the players into the room.

—Ronald Brownstein

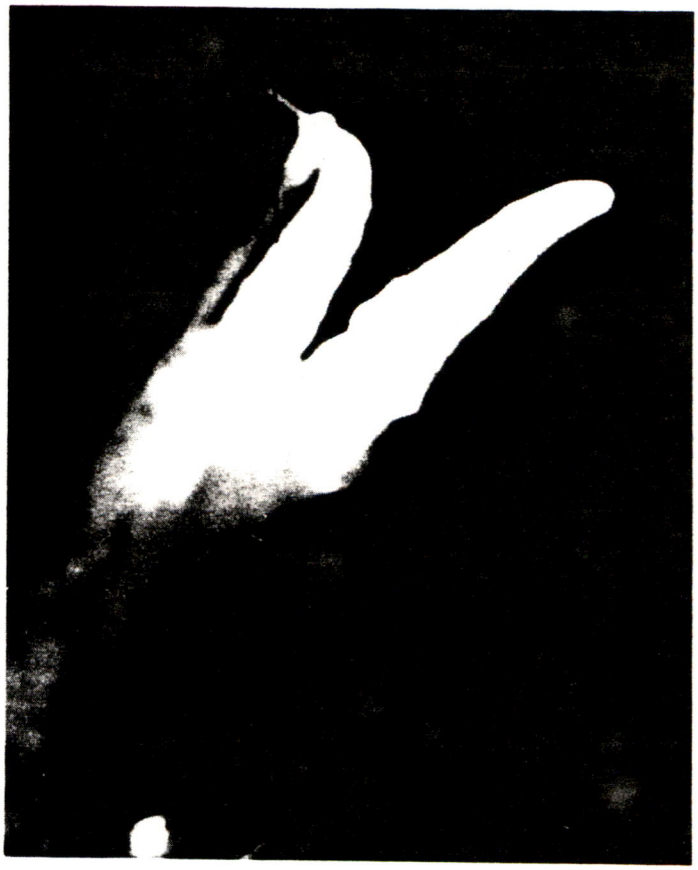
Rescuing White House from Clutches . . .

When the space shuttle *Challenger* exploded on Jan. 28, killing its seven-member crew, a carefully organized and well-oiled policy-making mechanism was ready and waiting to develop a Reagan Administration response.

Interagency responsibilities and relationships had been carefully detailed in a pair of lengthy presidential decision directives. Less than 18 months before the *Challenger* disaster, President Reagan had approved a national space strategy blueprint to implement the space policy that he had spelled out in a far-ranging paper promulgated two years earlier. Cabinet-level guidance for the process was provided through the National Security Council (NSC); questions on commercial uses of space were assigned under a separate directive to the Economic Policy Council.

Ultimately, however, the future of the nation's space program may be most affected by the spur-of-the-moment decision of four White House aides during the flight back from the President's appearance at a Jan. 31 memorial service in Houston for the Challenger victims.

Huddling aboard Air Force One, chief of staff Donald T. Regan, national security adviser John M. Poindexter, director of Cabinet affairs Alfred H. Kingon and presidential assistant W. Dennis Thomas essentially rescued the White House from the clutches of its own policy apparatus. Resisting pressures from their own bureaucracy for an internal review of the shuttle disaster, they advised the President to appoint an independent investigative commission.



NASA

The difficulties that have since beset the White House in deciding whether to build a replacement shuttle demonstrate both the strengths and the weaknesses of the interagency policy networks that constitute the heart of Cabinet government. The space shuttle experience suggests that policy making by bureaucratic committee is more suited to defending the status quo than to dictating a change of direction.

After more than three months of percolation in the labyrinthine, multitiered NSC study process, a "consensus" bubbled up for presentation to the President on May 15. At a full-dress NSC meeting that day, Reagan was advised to replace the *Challenger* at a then-estimated cost of $3.5 billion and thus restore the space fleet to four shuttles.

The recommendation came from an NSC senior interdepartmental group on space (SIG-Space, with eight members and two observers), chaired by Poindexter, after having worked its way through a lower-level interdepartmental group known as an IG, which initially had assigned the problem to a working group, referred to by some as an IGLET.

"A working group was constituted to do the technical work on the orbiter replacement issue," a mid-level official involved in the process explained. "It submitted a paper to the IG, which polished it and reported it to the SIG, which in turn met and made the recommendations to the NSC."

At the May 15 meeting, however, the President sent the issue back for further study after Regan and others posed a withering series of questions about the justification for rushing ahead to build a replacement shuttle.

Regan also held a powerful trump card at that meeting. The findings of the independent *Challenger* study commission, headed by former Secretary of State William P. Rogers, were not to be formally presented to Reagan until June 9. So it was understood at the May 15 NSC session that any decisions would be contingent upon a later assessment of the Rogers panel's conclusions.

From virtually the moment the shuttle exploded, the White House had been subject to emotionally charged appeals from within the Administration for a crash program to get the space mission back on track. Those who took that position had little enthusiasm for an outside investigation.

"There was pressure to follow the *Apollo 1* precedent," recalled an aide involved in the Jan. 31 decision to appoint the Rogers commission, alluding to the review panel that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) appointed after three astronauts died in a 1967 fire. "Frankly, some of the lesser NSC people were pushing for that, as was the NASA bureaucracy," the aide said.

The emotional climate was such that a veteran of Administration space councils speculated that the entire interagency decision-making process on replacing the orbiter might have been bypassed if NASA's leadership had not been in disarray at the time of the explosion. Administrator James M. Beggs was on leave of absence to defend himself against fraud charges related to his previous employment.

"If Jim Beggs had been over there, I imagine he would have gotten the President to put in the State of Union

. . . Of Its Own Space Policy Apparatus

message [delivered a week after the accident] that he not only wanted the program to go forward again but that he was giving an order today to start building another orbiter," the official said. "That's the way that you preempt interagency involvement."

But even the NSC's interagency process focused on the narrow question of how to replace the lost *Challenger* rather than on a broader reevaluation of the accident's impact on national space goals. NASA was committed to making the manned shuttle the nation's primary space transportation system, and most of the other players at the table had vital interests in the shuttle payload schedule.

The military establishment and the intelligence community regarded the shuttle as a primary tool for achieving their national security missions. Civil agencies such as the Commerce and Agriculture Departments depended on it to launch weather and data collection satellites.

Consequently, said a participant, "the way the original IG discussions began was that this is simply a hardware procurement exercise. From a policy formulation standpoint, that is a fascinating approach for the NSC to take, because that means all [existing] policies remain in place. We are just looking at hardware."

The odd party out in this approach, however, was the Economic Policy Council's working group on a commercial space program. It was mandated by Reagan's 1984 national space strategy directive to encourage development of a "robust" private space industry using unmanned rockets—so-called expendable launch vehicles.

Because NASA jumped into the commercial space picture first, offering attractive rates for private shuttle payloads, the Economic Policy Council's space working group had not made much progress. NASA's emphasis on the shuttle also diminished rather than stimulated private-sector production of unmanned rockets.

If the Economic Policy Council's proponents of space privatization, led by Commerce Department officials, hoped that the Administration's response to the shuttle disaster would lead to a broad reappraisal of NASA's policies, they were initially disappointed. Even fellow Commerce officials at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration had joined forces with those who reportedly "worked very hard to keep it a shuttle hardware procurement issue."

While the bureaucratic policy process drove inexorably toward the May 15 recommendation that the President approve a replacement orbiter, the Rogers commission simultaneously was conducting public hearings that cast doubt on NASA's ability to operate its remaining three space shuttles safely without major safety modifications.

The openness of the commission's investigation also helped to pierce the veil of emotional hyperbole that initially portrayed the *Challenger* as a major national emergency symbolizing a collective failure of U.S. technological know-how. At an early meeting of the NSC's mid-level space group, the IG, a few members reportedly made histrionic appeals for a decision to buy another orbiter right away. "They wanted a decision by Feb. 1. Bang, just like that," a participant said.

Skeptics were reportedly reluctant to raise tough questions lest their patriotism be called into question. But the Rogers commission peeled away the emotional layers and revealed the issue to be a more commonplace matter of management mistakes and individual misjudgments.

It took four or five weeks before participants in the NSC process began to recognize that they weren't dealing with a simple procurement issue; even then, there was a delay in identifying the questions and policies that demanded review.

The momentum of the process carried it forward despite the fact that answers to the larger questions had not been formulated. That became evident at the May 15 NSC meeting, when Regan and others demanded to know the alternatives to a four-orbiter fleet. Among those at the table, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige chimed in with criticism of NASA's pitch for commercial business.

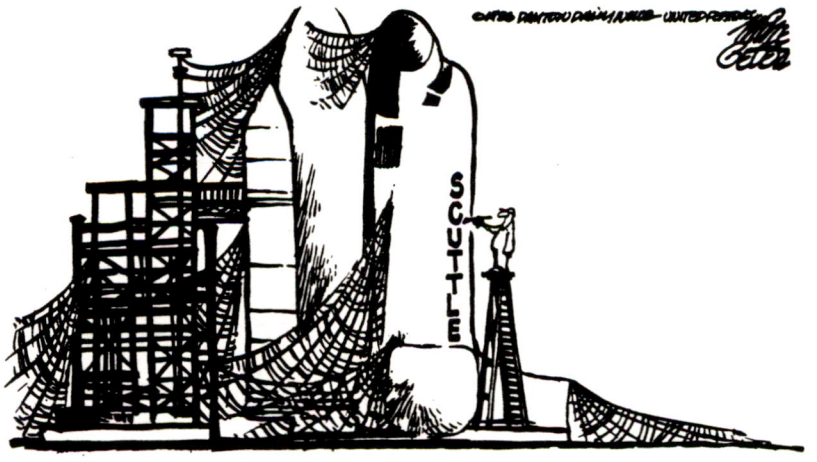
What about greater reliance on unmanned launches? Would a large expendable launch vehicle accommodate the same payload as a shuttle? What about lightening the manifest of future shuttles by spinning off commercial payloads to the private sector? Does NASA really need four shuttles, and what will it cost to get the remaining three flying again? Is newer and better technology available?

"There were a lot of questions that it was felt were not answered satisfactorily," explained the White House's Kingon. "The President has to make some hard decisions, but he wants better information before he does."

With those marching orders, the NSC-led space policy process immediately went back to work to produce a broader set of proposals, among them an expected mandate for the Economic Policy Council's commercialization group to chart a plan to stimulate entrepreneurship.

Presidential assistant Thomas, rejecting the notion that the interagency process initially failed, said: "I'd argue that that is where the system works rather than not. There may be every argument for doing something from one perspective. But what you need is a variety of perspectives."

The shuttle saga, however, does not make a compelling case for relying on Cabinet bodies to develop policy guidance. In this instance, the perspective most useful to Reagan came from outside his Administration.—**Dick Kirschten**



Managing the Executive Branch

Cabinet Councils of Government: Effectively Running the Federal Machine



Meese: "Maximize management communications."

HIGHLIGHTS

- ***The function of the modern President is to develop strategies and approve overall policies on almost everything.***
- ***Thus an organization designed for full access and total responsiveness must exist to expose all options.***
- ***Every modern President has recognized the need for an adjustable in-place system about a week after they take office.***
- ***And everything past Presidents have evolved, if effective, has been folded into the Cabinet Council process.***

On a cabinet just inside the entrance to the White House office of Ed Harper, assistant to the President for policy development, sits a Rubik Cube. Joe Chacon, a messenger who claims "only average" intelligence and, according to one Harper assistant, brings mail around to Harper's office "about 800 times a day," has been timed "doing" the cube in less than 70 seconds; lately has taken to doing it with "snake eyes" (a square of a different color in the center of each of the otherwise single-color sides).

Harper's office also is management focal point for a somewhat more important White House activity: running the President's Cabinet Councils of Government. And a considerable case can be made that, even after two years of Ronald Reagan's administration, a lot of people within Government and among those who judge the Council's principal product (policy recommendations to the President) have no more grasp of how the Councils function—or at least are supposed to—than they do of how a Rubik Cube works.

- **Item:** last October, when the Administration announced an expanded program to combat illicit drug trafficking and drug-related crime, much of the fault-finding White House Press corps labelled it, as one of them reported, "an example of the sometimes almost haphazard way in which decisions are made in this particular Administration." Actually, the program was merely an expansion on a policy that had been set more than a year earlier and, based largely on successes in the ensuing months, implementing it.

- **Item:** last November, headlines strumpeted that, "under pressure from Democrats and organized labor," the White House "has abandoned a plan to tax unemployment benefits." Actually, in keeping with a dictate of Counsellor to the President Edwin Meese III (principal architect of the Council system) that the Councils' job is to give the President as wide a range of ideas as possible, this particular tax notion was only one of some 16 options on a list which hadn't even cleared a Council working group yet; let alone become a Council agenda item.

In short, the President was unaware of it until he read about it in the newspapers. Noted Meese in a *Government Executive* interview, "The President doesn't like to make decisions based on memoranda. He always reads the background papers, the working-group report, before the final Cabinet Council meeting (on a given issue). Then, at that meeting (which President Reagan always chairs, himself, for every Council) he listens to the arguments and opinions right in front of him; knows what is behind the final policy recommendation when it reaches the Oval Office. He feels that face-to-face exchange is the way to make clear which alternative recommendations are likely to be the best."

Thus, says Meese, "Loyalty requires that these matters remain confidential" until that decision-making trip has been completed. "The one possible vice in the (Council) system is premature release of the range of proposed options." Nor does Meese think the Public's "right to know" is thwarted at all by staff and Cabinet people keeping their work to themselves until after the President has the final policy proposal.

Over the past two years, says Meese, "Once the President has made a decision, the longest lapsed time before the White House Press corps demanded details has been 40 minutes; the shortest lapsed time, nine minutes."

- **Item:** un-named "Administration officials" were cited in Media coverage of President Reagan's Latin American trip last December "downplaying the significance of it." Fact is, though the decision to go was not the result of a formal foreign policy analysis, the evident belief of some "Administration officials" about the trip points up, by implication, the need for continued communication among top Administration individuals—a chief potential benefit, as Meese sees it, of the Council system.

Reason: The trip reflected, as did President Reagan's meeting with the President of Mexico in early 1981, what was probably Ronald Reagan's first foreign policy pronouncement. He told Meese even before the Presidential Inauguration that he wanted his first overseas trip to be to Central and South America because "improving relations with our closest neighbors" had his highest foreign policy priority. (Pursuing that goal was delayed more than a year by a plethora of budget/tax-cut problems at home and already-scheduled mandatory Summit meetings abroad.)

- **Item:** a national newsmagazine, in a cover story on "How Reagan Decides," last month claimed, again quoting unnamed "high-level officials" and "a former aide," that, in effect, when he hears opinions stated on major issues at Council meetings which do not agree with his own, he attacks the speaker so strongly that advisers now tend to tell him only

The Cabinet Council Line-up

In addition to the National Security Council, established by Congress in the National Security Act of 1947, here is the current set of Presidential Cabinet Councils and their specifically designated members (whose job titles help explain what issues each addresses).

CABINET COUNCIL ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

- Secretary of the Treasury, chairman *pro tempore*
- Secretary of State
- Secretary of Commerce
- Secretary of Labor
- Secretary of Transportation
- Director, Office of Management & Budget
- U.S. Trade Representative
- Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers

(*Ex officio* members—The Vice President, Counsellor to the President, White House Chief of Staff, Assistant to the President for Policy Development.)

CABINET COUNCIL ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

- Secretary of the Interior, chairman *pro tempore*
- Attorney General
- Secretary of Agriculture
- Secretary of Transportation
- Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
- Secretary of Energy
- Chairman, Council of Environmental Quality
- Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers

(*Ex officio* members—The Vice President, Counsellor to the President, Chief of Staff, Assistant to the President for Policy Development.)

CABINET COUNCIL ON HUMAN RESOURCES

- Secretary of Health & Human Services, chairman *pro tempore*
- Attorney General
- Secretary of Agriculture
- Secretary of Labor
- Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
- Secretary of Education

(*Ex officio* members—The Vice President, Counsellor to the President, Chief of Staff, Assistant to the President for Policy Development.)

CABINET COUNCIL ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

- Secretary of Agriculture, chairman *pro tempore*
- Secretary of State
- Secretary of the Interior
- Secretary of Commerce
- Secretary of Transportation
- U.S. Trade Representative

(*Ex officio* members—The Vice President, Counsellor to the President, Chief of Staff, Assistant to the President for Policy Development.)

CABINET COUNCIL ON LEGAL POLICY

- Attorney General, chairman *pro tempore*
- Secretary of State
- Secretary of Treasury
- Secretary of Interior
- Secretary of Commerce
- Secretary of Labor
- Secretary of Health and Human Services
- Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
- Secretary of Transportation
- Director of Office of Management & Budget
- White House Counsel
- Chairman of the Administrative Conference of the U.S.

(*Ex officio* members—The Vice President, Counsellor to the President, Chief of Staff, Assistant for Policy Development.)

CABINET COUNCIL FOR MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

- Counsellor to the President, chairman *pro tempore*
- Secretary of Treasury
- Secretary of Defense
- Secretary of Commerce
- Secretary of Health and Human Services
- Secretary of Transportation
- Secretary of Energy
- Director of Office of Management & Budget
- Administrator of General Services Administration
- Director of the Office of Personnel Management

(*Ex officio* members—The Vice President, Chief of Staff, Assistant for Policy Development.)

CABINET COUNCIL ON COMMERCE AND TRADE

- Secretary of Commerce, chairman *pro tempore*
- Secretary of State
- Secretary of the Treasury
- Attorney General
- Secretary of Agriculture
- Secretary of Labor
- Secretary of Transportation
- Secretary of Energy
- U.S. Trade Representative
- Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers

(*Ex officio* members—The Vice President, Counsellor to the President, Chief of Staff, Assistant to the President for Policy Development.)



Harper: "Generically relate the issues."

what they think he wants to hear rather than what they think he ought to hear.

If true, of course, then the whole point of the Council system of management is blunted. To Meese, the claim is nonsense. "In the 16 years I've worked for him—and I've probably been in a position of giving him more bad news and unpopular information than anybody else has—I've never, in all that time, heard, or heard of, his chewing somebody out for giving him views, opinions, information contrary to his own."

The "chewing out" Meese *has* seen has been of someone for *not* giving him an unpopular view when they could have. The only other times, during his current White House tenure, when Reagan's anger has been roused has been when one of his appointee-advisers has taken a case public without bringing it to him first. (It has happened a couple of times, to a greater or lesser degree, since he took office and the message behind the resultant dressing down, "Argue with me, not to the Media," seems finally to have sunk in, at least with most of the Executive branch.)

• **Item:** late last year, when Meese announced creation of the Cabinet Council on Management and Administration, Press coverage dubbed it "a task force set up to oversee the other task forces;" said, "Among other things, it also would oversee the *Reform 88* program." In fact, each of the separate Councils "oversee" themselves and *Reform 88* (see story, this issue) is pretty much the whole point of the newest of the Councils.

In short, a lot of erroneous perceptions and misinformation is floating around Washington and across the country. One reason for the criticism of Reagan's White House management, thinks Meese, is simply that "Some people don't like the final decision" and one way the losers use to contest it is to contend, "The guy just doesn't understand the problem." The other reason, he thinks, is that some of

Streamlining Defense Will Take a Dramatic Policy Change

Five major consequences he sees in today's long lead times:

I—Each year of delay adds roughly 30% to the original cost estimate on buying a proposed new system; and, "according to Paul Thayer, 40% of every Defense procurement dollar now goes to bureaucratic overload."

II—Permanent U.S. inferiority in the performance of "cutting-edge-of-technology" new weapons because the Soviets currently have plenty of time "to see what we plan, steal our technology, copy and deploy equal or better systems before we do."

III—No President can introduce any new strategy, or meet any new threat, "on his watch" (a presumed maximum eight years—and remember who was the last full two-term President) if and where this calls for new hardware.

IV—The only chance the President has to deliver on his election commitment to establish a "margin of safety" is to change U.S. strategy and the third point above precludes this. Thus, "given present lead times, we likely will enter '84 and '85 even more inferior than were in '81 unless he can cope with this acquisition problem".

V—Congressional and/or Administration support for any new system cannot be sustained over 13 years. Programs like *Stealth*, for instance, enthusiastically supported today, are not likely to be viewed in the same light 10 years from now when megabuck production money is sought—especially if Point **II**, occurs, as it will.

Richardson's "culprits:" A "Parkinson build-up of regulations and procedures (84,000 pages) designed more to protect decision-makers than to achieve results; over-layerization of authority and excessive participation in the decision progress by staffs and echelons that need not and should not be involved; a front-end decision process that has stretched from six months to, now, six years; perpetuation of the McNamara-induced (he was Defense Secretary in the 1960's) low-risk, building-block policies, adding four years to the development cycle, all but precluding "concurrency" in system-component developments and requiring all technology be in hand before going for the system; inadequate or no commitment at all levels, from the outset, to end product; adversarial rather than team effort in contractor-Government relations and management personnel turnover during the 13-year cycle.

The so-called "Carlucci Initiatives" and other DoD efforts focus, he argues, only on regulations, procedures and the multi-year contracting/program instability elements of the above-listed collection of acquisition problems.

Only "decisive Presidential orders," with, in several cases, Congressional support, can correct the rest.

As reported in a recent issue of the *Government Purchasing Outlook* newsletter, "A move is afoot, and events—including the recent establishment of the President's Cabinet Council on Management and Administration plus naming of Paul Thayer as Deputy Secretary of Defense—make it likely the notion will at least receive careful study, to alter dramatically the way the Pentagon buys major weapons systems."

Two of the proponents, E.D. Milauckas and Bob Richardson, (see December *Government Executive*, page 46) worked with, and for, retired Air Force General Bernard Schriever (who also is a strong backer of the concept) during the heated missile/space race era of the late 1950's and early '60's.

Sums up Richardson, in part, "After shopping *High Frontier* (a proposal for deploying a series of space systems to establish "assured defense" against Soviet strategic nuclear attack—see June, 1982,. *Government Executive*) in and out of Government, I have come to the conclusion that today's (Pentagon) acquisition process not only is the Achilles heel of HF but probably of our ability *ever* to achieve an acceptable U.S. security posture. Unfortunately, the acquisition problem is generally considered a relatively minor DoD (Department of Defense) technical and managerial matter, unglamorous, hard to explain—and thus fails to get the attention it should at top levels."

In one sentence, he says, "The problem is *time*." In the 1950's, he points out, the cycle from deciding to field a new system through the development and procurement of it to "full up" operational capability averaged six years with urgent programs such as *Polaris* fielded in four years. Today, the average is 11-13 years "with some programs up to 20 years in the pipeline!"

the critics don't understand how Government should work under this Cabinet Council system.

Basically, the structure in place today was started as the Reagan "transition team" came to Washington in November-December, 1980 when Meese was looking to apply in the Federal Government the cabinet system he created in Sacramento when Reagan was California Governor, "recognizing that at State level there are no national security or foreign policy (except for trade) concerns." (The Council to cover those latter fields already exists, anyway, in the National Security Council, created by law in 1947 and designed to coordinate separate-Department national security programs since, as its chief proponent at the time, the late James Forrestal, said, "Communism will attack us on all fronts, military, economic, and political.")

One Meese objective: "Maximize management communications" on problems and issues. A second one: as he told the editor of *First Monday*, the Republican Party's magazine, "We'd come to the point, in previous Administrations where Presidents literally exhausted their energies, doing pick-and-shovel-work, for which we have very competent people on the front line. The real Presidential duties are to develop strategies and approve overall policies."

The Cabinet Councils' organizational structure is simplicity itself. At the pinnacle, just below the President—who, as noted above, always chairs the final meeting on an issue before one of the Councils is due to send a policy recommendation up to him—are the Councils, of course (see box). Each has a formal membership list and an Executive Secretary to give their deliberations administrative support, the latter doing more than merely paperwork but also, from time to time, providing a Council with, for instance, "timing" advice—after deliberations with Meese and Harper—on when to bring an issue up to the President at a final meeting.

Notes Harper, "Every week, I meet with all the Executive Secretaries of the Cabinet Councils; go through the agenda of what they have scheduled for the next 60 days." Those meetings also give him a visibility on the whole effort, make sure "the left hand knows what the right hand is doing." For instance, at this writing, he says "Human Resources, Economic Affairs, and the Commerce & Trade (meeting) agenda's all will be addressed in the next three weeks because they're all studying some generically related issues."

For that same issue-overlap reason, Council memberships are not rigid. Any Cabinet Secretary can attend somebody else's meeting, or send a representative (depending on how close to meeting with the President an issue is), even if he//she is not formally assigned to that particular Council. Says Harper, "The National Security Council obviously has a strong interest in much of what's being discussed in the Cabinet Council on Natural Resources, for instance; two groups interested in the same topic. So we have overlapping attendance and memberships."

Further, points out Meese, "To extend management communications even further, senior White House staff people can attend any meeting they choose." Those dialogues are important to Meese as well because of his three-fold responsibility. The three: *Planning and Evaluation*, i.e. looking strategically out into the future "at what we should be looking at," reflecting Presidential goals; *Policy Development* which takes generalized guidance from Planning and Evaluation, deals in the much more immediate time frame of "this year;" and *Cabinet Affairs*, i.e. getting input from the Departments on policy problems and monitoring policy implementation.

The Executive Secretariate to each Council is made up, usually, of the Assistant Secretary for Management of the Agencies that belong to a Council. Below that, as issues arise, working groups are set up to do studies, make recommendations to a particular Council. In short, says Meese, "It is a clear-cut process for

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decision making so everybody gets a chance to get input to the President. He demands full information and our job is not to censor ideas but to give him as wide a range of ideas as possible."

How do "issues" crop up? "I'm not sure [illegible]aker a lot for an issue to get visibili[illegible] says Harper. "My staff and I gather, [illegible]d pour through, a tremendous amount of material every day—though, and it may sound self-serving—I'll spend more time reading *Government Executive* than, for instance, watching the network news because I can get what the latter are saying out of the 'Current News' summary."

Adds Ralph Bledsoe, who has an armlong list of White House job titles, e.g. Special Assistant to the President, Executive Secretary to the Council on Management and Administration, Associate Director (to Meese) of the Planning and Evaluation Office, "Maybe the jury is still out on whether (the Cabinet Council structure) has made a difference."

Some issues are still going up to the Oval Office the old way, he points out, i.e. a direct visit by a Cabinet official, or someone else, to the President "and there will always be some that just don't neatly fit one of the Councils." Still he sees a lot of merit in the management system—and notes, to back that up, that the number of issues going up through the new channel "is impressive."

Prior to the present set-up, he says, "Managers of various Agencies, Admin[illegible]trators, and so on often just never could [illegible]rk their way to the President with [illegible]ssues important to them. Now, they can get to the President, or at least one of us, direct."

Also, he notes, when a Cabinet-level Secretary did reach the President in the past, he usually took up issues central to individual Department problems. Conversely, full Cabinet meetings (which the current President convenes a great many less of because of the Council system) had long agenda's and wasted the time of many attendees who simply had no interest in what was on most of the list. "In some ways," he sums up, "by decentralizing and delegating, we're getting more work through the system than the once-huge Cabinet meetings did."

"The whole Cabinet Council effort is unique," he says, "it is the one thing that's been missing from a whole series of recommendations," e.g. the Hoover Commission, the Brownlow Commission, etc., "on how to improve Federal decision-making machinery. Just creation of the Cabinet Council arrangement solves a lot of problems."

His underlying point: "In the past, we've put our chief executive officer (CEO), with no prior experience, in [illegible]harge of a vast organization with no [illegible]usiness-like machinery for running it." Results were, among other things, a lot of biased and/or misinformation and unbalanced opinion reaching the Oval Office; a tendency at top levels to start programs and go on to other "new-starts"—without having either the resources or the time to go back, say two years later, to find out if the old ones ever were done.

"What we're going to do this time," says Bledsoe, "is to create a monitoring system to ask, 'Why hasn't it been done?' " Much of that data flow will be automated. "We're using some automated tracking systems right now. Each Council has one. And the Office of Administration has computers which support OMB (Office of Management and Budget) and most of the rest of us around here."

Even so, he suspects, "We're always going to have some information flow in here, Agencies telling you what they want to tell you, that could be suspect." Adds Harper, "We operate on a process basis (in developing policy), not a project basis. The Cabinet Departments are responsible for carrying out the policy."

Sums up Meese, "When the President makes a decision, everybody is then required to support it and the Agencies are held accountable for implementation." And therein may lie the rub: it's not the management scheme that's flawed; it's the way people inside Government work—or don't work—with it and people outside Government criticize it.

Of the latter, says Meese, "Most of the Press just doesn't understand our approach because very few ever have had any management experience running a business." Of the former, the examples already make a long list. To name a few:

- State Department staff failing to "hang tough" with Congress, among others, on President Reagan's Middle East peace plan; and "Reagan's failure," according to columnists Novak and Evans, making him "a laughing stock in the world and the U.S. Senate."
- The much-maligned White House plan of last year to sell grain to the Soviets but embargo sale of natural-gas-pipeline technology, in retaliation for Polish crushing of "Solidarity" (which may not be all that "crushed" for that matter) and imposing martial law, generally has blamed "ineptness" for the White House decision.

That story deserves more detailed attention than is available here. But the bottom line was, even before Reagan made the grain/pipeline announcements, the Administration-preferred bank embargo of *credit* against the Soviets as the most likely tactic that would succeed—and U.S. European allies refused to go along. All of that surfaced in Council meetings as well as the fact that: (a) the grain deal would mean a cash drain on Soviet treasuries (provided commercial banks didn't undercut White House policy) and, besides, the U.S. has never used food for political blackmail; (b) unlike grain and other commercial-commodity items, says Harper, "We were closer to being able to exercise a monopoly influence with the gas pipeline than on these other things."



Bledsoe: "Maybe the jury is still out."

In sum, while the President felt he had to do something in retaliation for the Soviet aggression, he was left with a poor package—and the Europeans refused to go along with that one, too. Point is, it was not the system for surfacing issues that was flawed, but the actions of some of the people and groups who were to carry the policy out.

- Late last Fall, three separate Cabinet Departments were looking separately at (a) job training; (b) assisting auto and steel workers; (c) employment compensation programs—until Harper brought them together via the Cabinet Council system because all three issues were generically inter-related to a single issue: unemployment.
- General Services Administration (GSA) late last year was doing an office-space reduction study, the kind they do almost annually, from the perspective of cost-cutting—until they were sent back to the drawing board by Council deliberations which pointed out that the basic challenge was, "Are we adding programs or cutting programs" and, as a result, "How many people are we going to have and where?"
- Office of Personnel Management (OPM) presented a proposal, late last year, to the Council on Management and Administration on re-writing job descriptions of Federal contracting personnel to combat "grade creep;" then heard a rebuttal from the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) which insisted there had been no grade creep in that job category and, under the circumstances, to appear to criticize very important, "guiltless" people "responsible for megabucks of Federal dollars would be demoralizing."

OPM's "working group" was sent back with instructions to talk to Agency ex-

ecutives at higher levels than they had to this point; see if they couldn't come back with a consensus view. In short, they were told politely, "You haven't done your homework properly."

• Attempts in Congress, and among Executive Agencies, to circumvent a long-established policy that the Federal Government should contract out for goods and services, except under unusual circumstances. "We're not going to give up any more ground on *A-76*; let Government willy nilly take as its own what ought to be contracted out. It's very unfortunate, and a little puzzling really, how sometimes Congress decides we ought to abrogate our responsibility to the taxpayer merely to take care of the political concerns of a handful of their colleagues."

To combat that kind of thing, says Meese, "We (notably Jim Baker among many others) promote our views on Capitol Hill; line up outside groups to support our policies. A lot of times, the reason one-issue activists are able to get a law passed is it is such a narrow issue that nobody else is interested—but a lot of times, if we can mobilize those otherwise disinterested parties, they can neutralize the special-interest move."

In any case, while Harper points out, "We deal in processes, not projects," the clear White House determination to follow-up policy pronouncements with management machinery (such as computers and the various Inspectors General committees already in place) to assure policy implementation. In other words, more and more Executive personnel in the Departments are going to be getting notes like the one Harper sent the Pentagon recently.

Said it, pointing out an established, new Defense procurement policy, "What's the hold-up?"

nformation Engineering

"Reform 88"—How the White House Intends to Streamline Operations

HIGHLIGHTS

• —As every new President since Hector was a pup also has claimed, this Administration, under the slogan "Reform 88," has called management efficiency and "streamlining Government operations" one of its "highest priorities."

• —This time, however, what it starts it actually may finish, in part because that's the Reagan management style and in part because teams have been tasked through the Cabinet Council on Management and Administration to audit implementation progress.

• What is, and will be, flowing out of that Council will affect employee job ratings, procurement procedures, cash management, program administration, much more.



OMB's Wright: on information reporting, "timeliness in reaching the President is terrible."

Looking back on his service as Secretary of Defense, Robert Lovett noted, "One of the toughest parts of that job was you just knew there was some guy, probably down in a nondescript office on the first floor, A ring, who knew more about a particular problem you were facing than anybody else in the world—and you had no way to get to him."

Presidents have the same difficulty, and one of the objectives of the Cabinet Councils of Government is to chop through that essentially red-tape obstacle to the flow of information and opinion up and of decisions back down quickly to the "grass roots" people charged with implementing them. In essence, one of the central goals of "Reform 88," is an ambitious six-year effort to make the Federal Government operate in a more businesslike manner. Counsellor to the President Ed Meese—when he announced it and the setting up of the Management and Administration Council last September—called it "one of the highest priorities of this Administration."

Every new arrival to the White House in recent memory has made that commitment, and, at the end of their various tenures, not much had happened except that Government had grown larger, more complex, more costly and was taking longer and longer to get things done. The present Administration is well aware of this. Notes Ralph Bledsoe, Executive Secretary to the above-named Council, "Go back in history and you'll find Administrations like to start things and go on to something else."

This one, he says, intends to follow up policy pronouncements and track the Agencies to assure implementation. Indeed, the Inspectors General/auditor teams who will do a lot of that tracking were set up as a coordinated structure among Federal Agencies and Cabinet-level Departments even before the Management Council was (and uncovered $5.8 billion in fraud and waste in their first six months at work, hinting at just how organizationally antiquated and red-tape laden the Executive branch has become in recent years.)

The planned follow-up thesis is analogous to President Reagan's strategy for working with Congress—as he also dealt with the State legislature when he was Governor of California. In simplest terms, he sets major policy goals early, takes what he can get from the Congress in implementing legislation the first year, keeps coming back until he has his entire package—or events, themselves, have made it, in his judgment, no longer necessary to push for the whole package. (One clue to Reagan's "take what you can get—for now" philosophy: he's been, so far, the least veto-prone President since Roosevelt.)

In short, the often carping and sometimes gleeful criticism that "we made him renege" on this program and/or "he's given up" on that one not only misses the point of his long-term intent but has a lot

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ANALYTICAL PROBLEMS IN THE STUDY OF PRESIDENTIAL ADVICE: THE DOMESTIC COUNCIL STAFF IN FILM

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Introduction to the Problem

Were a President starting out anew, it is unlikely he would choose the particular configuration of staffs and units to assist and advise him which exists today in the Executive Office of the President (EOP).

He is bound to insist on a large budget office. He would almost certainly require a staff to help manage the day-to-day decision process in foreign and domestic policy. He would need a White House Office containing a number of personal aides close at hand, staffs for press and Congressional relations, and a range of operational support. He would probably want an economic policy adviser but not necessarily a Council of them. Beyond these, his choices for staffing would reflect his own particular substantive and operational priorities, as well as his organizational philosophy concerning what his Executive Office should or should not contain.

Of course, the President doesn't start with a clean slate. He inherits the Executive Office structure from his predecessors and his immediate needs for staff support generally bring him to fill most senior EOP positions before he has had an opportunity to review how much of the institutional vestige he wishes to retain.

This much is well-known; so too is the cumulative result – an almost unbroken process of adding new advisory units, new layers of staff to man them, and new roles and responsibilities for each of the President's advisors to perform. Analysis of the history of the EOP over the past three decades shows a consistent pattern of expansion. In budgetary terms the Executive Office has grown to over eight times its size in 1950. Manpower has grown in the same period just from over 1,100 to over 1,700 – an increase of more than 50 percent.

Predictably, the expansion of staff numbers, the creation of more EOP units and more small units, the delegation of decision-making authority, even the effect of periodic cutbacks have resulted in changes of both organizational shape and size. These factors have increased the amount of reporting upwards and sideways that is required in the preparation of papers for executive review. They have widened the networks of contacts that go into presidential staff work; they have exacerbated problems of role definition, boundaries of responsibility, and general coordination of advice.

These are widely acknowledged as general problems of the policy process in the Executive Office. What is not well understood is whether there is a cause-and-effect relationship between specific organizational patterns in the Executive Office and the outcomes of the policy process which the EOP is responsible for producing. And if there is such a relationship, the literature on the presidency is a mass of contradictions and doubts as to what that might be. Consider these examples.

1. *Bureaucratic expansion increases the complexity of decisions and disperses the power to make them.*

One trend already noted in the EOP is the proliferation of policy units, each with its own circumscribed area of responsibility for policy advice. The effect has been an increase in the number of people whose role potentially involves them in the review of policy papers. The more numerous papers for review

become; the more issues for decision are presented, and the more complex the decision process inevitably must be. It is a truism of modern organizational studies to say that the more complex this process becomes, the greater the uncertainty in predicting its outcomes, and the more variables that are required, analytically speaking, to plot and explain what the outcomes are. As Steinbruner (1973) noted in a recent study of national security policy-making, in these circumstances the effective power to make policy decisions to dispersed, the President's power not least of all. The measure of the President's power in decision-making is thus arguably the reciprocal of the complexity of the process.

2. *Increasing delegation of presidential powers adds to the need for staff coordinating mechanisms.*

The history of the Executive Office is in important part a process of increasing delegation of policy review and of decision-making powers from the President to his assistants in special policy areas or fields of responsibility. Each of these assistants or staff has in turn delegated more of his functions to subordinates.

Presidents have differed in the value they placed on delegation within their own office. Delega n has the advantage of increasing the span of control the Chief Executive can exercise over both people and policy issues, and this enhances the coverage of expertise, the adequacy or representation, and the range of feedback that are available for presidential decision-making. Studies of executive decision-making in business have suggested also that the influence of the chief executive is greater and more effective, the more he delegates functions to his subordinates (Leiberson and O'Connor 1972).

On the other hand, the more a chief executive delegates his authority, with a greater number of units and sub-units reporting back, the more difficult it becomes to coordinate his policy-making process (Rose 1977). Studies by Helmer of the evolution of the Executive Office (1977) illustrate that an increase in staffing an issue in one section of the EOP or within an Administration in general, is usually not balanced by a decline in staffing the same issue in other sections. All staff like to be where the action is, even if only on the margins, and once there, they prove difficult to silence or remove. The result is that as new issues gain presidential priority, all units try to gain new resources to throw more staff into the policy process. Staff output increases exponentially and more staff time is consumed in processing and "coordinating" the flow of paper and inter-agency committee meetings that results.

3. *Shortened tenure shortens organizational memory and narrows policy focus.*

Senior staff tenure in the White House averages less than two years on the whole, it is longer in other EOP units but over time the trend has been for this to shorten in all units. Contrasting only the domestic policy staffs of the past three Administrations, and excluding staff unit heads, the following figures indicate average tenure:

Califano staff	24.4 months
Ehrlichman staff	34.5 –
Cannon staff	24.1 –

Short tenure means that organizational memory is short and staff contacts in government narrow. The lessons of experience are learned too late in the individual's tenure to benefit the decision-making process (cf. Heclo 1977; et seq.). For staff with little experience, there is marginally greater effectiveness and influence to be gained in specialization of advisory roles and in concentration on short-term policy problems. Little insight and few resources are available for longer term policy work and staff planning.

4. *The Ear versus the Eye of the President.*

Presidents have differed in the extent to which they preferred oral briefings on issues rather than written memoranda. This is partly a matter of personality, partly of background, and partly of managerial style. There is a simple but important implication for the structure of the Executive Office: the size of the advisory staff will be roughly proportional to the volume of paper the President demands, and to the ratio of paper to talk at the Oval Office stage of policy decision. In order for the President to cut staff significantly, for example, he needs to consume

less paper; but consuming less paper is bound to require more time for talk. This is the marginal advantage of paper—that it commits less time and thereby leaves the President freer than otherwise to set his own deadlines and keep his own policy counsel.

5. *Increasing hierarchy of staff reduces the options delivered to the top.*

Another problem of the effect of organizational structure upon the executive policy-making process flows from the sizeable change in *shape* of the executive bureaucracy over the last two decades. In this instance, shape refers to the number of levels (civil service or General Schedule grades) at which staff are appointed, the average grade of different EOP units, and the span of control of supergrade staff over middle and low-grade subordinates in each executive unit.

To the extent that EOP units now have relatively more senior staff and more layers of staff than they used to have, policy papers are required to travel through more clearance points on their way upwards. What hierarchy of this kind can do is to reduce the detail of information, and the number of individual options or issues for decision that are transmitted to higher authority (Helmer 1975).

What studies of EOP decision-making reveal is that as the process becomes more complex for the President in the aggregate, each decision file itself becomes less complex as it heads towards the Oval Office. What the layers of staff do in short is to reduce argument of pros and cons, detail of agency submissions, and range of inter-agency options down to that limited number on which no further agency or staff agreement can be secured in advance. Perhaps this is what staff should do, but in acting thus they also create problems of isolation of the President which in the past have been serious in their implications.

6. *Organizational Scale and the Effects of Competitiveness Among Advisers.*

The competitiveness by means of which Presidents like Roosevelt and Truman sought to invigorate the advice they got and multiply their options, took place in an Executive Office which was a fraction of the present size and leaner (less top-heavy) in shape. In that context competitiveness might be regarded as healthy in the sense that it neither shifted the balance of presidential attention for too long from one policy area to another, nor diminished the range of his choice within each area.

In the much larger and more complex Executive Office of today, competiveness among advisers can have several less beneficial effects. For in the process of decision-making, the larger and more specialized units can and do drive the smaller ones, not to mention the Cabinet agencies, out of the market in presidential attention. In the case of the last three presidents, attention has tended to be fixed almost exclusively and for long periods in single areas of policy.

EOP units can have these effects by generating more issues for decision, more detailed options, and a greater volume of paper than the President of the day can fairly absorb if each advisory unit had a nominally equal share of the President's time and stood in line to wait for it. With advantages of size and resources and using a variety of staffing tactics, some units can manipulate the rules of the game in executive decision-making and exercise disproportionate influence over the process as a result.

In the Ehrlichman period this was the case with the ascendancy of the Domestic Council staff in domestic policy as against the Cabinet agencies. In the Ford Administration it was true of the Economic Policy Board as against both domestic and foreign policy advisory units in many key policy areas. Increases in scale have thus fundamentally changed the consequences of staff competiveness from what they were in Roosevelt's time.

Methodological Problems

Identifying a range of hypotheses like these is one thing; finding reliable tests for them is quite another.

At any selected point of time, for instance, it is difficult to gauge how far the decision-making process employed by a particular President follows the formal rules and division of responsibilities of the executive bureaucracy as this has been legislated or otherwise chartered to operate; how far this process deviates in order to follow the dictates, style or plans of an incumbent President prepared to improvize within the

existing structure; or alternatively, how far the process responds to the improvizations of many members of the Executive Office with the effect that no one, certainly not the President, is responsible for the shape it takes, nor is anyone especially competent at predicting or controlling its outcomes.

These difficulties are compounded over time, for no President uses the same staff units in the same way, and each of the modern Presidents since Roosevelt has made at least one, some more than one effort at formally reconstructing and reorganizing the Executive Office to suit his particular leadership or policy needs. The number of informal efforts to tinker with or fine tune the EOP are legion.

And yet the rhetoric of Executive Office reorganization has remained much the same over the years, and veteran White House advisors and staff write or talk of much the same problems of the policy-making process. A recent review of Executive Office reorganization plans since 1936 concluded that "there are no new ideas which today's reorganization teams have uncovered which those of the past have not clearly identified or experimented with."

In contrasting the policy processes of different presidents, this kind of conclusion creates something of a paradox. Either the dynamics of the executive bureaucracy and policy process have remained constant, while the outcomes have varied—a position which belies the evident expansion of the EOP and which in principle few students of bureaucracy would find credible. Or else neither policy process nor outcome has varied much from one Administration to the next—a view with which few observers of the modern presidency would agree.

In another study Helmer (1977) has analyzed the dynamics of the executive bureaucracy since 1950. This has identified the principal sources of growth and attempted to measure competitiveness and illustrate the rise and fall of staff units with the EOP. Related but classified studies by Helmer[1] of presidential decision-making have sought in part to assess the impact of bureaucratic structure on policy processes and outcomes as such.

An alternative approach to these problems is to monitor and analyze a single presidential advisory unit over time, identifying the relationships between organizational structure and policy-making or advisory roles, as these evolved through one presidential term and from one administration to another. Earlier papers by Helmer (1975) and Maisel and Helmer (1976) have outlined a comparative study of domestic policy staffs in three quite different administrative frameworks—the United States (Domestic Council), Australia (Priorities Review Staff), and England (Central Policy Review Staff). The focus of the present paper is on the Domestic Council, and on what can be learned about presidential policy-making in general from the career—and a relatively short-lived one at that[2]—of a single staff advisory unit. What is likely to be learned depends of course on the types of data which are available and the perspective from which they are viewed. What the paper aims therefore to do is to contrast the interpretations of the Domestic Council and its performance in the executive advisory system which can be provided by two quite independent approaches (methodologically speaking) to the evidence.

In the first instance, the approach is primarily historical and the sources of data are the official documents of presidential administration, including some publicly released reports of the Domestic Council itself,[3] comments of officials reported in the press, and material opinions obtained from a series of personal interviews which the authors conducted with members of the Ford Domestic Council staff and a number of their predecessors during 1976.

These interviews were structured in such a way as to provide in addition to personal judgements about staff roles, data on the pattern of staff interactions within the Domestic Council and between it and other units of the Executive Office and the Cabinet agencies; as well as information on the use of time by staff members, specialization and the degree of coordination of their own with other advisory work in the EOP. These data lend support to significantly different interpretations of the function and performance of this staff unit. Combined with other little-used measures of Executive Office organization, influence and power, the paper presents an alternative set of results that go some way to testing the hypotheses which have already

been mentioned, but at the same time cast some doubt on the reliability of the first set and the perspective from which it was derived.

The Evolution of the Domestic Council—One Perspective

The history of the Domestic Council needs to be viewed within a broader context of the growth of formalized Presidential advisory units.

As Richard Neustadt (1977), Patrick Anderson (1972), and many others have shown, Franklin Roosevelt and each of his successors have adapted the use of their White House staff assistants to suit their own decision-making styles. Roosevelt's "competitive" style of staff use contrasted markedly with Eisenhower's hierarchical style. Truman's staff worked in a manner somewhere between the two. Kennedy seems to have patterned his use of the White House Staff on the Roosevelt model. And nothing could have been more unstructured or more personal than the way in which Lyndon Johnson treated his White House staff (on Johnson see also Kearns 1976; Wayne, forthcoming; Maisel and Helmer, 1976).

None of these Presidents developed a coordinating mechanism for domestic policy to parallel the National Security Council for foreign policy. That step was left to Richard Nixon and the Ash Council.[4]

1. *The Ash Council and the Establishment of the Domestic Council*

Soon after taking office, Richard Nixon asked Roy L. Ash, President of Litton Industries, to chair a Presidential Advisory Council on Executive Organization. The Council, which was commonly known by its chairman's name, met for slightly over a year, with the six members convening approximately once a month to work on the basis of papers prepared by the Council's staff. Eventually the Council produced thirteen memoranda, three of which have been publicly released.

The Council's recommendations led to Nixon's major effort to reorganize the government, abolishing seven departments, creating four new departments, reducing the power of many independent agencies. These proposals were never given serious consideration by the Congress. Nixon attempted to accomplish some of their ends without Congressional action, by creating the essence of a Super Cabinet among his top advisors, but this plan too was short-lived, its demise hastened by the Watergate scandal.

The Ash Council was more successful, however in having its plans for the Executive Office of the President instituted. The Council's plan called for adding management functions to the Bureau of the Budget, renaming it the Office of Management and Budget, and creating a domestic policy coordinating unit within the White House, the Domestic Council.

The Domestic Council was to be chaired by the President and to have as its other members the Vice President and the Cabinet Secretaries with responsibility for domestic programs. In theory, the Cabinet officers were to play a major role. According to Murray Comarow, the Executive Director of the Ash Council:

> We also concurred with the accurate charges that the Cabinet was being cut out. What do you do? Create something which employs the Cabinet members more than they have been and give the people making the decisions some institutional basis from which to work . . . We wanted the staff of the Domestic Council to be very small.[5]

As Kessel (1975:20) points out, however, President Nixon gave the Domestic Council very broad responsibilities and the formal members were already busy men; "When busy men are given new responsibilities, it is well to inquire about the staff that is going to carry out these tasks." In point of fact, the Council itself met infrequently from the start, so that in most cases references to the Domestic Council are in fact references to the staff unit set up under the Council to serve the President directly.

Almost from the beginning, John Ehrlichman was sensitive to the problems of the decision-making process in the Nixon White House. During the early days of 1969, when Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Arthur Burns were the President's principal domestic advisors and frequently presented him with conflicting views, Ehrlichman was a fairly minor staff man. By the time the Ash Council was in full operation, late in 1969, Ehrlich-

man saw its importance, both for the President and for himself:

> The Ash Council became our great white hope for solving all of the administrative problems we were having. I had a number of sessions with Comarow and with Rouse and with the whole group. I was lobbying the President at the same time I was lobbying the Ash Council and I would say I had a fairly high level of success. I was not trying to tailor a suit of clothes to fit me, but it certainly was something I was comfortable with.[5]

2. *The Nixon Council*

Ehrlichman was appointed the Domestic Council's first Executive Director. He chose Kenneth Cole as his deputy and they eventually appointed six assistants, each of whom, in turn, had a small staff. This model fitted Ehrlichman's style, but it was not what the Ash Council had in mind. Comarow commented:

> The Domestic Council was working to a degree under John Ehrlichman, but from its earliest days it took off in a direction I did not intend. It was not 180 degrees off, but 45 degrees. We saw emphasis on the Domestic Council as a mechanism within which the fragmented Cabinet system could function on problems which cut across departmental lines. Even under Ehrlichman it took the form of John Smith in charge of these areas. Jim Jones in charge of those.[5]

John Smith, Jim Jones, "faceless assistants ordering Cabinet Secretaries around"—Kessel (1975) and especially Richard Nathan (1975: Ch. 3) point out that Nixon lost faith in his Cabinet early in the first term. As a result, they have argued, power soon flowed from the Cabinet Secretaries to the White House, even more so that it had in the days when Joseph Califano dominated Cabinet members in the name of Lyndon Johnson. Ehrlichman and his Domestic Council staff became the instrument exercising much of this power. According to both observers (Bonafede 1975) and former officials (Ehrlichman 1975; Ehrlichman and Moynihan in interview[5]), Nixon came to rely on Ehrlichman for domestic policy advice because he provided him with order and options insteads of the more indeterminate situation in which the President received advice from two domestic counselors of fundamentally different ideological persuasions, one purportedly liberal, the other conservative. The President relied on Ehrlichman because he needed and wanted to delegate responsibility for domestic policy decisions. Nixon felt more concerned with foreign policy and concentrated his own efforts in that area. Ehrlichman noted in interview that there were periods of the Vietnam War when he hardly saw the President at all. In this situation, Nixon preferred a domestic advisor who would give him one viewpoint on which to act, not two which required further study and staff review before action was possible.

Kenneth Cole summarized the role of the Ehrlichman Domestic Council in this way:

> Nixon needed not only a domestic adviser but also a formal organization with formal procedures with a good idea of where it was going. I don't think that in the years 1971-1973 any better organization could have been put together and could have functioned. The people were superb. The work got done, notwithstanding the barbs about the "faceless assistants telling Cabinet officers what to do," and the ultimate test is the legislation which got passed.
>
> We knew what was going on. The President knew. Legislation got drafted and passed. Everyone knew what the President stood for. I think relying on a powerful staff within the White House is the only good way to do it in a government organized as poorly as it is, even if it is somewhat insulting to the intelligence of the Cabinet.[5]

The heady days did not last long. The series of events collectively known as Watergate first slowed down and eventually brought an end to any semblance of normal decision-making. Top presidential advisors, John Ehrlichman among them, focused principally on the defence of Richard Nixon and then on their own defence. Ehrlichman gave up formal control of the Domestic Council as the second term began, four months before his resignation. As an effective staff institution the Council's reputation

was irretrievably lost as Ehrlichman and two assistant directors of the Council, Morgan and Krogh, were indicated for Watergate-related offenses.

The last year of the Nixon Administration was not a time for legislative initiatives. After Ehrlichman's resignation, first Melvin Laird and then Kenneth Cole served as the President's key domestic advisor and as Executive Director of the Council, and instead of directing the domestic policy of the Administration, the Domestic Council "became just another service unit in the presidential establishment" (Bonafede, 1975: 1689).

3. *The Ford Council*

Cole stayed on to help with the Ford transition, but within a few months he too resigned. James M. Cannon, whose career in government service had been closely connected with Vice President Rockefeller, succeeded Cole. Richard J. Dunham, state budget director in New York when Rockefeller was Governor, and James Cavanaugh, a holdover from the Nixon staff, was each named Deputy Director of the Council staff. The appointments of Cannon and Dunham followed a widely publicized power struggle within the White House (Bonafede 1975; Leamer 1977; Osborne 1975). Chief of staff Donald Rumsfeld had wanted President Ford to name Phillip E. Areeda, then serving as a Counsel to the President, as head of the domestic advisory unit. The President decided, however, that he would give the Vice President primary responsibility for running it. In doing so, Ford is said to have intended to revitalize the Domestic Council and to broaden the substantive authority of Rockefeller. As a consequence, President Ford felt it appropriate that the Council's leadership be comprised of people in whom the Vice President had confidence.

The decision to involve Rockefeller directly in the day-to-day running of the Domestic Council had important consequences for the influence of that unit throughout the Ford Presidency (Moe 1976). For a variety of reasons this decision insured that the Council would not approach the position of influence it held under Nixon and Ehrlichman.

First, there is the important question of presidential access and an advisor's relationship with the President. When interviewed on this topic, Kenneth Cole commented on the differences between his relationship with Nixon and Ehrlichman's.

> The whole organization was strongest when John Ehrlichman was running it, as he was closest to the President. During my tenure I didn't have the relationship with the President that John did . . . that made a big difference.[5]

Access to the President is not guarantee of influence. Ehrlichman had both; Cannon had the first but not the second. In fact, because he travelled so much with Ford, Cannon had constant access to the President, but unlike Ehrlichman, he shared it more and he could not count on the same staff loyalties below him. What confronted him instead was an overlap or conflict of loyalties among staff picked up over at least three changes of the Council leadership.

To observers the loss of influence was Cannon's fault. To one, a fault that stemmed from a weakness of will and personality:

> Cannon is recognized as hardworking, competent executive. Yet after almost a year, there is little evidence that he has taken firm control of the Domestic Council or given it a special institutional identity. Nor is his personal input visible (Bonafede 1975:1691).

To another, Kenneth Cole again, this was an example of poor bureaucratic strategy.

> The process and the organization are different (now). Basically we tried to plot a year ahead. What was the situation with crops? How do you get prepared for the worst alternative? What laws are about to expire? What substantive things are happening and what should be done about them? We held daily meetings to assure that everyone knew what everyone else was doing. Was there any overlap? You could get more objective views that way. We tried to give a team feeling and you cannot be part of a team unless you know what the other players are doing. Cannon has stripped the organization of organization. We had four to five key players and then staff under them. Cannon has made everyone equal with specific and narrow

> portfolios. We tried to stay on top of what was going on, to stay ahead of the Cabinet, etc. They don't try to do that as much either.[5]

This points up the importance of staff cohesion. The staff of the Council was shaped by the decision to name Rockefeller as the Council's leader. As reported in an earlier paper (Maisel and Helmer, 1976:9-10), the Ford staff was comprised of three distinct groups by origin of recruitment. Cannon and Dunham brought with them a group of five others whose political experience had been in association with Rockefeller. Cavanaugh was one of five holdovers from the Nixon Administration. Others could be deemed more clearly Ford appointments, though none of them had any prior political connection with the President. While there were no open conflicts among these groups, cohesion of the kind reported by the Ehrlichman staff (Gilson 1976; Kessel 1975; Waldmann 1976) was not evident either.

Even this tripartite staff never really stabilized with personnel turnover and short tenures producing an instability that has been cited as another factor leading to a weakening of the Council's position. A number of changes during the Ford Administration are worthy of note in this respect. By late 1975 Rockefeller asked to be relieved of day-to-day responsibility for the Council. This followed his decision not to run for Vice President in 1976. Even before that time, Dunham had resigned to accept an appointment to the Federal Power Commission. According to one staff member at the time, Rockefeller's withdrawal "cut the legs off Cannon." Cavanaugh appeared to fare much better, staying on as a Deputy Director of the Council although he too moved responsibilities away from the Council somewhat, assisting Richard Cheney, the President's Chief of staff during the campaign for reelection.

In the spring of 1976 Arthur Quern, who played a key role in coordinating Domestic Council input to the 1976 State of the Union Address, was named to succeed Dunham as Deputy Director. He was placed in charge of Planning and Policy. According to his own testimony, Quern felt that by that time morale on the Domestic Council staff was low as it was "an organization without influence." In an effort to revive morale and promote staff unity, Quern decided to retain his office in the Old Executive Office Building where the staff could have constant access to him, rather than moving to the office in the West Wing to which he was entitled but where he was more inaccessible. Others on the Council staff left for appointive positions elsewhere in the Executive Branch; in the case of Todd Hullin, as an Assistant Secretary of Defense. Fairly rapid turnover and shuffling of positions—producing an average tenure for Council staff by December 1976 of just over two years—might very well account for the inexperience by which observers have characterized both the Council staff and its leadership (Moe 1976:266). According to one official quoted by Wayne (forthcoming:262):

> Once it's clear that the guy who runs the Domestic Council doesn't have the clout or doesn't know how to use it, it filters down. Everybody understands it. So decisions get made and associate directors of the Domestic Council are not consulted: meetings are set up and they are not included.

To another, a subordinate of Cannon's, it was clear that "Jim Cannon did not become the key figure on domestic policy because he was either disinclined to use the resources available, or unable to, or both." To a third, also a Council staff member, Cannon's failings were mostly personal—he was too timid, he spent too much of his and the staff's time editing and redrafting memoranda, he lost his temper too easily and lost track of the paper flow in and out of his own office.

4. *Evolution of Formal Roles*

Before the staff unit was established in mid-1970, according to Patrick Moynihan, there had been a very active system of working groups at the Cabinet officer-level, generally focussed on areas of special concern or program initiative, in which the President himself was an active participant. Supporting these committees was Moynihan's staff, known as the Urban Affairs Council staff and the National Goals Research Staff, which together numbered less than twenty.

The operation of Cabinet working groups did not immediately change with the formation of the Domestic Council. The formal members met as a Council thirteen times in 1970, and in smaller ad-hoc groups more frequently. The focus was on a set of some fifteen priority issues which had "evolved during the summer of 1970 through informal analysis and through canvassing of the staff, the cabinet members, and a few outside advisers, and were finally given presidential approval in a meeting at Camp David" (Waldman 1976:263). The issues included environment, law enforcement, urban development, welfare reform and revenue sharing.

The original assignment of roles and responsibilities among the staff followed these priorities; work by the staff on the 1971 State of the Union address aimed at formulating administration programs in these terms.

According to one of the participants, the staff structure had three basic "components" –a "front office" consisting of Ehrlichman, his deputy and a staff assistant; the assistant directors, each of whom was responsible for a priority issue and was designated as a "project manager" for program development in that and related areas; and thirdly, a "planning staff" which had "general duties with presidential messages, the budget, and other issues which did not fit the project manager style" (Waldmann 1976:263).

The development of the Nixon administration's legislative program remained formally the job of Cabinet committees but practically speaking the work of developing (as well as excluding) options was done by working groups consisting of Assistant Secretary-level staff, OMB officials and the assistant directors of the Domestic Council.

The last of these played the pivotal role, coordinating the meetings and finalizing the decision memoranda. According to Nathan, the staff working on revenue sharing plans in 1971 deliberately excluded close Cabinet-level involvement until after the plans were fully formed (Nathan 1975:48). According to Epstein, the role of Egil Krogh, the assistant director in charge of drug abuse policy, was to screen out conflicting viewpoints and facts which deserved (as Epstein saw it) fuller consideration (Epstein 1975:99). In interview Ehrlichman has said that the amount of Domestic Council direction varied from issue to issue, and there was no set rule about inclusion or exclusion of participants in the working groups:

> On the energy thing, for example, the guy from the CIA was a spy, but he knew more about the realities of the thing than any Ambassador, and we pulled a guy out of Texas who was a geologist and then there was an Assistant Secretary and even (sic) a Cabinet Secretary. Richardson was personally at every meeting on F(amily) A(ssistant) P(lan) . . .
>
> A great many of these groups were set up on open questions and it was the Assistant Director's job to get what there was to get from the people at the meeting. But there were times when Nixon wanted to go in some direction and ramrodded these. Most of the Assistant Directors could ramrod in that situation as well.[5]

In these respects, the Nixon Domestic Council was not the innovation that many thought of it. Special task forces for program development had characterized the operation of the domestic policy staff under Califano, during the Johnson Administration. Nor was the successor group under Cannon too different in the same respect. A number of task forces were set up within the Ford Domestic Council. Of these, one of the most visible (Moe 1976:267) was the Domestic Council Review Group on Regulatory Reform, an inter-agency group of about a dozen which functioned as "catalyst, coordinator, and monitor of the various aspects of the executive branch's efforts to review all regulatory policies" (*Ibid.*, 268). Other task forces focussed on drug abuse policy, illegal aliens, and welfare reform.

At the outset, the Cannon unit was organized in two parts, reflecting the division between longer-term planning of priorities and administration initiatives ("legislation packages") on the one hand, and short-term operations or daily presidential support on the other. According to Cannon,

> We took a group of outsiders with consultant money to deal with long-range issues. As you might imagine, the immediate problems tend to drive out the long-range. There have to be places to do

> both. They interact. We consciously set up a structure to provide for both immediate and long-term. As an illustration, look at the question of the future status of Puerto Rico. We've had a group working on that since last October.[5]

For both the planning and operations divisions, the staff of the Council were assigned special areas, which were broad and issue-oriented to start off with but became fixed in terms of departmental assignments as time progressed. When Dunham, who had been the Deputy Director in charge of the long-range division, left the White House, the bifurcated structure was abandoned, and the planning role taken over by Quern as the associate director in charge of preparing the State of the Union address.

In terms of roles and responsibilities it is difficult to see the difference between the Domestic Council under Ehrlichman and that under its successors. To be sure, the policy initiatives which were proposed between 1970 and 1972 were somewhat different from those developed during the Ford term, but they scarcely justify the sharp contrasts already reported in the assessments of the two staff groups.

5. *Task Forces*

Originally as we have said, one of the conceptions behind the Domestic Council plan was that it would be an umbrella organization for several inter-agency policy groups operating at the Cabinet level. Task forces would arise as there was need for them and then self-destruct.

According to Comarow, the executive director of the Ash Council,

> We wanted the agencies with the biggest interest to head up the task force. The head of the agency was to be head of the task force. Other agency people would be members. We would have an independent staff from the White House working with the task forces. They were not there because they were smarter, but they weren't advocates either. They were there to give it their best shot. The danger was that the system could be perverted and become too political . . . We were after systematic objective consideration of social issues.[6]

There was a difference in emphasis here from the Johnson Administration's use of task forces. For one thing, Johnson regularly geared them into the Fall drafting of the annual legislative program, so that the reports became the basis for White House, Bureau of the Budget, and agency work on specific program proposals and the State of the Union package. In the second place, Johnson used the task forces to engineer legislative support by coopting key congressional leaders in the task force deliberations. Certainly outsiders were invited to participate in post-Johnson task forces but the congressional involvement ended with Nixon. Ehrlichman, for example, expressly ordered his staff to avoid contact with Congressional Democrats and to maintain it only with the Republican minority. Neither they nor their staff, however, were involved in the working groups.

The difference between the Ehrlichman working groups and the Cannon review groups which succeeded them was in the first place that the sources of policy initiative were more firmly located in the agencies with the result that inter-agency review at the Domestic Council level carried tactically less weight. Cabinet secretaries could afford setbacks and even defeats at the review group stage and still win on appeal to the President. Consensus was much harder to achieve than under Ehrlichman because the sanctions against holdouts which he exercised were no longer in force.

Secondly, Cannon initiated fewer review groups, which ran for much longer periods. Early in 1976 there had been four—on social assistance programs, regulatory reform, drug abuse, and environmental problems, plus the special consulting group on the status of Puerto Rico. Of these only one, the Domestic Council Drug Abuse Task Force, had completed its work and released a report by 1976. This one is a useful indicator of the administrative style and the achievement of the Cannon staff.

In style the *White Paper on Drug Abuse*, as the report was titled, was a notable success. The review group was headed by Richard Parsons, a 27-year old attorney and former aide to Rockefeller in New York. He chaired a committee of 19 agency representatives which included Raymond Shafer, a counsellor to the Vice President who had previously

headed the abortive National Commission on Marijuana which had been totally ignored by the Nixon Administration. This group of officials in turn led 87 lesser officials, who divided into 2 sub-groups, who in turn called in 34 outside advisers and 7 organized lobbies. Altogether this was something of a record in bureaucratic size, representing more people in total than the White Paper has pages. To have produced a document then that would be acceptable in that bureaucratic zoo was a virtuoso achievement for which the unknown and relatively inexperienced DC staff member should have been recognized. In a sense he was. Released in October, the report was endorsed by President Ford after Christmas in terms that promised to put the recommendations into effect. Exactly which of these and how was never specified.

In substance the White Paper was opaque. On the one hand, it broke new ground in bureaucratic procedure by admitting that there were no known means by which government could hope to make prohibition effective by eliminating illegal drug use. It also urged a shift in enforcement priorities towards greater effort on narcotic drugs and less on marijuana. On the other hand, in spite of emphasis on "liaison," "coordination," and "integration"–the White Paper recommended setting up more than a dozen new bureaucratic committees for these purposes–the review group was unable to heal the long-standing split between the US Customs Service (Treasury) and other federal agencies over control of intelligence operations and responsibilities for border enforcement and smuggling. The Customs officials insisted on adding their own rider to the report.

Oddly enough, as the task force was so closely connected with the Vice President, it failed to take any account of the impact of the tough legal measures enacted in New York by Rockefeller as governor in 1973. Other studies for the Department of Justice were showing by mid-1975 that the Rockefeller approach was failing badly in most respects, except to make more work for the courts. Indices of heroin use had failed to respond to the deterrent effect of the new laws and began in fact to edge up after a relatively stable period in 1972-74. Also notwithstanding the new sentencing rules, the number of offenders released on probation increased after the legislation came into effect, instead of falling as it was supposed to do.

In May 1976 when the President finally sent his legislative proposal on drug policy to Congress, there were no additional indications that the New York lessons had been absorbed, and few signs that the Domestic Council report had in the end been persuasive. Ford's rhetorical emphasis was on bigger and better enforcement, tougher sentencing provisions on the New York model, and no sign of weakening on marijuana. On the key bureaucratic issue of centralized control versus every agency for itself, Ford had a Cabinet committee to propose for the centralizers, and a major expansion of powers of search and seizure for the Customs Service.

To be sure, this is not the first piece of White House staff work to have been ignored, but it almost certainly has been one of the most expensive Domestic Council operations in its history. Like the *Interim Report on Illegal Aliens*, which was released at the very end of 1976–too late for the Ford Administration to implement its proposals–both have been followed by equally extensive staff work in the new Administration–drug abuse policy work by the Office of Drug Abuse Policy under Carter assistant, Peter Bourne, and the aliens issue by a new Cabinet Committee and Ann Gutierrez of the Carter Domestic Council staff.

What then can be said about the effectiveness of the Domestic Council review group under Cannon as compared with those under Cole or Ehrlichman, or for that matter, Califano before them? Cole said, it will be recalled from an earlier quotation, that in his administration the Council was better organized "to plot a year ahead" and that Cannon had "stripped the organization of organization." His staff failed to "stay on top of what was going on, to stay ahead of the Cabinet."

On the other hand, observers of the Cole staff have noted that at that time the formal, Cabinet-level members of the Council became more active, albeit in *ad hoc* working groups, and that at the staff level, the agencies were more influential on task forces, and the Office of Management and Budget more

powerful in handling the central clearance of legislation (Moe 1975:7). If the reorganization announced by the President in January 1973 was designed to enhance the policy role of the "super Cabinet"–the Secretaries of Agriculture, HEW and HUD, who, together with Ehrlichman, were promoted to the rank of Counsellor–it also statedly aimed at reducing the role of the Domestic Council in program oversight and the coordination of interdepartmental initiatives. As Nixon announced:

> Counsellors Butz, Weinberger and Lynn, with the support of the committees they will head, will be able to provide much of the advice and supervision for which the Presidents in the past (sic) have had to turn to domestic policy establishments within the White House. The Counsellors will also be able to resolve with their colleagues at the Secretarial level many interdepartmental issues which have heretofore required arbitration by the President or his staff (US President 1973).

This hardly squares with Cole's more expansive opinion of the Council's role, and it suggests that, whatever his successor's weaknesses might have been as already discussed, the formal charter within which Cannon's Council and staff had to operate was already initiated by administrative and procedural changes introduced before Nixon left office.

Could Cannon have done any better? And what in this instance would "better" have consisted of?

The consensus of historical judgment so far is that under Ehrlichman the Domestic Council was more powerful than it has become since. Waldmann, who worked for Ehrlichman, tried to explain this in more detail by saying that the staff,

> Succeeded to a degree never before attempted in gaining centralized political control over the Executive Branch of the President. It experimented with a variety of techniques in developing policy, including top-level consultants, presidential commissions, inter-agency working groups and task forces. It attempted to maintain a consistency in policy across department and agency lines in important priority issue areas (Waldmann 1976:266).

But neither the second nor the third of these achievements represents any innovation in Executive office politics, and without the evidence of the Council staff memoranda, there is no reason for thinking that the staff was any more effective in its advice to the President than those which preceded or those which have followed it.

What can be said to sum up the historical record is relatively simple. Once effective policy initiative is delegated to the agencies, then inter-agency review committees at the Council level are an expensive waste of time and money. They are opportunities for the bureaucrats to stall, snow or intimidate the White House. If on the other hand the White House retains the initiative and sanctions to keep it up, then task forces can be an effective way of identifying the potential opposition and mobilizing coalitions of forces against.

In the final analysis, the record of participants and observers comes down to a statement that the Domestic Council (staff) was more powerful between 1970 and 1973 than since because John Ehrlichman was powerful, and that power was based on the President's willingness to listen to him and give him the power (with H.R. Haldeman) to decide who else would be listened to. This was a power Ehrlichman passed on to his staff--they controlled access to the President and no one, not Cabinet officers even, could avoid that.

Does this, however, represent a successful attempt "at gaining centralized political control over the Executive Branch of the President," as Waldmann suggests? Conversely, does the Domestic Council staff under Cannon which had no such power and competed for access to the President along with a number of other White House and Cabinet agencies, represent a weakness in the advisory system, or even a failure of political control? From what perspective can weakness and strength, power or the lack of it, success and failure of the advisory system be judged? The President's? The advisors'? The Cabinet heads'?

It is the value of these questions, rather than of the answers that have so far been

suggested to them that this paper is intended to emphasize. But if the evidence adduced to date is as opaque and contradictory as it appears, what alternative is there?

A Quantitative Perspective on the Advisory System

1. *Traffic analysis*

Neat organization charts, lists of functions and efficiency audits can be misleading: so can the impression of officials themselves as to what exactly they are doing.

Staff performance is limited by the networks they maintain each day in their jobs. Networks develop in part according to the allocation of functions and the formal hierarchy within the Executive Office and White House. In part they combine, dissolve and recombine in response to the pressure of events and external demands for Administration action. In part they are based on patterns of patronage, alliance and protection and in part on where people are located, from the West Wing to the Old Executive Office Building, and across Lafayette Square to the New Executive Office Building, where they eat lunch, whom they are married to, and so on. These things can be either arbitrary or carefully planned, and White House staff will compete for network advantage in whatever way they can.

One method of assessing the Ford/Cannon operations is to compare the amounts of time spent by Council staff on parallel functions under Ehrlichman and then under Cannon.

Table 1 shows the results of a survey of 1972 and of our own survey in January, 1976.

Both staffs clearly had clarification of options as their top priority, but the Cannon group spent less time on this than the Ehrlichman group. Overall, the Cannon staff have distributed their time more evenly across all five functions while the Nixon staff concentrated more of their effort on options, priorities and backstopping, and less than Ford's staff on information-gathering and agency monitoring.

Backstopping the President took more staff time in 1976 than in 1972, although this function had been delegated to the second-string staff. This may reflect subtle differences in the nature of the activity. Under Ehrlichman backstopping meant passing directives to agency officials and reporting presidential views on policy points. It ultimately also meant trying to clear the communication channels and paper backlog which accumulated as the system became overloaded.

Under Cannon however, backstopping was much less policy-directed, but also more trivial. At its most serious it involved drafting veto messages, but more often than this according to interviews with staff, it has included catering arrangements for presidential functions, advance work, protocol and the like.

It should be noted that monitoring agencies was a more significant activity under Ford/Cannon than before. Ford delegated

Table 1

Mean Time Allocations of Domestic Council Staff Members

Activity	Time Use			
	Nixon-Ehrlichman*		Ford-Cannon	
	Leaders	Aides	Leaders	Aides
Clarifying options	4.00	3.31	3.45	3.25
Determining priorities	3.33	2.67	3.00	2.50
Backstopping the president	3.33	2.71	3.27	3.75
Collecting information	2.33	2.67	2.64	2.75
Monitoring agencies	2.00	2.75	3.09	2.75

KEY: Staff members were asked how much of their time was spent on each type of assignment. Scores were assigned as follows: 4 = "a great deal of time", 3 = "a fair amount", 2 = "not too much time", and 1 = "no time at all". Thus, the higher the score, the more mean time is spent on each function.
*Data from Kessell 1975.

more policy initiative to the agencies but watched them closer; Nixon ordered more but followed up less. This new monitoring was not perceived by the agencies to be as threatening as the Ehrlichman regime had been. Partly this reflected a certain amount of exaggeration by the agencies about the extent of the earlier Ehrlichman threat; partly also it reflected the agency view that Domestic Council monitoring was unlikely to carry more weight with the President in a policy conflict than the agency itself. Still, it is arguable that more active monitoring evident here by the Ford staff was at least as effective in achieving the political control or integration of Administration's policy positions as the Ehrlichman methods, referred to in the earlier section.

The way in which White House staff spend their time and whom they spend it with will naturally depend on presidential priorities for problem-solving and the politics of the problems themselves.

The deterioration of the economic condition of the country after Nixon left office and the demonstrable difference rates of unemployment and inflation make to presidential electoral popularity made certain that economic management and social welfare would preoccupy President Ford's attention. But never before in American experience had decision-making on economic policy been allocated to so many different EOP staff, and no where in modern government at large, not even in the communist states, have there been as many different agencies of central economic management as there were at the time in Washington.

To compare the amounts of time spent by the Ehrlichman and Cannon staffs on different issues will first of all indicate the way in which the priorities have been assigned from one Administration to the next.

What the table shows is that both economic management and social welfare have been the two most important areas of staff work, but predictably with the expansion of other economic policy staff in the White House, less of the Cannon staff's time has gone on this area than was the case under Ehrlichman. The drop in time spent on social welfare issues has been even greater.

On the other hand these declines were balanced by a 13 percent increase in effort

Table 2

Mean Time Allocations of Domestic Council Staff Members by Issue Area

Issue	Time Use	
	Ehrlichman	Cannon
Economic management	2.89	2.63
Social welfare	3.32	2.81
Civil liberties	2.16	2.19
Natural resources	1.89	2.13
Agriculture	1.58	1.75
Labor relations	no data	1.56
Urban policy	no data	2.44
International policy	1.63	1.50

KEY: Staff members were asked how much of their time was spent on each type of assignment. Scores were assigned as follows: 4 = "a great deal of time", 3 = "a fair amount", 2 = "not too much time", and 1 = "no time at all". Thus, the higher the score, the more mean time is spent on each function.

on natural resources policy and 11 percent increase on agriculture—the first of these notwithstanding the creation of the new Energy Resources Council and lower-level EOP energy units.

If it were possible to use these data in an input-output analysis of bureaucratic expansion and productivity, what they suggest is that an increase in staffing an issue in one section of the Executive Office is usually not balanced by a decline in staffing the same issue in other sections. The result is that staff output goes on increasing expotentially and more staff time is consumed in processing and "coordinating" the flow of paper and committee meetings. But then the role of the Domestic Council staff was *inter alia*, as President Ford announced in February 1975, to do just this—"to coordinate the formulation of policy options in the domestic area for my consideration." The data thus appear to support the very broad hypothesis about the effect of delegation, mentioned in the Introduction, but do they support the interpretation that Cannon's unit was a success at coordination, or the interpretation it was a failure at formulation?

If unit members of the EOP can be assessed in terms of how much time they spend on what sort of problems with what other officials inside and outside the EOP, it becomes clear that the communication or

Table 3

Contact Networks of Cannon DC Staff with EOP*

Frequency of contact with**	EOP UNIT					
	OMB	CEA	ERC	EPB	NSC	CIEP
% Daily	75	13	6	6	0	0
% Weekly	7	20	7	33	20	13
% Monthly	8	17	8	42	8	17
% Infrequently	6	35	48	19	49	45

*Data exclude Cannon and Cavanaugh.
**Refers to face-to-face and telephone contacts.

traffic pattern of the EOP may be producing unnecessary *jams*—that is to say, too many functionally effective people converging on one location in the system. When this occurs, there may be no way of rating the relative power or influence of advisors or advisory units.

Look at the way in which contact actually occurred between the Cannon staff and other units of the EOP, with the White House and with Cabinet Secretaries and their staffs, as this can be measured from our survey of January, 1976.

In the first place, there is a significant overlap between Domestic Council and OMB and this absorbed far more of the daily contacts Council staff had than any other unit. Two main networks were operating daily—*sideways*, between DC staff and OMB staff in particular policy areas, and *upwards one level*, between DC staff and presidential personal assistants.

After these two in frequency was a network of Cabinet Secretary or Secretary's staff contacts, and at about the same degree of frequency (but not shown in the tables) contacts with the assistant-secretary level of the agencies. Contact with the President personally was fairly uncommon, and with Cabinet Secretaries only slightly less so.

It is worth noting that 19 percent of daily contacts and 53 percent of the weekly ones were with economic policy advisers either in CEA or EPB. This is high when set beside the diminishing priority that economic policy had for the DC staff, but it serves to underline the problem that overlapping roles create.

We said before that traffic jams occur when too many functionally effective people converge on one location at the same level in the system. Economic policy appears to be one of them and the overlap between DC staff and OMB another. Natural resources and energy policy was probably a third.

It remains a problem to decide, however, when overlap represents valuable coordina-

Table 4

Contact Networks of Cannon DC Staff with WH and Cabinet*

Frequency of contact with**	UNIT						
	President	Pres. Pers. Staff	Counsel's office	Press office	Cong. Liaison	Cabinet Secretaries	Secretaries' staff
% Daily	0	69	25	0	13	6	38
% Weekly	13	19	6	13	19	31	38
% Monthly	44	13	0	0	13	31	6
% Infrequently	44	0	69	87	56	31	19

*Data exclude Cannon and Cavanaugh.
**Refers to face-to-face and telephone contacts.

tion of effort and when it becomes a competitive tangle that has to be unsnarled. One test for the Council staff may be whether it has been directly responsible for delivering assessment of priorities, clarification of options or the results of program analysis to the President himself. If not—and another unit has—then either the Council staff or else the other unit is ineffective in its role.

On this criterion, it is difficult to justify a DC staff member spending, say, 50 percent of his time on economic policy in conjunction with CEA or EPB when it is they and not the Council who will report directly to the President. It may have been tactically useful from the DC director's point of view to have his man watching the others and in a position to brief him before the Assistant for Economic Affairs or the Chairman of the CEA had their say with the President, but it is precisely this type of bureaucractic situation which makes assessments of power and influence difficult to make.

If the Ford Administration over-bureaucratized the formation of economic and energy policy with too many units interacting too often together on the same issues, stalling and blocking each other rather than facilitating presidential decisions, then who can blame the tangle on the weaknesses of the Council, let alone the impotence of its director? What a simple quantification of time use can do is to pinpoint where situations of this type occur; it isn't any more reliable than the opinions of the observers and participants reported earlier in determining whether the circumstances assisted or hobbled the advisory system.

Some Presidents have wanted advice in this fashion. For example, there is evidence to suggest that President Johnson used to both overload his staff and deliberately create the circumstances for jams, the more to exercise his own hand at running things, and the better to exact personal loyalty from each staff member. His was not the first executive advisory system nor will it be the last designed for maximising loyalty to the President above all else.

Two final points about the staff networks that emerge from the tables. The first to be noted is the infrequency with which DC staff make contact with either the White House Press Office or Congressional Liaison. It has been a commonplace of political observation in recent years to note the failure of the White House in its relations with the press and with Congress. The table merely points up where the channels of communication did not exist.

The last point is not so visible in the tables but is clear from the detailed interview material provided by each staff member. This is that the Cannon structure spent little time coordinating and monitoring its own activities. The more time the staff member spent on contacts outside the group, the harder it was for him/her to identify his/her interests with the group as such or with the group's chartered role. The need for recognition and promotion and the desire to feel effective were consequently expressed in an individualistic rather than a collective framework. Other data on recruitment help to substantiate this point. Ehrlichman whose selection principle was quite clear—"good brokers, seldom experts"[5]—created a staff that was dominated by lawyers, but also by people who had known each other or worked together before (particularly in the 1968 campaign) (Waldmann 1976; Gilson 1976:4). Cannon's staff on the other hand was evenly divided between lawyers and business administration graduates, but split three ways into Nixon holdovers, Rockefeller and Ford appointees: most of them were either from Washington, D.C., or from New York, but they had little experience functioning together. With the greater commitment of their time to monitoring programs and agencies, it is unremarkable that the staff developed individual agency perspectives and identifications with the networks on whom they depended for information and work.

Fragmentation like this makes for the Lone Ranger Syndrome—each staffer pursuing a policy line or tactic that is calculated to put as much distance and visibility between him/herself and the others involved in an issue as is worth risking, in the hope thereby of attracting the attention and reward of the DC Director and perhaps even the President.

Honest brokerage of sub-Cabinet level policy conflicts is not encouraged in this kind of atmosphere, and once agency officials realize it, they are bound to determine not to negotiate on their positions until they

have by-passed the Domestic Council and reached the top. The only power to stop them doing that—and thus power of the Domestic Council to enforce "coordination" or whatever viewpoint it had on issues—was thus the power of direct access to the President. The Domestic Council staff lost that with the fall of Ehrlichman, as we have already said.

2. *Measures of the internal dynamics of staff work.*

Two elements in particular are important —how the hierarchy operates to direct staff assignments and how staff relate to each other in performing them.

On paper the Ehrlichman, the Cole and the Cannon operations look alike—the assignments came from the Director, and when completed went back to him. According to Ehrlichman, however, he made little substantive change to the staff papers he received. In the Cannon case, the staff typically reported that Cannon returned memoranda for at least one rewrite, often more. This was a substantial waste of time and resources, and demoralizing for the staff.

The principal reasons for it can be found in the working relationships of the staff. Cannon may have ordered assignments but it was Cavanaugh's job (the Deputy Director) to see that they were carried out. A telephone log of staff calls in January, 1976 shows that Cavanaugh received three times more calls from the DC staff in a day than Cannon or anyone else on the staff. Cannon himself was often away travelling with the President and unavailable for staff discussions. He put distance between himself and the associate directors in other ways too.

Whereas Ehrlichman used to include at least one of his staff at a planning meeting each morning at 7 am, and then several of the staff at the 7:30 meeting with the senior White House staff, Cannon typically only had Cavanaugh to the first meeting (at 7:30 —the Ford White House was slower to wake up than the Nixon one used to be), and went alone to the senior staff conference at 8.

Cavanaugh, the Deputy Director, was not the only person other staff consulted while working on assignments. Tables 5 and 6 illustrate how communication and influence was channelled among the staff in November 1972 (Ehrlichman) and January 1976 (Cannon).

What is evident in both cases is the operation of an informal hierarchy beside the formal one. Now in practice they may complement each other or alternatively work at cross-purposes and against each other. In the Cannon case, complicated as it was by the recruitment of staff from three different political camps, the role of the second Deputy, Arthur Quern, a Rockefeller appointee, was as crucial as Cavanaugh's, a Nixon holdover. He not only served as an alternate point of clearance, but was a more valued source of briefing and general job orientation to the staff than either Cavanaugh or Cannon.

Now overlapping authority like this is a condition of executive staffing systems that a number of observers of Democratic Administrations have regarded as a prerequisite of the President's need to know as much as he can. Schlesinger on Roosevelt and Neustadt on Truman both emphasize the value to the President of an atmosphere of "creative feuding."

Of course, their judgments are *retrospective* ones and ones that cannot be separated from their overall view of Roosevelt and Truman as *successful* administrations. Nixon's initial judgement was not too different but subsequently the experiment with Moynihan and Burns in what was called "adverse advocacy" changed his mind. As there is much difference of opinion about the success or otherwise of the Johnson Administration, so there are those who regard the factionalism of the staff as responsible for the good and those who blame it for the bad.

In design terms of course, it is not as if a president has much choice—there will always be competitiveness among the staff, and this can harden into factions or cliques. This is going to appear quantitatively in the communication patterns and influence matrices, but is not necessarily thereby an indicator of poor performance.

So what is poor performance? For this two criteria can be suggested: one is that the dynamics of staff work should reflect a spread of contact and cross-reference within the group that indicates widespread respect and an absence of pockets of isolation. Secondly, influence patterns should complement the

Table 5

Influence Matrix for Domestic Council Staff November 1972

	Arc	Bai	Com	Dan	Hil	Fre	Ful	Gea	Gru	Ham	Jen	Leg	Mil	Nor	Phi	Red	Sch	Tut	Web	Total Sent
Archer	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Bailey	1	-	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Compton	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Daniels	0	0	0	-	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
Flint	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Frederick	1	0	0	1	1	-	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Fuller	0	0	0	1	0	1	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Gearert	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Gruer	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	7
Hampton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Jensen	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	-	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Leggett	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Miller	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Norris	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	-	1	0	0	0	0	3
Phillips	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	1
Redren	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	-	0	0	0	2
Schmidt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	1
Tuttle	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	2
Weber	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Total Received	3	1	0	3	8	3	1	2	12	1	3	3	2	1	3	0	2	0	0	

Note: Data are from responses to the question, "Which persons do you spend most time with getting your work done?"

Row entries denote channels through which messages are sent; column entries denote channels through which messages are received.

The names are pseudonyms for the Ehrlichman staff and exclude both Ehrlichman and Cole. Table published in John N. Kessel, *The Domestic Presidency* (Duxbury Press 1975), p. 37.

formal assignment of power and responsibility, and reinforce it. It will be recalled from the last section that according to the testimony of the participants and of observers, the Cannon staff was much less cohesive than the Ehrlichman and Cole units, and if common recruitment, common backgrounds, turnover rates and regular intragroup meetings are the evidence we have to go on, then indeed this judgment appears correct.

On the other hand, considering the data of Tables 5 and 6, it is not apparently evident that in their daily operations there was a great deal of difference in communication pattern between the Ehrlichman (1972) group studied by Kessel and the Cannon group studied by us.

To be sure, the data are not exactly comparable. The questions asked, from which the matrices have been assembled, are not identical; the time of the year and hence the nature of the staff work were not the same; and in Kessel's case, interaction of the staff with both Ehrlichman and his deputy at the time, Cole, has not been recorded. Notwithstanding, it is noteworthy that in the Ehrlichman group there were four staff members (21 percent) who received no communication from the rest of the group, including two who neither received nor initiated any contact within the group. One additional staffer, "Hampton," reported only one contact sent and one received. The findings for the Cannon staff reveal no staff without any contact, and only two (14 percent)—Hullin (who left the Council twelve weeks after the measurement was taken) and Humphreys—whose contact within the group was minimal. On the first criterion then the comparison between the two staffs fail to justify some of the conclusions we have already reported.

On the second criterion—the issue of complementarity between formal power within the unit and informal influence—it is possible to confirm the earlier finding that Cannon's subordinates initiated little contact with

Table 6

Influence Matrix for Domestic Council Staff January 1976

	Can	Cav	Joh	Par	Lea	May	Del	Lis	Que	McC	Men	Hul	Sch	Hop	Hum	Mas	Rya	Mye	Total Sent
Cannon*	–																		
Cavanaugh*		–																	
Johnston*			–																
Parsons	1	0	1	–	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
Leach	0	1	0	0	–	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
May	0	0	0	0	0	–	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaney	0	0	0	1	0	0	–	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	6
Lissy	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	–	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	5
Quern	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	–	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
McConahey	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	–	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Hendricks	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	–	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Hullin	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	–	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Schleede	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	–	0	0	0	1	0	2
Hope*														–					
Humphreys	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	–	0	0	0	1
Massengale	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	–	0	0	3
Ryan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	–	0	0
Myer	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	–	3
Total Received	2	7	2	3	0	2	2	1	4	3	2	0	1	2	0	2	2	1	

Note: Data are from responses to the question, "With whom did you speak personally on work you're involved in (yesterday)?"

Row entries denote channels through which messages are sent; column entries denote channels through which messages are received.

The asterisk (*) signifies that no details were provided on this question.

him in the course of their work, but turned instead to Cavanaugh (19 percent of all contacts sent by staff) and to Quern (11 percent).

Without the inclusion of Ehrlichman and Cole in Table 5, it is impossible to make a comparison on this measure; however, within what remains of the 1972 staff two individuals stand out as the focus of a good deal of informal interaction, "Gruber" (25 percent) and "Flint" (17 percent).

For all the incompleteness of these data, they illustrate nevertheless the potential which exists for quantitative measurement of the performance of the presidential advisory system. More specifically the data support the general point we made at the outset. This was that by varying the perspective and the methodology of the analysis of the Executive Office, we would generate different and contradictory interpretations of what goes on and why.

3. *Competition Within the Executive Office*

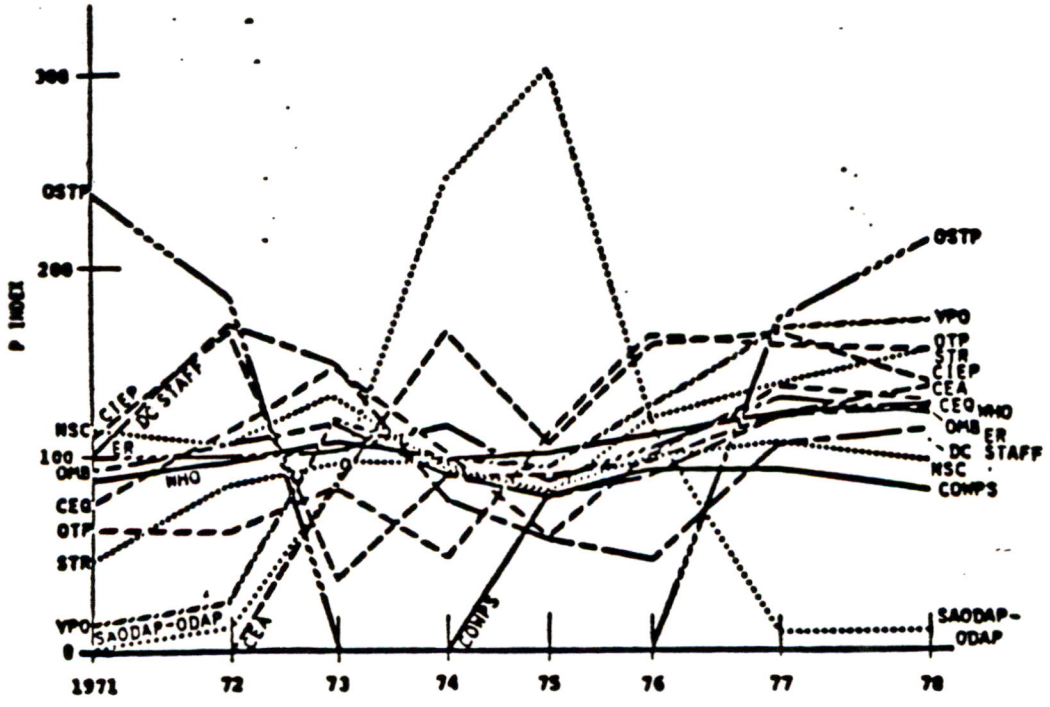
The participants and observers may differ on their interpretation of the internal dynamics of Council staff work, but what of the almost unanimous finding by observers that the Council steadily declined in power and influence within the broader presidential advisory system?

In order to assess the process of competition as such, and to isolate the points in time at which EOP units achieved a marked acceleration in their rate of growth or just the opposite, a simple measure has been developed, called the Prosperity Score (or P index for short, Helmer 1976).

This is an index which illustrates the extent to which each unit's budgetary outlay for each year is more prosperous (greater) than or less prosperous (smaller) than its average level throughout the period. At 100 the index illustrates that for the year a unit's

Figure 1

Change in the Prosperity of EOP Unit Budgets (constant 1972 dollars)
1971-1978



annual outlay is equal to its average budgetary level over the whole period. Below 100, the index shows that unit outlays have fallen below the average; above 100, a rise above the average. By comparing the indices of several EOP units taken together, as shown in Figure 1, a simple comparison can be made of how units managed to become more or less propserous at any selected point of time. To put the results in another light, the measure identifies the key points when units experienced *sharp changes* either up or down in their outlays.

Among the most stable of EOP units, there are also some of the oldest—the White House Office, OMB, NSC and CEA. These all hove. close to the 100 mark throughout the period, which indicates little change in strength or power, for these organizations, at least as measured in budgetary terms, from year to year, through two Administrations and into a third, and relative to one another.

The most visible indication from Figure 1 points to the rise and fall of the Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention and President Nixon's commitment to initiatives in the drug policy field. The greater part of the SAODAP program was in the form of grants, both to other executive agencies for research and program development in their special areas of drug abuse control, and also to agencies, contractors and researchers outside the Federal Government. The P Index in this case being sensitive only to dollar outlays, can scarcely be said to measure the influence of SAODAP as a presidential advisor; in other cases it does.

A second case of dramatic rise and fall—although in reverse order to SAODAP—involves the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Because the Nixon Administration decided to abolish the operation of the science advisor at the EOP level and delegate the unit's functions to the National Science Foundation, there was a marked decline after 1972. With the Ford and then the Carter Administration's commitment to reinstate the unit, the Figure reflects the rapid take off that has resulted.

A third case of broad rise and fall is the

Council on International Economic Policy, which experienced a fairly dramatic rise in budgetary prosperity until 1975, and has since then had a precarious existence.

The figure also illustrates several instances of more modest prosperity so far unaffected by reversals or declines in budgetary fortune. The Vice President's Office is one of the few units to have maintained almost unbroken increasing prosperity from its take-off in 1972-73. The Council on Wage and Price Stability (COWPS) is more short-lived (created in 1974) but has also improved its position steadily. In the second case, however, the picture can be misleading. For COWPS, which began in 1974 with a small $1.0M budget, was the successor to the very much more expensive and powerful wage and price control agency called the Cost of Living Council (CLC). The original CLC was established as a Cabinet-level committee on August 15, 1971, with the Secretary of the Treasury as chairman, to supervise President Nixon's 90-day wage and price freeze. It changed as the Nixon policy changed through Phases I to III, becoming by 1973 a unit of over 900 people with outlays of over $26M. Although in most respects comparable to other EOP units, the CLC was never shown in the EOP budget, but was included instead as among the Funds Appropriated to the President–Economic Stabilization Activities.

Contrasting the patterns over time of each of the units, it is worth observing the reversals that have occurred in the relative positions of the NSC, DC, CEA and the Office of Special Representative on Trade Negotiations. In the case of the NSC, it is evident that during Nixon-Kissinger period the unit was more prosperous than it would become in the Ford-Kissinger period or the first year of Brzezinski's leadership; relative to the other advisory units, it was also ahead of its own average outlay. The course of the Domestic Council runs somewhat parallel to the NSC, although its prosperity is more variable over the length of the period. There is no mistaking the decline which has been pointed to by others, but it is important to notice that in the first place this begins with the 1977 budget, a full year before the staff cuts and reorganization were announced in January 1973, and before Ehrlichman left office. The decline continued after that, but this was parallel to budgetary declines for a large number of other Executive Office units as well.

In examining the Figure for evidence of points of change, it is clear that the period of major Nixon initiatives–the expansion of the drug abuse program in SAODAP and of the wage and price control program under CLC–also saw a marked narrowing of budgetary prosperity for the remainder of the EOP units. Fiscal 1974 and 1975, as the Watergate investigations intensified and as Congressional opposition to the activities of White House staff reached their peak, were the two years in which the budgetary outcomes for almost all EOP units reflect a general downward trend–the exceptions were CEQ, which was a Congressional initiative forced on the President, OMB, CIEP and SAODAP. The convergence of lines also reflects the fact that relative to one another EOP units received less support or preference from the President.

Relative position by the last of the Ford budgets (1976) is the key–and at that time it is clear that the DC had sunk to the bottom of the rank order. This is notwithstanding the fact that in personnel terms its size had grown with the Ford takeover and then stabilized at around 40 full-time permanent personnel–less than it had been in 1971 under Ehrlichman but more than when Cole was in command.

What had eclipsed the Council was almost the full range of economic policy units–CEA, COWPS, CIEP, and STR–as well as the Vice-President's Office itself, which under Rockefeller reached an all-time high in staffing and executive appropriations.

In broad outline then we are able to confirm the decline in influence that has been reported already. But far from supporting the personality-oriented accounts that pin the explanation to Jim Cannon, these data suggest a more far-reaching structural change was responsible, which shifted the focus of policy advice within the Executive Office to economic issues.

This phenomenon showed up before in our analysis of time distributions (Table 2), but as then the evidence shows not the sharp change in Council staff performance that has been alleged, but rather a new climate of competition in which its recommendations

to the President competed with those of others on a more equal basis. From the perspective of the President at the time, this development may have actually enhanced the effectiveness of the advisory system rather than detracted from it. As to how the Cannon staff performed on economic policy, as compared, say, with the Cole or Ehrlichman staffs, this is a topic which cannot be treated without a more extensive outline of changes in the policy environment within which the EOP advisors had to operate and to which they had perforce to respond, both as crisis managers and as longer-term planners. This cannot be pursued here but is in other publications (Helmer 1977; Helmer and Maisel, forthcoming).

NOTES

1. As a member of the President's Reorganization Project, Helmer was responsible for designing and with others carrying out studies of presidential and Executive Office decision-making during the first six months of the Carter Administration. The results are contained in President's Reorganization Project, *Executive Office of the President Reorganization*, Final Report, v. 2, Decision Analysis Report, Washington, DC: Office of Management and Budget, June 1977 (classified).
2. The Domestic Council, which was initiated by President Nixon in July, 1970, has been proposed for abolition by President Carter in his Reorganization Plan No. 1, submitted to Congress in July, 1977.
3. Compared to the parallel domestic policy advisory units of other governments which we have studied (Helmer and Maisel, forthcoming), the Domestic Council has released very few public documents or reports. The Library of Congress lists four for the Nixon-Ehrlichman period: *The History of Revenue Sharing* (27pp), 1971, *Reform and Renewal for the Seventies* (no pagination), 1971, *Workfare: Reforming the Welfare System* (12pp), 1971; and *Report on National Growth* (no pagination), 1972. During the Ford Administration, two Domestic Council reports were published. These were *White Paper on Drug Abuse* (116pp), 1975, and *Preliminary Report of the Domestic Council Committee on Illegal Aliens* (281pp), 1976. The last two cannot be regarded as having been written by Domestic Council staff; in fact, both were the products of very large inter-agency task forces detailed to work on special topics under the general supervision of an Assistant Secretary-level committee in the drug policy case, and of a Cabinet-level committee in the aliens policy case. The role of the Domestic Council staff in both instances was primarily that of coordinating the large volume of paper that was produced and integrating it for final review and approval by the supervising committees. The Ford publications were nevertheless substantial contributions to the policy analysis and debate within the Administration on these issues; the Nixon documents referred to were not of this kind. They were drafted primarily to explain and defend policies or objectives already decided on by the Administration.
4. It should be noted that others had suggested such a coordinating unit before the Ash Council. Then Governor Nelson Rockefeller aired the idea as early as 1958 and Vice President Humphrey used this idea as a campaign theme in 1968.
5. This and similarly footnoted quotations are from interviews conducted by one or both of the authors during the winter and spring of 1975.

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