Richard Nixon Presidential Library
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January 3, 1969

MEMORANDUM

new copy

TO: John Ehrlichman

FROM: RN

In considering my schedule for the first six months after the Inauguration, I have concluded that some drastic changes in existing policy with regard to state visits as well as to customs covering White House dinners must be made if I am to have the time available which I consider absolutely essential to devote to major decisions which I must make in that period.

Unless we get ahold of the schedule now I will be swamped with state visits, the usual customary White House dinners for domestic purposes, not to mention the Congressional and Senatorial appointments which will be flooding us during that period. A memorandum from Bob Murphy on December 24 indicates that 15 visits of foreign dignitaries are tentatively scheduled in the first three months of the new Administration, from March to June. By comparison, Eisenhower received only six foreign dignitaries in his first six months in office, Kennedy 18 and Johnson 21. In other words, if we continue at the pace suggested we will have 30 in our first six months. I am enclosing the December 24 Murphy memo with the backup information supporting the requests for including these visitors in the schedule.

Under the circumstances, I have decided that the following procedure will be in order, regardless of whether the visitor is a head of state or head of government and regardless of whether the visit is described as a state visit, an official visit, or a private visit.

1. I shall always be willing to have a talk with any visitor who is head of government or head of state.
2. Where the visitor is a head of state I will have a dinner for him.
3. Where the visitor is a head of government I will have either a dinner or a lunch for him, depending upon the recommendation made by State.
4. Even where the visit is a so-called private one, I will be willing to have a lunch if State recommends it.
5. But under no circumstances, regardless of the character of the visit, will I go to a return dinner or luncheon or reception of any kind which is put on by the foreign visitor. I realize that this will break some china in State, but it is time to make this shift of policy now and to carry it out in the future. This decision, incidentally, is not subject to further discussion. I have made up my mind and I have considered all the factors involved.

Even if I limit myself in this way the burden will be enormous. Johnson told me that he had exactly 200 visits by foreign dignitaries during his 5 years as President. This means that at the

same pace I will have 400 occasions in which I have to spend a miserable three hours in an evening, or two and a half hours at lunch, entertaining some foreign visitor. I realize this is necessary from a protocal standpoint, but at least we can knock off the tradition of the President going to return dinners, luncheons or receptions which simply doubles the load. In fact, my decision in this respect goes even further. I do not intend to attend any function given by a foreign embassy outside the White House during the time I am in office. If there is a meeting of the OAS or a meeting of the United Nations or a meeting of NATO or something of that character I will, of course, attend. But as far as single embassy's are concerned, I will not attend.

I have discussed this in preliminary form with Bill Rogers, and I believe he will agree with this decision. The problem he will have, of course, is to see that his boys down the line don't get ulcers trying to implement it.

Wherever it is possible to get a foreign visitor to settle for a good hour or two hour talk on substantive issues instead of putting me through the agony of a dinner or luncheon I will gladly make the exchange. I realize, of course, that this will generally not be possible since the courtesy of a White House dinner or luncheon is now expected by all foreign visitors.

With further reference to my schedule, I do not want to have the usual dinners which the President gives for the Vice President, for the Supreme Court, for the Cabinet, etc. I would suggest that you check to see what these dinners are and establish the new policy

immediately. I will take care of the Supreme Court, the Vice President and the Cabinet officers by inviting them to the dinners I will necessarily have to give for foreign heads of state.

With regard to Congressmen and Senators, I think it is essential that you have a talk with Bryce Harlow and set up some sort of priority with him immediately. It will not be possible for me to have individual meetings with individual Senators or Congressmen -- except for those in leadership positions or Chairmen of key committees. That means that the likes of Jack Miller, Javits, Allot et al can only be seen when they are part of a larger group. In addition, I prefer that such meetings be in the office for a period of time rather than for a meal or for drinks at the White House. Only when Bryce believes that drinks or a meal are absolutely essential to get the work done should such affairs be scheduled. The thing to do is to simply tell Congressmen and Senators that I prefer to talk substantive business and lay it on that way. I think most of them will be complimented if it is presented to them that way. The way we handle them as far as White House dinners and luncheons are concerned, again, is to include them as guests at the dinners and luncheons for foreign dignitaries. Incidentally, where dinners and luncheons for foreign dignitaries are scheduled, it is probably best to include wives, unless it is absolutely clear that some substantive talk of value might take place after the dinner.

With regard to both luncheons and dinners, I want the number of courses held to an absolute minimum. Make the meals very good, but very short.

cc: The Honorable William P. Rogers
Mr. Bryce Harlow

January 3, 1969

Xerox copy

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bob Haldeman

FROM: RN

SUBJECT: RN Schedule on Vacation

Don Hughes was put in a difficult position on two or three occasions in Miami because he had not had adequate guidance as to the rules that I want followed when on vacation as far as personal requests for appointments are concerned.

V. J. Skutt, Jimmy Doolittle, and Jerry Ford's brother were among those who asked to see me, and Don naturally thought he should submit these requests to me.

I want a hard and fast rule adopted that when I take these vacations there will be absolutely no exceptions where personal requests of this type are concerned. Everybody that wants to see me of this type should call direct to Washington.

January 3, 1969

MEMORANDUM

news copy

TO: Bob Haldeman

FROM: RN

SUBJECT: Agnew's Staff

Agnew spoke to me about getting a man in transportation, one in housing and one in health to serve on the staff of his federal-state and local government operation which Nils Boe is going to head.

I think Mitchell and you should have a discussion with him on this matter in view of the fact that we may be building up too many staff. Kissinger, of course, will have a staff of about 20 for the NSC, Moynihan will have a staff for his Urban Affairs Council, and now Agnew and Boe will build a staff for their federal-state-cities operation. What appears inevitable is duplication, particularly in the latter two areas, and inevitable competition.

I would surmise that the best way to handle Agnew's staff requirements here would be to have HEW, Transportation and Housing assign a man to him from their Departments.

In any event, there should be a thorough discussion of this with Mitchell presiding, and Agnew and the three Cabinet officers involved as well as Moynihan and Haldeman attending so that this kind of duplication can be avoided.

January 3, 1969

MEMORANDUM

new copy

TO: Bob Haldeman

FROM: RN

SUBJECT: Jeff Donfeld

Tricia has spoken to John Ehrlichman with regard to Jeff Donfeld's desire to be considered for a White House staff position.

My recollection is that he got pretty high marks as an advance man. More importantly, he has the additional attributes of having passed the bar in California, has been President of the student body at UCLA, and has a Jewish background.

In view of the fact that there has been considerable grumbling to the effect that too many of our 20 to 30 year old White House staffers were from J. Walter Thompson it might be well to consider him for a position, either on the Counsel staff or in another area where he would be qualified. Since this is the only position in which Tricia has indicated some interest, I would like for you and Ehrlichman to discuss it and come up with a recommendation.

If the White House staff should not be the appropriate place, perhaps John Mitchell might consider him for Justice. Or Bob Finch might want him on his Counsel staff over at HEW. Incidentally, he might be a good man to work with Bud Wilkinson.

January 3, 1969

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bob Haldeman

FROM: RN

SUBJECT: Personnel Recommendations

There is not enough coordination of Peter Flanigan's operation with Harlow, Mitchell et al. For example, Flanigan is continuing to recommend Roz Perkins for some sort of assignment and I recall sitting in a meeting with Harlow where we all agreed that Perkins, under no circumstances, should be offered a position in the new Administration, due to his very strongly antagnostic attitudes pre-convention and his close alignment with individuals who are not interested in our success.

Along the same lines, I do not believe that the Cabinet officers have been adequately informed by Mitchell that as far as Under Secretaries in particular are concerned we ought to have a clear approval from RN. Several Cabinet officers have discussed the appointment of Under-Secretaries with me, but this does not accomplish the objective. What should happen is that their recommendations should be first discussed with Mitchell who will, of course, have access to Flanigan's views; next Mitchell should run the name by Harlow, and only after this procedure has been followed should the name come up to me.

An example to illustrate this point is Volpe's move to get Jim Kemper, Jr., I do not believe that Volpe checked this out with Clem Stone which, of course, should have been done in view of the fact that they are possible competitors in the insurance field. Also, I personally have some grave doubts as to the political advisability of a Kemper appointment. On the other hand, Volpe throws the name at me out of the blue, and I cannot under these circumstances, react responsibly unless I know that it has been run by Mitchell.

Hickel, in particular, needs some guidance on his sub-Cabinet. Whether or not Russell Crane measures up as one who has a public reputation for conservation is something that should be discussed with Harlow who, as I recall, has some doubts on this score.

To set up an adequate procedure I think that the Under-Secretary and the more important Assistant Secretary positions should be run by both Mitchell and Harlow before they are submitted to me.

January 3, 1969

MEMORANDUM

rmw copy

TO: Bob Haldeman

FROM: RN

SUBJECT: RN Signature on Form Letters

As we previously have agreed, the use of my signature should be very drastically curtailed beginning immediately.

For example, sending letters to all of the people listed in Who's Who was, in my opinion, a somewhat silly exercise, and particularly, under those circumstances, my signature should not have been used.

I was surprised to note that my signature had been used by a letter which was sent to several thousand businessmen on behalf of the Inaugural Committee, asking them to make loans to the Inaugural Committee for the inauguration. As distinguished from the Who's Who letter, this use of my signature was worse than silly. It was absolutely wrong.

Under no circumstances in the future do I want my name used on form letters for fund raising of any type. Also, I take a dim view of having the signature, in facsimile or other form, used for exercises like the Who's Who business.

I think the best way to avoid this kind of a mistake in the future is for the next two or three months to submit all decisions for the use of RN signature on form letters to me personally. After a pattern has been established I will not have to go through this, since you or someone else on the staff can make decisions in accordance with the previously established policies.