

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 17, 1970

TO: Bryce Harlow  REPORT
FROM: Lamar Alexander  Blacks

You asked how to correct the "totally unacceptable" state of the Administration's relations with blacks. To get some ideas, I visited with Garment, Bob Brown, Ware (Brown's black assistant), Bruce Rabb, Nofziger and Lias.

Two Immediate Problems:

1. Remarkably, this Administration lacks a policy toward its biggest domestic program -- race, or, what to do about blacks.
2. There is an unstated attitude (almost a policy) of disregard toward blacks brought about by a political concern for white votes. As a result, we generally think all white, ignore black. We fail to maintain basic contact with the black community. Such disregard may be politically useful. But it ignores a President's responsibility to govern blacks as well as whites. And, of course, a black -- as does anyone -- resents being disregarded.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Set a policy -- To begin, Garment suggests that you meet with him and Finch (and me) to outline some options for a Presidential memorandum. Then a Presidential visit would be in order. As Moynihan would plead, there is no need to haul off with a bunch of programs and lengthy discussions of "action" until there is a policy within which to formulate programs and against which to test action. This will take some time and care since it will be our most important domestic policy.

2. Pay more attention to blacks -- Plenty could be done here without delay, without changing the Administration's essential political posture, or without Presidential action -- except a decision that it should be done: (1) Reduce symbols of antagonism; (2) Put black thinking into White House administrative process; (3) Show black presence in

"high councils"; (4) Begin a quietly professional political effort to elect black Republicans; and, (5) Maintain contact with black silent majority.

It is easy to view these basics as unimportant. They are unimportant, when done correctly. But, like unanswered Congressional mail to the President, they assume tremendous importance when done improperly or not done at all. A program is outlined at TAB A.

COMMENT: Morale of Administration blacks (and whites who work with them) is low. There could be some unfortunate resignations. See Bruce Rabb's memorandum at TAB B.

Clarence Townes, Republican National Committee, outlines his thoughts in a memorandum at TAB C. A (yet unimplemented) "game plan" from Klein's shop aimed at the "Black Silent Majority" is at TAB D.

National Committee brochure on black Administration officials is at TAB E.

I. SYMBOLS OF ANTAGONISM TOWARD BLACKS

Some are:

- A. Agnew
- B. Law 'n Order
 - 1. Mitchell
 - 2. Justice Department
 - 3. Carswell
 - 4. Voting Rights Act dilution
 - 5. No-Knock legislation (surprisingly, this is seen as a device to permit white cops to break into homes of black families.)
- C. Slowdown on school desegregation
- D. "Watch my deeds, not my words"

To explain and to suggest some corrective action:

A. Vice President Agnew - Perhaps he could avoid antagonizing blacks, e.g., asking the Harvard junior fellow to resign the Kent State Commission. More affirmatively, he could do as Kennedy did with the Houston Baptists -- address a black meeting explaining that our aims are their aims, that law 'n order means personal safety, not hate blacks, etc.

B. Law 'n Order - Most of the bad symbols end up on this peg. Many blacks believe they can't get justice. Cure? Appoint a black Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Criminal Division. Or in charge of the new Consumer Division (but that seems unlikely to pass Congress this year). Perhaps the Attorney General could begin directly to address the problem in his conversations and statements.

C. School desegregation - Nothing to do here except to stay firmly on the moderate course (generally unpopular with blacks) to which we are committed; it would help to pick Option III on the tax-exempt private schools issue.

D. "Watch my deeds, not my words" - President should drop this. Apparently goes over thuddingly with black leaders. Trouble with it is, Presidency is a symbol; the occupant's actions and words are watched carefully. President Nixon has words for others. But no words for blacks. President Cheek of Howard told me: "All the President needs to do is say he's for equal opportunity for blacks and whites, but he needs to say it all the time."

II. "THINK BLACK"

White House staffers do not "think black" when solving problems. This is not unexpected, since we have live segregated lives. Therefore, in the pressure-cooker where all but the most important factors are squeezed out of consideration, the black factor is squeezed out about every time. Not purposely. Black thoughts just rarely enter our minds. For example, when you think of the bar association, do you think of the National Bar Association (black) as well as the American Bar Association?

The Cure? Word should be passed to the key staff that the President wants this done. Keogh should know that the President wants to talk about equal opportunity whenever he can; Chapin should know to push a little harder for the National (black) Medical Association on the schedule; John Brown and Ken Cole should see that the secretariat routes all domestic papers through Bob Brown and see also that his input is considered; Butterfield should see that phone calls to blacks (to a college president following up White House meeting; to Art Fletcher asking progress of Philadelphia Plan) are included in President's time. A liaison should be set up with the black press, an elementary operation which we apparently don't now have.

III. MAKE BLACK MORE VISIBLE AROUND WHITE HOUSE

The absence of black faces around the President or at official functions makes it appear that black interests are not represented at the top. Cosmetic but very important. Bob Brown's status is not seen as enough to satisfy this need.

Some suggestions:

1. More blacks on White House staff - Fletcher-Jackson contend President ought to have a black Counsellor. As Garment points out, under present conditions, this would never work. Instead, Ehrlichman might have a black Deputy Assistant charged with reviewing every domestic policy paper and pumping in black thoughts that might otherwise be neglected. (Why doesn't Bob Brown do this? He claims he does, but that no one listens.) With expanded Domestic Policy Council and OMB staff, there must be more blacks added to the staff. Another possibility: put a young black in the Ziegler office as a press assistant (Alan Woods type of job). This would have high visibility.

2. Black faces in White House meetings - Are Administration blacks included in White House working groups as much as possible?

3. Blacks to Key Biscayne and San Clemente - Important because of press attention given to those who accompany the President.

4. Social events and Presidential ceremonies - Are blacks included?

IV. ELECT BLACK REPUBLICANS

Nofziger believes we should begin a professional effort to elect black Republicans, not bothering (in this effort) with (1) helping whites get black votes; (2) helping blacks who can't win.

Tom Lias should head it up working with Republican blacks who have run for office (Fletcher, Farmer). This should be low-key and intensive with no publicity.

First, look over 1970 crop of candidates to determine whether we can usefully help any blacks. Jim Flourunoy (a black) is on the Reagan-Murphy ticket for Secretary of State of California.

Second, pick one (at best two) Congressional seats for 1972 and begin to groom candidates, finance them, help them get properly districted seats. Jim Johnson (CSC Commissioner) wants to run for Congress from California in 1972. We should promote him to a more partisan position so that he can speak out between now and then.

Third, perhaps we can encourage Republican blacks to run for the elective offices that no one wants anymore: mayor, city council, school board.

V. THE BLACK SILENT MAJORITY

Republicans traditionally have gotten some support from white-collar and blue-collar blacks who are politically moderate except on issues of racial equality. Whether we can again get their votes, these blacks offer the best opportunity to maintain a temporary bridge into the black community. They are the insurance men, lawyers, doctors, businessmen. We should increase our efforts to maintain a network of communication with these persons. See TAB D.