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1968-69

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION

Franklin B. Lincoln, Jr. Oct. 25, 1968

1968-69

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION

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MEMORANDUM ON TRANSITION

October 25, 1968

I. Introduction

There are about seventy-five days between Election Day and Inauguration Day. The immediate tasks are the designation of capable and responsible leadership to the Executive Branch, the identification of the functions of that Branch, and the acquisition of information about key governmental issues.

II. The Transition

A. Pre-Election Period

Work should begin on three principal fronts:

1. Organizational and substantive studies beyond those immediately required for campaign purposes should be started as soon as possible.

2. Plans for a personnel search for prospective departmental and agency appointments should be finalized.

3. Contact with the Johnson Administration on matters related to the transition should be pursued.

In response to President Johnson's invitation, a good working arrangement has been established with Charles

Murphy, the White House designee.

There have been meetings with the Bureau of the Budget, the General Services Administration and the United States Civil Service Commission. Each is prepared to aid in the transition.

A list of Presidential appointments and current vacancies has been obtained. A statement on the expiration date of statutory Presidential Reorganization Powers and other special powers has been requested. FBI clearance procedures for Presidential appointees and others are being explored to expedite security and Presidential clearances as soon after after Election Day as possible.

B. Immediate Post-Election Period

1. Presidential Transition Act of 1963

Sponsored by Kennedy, this law vests in the Administrator of General Services the authority, upon request, to provide to the President-elect and the Vice-President-elect services and facilities, including office space, payment of salaries, travel expenses, communications services, printing and binding, and postage. An appropriation provides \$375,000 for the President-elect and \$75,000 for the Vice-President-elect for expenses incurred during the period between election and inauguration.

The Administrator has set aside 12,500 square feet of floor space in the Kennedy Federal Office Building (#7) on 17th Street, Washington, D.C. for the use of the President-elect after election without charge. It is excellent space and offers no problem as to security.

There is no government space available in New York but space can be obtained on a rental basis and therefore subject to a charge for its use.

Office furniture and fixtures will be furnished at a very nominal cost. In addition, transportation, including airplanes, will be available without charge to the newly elected President and Vice President. Telephone and telegraph will also be supplied by the Government at reduced tariff.

2. Location of President-Elect and Staff: Both Clifford and Murphy strongly recommend that Washington be established as the headquarters for the new Administration not only because of convenience and nearness to the seat of government but equally important because of the public image created thereby. This is, of course, a matter of personal preference.

3. Johnson-Nixon Meeting

The President will undoubtedly initiate contact with the President-elect. He presumably will suggest

an early meeting. If precedent is followed, an agenda will be prepared by Murphy and Lincoln after consultation with the principals. If not, you might want to give some thought to the topics to be explored at such meeting.

Such an agenda should include the following points:

- a. Security Clearance - Final arrangements for expediting security clearances for appointees.
- b. Current Information for the President-Elect - Arrangements to receive such Administration information as daily military, diplomatic and foreign intelligence reports, briefings and memoranda on current problems and "cable traffic."
- c. Other Presidential Information - Arrangements to obtain copies of personal memoranda of Presidential meetings with foreign officials, operating information from outgoing Presidential staff, Task Force reports prepared for the President and not publicly released, reorganization studies in the Departments, Agencies or in the Bureau of the Budget, personnel information re-

lating to appointments, terms and vacancies, memorandum on technical operations of the White House Office.

d. National Security and Budget Observers - Arrangements for early and close cooperation on national security affairs and the budget process.

e. Orientation of Appointees - Arrangements for briefing of new officials by their predecessors, access to career staff and departmental information, clerical and professional assistance, and establishment of ground rules for access to policy discussions.

f. The Handling of Crises - A procedure should be established to facilitate coordination between the principals in the event a crisis occurs.

g. News Release - It may be useful for the President and President-elect to issue a joint statement after their meeting. The substance of such a statement could be along these lines:

The President and President-elect had a full, friendly and useful discussion. They and their associates will cooperate in every appropriate way in order to insure a smooth and effective transfer of responsibility on January 20. They will

continue to consult as they think desirable and are confident that such cooperation can be achieved without impairing the orderly functioning of the Executive Branch.

3. Key Items

Two items on the proposed agenda are particularly significant.

a. Clearance of New Appointees

The President-elect in cooperation with the President must make appropriate arrangements to investigate the background of new appointees in order to assure the Johnson Administration that persons to be given access to classified information have security clearance. It is also wise to establish the practice of investigating all prospective Presidential appointees regardless of their need for access to classified information.

Especially for the first category, the process must begin as early as possible. As to these, the Johnson Administration should properly examine the report, make its decision and forward the report to the President-elect. As to the second category, the present Administration should order the check and send the FBI report unopened to the President-elect.

b. The Handling of Crises.

In the event of a crisis of major proportions during the transition period, the President will undoubtedly consult with the President-elect. The Nation would normally expect this but there is no requirement by precedent or otherwise that the President must abdicate his constitutional authority and duty to decide or that the President-elect must join in or be bound by the President's decision.

C. The Administration's First Months

Pockets of resistance to the President inevitably tend to exist in the Departments, in Congress and in the Party. It goes without saying that the President-elect should assume the reins of power and leadership in his own hands, as soon as possible.

D. Task Forces

In addition to the selection of capable people, the President-elect should appoint task forces in at least two Departments: State and Defense.

President Kennedy made a mistake by having too many task forces (approximately 29 in number), in addition to numerous departmental studies conducted by McKinsey & Company.

President Johnson has directed (through Murphy) each Department and Agency to prepare a volume on organization, function, budget and personnel and a second volume on pending issues. The Bureau of the Budget likewise is to prepare a similar study on each Department and Agency. This material will be available through Murphy after election.

The Brookings Institution has in preparation a volume on important issues confronting the new Administration and has promised to deliver a galley proof by November 1, 1968. The title of the study is "Agenda for the Nation."

III. Appointments - Key Positions to be Filled

A. The White House Staff - Pre-Inaugural Period

A skeleton staff should be chosen, briefed and prepared to move into operation the day after the election or shortly thereafter. This staff must be capable of discharging a variety of duties and the following key senior positions are suggested:

1. Special Assistant (for Programs and Policy)

This is the key policy post on the staff and should in addition have primary responsibility for speeches, messages, proclamations, review of Executive Orders and similar tasks.

This position on the President's Staff was initiated during the war by President Roosevelt who appointed Judge Samuel I. Rosenman as Special Counsel to the President. President Truman abolished the position but later resurrected it by appointing Clark M. Clifford as Special Counsel. Charles S. Murphy succeeded Clifford. In addition, John R. Steelman, the Assistant to the President, aided in coordinating Federal agency programs and policies.

Under President Eisenhower this function was performed by Staff members reporting through Governor Sherman Adams and later General Persons.

President Kennedy used Theodore Sorensen as Special Counsel to focus from the beginning on the State of the Union message and to continue to advise on questions of program and policy. This role under President Johnson is now occupied by Joseph A. Califano, Jr. as Special Assistant to the President.

The Special Assistant should have a staff to assist him and access to the Administrative Assistants as they are appointed. The Special Assistant's drafting group should begin as soon as possible to collect ideas for and to prepare initial drafts of the Inaugural Address to be given on January 20, and, following that,

a State of the Union message which will present the President-elect's legislative program. These messages should be tied in closely with the Budget, and therefore it would be wise to bring into this group, on a temporary basis, an experienced man with background in the Bureau of the Budget. The President-elect may later choose to divide the responsibilities of this position among other staff personnel, but initially, the responsibilities for the described functions should be delegated to one individual.

2. Special Assistant (for National Security Affairs)

It is imperative that the President-elect have on his staff an adviser or advisers to brief him on developments involving national security. This Special Assistant serves as liaison between the President and the National Security Council and supervises the staff of the National Security Council.

Additionally, the Special Assistant brings to the President's attention issues which the President may want to explore with the Secretary of State; briefs the President on current military, diplomatic and foreign intelligence; serves as a general point of contact between the White House and the operating departments con-

cerned with National Security; and briefs the President on impending problems which have not yet reached crisis proportions.

The duties of this position were performed under President Roosevelt by Harry L. Hopkins, Special Assistant; Admiral Leahy, Chief-of-Staff to the Commander-in-Chief; and Judge Rosenman. W. Averill Harriman assumed this role under President Truman, serving in the specially created position of Director for Mutual Security. Under President Eisenhower, Adams and later General Goodpaster handled these duties. President Kennedy named McGeorge Bundy to the National Security Adviser's job and President Johnson appointed Walt W. Rostow upon Bundy's departure.

It is suggested that the implementation of the positions for Special Assistants for Programs and Policy and for National Security should not be permitted to develop into chief of staff functions. These positions should not block access to the President.

The following are additional staff positions which should be filled as soon after election as possible. Some may be only temporary but most will later become the official White House Staff.

3. Personnel Adviser

The President-elect should have an assistant to coordinate the recruiting and screening of top personnel.

Attached hereto is a list of high priority positions to be filled prepared from a computer tabulation listing provided by the Chairman of the United States Civil Service Commission.

4. Appointments Secretary

This individual keeps the President's calendar, coordinates his time, assists in determining priority of visits, supervises the making of travel arrangements, ceremonies and official functions. The position requires an assistant and a secretary.

5. Press Secretary

A vital job requiring the talents and diplomacy of a highly skilled individual to serve as the President's spokesman to and liaison with the press. He will need one deputy who can speak in his name, and preferably two, and an appropriate staff. He should be one of your advisers on public relations.

6. Correspondence Secretary

He has responsibility for the President's correspondence, refers inquiries to Departments for answer, and functions in cooperation with the Staff Secretary and

Executive Clerk in handling volume mail. He will need some staff personnel.

The Staff of the White House is the President's personal staff and should conform in size and function to his needs. It is suggested that initially the President-elect's staff be kept small and versatile. The staff can be expanded later. Back-up resources in the Bureau of the Budget and in the Council of Economic Advisers are available.

Each Administration has, in addition to the regular White House staff assistants, acquired by assignment from Departments and Agencies, a large pool of back-up personnel.

For example, the Johnson White House Office is served by 2500 persons. We are seeking to obtain more detail on their functions.

7. Chief of Staff

President Eisenhower found the Chief of Staff organization well suited to his method of operation. Others have rejected it as inadequate. It is suggested that a system that permits all senior persons on the staff access to the President and provides for regular meetings with staff encourages much desired intra-staff communication. Staff should share in the government-wide perspective of the President.

The President's staff should include the following senior positions in addition to those enumerated above:

8. Staff Secretary

"Monitor" of White House staff work, keeping track of documents requiring action, of assignments requiring execution, of decisions reached in Cabinet meetings, legislative leaders' meetings, and elsewhere. Coordinates and synchronizes the work of the staff. The staff secretary works closely with the White House Executive Clerk (normally a non-political position), who handles and records all formal papers and documents for President's action or attention.

9. Cabinet Secretary

Handles general liaison with Cabinet officers and other agency heads, investigating grievances and adjusting minor differences not requiring Presidential intervention. Attends Cabinet meetings and keeps minutes of proceedings.

10. Administrative Assistants to the President

The White House staff should have at least six Administrative Assistants. Several should be capable writers, to assist in speech writing and to be available for direct assignment by the President to other jobs. The other Assistants should have roving assignments as

directed by the President. One Administrative Assistant could be permanently assigned to the recruitment and processing of top level appointees to significant policy positions, after the groundwork has been done initially by the Personnel Adviser.

11. Armed Forces Aide to the President

This post should be held by a regular military officer and is useful for ceremonial and housekeeping functions, travel and similar responsibilities.

12. Congressional Liaison

Assists in formulating Administration strategy for achieving a legislative program and advises on Administration policy-making on what Congress is or is not likely to do. He also serves as a conduit for legislators to the President.

13. Scientific Adviser

Assists President and his advisers in analyzing and understanding complex technical questions on the weapons, space, disarmament, drug, mining, agricultural, and related fields.

In addition to the above White House staff positions, the President requires other personnel such as the household staff, the Secret Service, communications room, switchboard, files, the mail room, personnel office, and related services, all of which will carry over in their

present form and with much the same personnel. Also required are the social secretary and such other staff as the President's wife may require who will have to be brought in.

Attached to this memorandum are lists of the Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson White House office staffs for purposes of comparison.

B. The Executive Office - Pre-Inaugural Period

1. Bureau of the Budget

As indicated above, contact has already been initiated with the Director and Deputy Director of the Bureau of the Budget. There is a critical need for the President-elect, as his first appointment, to designate an individual or individuals to serve a liaison function with the Bureau. President Eisenhower's designation of Joseph W. Dodge within ten days after the election in 1952 to work with the outgoing Budget officials did much to increase the effectiveness of the new Administration during its early months.

The Bureau has indicated that consideration of the most important budget matters relating to the departments and agencies will be taken up between Election Day and Thanksgiving.

The Budget liaison man may be a new Presidential staff member on loan or the President-elect's ultimate choice for the Director's position.

The Bureau is preparing 21 Department and Agency Highlight Summaries, which identify main aspects of program and policy, budget legislation, and organization and management of which incoming management should be informed at an early date, 75 Issue or Topical Papers and a series of Basic Reference and Descriptive Papers covering the various functions of the Bureau. These papers will be made available through Murphy the day after election.

2. Council of Economic Advisers.

The President-elect should promptly designate an individual to act as liaison with the present Council of Economic Advisers and with the Bureau of the Budget on economic matters. Access should be given to the Treasury Department. This individual could be the new Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

3. National Security Council

The National Security Council is composed of the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the Director

of the Office of Emergency Planning. As indicated above, the President-elect should at his meeting with the President make arrangements to permit a representative of the President-elect to observe National Security Council meetings and to facilitate close cooperation between the President's White House advisers in this area and their designated counterparts.

4. The Central Intelligence Agency

The Central Intelligence Agency is under the direction of the National Security Council. The Director of the CIA is probably the most important man in the intelligence establishment. The President-elect might consider retaining the current Director, a career man, for several months at least and then replace him if he was found unsatisfactory. If so, this should be announced before inauguration.

C. Executive Office

The key positions are:

1. Budget Director

The Budget Director is a direct arm of the Executive (not even Senate confirmation for his appointment is required). Under his direction, the Bureau of the Budget is a source of sophisticated

economic analysis and a potential participant in positive policy making. In addition, the Bureau can serve as the most effective way of controlling the departments and shaping of Presidential policy. A strong Director is essential.

2. Chairman and Members of the Council of Economic Advisers

The Council serves a valuable function to keep the Department of the Treasury and the Federal Reserve from overpowering the President, and to estimate and define the differences between the Treasury and the Federal Reserve.

The following agencies constitute the remaining bodies located within the Executive Office of the President. They need no priority attention from the President-elect at this time.

3. Executive Secretary of National Aeronautic and Space Council

4. Director of Office of Economic Opportunity

5. Director of Office of Emergency Planning

6. Director of Office of Science and Technology

7. Special Representative for Trade Negotiations

8. Executive Secretary of National Council on Marine Resources and Engineering Development

9. Executive Secretary and Chairman of Consumer Advisory Council

Attached hereto is a list of the key appointive positions making up the Executive Office.

D. Executive Departments, Commission, Agencies and Boards

1. Appointments in General

a. Retaining career officials. Some of the posts to which the President-elect may make appointments are now held by very capable people, some of whom served under the Eisenhower Administration and who will not find it difficult to serve loyally under a new Republican Administration.

b. The Appointments Process. The President-elect will normally fill Cabinet positions from his intimate advisers and other major political figures.

As to the others, the President-elect should utilize the skills of an individual or individuals with wide acquaintanceship in the fields of government, law, business, education, and foundations to conduct a talent hunt for the several hundred sub-cabinet posts that must be filled.

One danger to avoid is that encountered by Kennedy, that of filling too many departments from the bottom up. Generally, the Secretary should be named first, so that he can be consulted on lower jobs in his department.

c. Personnel Policy. Various general personnel

problems, such as pay raises, leave payments, and reclassifications inevitably greet the President-elect. The United States Civil Service Commission, under John W. Macy, Jr., Chairman, is best equipped to function on these problems. These problems should not be handled by individuals occupied with selecting and screening top appointments.

2. Cabinet Appointments

In selecting the heads of the twelve Executive Departments and the Ambassador to the United Nations, the new President establishes a public image of the character of his Administration. Bi-partisan appointments might be considered. There is a good public relations impact in making early appointments.

Priority should be given to the following positions:

- a. Secretary of State and two Under-Secretaries.
- b. Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary.
- c. Secretary of the Treasury.
- d. Attorney General.
- e. United States Ambassador to the United Nations.

E. Relations with the Military

1. Replacement of Incumbent Joint Chiefs of Staff

Although the President naturally desires to have his own men around him, it probably is good judgment to retain for the time being the present Joint Chiefs and other senior military men. General Wheeler, the Chairman, serves at the pleasure of the President; the term of General Westmoreland, Army Chief of Staff, expires in 1972; the term of Admiral Moorer, Chief of Naval Operations, expires in 1971; and the term of General McConnell, Air Force Chief of Staff, expires in 1971.

Under former Secretary McNamara the status of the Joint Chiefs was reduced to that of technicians. It would be advisable to restore the earlier prestige and usefulness of the Joint Chiefs by a meeting with the President-elect before January. It would be welcomed by the Chiefs and helpful to the President-elect.

2. Presidential Military Adviser

This is a delicate choice as evidenced by the antagonism aroused in the military establishment by Kennedy's personal relationship with Maxwell Taylor and James Gavin. Certainly a personal military adviser to the President can be found who would not

arouse such antagonism at the Pentagon.

IV. Relations with Congress

The President-elect will be in a position to develop a strong continuing relationship with the Congress and he must take the initiative immediately after election to do so.

A. Organization of Congress

The President-elect should give attention to the organization of both Houses.

B. Program

The President-elect should plan strategy for his legislative program with the Congressional leaders. Many points of his program have, of course, been outlined by the President-elect in his public statements. As soon as Congress meets, steps should be taken to effectuate these proposals. The State of the Union message to the Congress will itemize his legislative objective.

An analysis of the Bills in the 90th Congress on which full hearings were conducted should be made and a determination made as to those Bills which the President-elect might decide to support.

The President-elect has the alternative of urging their immediate passage or incorporating them into a

broad program as presented to the Congress in his State of the Union message.

C. Future Relationship with Congress

The President-elect might wish to set forth immediately his ideas on regular meetings and channels of communications between him and Congressional leaders. Personal weekly conferences with the Big Four accompanied by ad hoc contacts with committee chairmen and important Congressmen might be the best approach at least initially. As already noted it is essential for the President-elect to establish a position within his own staff to supervise congressional liaison.

D. Patronage

The Congress, of course, is a constant source of requests for appointments to government positions. Lest this create unwanted friction explicit procedures should be established.

V. Control of the Republican Party

The President-elect will have control of the National Committee and the support of the leaders of most of the organizations within the Republican Party. If not, this should be acquired shortly after election.

A. National Chairman and Staff

The President-elect should work with the National Chairman to encourage communication be-

tween the Party leaders and the President-elect, to assist with patronage with members of Congress and party leaders, and to coordinate the fund raising for mid-term elections.

B. Patronage

Between election and the inauguration, requests for patronage and recommendations of appointments to Executive Branch positions, particularly below the level of Assistant Secretaries and policy heads, will be quite heavy. Perhaps the President-elect could use the National Committee to divert pressure from the White House.

Field positions, such as attorneys and postmasters are politically important but should be made thoughtfully as a persuader in obtaining passage of programs through Congress.

Conclusion:

This memorandum is purposely brief. It is primarily an interim report and check list and seeks to reflect the best thoughts of a host of others who have worked on the problems of transition.

Franklin B. Lincoln, Jr.
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