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EXECUTIVE

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746-11-1/B *
746-11-1/H *
746-11-1/K *
746-11-1/Burns, Arthur
746-11-1/E *

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 27, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR

H. R. HALDEMAN

Dr. Burns submitted a memorandum (Tab A) requesting that you give consideration to a proposal from Oveta Culp^xHobby (Tab B) that we establish an historian-in-residence at the White House.

John Ehrlichman (Tab C) is not in favor of the proposal because he feels that the Administration has already established an unusually high level of documentation and any historian we selected on the basis of fairness towards the Administration would find his work tainted by charges of bias and favorable prejudice. In addition, we would be leaving ourselves open to possibly suffering the experience of "the tragedy of Lyndon Johnson".

Jim Keogh (Tab D) notes that this matter was given thorough consideration in February, at which time it was decided not to bring on a staff historian. On reviewing Mrs. Hobby's suggestions he does not feel that her proposal contains any new considerations that would cause him to change his recommendation. Keogh enclosed his February 10 memorandum on this subject (Tab E).

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that you sign the attached memorandum to Dr. Burns (Tab F) informing him that we do not wish to pursue this matter further.

10



JRB
John R. Brown

Raymond G. Pice^x
Harold M. Hyman^x
William P. Hobby^x

MEMORANDUM

TO :

YOU WERE CALLED BY

YOU WERE VISITED BY

OF (NAME)

MESSAGE

RETURNED YOU

WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

IS WAITING TO SEE YOU

Off. of Staff Sec.

Central Files:
Please put with other materials you have
on this subject - origi. action memo was
dated May 17, 1969 and went to J. Ehrlichman
and J. Keogh.

RECEIVED BY

DATE

TIME

FORM 83
214 (10-68)

07-108

THE WHITE HOUSE


WASHINGTON

May 27, 1969

(F)

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. BURNS

In early February, a proposal for the establishment of an historian-in-residence at the White House was given thorough consideration and a decision was reached not to bring on a staff historian. Mrs. Hobby's suggestion has been reviewed and it is felt that her proposal does not contain any new considerations that would cause us to change our decision.


H. R. HALDEMAN

RECEIVED
MAY 29 1969
CENTRAL FILES

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 22, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE STAFF SECRETARY

FROM

JOHN EHRLICHMAN

SUBJECT

PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
A HISTORIAN-IN-RESIDENCE AT THE
WHITE HOUSE

I am not in favor of the idea of our own "Goldman in the East Wing".

As your office can testify, this administration has established an unusually high level of documentation of the thoughts and opinions of staff members as well as the President. Therefore, to bring in a historian to record the "inner workings" is largely unnecessary.

Professor Hyman also suggests that the historian would be a logical choice to be director of the Presidential Library upon the expiration of the administration. This is, of course, a function of the highly trained archivists' staff, and it is unlikely that they could be surpassed in their qualifications for that kind of work.

Lastly, any historian we selected on the basis of his fairness toward the administration would immediately find his work tainted by charges of bias and favorable prejudice. Accordingly the value of his record of history is lessened. On the other hand, if we are less than judicious in our selection of a historian, we could suffer the experience of the "tragedy of Lyndon Johnson".

I am not in favor of a historian-in-residence at the White House.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

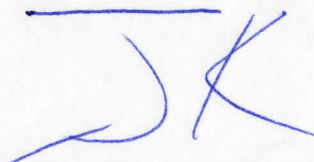
WASHINGTON

May 19, 1969

TO: Ken Cole
FROM: Jim Keogh

We gave thorough consideration in February to the question whether we should have a White House historian-in-residence. I have studied Mrs. Hobby's suggestion, reviewed the conclusions we came to earlier, and feel that her proposal does not contain any new considerations that would cause us to change our position.

I still recommend that we do not establish a White House historian-in-residence. I am attaching a copy of my February 10 memo on the subject as well as one from Ray Price. These spell out our rationale for our point of view, which is based generally on the problems of access, independence, loyalty and propriety.



Enclosures.

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 16, 1969
Time: 12:00 p.m.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MAY 16 1969

FOR: JOHN EHRLICHMAN *5/23*
JAMES KEOGH *- 5/20*

cc (for information):

FROM THE STAFF SECRETARY

SUBJECT (see attached):

Proposal for the establishment of an Historian-in-Residence at the White House.

ACTION AND REMARKS:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> For Necessary Action | <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Reply |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare Agenda and Brief | <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Remarks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> For Your Comments | <input type="checkbox"/> For Your Information |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Your Recommendations | |

Other:

DUE: Date: Monday, May 19, 1969

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Please attach this copy to material submitted.

If you have any questions or if you anticipate a delay in submitting the required material, please telephone the Staff Secretary immediately.

JRB

K. R. COLE, JR.
For the President

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 14, 1969

To: H. R. Haldeman
From: Arthur F. Burns



I am enclosing a letter together with some enclosures that I have received from Oveta Hobby. I think the proposal that she is putting before us deserves consideration. Let us talk about this in the near future.

Enclosure -

Letter from Oveta Culp Hobby dtd May 12, 1969 with attachment from Professor Harold M. Hyman

THE HOUSTON POST COMPANY

ESTABLISHED 1865
HOUSTON, TEXAS
77001

OVETA CULP HOBBY
EDITOR AND
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

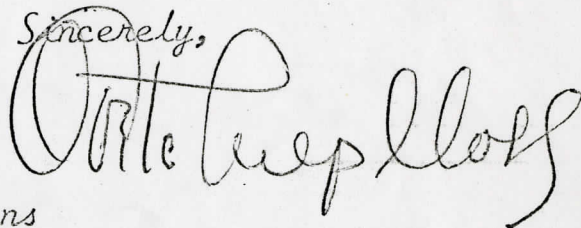
Dear Mr. Secretary:

Perhaps you will recall my mentioning to you in a telephone conversation the proposal suggested to me by Dr. Harold Hyman, Chairman of the History Department of Rice University, in regard to the establishment of an Historian-in-Residence at the White House.

I am enclosing a copy of his letter to me with a list of suggestions. I can see the strengths and weaknesses in this proposal; perhaps some of the weaknesses could be eliminated. But, at any rate, if you think this is worthy of bringing to the President's attention, I know the historians concerned would appreciate it.

With warmest personal regards.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Arthur S. Burns
The White House
Washington, D. C.

May 12, 1969

RICE UNIVERSITY

HOUSTON, TEXAS

77001

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

April 9, 1969

Hon. Oveta Culp Hobby
Houston Post
2410 Polk Avenue
Houston, Texas 77001

Dear Mrs. Hobby:

After many exchanges of views with colleagues around the country, I venture to bring to you this proposal for the establishment of an Historian-in-Residence in the White House, and to ask your help in laying the matter before President Nixon.

Recent events have increased the concern of historians about the role their profession plays in recording and evaluating Presidential tenures, personalities, and alternatives. Scholars who have enjoyed close connection with precedent Presidents have seen fit to offer to the public insights and judgments, very soon after leaving 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. This quick-disclosure pattern is creating increasing difficulties for scholarly investigators to learn what actually occurred, and a growing reluctance on the part of high officials to open their thoughts and files to historians. Either way, or both ways, the result is more contention and less illumination.

Therefore it appears to be in order to suggest that President Nixon and each succeeding President appoint to his Office staff, a Historian-in-Residence, who will be committed to remaining mute throughout that President's tenure and for a stipulated time thereafter. The Historian-in-Residence should, for purposes of taking notes and preparing chronologies of steps and events involved in the Administration's decision-making processes, regularly attend meetings of the Cabinet,

April 9, 1969

the National Security Council, and other executive agencies that produce basic administrative policies. He should also (1) advise the White House archivist concerning the arrangement of official documents, (2) interview participants in Cabinet and other Executive sessions, and (3) maintain his own diary, notes, and other ongoing records of moods, impressions, and nuances. As the President's representative for purposes of establishing a core of reliable source data, the Historian should have free access to key members of the Administration and to their files.

Dear Mrs. Hobby:

The Historian-in-Residence should likewise be responsible for leadership and direction of the federal government's historical programs. He should see that these programs -- at least those of the Executive Department -- follow the same signals and work toward the same goals, which unfortunately has not always been the case. Because of the federal government's existing commitment to its official historical program, it would be exceedingly beneficial to have high-level direction and coordination of that program from the White House. Such direction would facilitate communication between the nation's academic communities and the federal government (through establishing and maintaining uniform policies on researchers' access to records, among other things) and eliminate needless friction and duplication within the program. As the leader of the federal government's historical community, the President's Historian-in-Residence could perform enormous services by promoting the systematic, intelligent study, recording, and analysis of history, by scholars within the government.

If a Historian-in-Residence were installed in the White House, his accumulated, first-hand records should provide for the present Administration (as those of his successors should provide each succeeding Administration) a less polemical, more accurate record of men and measures, truer to the facts. It appears logical that each Historian-in-Residence should become the director of that Presidential Library on the expiration of an Administration. Should he make this transition, the Historian-in-Residence, now director of "his" President's papers and Library, would have already established the categories

April 9, 1969

into which that President's papers should be divided, would know which major figures of that Administration should be recruited for oral history interviews, and would be equipped to guide other scholars in terms of verification of facts and exploitation of documents.

Obviously it will not be easy to find a man for the post of Historian-in-Residence, who is willing to cut himself off from campus life, who is capable of taking on the muteness essential to this task, who is acceptable to the incumbent President, and who has the extra-scholarly abilities to move on to the directorship of a Presidential Library, if the last step is included. But it is not impossible to find such a man. It is time to try to serve the Office of the President with the best skills that the historical profession can muster. Too much is lost when faith becomes weak in the path to the present.

Respectfully submitted,

Harold M. Hyman

Harold M. Hyman
William P. Hobby Professor of History, and
Chairman of the Department

HMH:sr

Attachment: Nominees for the position of Historian-in-Residence

Research in the Area of National Security
Organization for the Study of National Security, 1967
The National Security Structure, 1967
The Development of National Security, 1945-1960

Suggestions for Historian-in-Residence

Donald R. McCoy, b. Jan. 18, 1928
B.A., Univ. of Denver
M.A., Univ. of Chicago
Ph. D., American Univ., 1954

Professor of history, Univ. of Kansas; there since 1957
Director of Studies, Harry S. Truman Library Institute,
since 1967

Books:

Angry Voices: Left-of-Center Movements in the
New Deal Era, 1958
Landon of Kansas, 1966
Calvin Coolidge, the Quiet President, 1967

Stanley L. Falk, b. Mar. 11, 1927
B.A., Bard College
M.A., Georgetown Univ.
Ph. D., Georgetown Univ., 1959

Office Chief of Military History, 1949-54, 59-62
Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1956-59
Associate Professor of National Security Affairs,
Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1962-

Books:

Bataan: The March of Death, 1962
Organization for National Security, 1963 (co-author)
The International Arena, 1964
Human Resources for National Strength, 1966
Decision at Leyte, 1966
The National Security Structure, 1967
The Environment of National Security, 1968

A. Hunter Dupree, b. Jan. 29, 1921

B.A., Oberlin College

M.A., Harvard Univ.

Ph. D., Harvard Univ., 1952

Univ. of California, Berkeley, 1956-68

Professor of history, Brown Univ., 1968-

Books:

Science in the Federal Government, 1957

Asa Gray, 1959

The Science and the Emergence of Modern America, 1963

Maurice Matloff, b. June 18, 1915

B.A., Columbia Univ.

M.A., Harvard Univ.

Ph. D., Harvard Univ., 1956

Office Chief of Military History, 1949-

Books:

Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 2 vols., 1959

Command Decisions, 1961 (co-author)

James Tyler Patterson, III, b. February 12, 1935

B.A., Williams College

M.A., Harvard Univ.

Ph. D., Harvard Univ., 1964

Assistant Professor of History, Indiana Univ., 1964-67

Associate Professor of History, Indiana Univ., 1967-

Books:

Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal: The
Growth of the Conservative Coalition in
Congress 1933-1939, 1967

The New Deal and the States: Federalism in
Transition, 1969

Walter Rundell, Jr., b. November 2, 1928

B.A., Univ. of Texas

M.A., American Univ.

Ph. D., American Univ., 1957

Instructor, History, Del Mar Coll., 1957-58

Instructor, History, Texas Women's Univ., 1958-59

Assistant Professor, History, Texas Women's Univ., 1960-61

Assistant Exec. Secretary, Amer. Hist. Assoc., 1961-65

Director, Surv. on Use of Original Sources in

Graduate History Training, 1965-67

Professor of History, University of Oklahoma, 1967-

Books:

Black-Market Money: The Collapse of U.S. Military

Currency Control in World War II, 1964

In Pursuit of American History: Research and

Training in the United States, 1969

February 10, 1969

TO: The President
FROM: Jim Keogh
RE: White House Historian

There are some serious questions involved in the recruitment of a White House historian.

The first is the ultimate: Should there be a staff historian, as such, in the White House?

Let's look at some of the points that flow from that basic question. What kind of access would the historian have? What kind of independence would he have? What kind of loyalty would he have?

As far as records are concerned, there are adequate papers reporting the formal actions of the Administration. They go into the archives. In establishing the pattern of having members of the research-writing team write informal memoranda on the meetings of the Cabinet, the Urban Affairs Council, the Committee on Economic Policy, and the Congressional Leadership, you have made provision for a record of the tone and color of key meetings. And so what is missing? Mainly inside reports on what goes on in the small conferences that the President holds with staff members, Cabinet Officers and others.

Should an outsider brought in as the historian sit in on those? I would say he should not, for his presence surely would tend to inhibit what the

President and others might say and do. And so the historian's presence could have a negative effect not only on the Presidency but also on history.

Now to the question of independence. Any established historian that we might bring on would have very definite ideas about his own freedom of point of view. He would want to show, ultimately, that he had not been taken into camp, and his tendency would be to prove his credentials to his colleagues in the profession by being critical, even if that meant doing so only for the sake of being critical.

Loyalty is another problem. A man recruited now on the basis that he seems eminently loyal might seem -- as events take their course -- to be considerably less than that a year or four or eight from now.

The recent track record on all this is not encouraging. Eric Goldman, professor of history at Princeton, was brought into the White House by Lyndon Johnson. He has just produced The Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson, which can only be described as an anti-Johnson book.

I have discussed the question of a staff historian at considerable length with my group -- Price, Safire, Huebner, Gavin, Buchanan and Huston. The consensus in this group is that this Administration should not bring in a historian as such. This position is based on the feeling that the risks are too high and the potential for positive results is too low.

And so what should we do? I suggest that we see to it that the process of keeping the informal record of the tone and intention of the Administration is expanded and carried on with diligence. As I said before, we now have a good start with coverage of the Cabinet, Urban Affairs Council, Committee on Economic Policy and the Leadership meetings. We should see to it that someone is assigned to write informal memoranda on other key sessions of this kind. One that immediately comes to mind is the National Security Council. I assume that Kissinger is keeping copious notes. But is anyone recording the color, the tone, the asides for the general Administration record? Someone should be assigned to do so, not only in the NSC meetings but in other meetings central to this Presidency.

The other area that should be covered is that of the more intimate conferences that the President holds. For these, I see only one process. The people involved should as often as possible record their own impressions so that they can be filed along with other informal memoranda. This is to suggest that Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Harlow and perhaps others should put on paper or on tape their impressions of what is going on.

This also suggests that the President himself should, as often as possible, dictate his own thoughts and impressions. Every day would be ideal, but of course that is too much of history to ask. But this

should be done as often as possible -- on tape or on paper -- and on some kind of more or less regular schedule.

Someone now on the staff should be given the duty of seeing to it that such informal reporting is done to cover all key points of interest and is properly filed away.

All of the material that is thus stored up can then ultimately be turned over as raw material for use by a chosen historian. Who will that historian be? When will the material be turned over to him? Let's not try to answer those questions now. The man who looks quite right at this time might be quite wrong eight years from now. In the unlikely event that no historian looks right then, the material will be of great value to the President for his own purpose of writing about his Administration.

In sum, my recommendation is that 1) we do not bring on a staff historian as such, 2) we see to it that the best possible informal as well as formal records are kept for later use as raw material for historical purposes, and 3) that someone now on the staff be assigned to coordinate this process and make sure that all possible bases are adequately covered.

I am attaching a supporting memo from Ray Price.

#

February 4, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. JAMES KEOGH

Subject: White House Historian

I would strongly urge that we not bring on an "historian," at least not in the sense of a man who would be given full access to meetings, etc., with an eye to his writing the authoritative history of the Nixon years. There would be advantages to having someone sympathetic, in whom we trusted, in a position to write such a history. But I think the risks heavily outweigh the advantages.

The first risk is to the orderly conduct of government. If he's given full access to meetings, discussions, etc., he's bound to be an inhibiting influence on the participants -- and there's a real danger that members of the Government will concern themselves more with how their advice reads in the history book than with its present usefulness to the President.

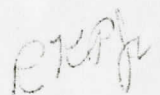
The second risk is to the President himself.

The proposal presupposes that the individual selected will not only have, but keep, the full trust of the President. It seems more likely than not that somewhere along the way, whether temporarily or permanently, and whether with solid reason or without it, the President will find himself harboring doubts or suspicions about the historian. What does the President do then? Fire the historian? Limit his access? Carry on as before, but with the President's every move and word circumscribed by the doubts that are with him whenever the historian is with him? Any course, in such a situation, is dangerous, either to the record or to the government. The historian would have a potential power over the President that no one should have, and the more he learned the greater that power would become.

February 4, 1969

The third risk is to the accuracy of the record. No matter how wide his access, no one person could conceivably absorb all that would be needed to write a "definitive" history of the administration. The proposal puts a lot of historical eggs in one potentially fragile basket. For the "authoritative" history of the Nixon years, it relies on the judgments of one individual -- and invests his judgments with a measure of apparent authority no past historian has ever had, and that no one man can have. If his judgment turns sour, his apparent authority will stand in the way of a lot of other historians who might be more kindly disposed.

The proposal was made at our meeting today that we think in terms not of an historian, but of an archivist. I think this has merit. Instead of setting up one person whose individual judgments would be cast as the judgments of history, we would aim at ensuring that the raw materials of history were stored away for use when the history was to be written -- and that these would represent multiple sources of judgment and insight, rather than a single source. The sweep of events is so broad that no one person can be everywhere that matters, on a day-to-day basis. Multiple judgments, and multiple sources of the raw material, ensure that no one person will be in a position to pose a threat to the President. The President can retain control of the materials until the time comes to turn them over to an historian -- or to historians. Altogether, this would seem better to serve both the interests of the President and the cause of history.



Raymond K. Price, Jr.