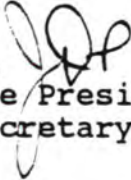


THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 22, 1993

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR STAFF

FROM: JOHN D. PODESTA 
Assistant to the President
and Staff Secretary

SUBJECT: PAPERFLOW

This memo sets forth the procedure for all White House staff to follow in sending paper to the President for signature or review. It is an initial cut at establishing a smoothly working paper flow system and I expect that it will require some refinement.

At the outset, it is important to emphasize that all paper going to the President should come through the Staff Secretary (with certain exceptions for the NSC). All paper leaving the President's office should go back to the Staff Secretary to ensure that decisions will be implemented, the appropriate people notified, and good records maintained.

Daily Briefing Book

Marcia Hale will be responsible for putting together the President's schedule and informing the appropriate offices what their responsibilities are for producing background memos, talking points, etc. (Full speeches are discussed below.) Marcia will distribute a draft of the next day's schedule at noon. All offices will be responsible for forwarding briefing book materials to my office not later than 4:30 pm the night before the day in question.

My office will review such materials for quality, completeness, etc. and produce the President's book. Briefing books will be distributed by 8:00 pm.

Decision Memo Clearance

Perhaps the most important function of the Staff Secretary's office is to ensure that decision memoranda are properly staffed before reaching the President. That will require cooperation of all staff. The following procedures should be followed:

o Unless a real emergency exists, decision memos must be forwarded to the Staff Secretary at least 48 hours in advance of presenting the document to the President.

o I will route the memo to relevant White House Staff for comment. The Chief of Staff and Vice President will receive all draft decision documents for comment. I will also route such drafts to Bernie Nussbaum and to Maggie Williams. Other offices will be routed as appropriate.

o Routing will be Assistants to the President. It will be up to each Assistant to decide proper routing procedures within his or her own office.

o As a general rule, staffing to Cabinet agencies will be done through the Councils. In the event that comment from Cabinet officers is required that cannot be handled through the regular Council process, paper will be routed through the Cabinet Secretary, who will also serve as a collection point for comments coming back from the Cabinet in those circumstances.

o My office will serve as a collection point for all comments from the White House Staff and in the circumstances described in the above bullet from the Cabinet (via the Cabinet Secretary) and will attempt to facilitate consensus, prior to presentation of the matter to the President. Where no consensus can be formed, I will ensure that individual views are noted and accurately presented.

Background Memos

Briefing papers, where no formal action is requested, will be handled in the same general manner as decision memos. My office will be responsible for preparing or editing summaries of all general briefing papers.

Speeches

Different administrations have handled the speech clearance process differently, with some vesting principal clearance responsibility in the Staff Secretary, and others in the speech writers themselves. We are going to try out a process under which the Communications staff will have primary responsibility for clearing all speeches and statements of the President released to the press, provided that these procedures are followed:

o My office must be on and see the original distribution list of draft speeches to ensure that all offices with a need to review have received a copy.

o Comments to speech writers should be cc'd to me, to ensure that those views have been appropriately considered before forwarding a draft to the President.

o Drafts of speeches to be presented to the President should flow to and from the President through my office, so that they can be properly handled and archived.

Report to Congress

The Administration prepares over 300 reports to Congress each year, as a result of statutory requirements. Many are submitted under the President's signature. They are frequently thick documents and often come to us with short deadlines. We will try to ensure that agencies submit reports in a timely fashion to give White House staff a meaningful chance to review these reports. We will route them for clearance to the appropriate people.

Legislation

Enrolled legislation (passed by both houses) is received and time stamped by the Executive Clerk. OMB has responsibility for interagency review of the legislation. The Staff Secretary's office will handle clearance of the legislation, signing statements and veto messages amongst the White House staff. The same procedures outlined for clearance of decision memos should be followed.

Correspondence

Congressional correspondence as a rule will be reviewed, personally, by the President. Staffing of letters to the Hill will follow the same procedures as outlined for clearance of decision memos. Other correspondence will be routed initially through Marcia Scott, the Acting Director of Messages and Correspondence who is working furiously to bring up our system for answering mail, whether for the President's or First Lady's signature, or for staff signature. A memo laying out the correspondence system will follow shortly.

Sequencing and Timing

It can be anticipated that staff sending paper to my office will frequently feel that the President must see it in the next 10 minutes. Barring real emergencies, that will generally not be possible. I will be working with Nancy Hernreich to develop a system that will make the President's day work for him.

Morning. With regard to paper, my expectation is that the President will have a short time in the morning to review his briefing book and paperwork, including (i) papers and letters he must review and sign; (ii) decision memos, briefing memos and others matters which he can review that morning or hold for evening review; (iii) a summary of documents and important correspondence received, which he can review in more detail if he wishes.

Daytime Period. The President wants to limit review of paper during daytime working hours. Only essential items which must be signed or reviewed, will be brought to his attention during those hours. I will forward essential items to the President through Nancy Hernreich who will be responsible for fitting review of essential items into the day's schedule.

Evening. After the President's morning work period all non-essential paperwork will be held until the evening. In the evening, we will give the President a manageable amount of reading -- no more than 45 minutes to an hour's worth. We will include in these materials all important decision memos which will be discussed the next day.

Weekend. Longer policy papers and think pieces will be held for weekend review, where possible. That will give the President more time to reflect and comment.

Following Week

By the close of business each Friday, senior staff -- and especially the councils -- should forward to me a list of any important decision memos that they expect to have presented to the President the next week so that we can build adequate time into the schedule for review at the staff level and by the President.

Style

Some changes may be made to the current style of documents intended for the President, but, for now, please use current style forms.

In closing, let me say that my office has a straightforward goal -- to protect the President and his decision-making process. Paper coming to him must meet the highest standards of excellence. Papers must be well written. Options must be clearly stated. Those who need to see it must have seen it. Views of advisors must be accurately reflected. Summaries must be brief and accurate. We cannot let the pressure of time compromise those standards.

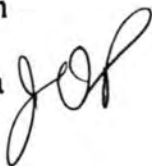
MEMO

TO: Mack McLarty

cc: Mark Gearan

FROM: John Podesta

DATE: 1/19/93



I have had extensive discussions with Phil Brady and Jim Ciccone, President Bush's Staff Secretaries, and Rick Hutcheson, President Carter's Staff Secretary. Unfortunately, I have not been able to have meaningful discussions with our own people because of travel, transition duties, etc. Therefore, I would like to lay out some preliminary thoughts and recommendations, which will need to be modified and massaged as we proceed. Where a decision from you is needed, it is noted.

Let me make two preliminary points:

Philosophy. I view my office and my job as having a relatively straight forward goal -- to protect the President and his decision making process. What does that mean?

Paper coming to him must meet the highest standards of excellence. Papers must be well written. Options must be clearly stated. Those who need to see it must have seen it. Views of advisors must be accurately reflected. Summaries must be brief and accurate. We cannot let the pressure of time compromise those standards. Paper not meeting those standards should be returned to sender as a general rule.

Discipline. If a paper system is going to work it has to be enforced. Ideally, all paper going to the President should come through the Staff Secretary (with some exceptions for the NSC). And all paper leaving the President's office should go back to the Staff Secretary to ensure notification and implementation of decisions and for appropriate record management. He has to understand that the system is set up to protect but not to insult him and he has to respect the system. This will also take the full cooperation of his personal staff.

Let me get to some specifics:

Daily Briefing Book. I would propose roughly following the current White House system for compiling the President's daily briefing book. Marcia Hale will be responsible for putting together the schedule and informing the appropriate offices of their responsibilities for producing background memos, talking points, etc. (Full speeches are dealt with below.) All offices will be responsible for forwarding briefing papers to my office not later than 4:30

P.M. the night before the day in question.

My office will review for quality, completeness, etc. and produce all needed copies of the book. We need to decide who should receive a complete version of the President's book. While staff clearly need to see matters in their particular area of responsibility, there is no reason for and there are production and control problems associated with broad distribution of the complete briefing book. I would recommend limiting distribution to the President, the Chief of Staff, the Vice President, Mrs. Clinton, Stephanopoulos and Podesta. At the end of the day, the President's copy of the briefing book should be returned to the Staff Secretary's office for proper archiving.

- John
let's discuss*
- ☐ Agree to the briefing schedule and distribution list
 - ☐ Discuss

*Wack +
shld get one*

Decision Memo Clearance. Perhaps the most important function of the Staff Secretary's office is to ensure that decision memoranda are properly staffed before reaching the President. That will require the cooperation of all senior staff. I would recommend the following general procedure:

1. Unless a real emergency exists, decision memos must be forwarded to the Staff Secretary at least 48 hours in advance of presenting the document to the President.

good idea

2. I will route the memo to relevant senior White House Staff for comment. The Chief of Staff and Vice President will receive all draft decision documents for comment. Other offices will be routed as appropriate. In the beginning, I would recommend that Williams and Nussbaum be routed on all decision memos.

good

3. Routing will be to Assistants to the President. It will be up to each Assistant to decide proper routing procedures within their offices. I would recommend one exception, which is that Varney be routed for paper which needs to be forwarded to the Cabinet and serve as a collection point for Cabinet comments.

4. My office will serve as a collection point for comments for White House Staff and the Cabinet through Varney, and will attempt to facilitate consensus, prior to presentation of the matter to the President. Where no consensus can be formed, I will ensure that individual views are noted and accurately presented.

- ☐ Agree to general procedures
- ☐ Discuss
- ☒ Agree to senior staff routing
- ☐ Discuss
- ☒ Agree to routing to Varney
- ☐ Discuss

*we need
back & forth*

Background Memos. I propose that we handle issue briefing papers, where no formal action

is requested, through the same general procedures as described above. My office will be responsible for preparing or editing summaries of all general briefing papers.

President Bush's
Speeches. The current Staff Secretary has primary responsibility for and ~~spends most of his~~ time clearing speeches and all statements of the President released to the press. This process ensures that all relevant staff have a chance to review statements and ensures that their views are considered. President Carter's Staff Secretary did not have this major responsibility. Instead, it was vested with the speech writers themselves. The argument for vesting responsibility with the Staff Secretary is that the Staff Secretary can be more of an honest broker than the communications staff who will naturally have a vested interest in resisting changes to speech text. The argument for the communications staff is one of continuity from the campaign and greater staff resources.

My recommendation is to follow the Carter model with these caveats:

First, I should be on the original distribution list of draft speeches to ensure that all offices with a need to review have received a copy. Second, comments to the speech writers should be c.c.'d to me, to ensure that those views were considered before forwarding a draft to the President. Finally, drafts of speeches actually presented to the President should flow to and from the President through my office, so that they can be properly handled and archived. In sum, I see the communications staff as playing the primary role in staffing the speech clearing function. My office would serve as a safety check and to ensure proper record management.

- Have you talked with George?*
- ☒ Place primary responsibility for speech clearance with communications staff, subject to staff secretary involvement as noted above.
 - ☐ Discuss

Sequencing and timing. My expectation is that everyone who hands me a piece of paper will be of the view that the President has to see it in the next 10 minutes. We need to work out a rhythm and flow that meets his needs and schedule but responds to real emergencies. Hernreich and I need to develop a system for making the day work. My initial thoughts are to make sure that he has some time (15 to 20 minutes) every morning to review his briefing book and paperwork. I would recommend that he be provided every morning with:

- check with Nancy Bruce on schedule*
- 1) daily Briefing Book;
 - 2) papers and letters he must review and sign;
 - 3) summary of documents and important correspondence received which he could review if he so requests; and
 - 4) other decision memos, briefing memos and other matters which he can review that morning or hold for evening review.

After his morning work period, which should probably be kept brief, we should hold all non-essential paperwork until the evening, when he should be given a manageable amount

of paper to review (no more than 45 minutes to an hour's reading). We will include in these materials all important decision memos which will be discussed the next day.

If he is going to spend the weekends at Camp David, I would recommend that we try to hold policy papers and think pieces for weekend review, if possible. That will give the President more time to reflect and comment on that type of work.

Same routing thru JP
Correspondence. Marcia Scott, who I have not met, has been hired to be Director of Messages and Correspondence. We need to develop a system for creating and clearing standard letter text for letters signed by the President and the First Lady. We need to develop a system to bring letters from important personal acquaintances to his attention through a daily correspondence summary. We need a similar or combined summary memo for important policy letters (Hernreich has been working on this). In addition, I would recommend sending the President a sampling of 50 to 100 letters a week from ordinary citizens and our standard responses for his signature. I believe that it is important for him to read what people are writing -- both good and bad -- on a weekly basis. *is current handling too many*

Yes I have no general sense
Autopen. President Bush personally signed 90% of routine nominations including low ranking military nominations, reports to Congress -- even when routine and after he approved draft language -- and other mundane matters. I believe much of this is a waste of time and should be autopenned along with the bulk of correspondence received by the White House. I would recommend that to increase everyone's comfort level with what is being autopenned, we should provide the President and Chief of Staff with a sampling of autopenned materials on a weekly basis for the first couple of months.

OK
Legislation. Enrolled legislation (passed by both houses) is received and time stamped by the Executive Clerk. The Executive Clerk and Staff Secretary will ensure that deadlines for action are met. OMB has responsibility for interagency review of the legislation. The Staff Secretary's office will handle White House staff clearance of legislation, proposed veto or signing messages and any accompanying material. I recommend we follow the same procedures outlined for clearing decision memos.

wow
Cabinet Communications. President Bush permitted his cabinet to bypass the staffing function by instructing his staff Secretary to forward certain confidential communications directly to him. In practice, the Staff Secretary kept the Chief of Staff generally informed about these communications, but did not copy him. I would recommend that we not provide this channel except on an ad hoc basis. You and the President are trying to build a cooperative team. The Bush approach seems to me to emphasize intrigue and back channels (perhaps a CIA holdover).

- ☒ Agree with the recommendations.
- ☐ Create a confidential communications channel
- ☐ Discuss

Paper Flow from the President's Office. On occasion, paper is going to be given to the President that has not gone through the Staff Secretary's office. This will happen in meetings, on the road, etc. It is important that such paper is returned to the Staff Secretary for several reasons. The paper needs to be properly archived. The Chief of Staff and other staff may need to be informed of its existence and need to be aware of any presidential action with respect to the paper.

Particularly on the road
- who travels
- routing