

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

EYES ONLY

March 2, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. HALDEMAN  
MR. EHRLICHMAN  
DR. KISSINGER

FROM: THE PRESIDENT

For discussion with the group and implementation.

After a great deal of consideration of our performance during the first year, I have decided that our greatest weakness was in spreading my time too thin -- not emphasizing priorities enough. This may sound strange in view of the fact that I did arrange my time to do the November 3rd speech and the State of the Union adequately; but the balance of this memorandum will demonstrate what I want implemented for the future. Also, while this applies primarily to my time, I want Ehrlichman and Kissinger to apply the same rules to allocating their time to the extent that they find it possible.

What really matters in campaigns, wars or in government is to concentrate on the big battles and win them. I know the point of view which says that unless you fight all the little battles too that you do not lay the ground work for winning the big ones. I do not agree with this point of view to the extent that it means that I will have to devote ~~my time~~ any significant part of my time to the lower priority items, or to the extent that Ehrlichman and Kissinger have to do so.

This means that there must be delegation to the Departments and within the White House staff of complete responsibility for those matters which are not going to have any major effect on our success as an Administration.

Applying this general rule to specifics, in the field of Foreign Policy, in the future all that I want brought to my attention are the following items.

1. East-West relations.
2. Policy toward the Soviet Union.

3. Policy toward Communist China.
4. Policy toward Eastern Europe, provided it really affects East-West relations at the highest level.
5. Policy toward Western Europe, but only where NATO is affected and where major countries (Britain, Germany and France) are affected. The only minor countries in Europe which I want to pay attention to in the foreseeable future will be Spain, Italy, and Greece. I do not want to see any papers on any of the other countries, unless their problems are directly related to NATO. At the next level out where I am indicating policy toward the Mid-East and then finally in the last is policy with regard to Vietnam and anything that relates to Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, etc. As far as the balance of ~~XXXX~~ Asia is concerned, that part of Africa which is not directly related to the Mid-East crisis, and all of Latin America and all countries in the Western Hemisphere with the exception of Cuba and anything else that may be concerned with the East-West conflict, I do not want matters submitted to me unless they require Presidential decision and can only be handled at the Presidential level.

This is going to require a subtle handling on Kissinger's part. He must not let members of his staff or members of the establishment and the various Departments think that I do 'not care' about the under-developed world. I do care, but what happens in those parts of the world is not, in the final analysis, going to have any significant effect on the success of our foreign policy in the foreseeable future. The thing to do here is to farm out as much of the decision-making in those areas to the Departments, and where Kissinger does not have confidence that State will follow up directives that I have previously laid down with regard to Latin America, Africa and the under-developed countries of Asia, he should farm that subject out to a member of his staff but he, himself, should not bother with it. I want him to concentrate just as hard as I will be concentrating on these major countries and these major problem areas.

In the future, all that I want to see with regard to what I consider the lower priority items would be a semiannual report indicating what has happened; and where a news conference is scheduled, of course, just enough information so that I can respond to a question, although it is interesting to note that we have received very few questions on the

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low priority items in news conferences to date.

Haldeman, in the arranging of my schedule, have in mind these priorities. Great pressures will build up to see this and that minor or major officials from the low priority countries. All of this is to be farmed out to Agnew. For example, the Minister of Mines from Venezuela is a case in point; he should not have been included on the schedule, and I do not want this to happen again.

MORE

continuation of Memo to Haldeman, Kissinger and Ehrlichman

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With regard to domestic affairs, our priorities for the most part will be expected but a couple will be surprising for reasons I will indicate.

I want to take personal responsibility in the following areas:

1. Economic matters, but only where the decisions affect either recession or inflation. I do not want to be bothered with international monetary matters. This, incidentally, Kissinger should note also, and I will not need to see the reports on international monetary matters in the future. Problems should be farmed out, I would hope to Arthur Burns if he is willing to assume it on a confidential basis, and if not Burns to Houthakker who is very capable in this field. I have no confidence in the Treasury people since they will be acting in a routine way. International monetary matters, incidentally, are a case in point in making the difficult decision as to priorities. I feel that we need a new international monetary system and I have so indicated in several meetings. Very little progress has been made in that direction because of the opposition of Treasury. I shall expect somebody from the White House staff who will be designated who will keep the pressure on in this area. The man, however, who could really be the lead man is Arthur Burns because he feels exactly as I do and it might be that he could exert some influence on the others. Ehrlichman, of course, could be helpful on the staff side but he is not familiar enough with the intricacies of the problem to assume the lead responsibility.

2. Crime: I feel that we have really failed in this area, not perhaps so much in what we have done but in publicizing it adequately. I am going to take charge and start pressuring some people and I want a lead man, either from the White House staff or in Justice, whom I can call daily if I feel like it and ask what is being done. The emphasis here must be more on crime in the street and narcotics. The attack on organized crime is important but not politically except as it affects the Democratic political machines in places like New Jersey and Missouri. Here, of course, we can count on Mitchell going ahead full-steam.

3. School integration: I must assume the responsibility here because it will be the major issue of controversy for the foreseeable future. Here again, I hope we can find one man to whom I can turn and on whom I can rely. This man should not be Garment because of his bias in one direction, or Buchanan, because of his bias in another direction.

You will note that I have excluded the environment. I consider this to be important from the stand-point of the nation and from the standpoint of the Administration making a good record in a vital field, but I have every confidence in Whitaker and believe that he can assume the lead responsibility and I don't want to be bothered with the details. Just see that the job is done. Of course, to the extent Train shapes up as an in-house Administration man he can work in tandem with Whitaker to carry out our objectives.

I have also not included family assistance, revenue sharing, job training, the whole package making up the "New Federalism." I consider this to be important but here again I think that our team is adequate to carry out our policies and I am going to count on them to do so without submitting to me the day-to-day decisions. In such fields as this I am only interested when we make a major breakthrough or have a major failure. Otherwise, don't bother me.

In the fields of education, housing, health, transportation, Post Office, agriculture and labor I want lead men, either within the Administration or within the Department, to assume the responsibilities. I consider each important but they are not the kind of matters which should require my attention. Here I think you could give Harlow a good batch of these, but tell him at the time that he has the responsibility and that I cannot be called upon unless it is something that requires Presidential decision.

The actions of the various agencies fall into the same category of lower priority items -- lower priority not because of their not being important but because they do not need my attention -- they can and should be handled by White House personnel or by a good Agency man who knows he has the responsibility.

In writing this memorandum I failed to include under the Kissinger section the national defense positions. Here I am interested only in those positions where they really affect our national security and East-West relations. That means that in the case of ABM I, of course, will consider that a high-priority item as long as it is before us. Where an item like foreign aid is concerned I do not want to be bothered with it unless it directly affects East-West relations. I have already indicated in my meeting with Pedersen (?) that I want some reform here and I shall expect that reform to be accomplished in some degree or the other.

A lot of miscellaneous items are not covered in this memorandum but I think you will be able to apply rules based on what I have already dictated.

For example, trade policy is a case in point. This is something where it just isn't going to make a lot of difference whether we move one way or another on the glass tariff. Oil import is also a case in point. While it has some political consequences it is not something I should become deeply involved in. A recommendation should be made and responsibility given at other levels and I will then act without getting involved at lower levels of the discussion.

One final note as to an area where I do feel Presidential involvement is necessary is in government reorganization. Here, however, I do not want to sit down in long haggling sessions but I do want the pressures kept on for a complete reorganization. I will expect Haldeman et al to assume the lead responsibility, calling upon me only when I have to give it a push.