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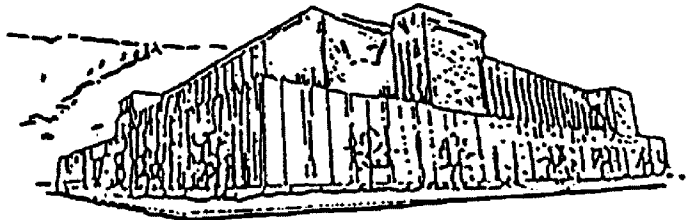
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PRESIDENTIAL AGENDAS AND LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS: THE CARTER
ADMINISTRATION'S MANAGEMENT STYLE

by

ERIK S. ROOT

B.A. The University of Montana, 1993

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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Master of Arts

The University of Montana

1995

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Root, Erik S., M.A. May 1995

Political Science

Presidential Management and Legislative Agendas: A Question of Management Style (114 pp.)

Director: Michael J. Laslovich *mjl*

The Executive Office of the President has grown dramatically in responsibility and size since the Great Depression. It is important for presidents to organize their staff in a way that allows them to focus on the broad-based goals of the administration. To win Congressional support for his initiatives, presidents must utilize the Office of Congressional Relations (OCR) to lobby for the administration's programs.

The proper organization of the OCR requires that the president takes time to communicate with his subordinates. A chief of staff must limit access to the president and take upon himself duties that ensure the president's wishes are being carried out.

The case study of the Carter administration's energy bill demonstrates that the President did not organize his staff in such a way as to increase the likelihood of the legislation's passage. Carter's reticence to engage his staff in a social exchange with Congress detrimentally slowed the legislative process. The resulting arduous and lengthy process contributed to the perception that the Carter administration was in disarray.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The office of the American Presidency has changed dramatically over time. In response to increased public expectations of the president, executive responsibility has also multiplied. The growth of White House staff is a principal consequence of this change. As demands on the president to solve the nation's problems increase, so too does his reliance on staff. Staffers are intricately involved in policy advising, policy making, and the development and implementation of political strategy in pursuit of the president's agenda.¹ The expanding role of staffers has required an increase in their numbers, which in turn complicates the president's task of coordinating his legislative program.²

This thesis contends that a president's ability to pass his legislative agenda is partially dependent on how he organizes and manages his staff. It centers on the presidential management of staff and how it affects the passage of legislation through Congress. The historical evolution of the president's staff is discussed to demonstrate the importance and necessity of staff support. President Jimmy Carter's general management of the White House staff, and in particular the effect his style had on the Congressional Liaison Staff's ability to lobby Capitol Hill, is of particular interest. The manner the chief executive directs his staffers influences the overall legislative success of the administration. The president's management skills are critical.³ The chief executive's failure to get what he

wants from the disparate congressional membership results in an ineffective administration.

Congress and the public have both turned to the president for answers to complex problems facing society in the modern era. With the Great Depression, the people turned to the president in hopes he could alleviate the poor economic times. Given these expectations, much of the legislation considered by Congress is now proposed by the chief executive.⁴ Since the president is the prime initiator and coordinator of the government, executive officials also anticipate presidential direction and guidance on how to implement policy.⁵ The management and organization of the White House staff also provides the administration with the ability to meet the increasing responsibilities of the executive office.

As the United States government's responsibilities grew, the president's tasks and duties became increasingly varied. While the chief executive's job has always been too large for one person, this growth made his tasks even more difficult to accomplish. Staff assistance is needed to promote the administration's policies on Capitol Hill. Promoting the president's programs to Congress helps the White House maintain linkages with legislators and foster a congenial working relationship between the executive and legislative branches.

The president's first responsibility regarding his staff, then, is to organize and mobilize the executive branch to address those tasks. This point is especially important if the chief executive wants to pursue an agenda that breaks from the past, since new policy directions are often met with resistance from Congress and interest groups.

Given this inevitable resistance to his policies the ability for the president to have his staff organized before the term begins becomes even more important. The chief executive must make a successful transition from campaigning to governing in order to increase the chances of legislative victories. However, successful transitions are difficult: what it takes to get elected president is quite different from governing. Richard Rose notes that because a candidate consumes himself with the arduous task of getting elected, he does not think much about what he is going to do once elected. But upon inauguration, the president should be able to "hit the ground running" to capitalize on his electoral victory.⁶ Since each administration potentially has only eight years to accomplish its goals, the president needs to have managerial control over his staff so he can coordinate his objectives. A president who does not make a successful transition by preparing the White House staff will fail to achieve many of the goals of the administration.

Having the White House ready to "hit the ground running" also increases the likelihood that the administration can take advantage of the less contentious political atmosphere accompanying the outset of the term. At the moment of inauguration, the president has his greatest amount of support from the voters because they want the president to succeed.⁷ During this "honeymoon period," the president's relationship with Congress is also the least turbulent.⁸ Legislators are tentatively open to the new president's leadership because the chief executive has not yet presented controversial legislation which a Congress member's constituents may dislike.

Members of Congress also tentatively welcome a new administration because the White House may pursue a bargaining relationship with Capitol Hill. Just as the president wants to pass legislation, Congress wants to push through their agenda. But an administration that does not seek out a congenial working relationship with Congress may alienate legislators. Members of Congress will feel unimportant and ignored by the administration if a relationship based on bargaining and compromise is not established. This relationship includes allowing legislators to have a say in White House proposals. Having a legislative staff working with members of Congress, building coalitions of support for initiatives, goes a long way toward ensuring legislative success.

Once offended, Capitol Hill will be less likely to support the chief executive's proposals throughout the administration's term. The ability to "hit the ground running" thus contributes to the White House's legislative effectiveness over the entirety of the administration's term. George Reedy, an aide to former President Lyndon Johnson, states that: "if the president gets along well with the Congress in the beginning, he may be able to carry [support for his initiatives] past the initial period. But if he gets off on the wrong foot, he'll never be able to shake [the bad relationship]." ⁹ Former White House chief of staff H.R. Haldeman also notes the importance of the administration establishing a congenial connection with Capitol Hill is critical because as soon as the president takes office, his power begins eroding and the window of opportunity to pass legislation gets smaller. ¹⁰ Haldeman believes that it is inevitable that the chief executive's influence will diminish because at some point legislators will be alienated by the president's agenda. Therefore, to retard this

diminishing executive influence, a president must seek out a good relationship with Congress to decrease the likelihood that early mistakes will hurt the president's chances for passage of initiatives in the future.¹¹

Given the benefits of organizing the executive staff organization to increase the president's legislative success, key research questions include:

1. How the management of staff affects the focus of the administration's staffers on the President's goals;
2. How the management of staff affects the likelihood of congressional passage of legislation; and
3. What lessons from the Carter administration are useful to the management and organization of future White House staffs.

The hypothesis in this examination asserts that the more direction presidents give staffers, the more successful their administrations will be at lobbying Congress. The clearer a president articulates what he wants to accomplish in office, the more focused the staff will be on the administration's goals. Conversely, a chief executive who does not guide his staff will find his administration in disarray. Without coordination, other members of the administration may propose legislation on Capitol Hill without the president's knowledge or support.

Operationalization and Scope

The elements of effective management have only been implied up to this point. For the purpose of this study, effective management purports three elements. First, enhancing legislative success requires

that the president articulates goals to his staff in a clear and prioritized fashion. Once the president articulates to his staff what he wants and expects, and what initiatives to pursue, the staff will be able to communicate coherently this information to Congress.

Conversely, confusion over what the president wants, and what issues should be addressed first, leaves the administration in disarray, and sends the Congress confusing and contradictory messages.

Second, presidents must direct staffers to lobby and bargain with members of Congress. To the extent that a president requires his congressional liaison staff to consult Congress on critical executive proposals, the chances for policy passage increases. If the president does not ensure his liaison staff maintains constant contact with legislators, and seeks their input on important legislation, presidential initiatives will most likely fail.

Third, the administration must be hierarchically organized to ensure that staffers receive proper direction and work towards the president's goals. This organizational structure allows the president to remain focused on the most important issues confronting the administration.¹² The chief executive does not have time to address every policy issue, and therefore must rely on staff to investigate problems, review policy options, and carry out his wishes. A clearly defined chain of command decreases the possibility that staffers will stray from the administration's goals to pursue a personal ideological agenda antithetical to the president's goals.¹³

One way to help avoid these organizational problems is to utilize a chief of staff. One of the duties of a chief of staff is to limit access to the chief executive and delegate duties and tasks to staffers

thus allowing the president to focus on broad issues and responsibilities.¹⁴ Because the chief of staff delegates responsibilities, his duties also include keeping staffers focused on the president's goals and making sure the president's agenda is being followed. Since the chief of staff inevitably comes into a vast amount of contact with staffers, he addresses minor problems that surface inside the White House. For example, if a dispute arises, the chief of staff will mediate between staffers and make a decision. While the chief of staff is of secondary focus in this paper, the experiences of presidents who have not chosen to organize the White House hierarchically with a chief of staff demonstrate the necessity of utilizing such a powerful staff position.

Before assessing the Carter administration, the growing importance of the White House staff shall be discussed in a historical overview of the development of the staff system. The overview traces how and why the White House staff grew, and how it was managed.

A general overview of Carter's management style will also be examined, followed by a case study of his legislative liaison's interaction with Congress regarding the administration's energy proposal. An analysis of Carter's management technique sheds light on how his style affected his relationship with Congress and, ultimately, the passage of the energy package. The energy package is important in this study because he thought it would define the success of his term. Before examining the case study, a clear description of the modern functions of the Office of Congressional Relations (OCR) should be explained. Carter's relationship and management of the OCR is the focus

of the case study in regard to the energy proposals examined in Chapter Four.

Notes

¹Bradley H. Patterson, The Ring of Power (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1988), 25.

²Ibid., 6. See also John Hart, The Presidential Branch (N.Y.: Pergamon Press, 1987), 3.

³Hart, 3. Hart notes that a president's management skills determine if his staff will be able to carry out his wishes to get legislation passed through Congress.

⁴Lester G. Seligman and Cary R. Covington, The Coalitional Presidency, (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989), 92.

⁵George C. Edwards and Stephen J. Wayne, Presidential Leadership: Politics and Policy Making, 3rd ed., (N.Y.: St. Martins Press, 1994), 1.

⁶Richard Rose, The Postmodern President: The White House Meets the World (N.Y.: Chatham House Publishers Inc., 1988), 10.

⁷James P. Pfiffner, The Modern Presidency (N.Y.: St. Martins Press, 1994), 147-148.

⁸Ibid., 147.

⁹James P. Pfiffner, The Strategic Presidency: Hitting the Ground Running (N.Y.: Dorsey Press, 1988), 137.

¹⁰Ibid., 7.

¹¹Ibid., 137.

¹²Rose, 150.

¹³Stephen Hess, Organizing the Presidency (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1988), 118-119. Hess says that staffers could critically damage a president by "going into business for himself."

¹⁴Pfiffner, The Strategic Presidency: Hitting the Ground Running, 37.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The president did not have a staff office like the Office of Congressional Relations at the beginning of the Republic because the founders frowned upon too much executive intrusion into the legislature's business. Therefore, there was no staff organization, and the president accomplished his tasks with little help. As the government grew, however, so did the need for staff to free the president from less important tasks. Problems in the modern world have become increasingly complicated, and the solutions to such problems have also become complex. For example, the Great Depression resulted in people expecting the government to manage the economy in order to avoid another economic crisis.¹ As a result, many staff offices now take on a greater role than just accomplishing such tasks as sorting the mail or typing a note for the president. As the president has become a prime initiator in proposing legislation, staffers presently help the president formulate proposals and lobby for passage of legislation.

This chapter examines the importance of staff and major trends in staff development, which will offer a glimpse into the importance of staff in the modern presidency. The different way presidents manage their staffs also provides insight into the difficulties they face in staff organization.

Origins of the Executive Staff

The concept of an inner body of advisors derives from America's British heritage. King Henry II believed that he needed a council of trusted and faithful advisors chosen by himself to further the monarchy's programs.² In the same vein, the founders of the Republic left to the chief executive the option of organizing an advisory body, rather than creating a separate advisory body for him. Some framers thought that such a body would be necessary to insulate the president from possible damaging problems. Others believed such insulation of the president problematic because he could then do as the King of England did: unjustly, and irresponsibly, blame his staff for bad advice.³ They thought that the president of the United States should be responsible for his decisions and not be protected by a coterie of advisors.

Many of the founders wanted the executive to remain a singular institution because, without several unelected staffers in the White House, the presidential office would represent unified leadership.⁴ Alexander Hamilton opined in Federalist Paper Seventy that, in the Executive Branch:

No favorable circumstances palliate or atone for the disadvantages of dissension in the executive department. [The sinful character of several human beings working in the White House] serve to embarrass and weaken the execution of plan or measure which they relate, from the first step to the final conclusion of it. They constantly counteract those qualities in the executive which are the most necessary ingredients in its composition--vigor and expedition.⁵

Hamilton's admonition was a reaction to the presumed negative effects of staff and an advisory system in relation to human ambition:

One of the weightiest objections to a plurality in the executive...is that it tends to conceal faults and destroy responsibility...It often becomes impossible, amidst mutual accusations, to determine on whom the blame or the punishment of a pernicious measure, or a series of pernicious measures, ought to fall...The circumstances which may have led to a national miscarriage or misfortune are sometimes so complicated that where there are a number of actors who may have had different degrees and kinds of agency, though we may clearly see upon the whole that there has been mismanagement, yet it may be impracticable to pronounce to whose account the evil which may have incurred is truly chargeable.⁶

Needless to say, Hamilton did not support a vastly staffed Executive. He feared that, just like the King, the president could blame council for his own bad decisions. The president could also claim that council divisions precluded better resolution on certain issues.⁷ Therefore, the Constitution omitted formal recognition of staff.

The Constitution did allow, however, for written opinions from subordinates which would allow one to pinpoint responsibility for governmental decisions.⁸ While not many expected that department heads would become the president's principal advisors, in 1791 President George Washington encouraged his vice-president and department secretaries (State, War, Treasury, and the Attorney General) to consult each other on issues. Eventually, Washington met with these men to discuss problems of the day and to develop political strategy. James Monroe referred to this group as the "president's cabinet" whose responsibility was to counsel, as well as support, the chief executive.⁹

Despite this input from the vice-president and department secretaries, Washington and the second United States President, John Adams, complained about the workload facing their administrations. In 1789 Congress allocated money for assistance to the president.¹⁰ The

legislators increased the president's salary to cover expenses for hiring a personal secretary and a few clerks.

To relieve his workload, Washington also utilized Tobias Lear, his personal secretary, as a liaison between the White House and Congress.¹¹ Lear's role was especially important because Congress' disparate makeup made it difficult to affect legislation. As Washington noted:

The impossibility that one man should be able to perform all the great business of the state [was] the reason for instituting the great departments, and appointing officers therein, to assist the supreme magistrate in discharging the duties of his trust.¹²

Still, the duties of the executive office increased and surpassed the work hours available from the cabinet and advisors. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams noted that when he worked for President James Monroe, he frequently received documents eighteen months after Monroe obtained them. Adams concluded that the demands on, and workload of, the president caused chronic delays and backlogging of the government's business beyond what the cabinet could keep up with.¹³ Nevertheless, for the next one-hundred and forty years, the cabinet remained the president's principal advisory group and staff support system. Among its many duties, the cabinet assisted the president by lobbying for certain measures originating on Capitol Hill.

In the nineteenth century, the White House had very little to do with the legislative process because Congress created and proposed all bills. When the president disagreed with certain proposals, legislative leaders were usually powerful enough to stop the White House from effecting any kind of change.¹⁴ Even though the president was interested in certain pieces of legislation, overall, legislative

actions were not a matter of intense concern for the chief executive because he had more burdens emanating from non-legislative correspondence.¹⁵

Nineteenth-century presidents continued to utilize personal aides and servants, as well as department secretaries, to assist in the political duties of the executive office. The salaries of these executive staffers came out of the president's own pocket.¹⁶ In 1825 James Monroe became the first president to lodge formally a complaint with Congress that he did not have a sufficient staff or fiscal resources to cope with the demands of the office.¹⁷ Though they did not act immediately on this complaint, Congress eventually decided to increase the appropriation for more staff. But it was Adams who began the trend that led the presidency away from sole reliance on the cabinet towards the creation of a formal White House staff whose exclusive responsibility and loyalty laid with the president. Unlike secretaries, staffers would not have to report to Congress and lobby the legislature for appropriations. They would only have to report to the president who hired and fired them.

Andrew Jackson adopted Adams's staffing ideas and became the first chief executive to move away from the use of the cabinet in favor of a "coterie" of personal advisors.¹⁸ Jackson noticed that his secretaries were beholden to their own interests which were generated by dealing with their department personnel. They lacked what he thought were "the necessary standards of selflessness and candor" needed in a staffer.¹⁹ Jackson believed that only a candid personal staff/advisor could relate which goals were realistically attainable. He also thought that staffers should carry out the president's wishes faithfully. While

the organization of Jackson's White House staff and advisors went unduplicated in subsequent administrations, the need for more immediate administrative help was addressed in the following administrations.

In 1857, Congress authorized a salary of \$2,500 a year for a private secretary; \$1,200 a year for a steward to take charge of the White House domestic establishment; and \$900 for a part-time messenger. By the time Abraham Lincoln was elected president, the personal secretary evolved into an invaluable position for the chief executive. The secretary began to take on "chief of staff" responsibilities: directing subordinates and managing access to the president.²⁰

Abraham Lincoln's Precedent Setting Personal Secretary

The election of President Lincoln prompted one his most famous unscripted speeches. As he boarded the railroad for Washington D.C., several Illinois friends shook his hand and congratulated him as he made his way to the train and began to speak:

My friends--no one not in my situation can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived for a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested on Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being...I cannot succeed. With [His] assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me, and remain with you and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your progress you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.²¹

As the train pulled away a breathless reporter rushed up to the president and asked him if he could have a copy of the speech "before

his noble words were lost forever."²² Lincoln then made a feeble attempt to write down the spontaneous speech when his personal secretary, John George Nicolay, seized the writing utensil from him and finished the task. Author Michael Medved states that: "it seemed entirely appropriate [that] one of Lincoln's most celebrated public utterances should come down to us through [an] intermediary"--a staffer.²³ Medved believes this action becomes more understandable only when taking into account the duties staffers are responsible for in the modern political age. Nicolay performed at that time what has become the normal operating procedure for staffers in the modern age--writing and transcribing the president's speeches.

Nicolay left quite an imprint on the presidential office because of his unprecedented, wide, and varied duties. With the Civil War underway, he guarded access to Lincoln so the President could concentrate on the war. Nicolay made Congressmen who previously had unlimited access to the Oval Office wait. This angered several legislators because no "staffer" had ever had such power before.²⁴ Nicolay also read, answered, and summarized the president's mail. His duties further included reading and summarizing newspapers, and writing opinion pieces for the New York Tribune. While Nicolay had wide and varied duties, his responsibilities did not include relations with Congress. However, his precedent-setting responsibilities paved the way for further increases in executive responsibilities.

Teddy Roosevelt became the first president to present legislation to Congress. This action was controversial because only the leaders of each chamber decided the legislative agenda and presented such legislation to Congress.²⁵ Roosevelt also used his office and limited

staff to lobby the Hill on proposals being considered in Congress. Though Roosevelt did not propose these measures, he publicly took credit for initiatives such as the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906.²⁶ Roosevelt's actions increased the public expectations of the executive office and opened the door for future presidents to generate legislation and present it to Congress.

President Woodrow Wilson continued the trend set by Roosevelt. Just before taking office he wrote that a chief executive "must be the prime minister, as much concerned with the guidance of legislation as with the just and orderly execution of law, and he is the spokesman of the Nation in everything."²⁷

Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Brownlow Report

Prior to FDR's administration, no formal White House staff offices existed. If the president's own personal secretary could not assume some of the burdens of the office, employees were borrowed from the departments. However, this practice eventually subsided. The use of cabinet members as advisors lost its appeal steadily throughout the 1800s-1900s because many presidents wanted a staff more dependent on, and solely answerable to, them. In turn, the White House staff gained prominence and became the primary advisory and lobbying entity for the president. The increased importance of staff resulted in centralizing the executive's operations.

FDR's legacy forever changed what the populace expected the federal government could and should do. Many scholars note that FDR marked the

beginning of the modern presidency because of the dramatic expansion of supporting offices, agencies, and staff of the executive office.²⁸

With the advent of the Great Depression, FDR found that he needed more help than the existing staff could provide.²⁹ The public expected the president to relieve the country of the effects of the poor economy. The impact of the Great Depression rendered theories of limited government obsolete.³⁰ The economic collapse forced the president to take a more proactive role in legislation facing the House and Senate. The president's new role meant he would need more staff to lobby Congress.

Since the citizenry looked to the president, not Congress, for leadership during the poor economic times, the chief executive set the domestic legislative agenda. In this way, FDR changed the nature of the office to an activist presidential office. But the aggressive rate at which he wanted to create new organizations and restructure the governmental bureaucracy disturbed even avid "New Dealers."³¹ To assuage the perception that his plan to reorganize the executive was drastic, FDR attempted to coordinate newly created agencies with old ones by forming the "Emergency Council" in 1934 to streamline the administration.³² However, the meetings were huge and created confusion. Instead of allaying fears about FDR's activism, controversy increased.

In 1937 FDR commissioned the "President's Committee on Administrative Management" to research ways the president could be helped.³³ Public-administration scholar Louis Brownlow chaired the committee and affirmed in his findings that the president needed help. Brownlow wrote that the president's "staff was inadequate to fulfill

[his needs].''³⁴ The Brownlow Committee recommended hiring four presidential aides including: a special counsel, an executive clerk, appointments secretary, and a press secretary. These staffers were to be ''possessed of high competence and have a passion for anonymity.''³⁵

The report stated that:

These aides would have no power to make decisions or issue instructions in their own right. They would not be interposed between the president and the heads of his departments. They would remain in the background, issue no orders, make no decisions, [and] emit no public statements.³⁶

Brownlow wrote that he and FDR were very close in thought on ''how to establish a simple but effective machinery which [would] enable [the president] to exercise managerial control appropriate to the burden of responsibility imposed upon him by the Constitution.''³⁷ The Brownlow committee report intended to create an executive branch that could meet the needs of the ''developing administrative state.''³⁸ However, FDR went beyond what Brownlow intended, using the report to reorganize the whole White House bureaucratic structure. The Republican opposition denounced the legislation as a ''dictator bill,'' because the increase of executive employees appeared to be a maneuver by the President to increase his powers over the other branches.³⁹ But FDR's plans for reorganization had public support: the citizenry wanted the federal government, and especially the president, to do something. Congress thus approved the Brownlow committee report.

Two years following the enactment of Brownlow, Congress and FDR passed the Reorganization Act of 1939.⁴⁰ This measure gave the president additional authority to submit plans for the reorganization of the executive branch--subject to congressional veto. The Act also

created the "executive office of the president" and expanded FDR's role as the chief manager of the White House.⁴¹ The Act of 1939 thus further centralized control in the Oval Office and increased the number of people reporting directly to the president. By Roosevelt's third term White House advisors assumed many of the roles previously the sole domain of the departments.

Despite some Republican opposition to Roosevelt's ambitious restructuring programs, the President was able to organize his White House without much opposition from the majority of Congress. As Garry Wills contends, Roosevelt was able to get much of what he wanted precisely because he became responsive to the public's wishes for a more proactive president.⁴² He understood the new expectations on the government and grasped the public's desire that he articulate their wishes to Capitol Hill. Wills states that: "Roosevelt ministered to a sick nation. Economic cures were being proposed on all sides, and Roosevelt was ready to try any of them."⁴³ Wills's statement captures the main reason behind the increased responsibilities and staff size of the executive branch. More staffers were needed to help the administration communicate with legislators on complicated pieces of legislation.

To increase his chances of getting his initiatives passed through Congress, the president employed White House liaisons to keep the lines of communication open between the White House and Congress.⁴⁴ The liaisons kept him aware of congressional activities that might help or hurt the administration by reporting to him what congressional members were saying and doing on the Hill.

In light of these new executive responsibilities, FDR changed the function of government. By the time Dwight Eisenhower was elected, the White House staff was a fixture of the executive.

The Eisenhower Administration

President Eisenhower had a clear idea of how he wanted to improve White House operations. Pundits of the time described Eisenhower as having a "strong sense of order and a readiness to delegate."⁴⁵ Drawing on his vast military experience, Eisenhower believed the White House staff would function smoothly if a military concept of order and organization was instituted. Eisenhower thought that "organization cannot make a genius out of an incompetent; even less can it, of itself, make the decisions which are required to trigger necessary action. On the other hand, disorganization can scarcely fail to result in inefficiency and can easily lead to disaster."⁴⁶ Eisenhower instituting a chief of staff system where one man would carry the responsibility of supervising all other aides.⁴⁷ This attempt to create a more efficient executive office was not the sole reason for Eisenhower's legislative success.

Eisenhower made sure that his staff appointments were experienced Washington insiders. He asserted that by hiring those who knew how Washington worked his administration would be more successful in lobbying congressional members. President Eisenhower was the first to appoint an experienced full-time congressional liaison to the newly created Office of Congressional Relations (OCR). He argued that having an appointment who could relate to legislators would link the White House and Congress in a congenial relationship. The OCR thus began to

field immediately requests from legislators on appointments and patronage. Eisenhower's actions sent the legislators a message that he wanted to work with the legislature. Had he opted for an appointment unknown to the members on the Hill, the bargaining relationship with Congress would have been complicated. The liaison's experience meant the administration would spend little time learning how to affect legislation and work with individual legislators.⁴⁸

Eisenhower initially believed in limited government and wanted to return the White House staff to its pre-World War Two size. He thought that he could get by with just a personal secretary, a chief of staff, and a few general assistants. But almost immediately upon taking office he faced more of a workload than he expected and reversed his plans to decrease staff size. With the rise in stature of the White House staff, the cabinet continued its decline in influencing the president. Since a large staff system increased the chances of mistakes, Eisenhower announced all decisions in front of the department heads and head staffers to ensure that both the staff and the departments knew what was expected of them and what goals the administration would pursue. He had his Chief of Staff follow up on these decisions to remind the cabinet of the positions taken by the president. The staff also reminded the department heads to implement the president's decisions. In this way, Eisenhower assured that everyone in the administration, including the OCR, focused on the same goals.

Eisenhower's system allowed cabinet officers to run their daily operations without much presidential interference. He wanted the departments and staff offices to take care of most of the problems while he concentrated on larger issues. When cabinet members and staffers

disagreed among themselves, they were to see the Chief of Staff, Sherman Adams. Adams mediated differences, and his decisions were final. Adams's presence and powerful position in the White House provoked many in the administration to nickname him "the governor."⁴⁹ Eisenhower saw his Chief of Staff as his "son of a bitch" since it was Adams's job to guarantee that the administration ran smoothly.⁵⁰ Those who served directly under Adams noted his imperious style. One staffer, Robert Gray, recalled that during some meetings with Adams he was "afraid to inhale for fear of breathing fire."⁵¹ Sherman also chaired all staff meetings where he would lecture those in attendance about the most minute details concerning the direction of the administration. None challenged his orders because the relationship he had with the president was clearly beyond question. The staff system under Eisenhower removed many of the President's burdens thus allowing him to concentrate on larger issues like his proposals.

Lyndon Johnson and the Growth of the OCR

The most efficient and successful use of the OCR came from President Lyndon Johnson's organizational style. He had the OCR gather information on many legislators, not just on their voting records, but also on their politics and the political pressures on them from their districts and states. The OCR reported directly to LBJ. He also made sure that the liaison office kept him current on any activity and all legislation making its way through the Congress. One OCR staffer, Claude Desautels, stated that:

Lyndon Johnson was a kind of generator of interest, and he was thorough in his knowledge of legislation, and so interested in even the smallest piece of legislation. As long as it was on that

'must' [priority] list, he wanted you to go out and win it. He'd go over the list with you and say, 'Well what are we doing about this? Where are we here, and where are we there? What are we doing?' As a consequence, you'd sometimes get 60, 70, 80, bills on that list and he knew exactly where they were...knew them all, and he'd follow them.⁵²

Johnson kept up with the bills pending on the Hill by installing direct phone lines between the Oval Office and the OCR. By pressing a button on the phone with a liaison's name on it, Johnson could reach the staffer and inquire about a piece of legislation that the liaison followed. The OCR, however, went beyond mere lobbying on Capitol Hill and informing the President on the status of bills.

Johnson made sure that the OCR rewarded legislators who backed his proposals. He reasoned that those compensated for their support would be more likely to vote for White House initiatives in the future. The OCR also made sure to reward the administration's most ardent and loyal supporters so as to not give them the impression that Johnson took their support for granted. The compensations took a variety of forms. For example, one loyal Johnson supporter and member of the House Public Works Committee, Fats Everett (D-TN), wanted a warden employed by the Fish and Wildlife service removed, but the Department of the Interior was intransigent. Henry Wilson of the OCR took up Everett's problem and wrote to Oren Beatty, the Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior. The warden was then fired. Everett appreciated the administration's work and expressed his willingness to assist the President when he wanted a bill passed.⁵³

Legislators also received government programs and projects for their state. Representative Carl D. Perkins (D-KY), who supported the Great Society programs and most specifically the Economic Opportunity

Bill, received sixteen million dollars worth of projects for his district--six million dollars above the quota provisionally allotted to him.⁵⁴

However, if legislators could not support the White House, the President did not indiscriminately punish them. The OCR took into account the politics of the congressperson's district on difficult votes. If the voters of a particular district did not like a piece of legislation, Johnson could not realistically expect a Congress member to vote with the administration. Generally, though, the OCR knew which votes would be difficult and tried to include those members whose votes were needed to make the bill more attractive in the negotiating process.

The Nixon Administration: Questioning Presidential and Staff Power

As vice-president, Richard Nixon had become impressed with Eisenhower's staff system. He recruited two former Eisenhower aides, Bryce Harlow and Andrew Goodpaster, to help him put his staff together. He asked Harlow to help because of his success in the Congressional Liaison's Office. The decision to bring Harlow to Washington illustrates Nixon's belief in the importance of White House organization. It also demonstrated that Nixon was a management conscious president who was concerned about the way the White House functioned. The President-elect and his Chief of Staff, Bob Haldeman, began to focus on White House structure and procedures weeks prior to the election.⁵⁵ Haldeman spent many hours preparing for his job by reading books about staff management. Additionally, just after the

election, the President-elect flew to Florida with a few staffers to relax and prepare for taking office.

Initially, Nixon did not think he would concentrate as much power in the Chief of Staff as he eventually did. Nixon believed that Adams had too much power in the Eisenhower administration. He wanted to be more accessible to his top staffers. But Nixon soon scrapped this organizational plan, realizing that his time was valuable and he needed someone to guard the Oval Office door and limit access to him.

Haldeman also made sure Nixon's decisions were carried out. He explained that every administration has to have a clear cut organizational structure so as to move constantly the administration toward its goals.⁵⁶ He insisted on a "zero defects" operation where everything the President wanted would be carried out flawlessly.⁵⁷ In this way he was very much like Sherman Adams, who eventually made enemies within the staff structure. Haldeman created animosities because of this zealotry. With his German name and crew cut hair style, some inside the White House labeled him "the Nazi."⁵⁸ Haldeman rationalized these descriptions of him: "Every President needs a son-of-a-bitch, and I'm Nixon's. I'm his buffer, and I'm his bastard. I get done what he wants done and I take the heat instead of him."⁵⁹ Clearly, Nixon knew how he wanted to get things accomplished. But he became too detached from the legislative process and he took a combative approach to Congress. Furthermore, he relied too heavily on Haldeman without supervising what his staff chief was accomplishing in his name.

Nixon thought that Washington had three demons that must be confronted: the press, Congress, and the federal bureaucracy.⁶⁰ His most intense opposition was directed at the legislature.⁶¹ Instead of

using his liaison staff to bargain with Congress, he unprecedentedly impounded funds the Hill appropriated to programs he did not like. He thus tried to use administrative actions instead of engaging in the legislative process. For example, in the Fall of 1972 Nixon vetoed the Water Pollution Control Act that provided eleven billion in appropriations in 1973 and 1974 for building water pollution plants. Congress overrode his veto. But Nixon was so intent on stopping this legislation he impounded the funds appropriated anyway.⁶² Since this approach offended many members of Congress, it rendered his use of the OCR generally ineffective.

In 1969 Nixon sent to the Hill the Family Assistance Plan (FAP) which was a welfare reform package guaranteeing families in America a minimum income. The plan emphasized workfare over welfare and had broad bi-partisan support. The President announced that FAP was his "high domestic priority," but his administration's lack of enthusiasm in lobbying for its passage made many question whether he really supported the initiative.⁶³ For two months after the details reached Congress, the White House, and the OCR, fell silent on the issue, and Congress responded coolly to the plan. When it became evident that the plan would not even make it out of the House Ways and Means Committee, Nixon began to lobby the House membership intensely. He even temporarily organized a liaison team whose sole job was to promote FAP.⁶⁴ The administration's efforts paid off, and on March 5, 1970, the House approved the FAP proposal. However, after this victory, the administration ran into more problems in the Senate.

Both liberal and conservative Senators found something wrong with FAP, but the Nixon administration once again fell silent on the proposal

because they believed that the House vote signaled smooth sailing for the Senate's consideration of the plan. However, because Nixon and his staff did not communicate with Congress, the White House was not aware of the problems many legislators had with FAP. The department head of the Urban Affairs Council, Daniel Moynihan, stated that the administration "was not sufficiently aware of the danger...the altogether different mood of the Senate Committee [from Ways and Means] was not sensed."⁶⁵

Two days after the Senate Finance Committee began hearings, members of the committee voted against the bill, surprising the administration. Though staffers and department heads immediately began working on a compromise proposal, Nixon's continued reticence over the initiative did not send legislators the message that the President really wanted to pass the bill. Even the OCR was left out of the planning process. Five weeks after the Senate Finance Committee killed FAP, Nixon decided to reenter the debate. He personally called Senators and invited them to the White House for dinners.

However, these personal appeals did not have much effect on the Senate. On October 8, 1970, the Senate Finance Committee voted FAP down fourteen to one. All six Republicans voted against the bill. Many summed up their perception of Nixon and FAP: "He wanted the bill, most of the time, but not that much."⁶⁶ Senator Albert Gore stated that he did "not have the faintest indication as to the President's lobbying efforts to get the Family Assistance Plan through Congress in 1970."⁶⁷ The difficulties of achieving FAP prompted Nixon to restructure the executive office.

In response to the administration's organizational problems Nixon became dissatisfied with the powerful Chief of Staff system. To make sure his subordinates kept their eye on the administration's goals, Nixon created a "counter-bureaucracy" within the White House to keep track of those he hired.⁶⁸ Nixon concluded that the vast bureaucracy, specifically in the departments, kept him from getting things accomplished. Presidential aide John Ehrlichman echoed this sentiment when he said that "we only see them [department secretaries and employees] at the annual White House Christmas party; they go off and marry the natives."⁶⁹ In other words, those who worked for the departments did not pursue the interests of the administration, but rather those outside the administration.

The drawback of the counter bureaucracy was that Nixon created an entity that competed for the loyalty of the President.⁷⁰ Some believe that the creation of this extra staff body precipitated the Watergate scandal. The White House staff grew to more than 4000 employees.⁷¹ After the 1972 election, Nixon realized the error of creating a vast executive staff. He announced that he had lost confidence in his appointees. He believed that the White House staff must decrease in size so he could more formally control them. Nixon may have displayed such urgency over staff size to deflect growing concern over Watergate. But some have concluded that the scandal began, initially, by those around Nixon: a large and uncontrollable counterbureaucracy had gone off on its own.⁷²

Conclusion: The Consequences of Expanding Staff

The consequence of the Nixon administration's problems with Watergate provoked more intense studies on White House structure and organization. Nixon's experience, and the possible detrimental implications for the country, compels one to consider seriously how a staff should be organized to help the president with the legislation he wants passed.

By the end of President Johnson's administration, the number of policies emanating from the White House increased dramatically.⁷³ Congress and the public expected a broader legislative domestic agenda from the president. Johnson reinforced these expectations by convincing the public that government could relieve such problems as poverty. As a result, greater demands were made on the White House for policy coordination. Johnson's remedy for the poor was encapsulated in his Great Society initiatives. Without a liaison staff bargaining with legislators on his behalf, Johnson would have found himself overwhelmed. Johnson thus continued what FDR started in 1934: the use of staff to meet rising expectations from the public that more must be accomplished on the executive level. Still, Eisenhower articulated some possible drawbacks of the staff system.

Even though Eisenhower revolutionized the way presidents organized staff, the staff has potentially become a way for presidents to avoid accountability. For example, Eisenhower Press Secretary James Hagerty noted that the President created a buffer zone between himself and the public and press. As Hagerty stated, "he would say 'do it this way' and I would say 'if I go to that press conference and say what you want

me to say, I would get hell."⁷⁴ Eisenhower replied "better you than me."⁷⁵ In this way, Hamilton's admonition in Federalist Paper Seventy regarding the staff providing political cover from criticism has been ignored. Still, many hold the president responsible for any problems with the White House staff because he is the person who organizes and manages his subordinates.

While FDR was pivotal in creating this opportunity for presidential expansion and control over the White House staff, Eisenhower set the standard of managing those who would fill the expanding executive positions. While the Brownlow Committee intended to limit the powers and responsibilities of staffers, presidents have found this aim unreasonable because it makes it difficult for the President to meet all his demands.⁷⁶ Some scholars have suggested that the Brownlow committee's recommendations have proven to be a double-edged sword for the president. On the one hand, a large scale staff is difficult to control, weakening the presidency and the ability of chief executives to effect change. On the other hand, the growth allows the president to concentrate on more important things while enlisting support for legislative programs.⁷⁷ Both assertions have merit. FDR and Eisenhower used their staff systems to their advantage with minor negative repercussions. However, as the Nixon example demonstrates, some chief executives are not as adroit in managing their staff.

Many of Nixon's problems, regardless of his hostility towards Congress, emanated from his detachment from the legislative process. Nixon remained distant from his OCR staff, and they had little input into the policy process (as evidenced in the FAP proposal).⁷⁸ To make matters worse, Congress did not take the OCR seriously because they

perceived the liaisons as not being able to speak on behalf of the President.⁷⁹ This perception was reinforced as Nixon did not communicate with them on a regular basis. Further, there is no evidence that Nixon had Haldeman relay important instructions to the OCR staff. Indeed, he rarely saw most of his personal staff advisors.⁸⁰ Nixon's unwillingness to communicate with his subordinates fostered an environment which lacked discipline and cohesion. The White House thus looked disorganized.⁸¹

The counter bureaucracy he established in the attempt to take control of the White House did not provide the control he was looking for.⁸² Ironically, despite Nixon's desire for isolation, he was very concerned with the details of things other than the management of his administration. For example, he wanted to choose the White House furniture himself, and he wanted extensive memos on what wines were offered and served at White House functions.⁸³ In this sense, Nixon spent too much time on unimportant details of the White House when he should have been managing and articulating his goals to his staff. Though President Carter did not organize his White House in the same way as Nixon, they had similar organizational styles. Like Nixon, Carter did not seek to organize and communicate with his staff. Carter also had a penchant for details. These similarities spawned similar problems for the Carter presidency.

Notes

¹James P. Pfiffner, The Modern Presidency (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 4.

²Henry Barrett Learned, The President's Cabinet: Studies in the Original Formation and Structure of an American Institution (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1912), 12.

³George C. Edwards and Stephen J. Wayne, Presidential Leadership: Politics and Policy Making (N.Y.: St. Martins Press, 1994), 171.

⁴Bradley H. Patterson, The Ring of Power (N.Y.: Basic Books Inc., 1988), 17.

⁵Clinton Rossiter, ed., The Federalist Papers (N.Y.: Mentor, 1961), 427.

⁶Ibid., 427-428.

⁷Ibid., 428.

⁸George Edwards and Stephen Wayne, 171.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰John Hart, The Presidential Branch (N.Y.: Pergamon Press, 1987), 11.

¹⁰Ibid., 72.

¹²Henry Barrett Learned, 47. Washington stated this on May 25, 1789.

¹³Hart., 10

¹⁴Lester G. Seligman and Cary R. Covington, The Coalitional Presidency (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989), 72.

¹⁵Hart, The Presidential Branch, 12-13.

¹⁶Pfiffner, The Modern Presidency, 51. See also Hart, 12-13.

¹⁷Michael Medved, The Shadow Presidents (N.Y.: Times Books, 1979), 12.

¹⁸Patricia Witherspoon, Within these Walls (N.Y.: Praeger, 1991), 4.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., 4-5.

²¹Medved, 15.

²²Ibid., 15-16.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., 19.

²⁵Seligman and Covington, 74.

²⁶Forrest McDonald, The American Presidency (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 358.

²⁷Ibid., 359.

²⁸Stephen Hess, Organizing the Presidency (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1998), 39. Also John H. Kessel, The Domestic Presidency: Decision-Making in the White House (North Scituate, Mass.: Duxbury Press, 1975), 17.

²⁹John P. Burke, The Institutional Presidency (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1992), 7.

³⁰Hart, The Presidential Branch, 1.

³¹Burke, Organizing the Presidency, 9.

³²Hess, 33.

³³Witherspoon, 6.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Pfiffner, Modern Presidency, 51.

³⁷Burke, 9.

³⁸Ibid., 9-10.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Hart, 29.

⁴¹Hess, Organizing the Presidency, 2.

⁴²Garry Wills, "What Makes a Good Leader?" Atlantic Monthly, April 1994, 71.

⁴³Ibid., 76.

⁴⁴ McDonald, 366.

⁴⁵ Hedley Donovan, Roosevelt to Reagan (N.Y.: Harper and Row Publishers, 1985), 55.

⁴⁶ Richard Rose, Managing Presidential Objectives (N.Y.: The Free Press, 1976), 131.

⁴⁷ Medved, 237. See also Hess, 63.

⁴⁸ Donovan, 57. Donovan also notes that the congressional liaison, being a "confidant" of Eisenhower's, sent the message that the legislative team spoke on behalf of the President.

⁴⁹ Hess, Organizing the Presidency, 56.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 65.

⁵¹ Medved, 248.

⁵² Nigel Bowles, The White House and Capitol Hill: The Politics of Presidential Persuasion (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 35.

⁵³ Ibid., 71.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 82.

⁵⁵ Carl Brauer, Presidential Transitions: Eisenhower Through Reagan, (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1986), 130.

⁵⁶ James P. Pfiffner, "White House Staff versus the Cabinet: Centripetal and Centrifugal Roles," Presidential Studies Quarterly, (October 1986), 669.

⁵⁷ Brauer, 134.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Pfiffner, "White House Staff versus the Cabinet," 670.

⁶⁰ Hess, Organizing the Presidency, 124.

⁶¹ Bowles, 186. There is no evidence of the explanation for the on-again, off-again nature of Nixon's lobbying on behalf of FAP.

⁶² Pfiffner, Modern Presidency, 158.

⁶³ Barbara Kellerman, The Political Presidency: Practice of Leadership from Kennedy through Reagan (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1984), 126.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 137.

⁶⁵Ibid., 139.

⁶⁶Ibid., 142.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Hess, Organizing the Presidency, 126.

⁶⁹McDonald, 338.

⁷⁰Hess, Organizing the Presidency, 126.

⁷¹Forrest McDonald, 338.

⁷²Hess, Organizing the Presidency, 130.

⁷³Seligman and Covington, 44.

⁷⁴Hess, Organizing the Presidency, 61.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Hart, 120.

⁷⁷Burke, xii.

⁷⁸Seligman, 86.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Imperial Presidency, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973), 222.

⁸¹George C. Edwards and Stephen J. Wayne, Presidential Leadership: Politics and Policy Making, 2nd ed., (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 255.

⁸²Forrest MacDonald, 339 and 370. MacDonald states that because he detached himself from managing the executive office, many staffers were left at the top of the White House hierarchy without the Chief Executive's direction.

⁸³Pfiffner, Modern Presidency, 67-68.

CHAPTER 3

CARTER AND HIS STAFF

The election of Jimmy Carter surprised many due to his political anonymity.¹ This relative obscurity lead many to rule him out as a contender early in the campaign. However, the disastrous effects of Watergate prompted the country to want change. In response to the public's negative reaction to the Watergate scandal, Carter sought to distance himself from the Nixon legacy. He campaigned as an outsider and promised to curb the excesses of Nixon's "imperial" presidency.² Since Watergate focused public attention on the potential power of staff to do illegal things on behalf of the president, Carter instituted a more decentralized and inclusive White House staff system. He promised that there would be "no all powerful palace guards in my White House, no anonymous aides, unelected, unknown to the public, and unconfirmed by the Senate, wielding vast power from the White House basement."³

According to Carter's Press Secretary, Jody Powell: "the Watergate scandal had a significant impact on the type of structure Carter chose to implement in his White House...there was a sense of concern about having an excessively powerful White House staff in general and a Chief of Staff in particular."⁴ He wanted to avoid the powerful Chief of Staff system that existed under Haldeman because he believed that it would cripple the effectiveness and success of his administration by increasing the chances that staff would become involved in illegal activities. To allay such fears, and to increase his own success, Carter eliminated the chief of staff position. The

President believed he could conduct both his presidential duties and those of the chief of staff.

Carter reasoned that without a staff chief, more information would flow into the Oval Office resulting in a president better informed about the activities within the White House. The chief executive, therefore, could stop anything antithetical to the administration's goals. The President thought that without powerful figures like Sherman Adams and H.R. Haldeman, covert activities would cease.

Believing that a powerful White House staff would choke off the flow of information to the President, Carter insisted that all option or opinion papers, except for highly sensitive security issues, should "make the loop" so all advisors could review the material before a decision was made. To keep up with the massive amount of paper flow into the Oval Office, Carter and some staffers enrolled in a speed reading course.

While the advisors and staffers were impressed with Carter's command and knowledge of the issues--especially his attention to detail--many thought that this system consumed too much time. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant for National Security Affairs, concluded that the amount of time Carter spent reading stemmed from information overload. As a result, Brzezinski made an attempt to prevent his office from forwarding too much to the Oval Office:

At first I would send him a great deal with a cover memo saying 'please look at the introduction, look at the conclusion, look at the clipped pages. Here is my analysis. Here are the other points of view. You have some options.' And the whole thing would come back to me annotated from beginning to end. He would read the whole thing. And so after awhile I realized if I sent him something, he was going to read it.⁵

Brzezinski found that 300 pages a day reached Carter from the National Security office. In response, Brzezinski actively sought to limit the amount of material heading to the Oval Office.⁶ Despite Brzezinski's forethought, the president still received an extensive amount of reading material.

Ominous Beginnings: Carter's Commitment to Decentralization

Some members of the president-elect's administration were concerned about Carter's organizational intentions. Joseph Califano, an experienced politician and Carter's Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, noted that "the new president evinced little sense of what Washington was like or of the complexities of governing."⁷ Califano's statement foreshadowed an event that occurred soon after the election. After the inaugural ceremonies, the President's immediate staff met in the Roosevelt Room in the White House to organize and set priorities. They were jubilant, but soon became uneasy as no one knew what to do or who might take charge. Eventually Frank Moore, who would become the Assistant Congressional Liaison, turned to Carter's personal advisor, Hamilton Jordan, and said "Ham, what do we do now? Moore's question got no answer."⁸

Before the election Moore talked with several presidential experts and past advisors and developed a transition and organizational plan. However, Jordan blocked the plan, thinking it unnecessary. Instead of spending time formulating a staff hierarchy, Carter announced that he would institute a "Cabinet Government:" No White House staff would dominate or act superior to the department secretaries.⁹ The

secretaries were granted more authority on policy issues. Jordan asserted that many past presidents were confronted with unnecessary problems when relying too heavily on staff. He reasoned that staffers could not accomplish everything from the White House. Carter argued that it made perfect sense to spread responsibility to as many as possible so no one organizational structure would become overburdened.

Still, while Carter wanted to utilize the departments more than his predecessors, he also wanted to make all the decisions from the Oval Office. Carter insisted on being immediately available to almost all significant personnel in his administration, including department heads and a few staffers inside the White House.¹⁰

Despite the staff's access, Carter wanted the cabinet to be the focal point in helping develop policy and implement the administration's programs without the assistance of the executive staff. To accomplish this, he spent more time in meetings with his secretaries than with the White House staff.¹¹ Initially, he communicated with the staff through memoranda. The Assistant for Domestic Affairs and Policy, Stuart Eizenstat, became frustrated with this style:

Frequently, though not always, I would suggest that if there was a particular important...or divisive issue, those memoranda [should] be followed up by meetings with the principals in which I would participate. But more often than not, the president liked to make decisions from paper and I would get back...his handwritten comments.¹²

The organization Carter instituted looked like a "spokes of the wheel" system where he represented the hub of the wheel and several subordinates, representing the spokes of the wheel, would have direct access to the hub (see appendix A). As a result, he spent a good deal

of time settling issues that could have been taken care of at a lower level.¹³

According to Brzezinski, Carter did not like to delegate "non-presidential stuff."¹⁴ Hans Mark, Secretary of the Air Force, suggests that the President's military background was the central reason for his attention to such detail: Carter served on a nuclear submarine, where all must have an acute attention to detail. Stuart Eizenstat, the Assistant for Domestic Affairs and Policy, said: "he wasn't satisfied making a decision unless he felt he really knew the facts about it. In that respect, I think he demanded more material than other presidents might."¹⁵ Some, like the Assistant for the Public Liaison, Ann Wexler, defended Carter's style: "If you're really going to make decisions, and when the buck really stops at your desk, you better...know what the intricacies of that decision really are. And he did."¹⁶

White House Structure: Consequences of Carter's Management Style

Since Carter put almost all of his energy into knowing the minute details of his policies and inner workings of the White House, he did not focus on the big picture and he did not articulate the most important goals of the administration. In other words, Carter did not convey the broad goals of his administration. He did not consider it part of his job to relay his overall vision to the rest of the administration.¹⁷ The "spokes system" promoted an organization without a sense of priorities. Consequently, his staffers could not pursue a definite agenda on behalf of the administration because there were several proposals being considered on one topic. The White House

Staff did not know how to function in their positions because they lacked direction. A case in point concerned the Domestic Policy Staff. Staffers spent most of their time trying to discern what the President wanted.¹⁸ In frustration, the staff amassed a list called "promises, promises" which listed all of Carter's campaign promises so the staff could work toward some of the goals he stated to the public.¹⁹ The list did not serve the administration well because several staffers ended up working on different promises at the same time. The staff, not organized to work toward just a few goals, failed to accomplish much because they could not decipher which issues were most important. The decreased significance of the White House staff further complicated the administration's problems by granting the Cabinet more control over policy formation and advocacy.

Carter believed that the Cabinet should take on duties formerly belonging to the White House staff in the area of creating and lobbying for proposals. President Carter's new organizational system, however, led not only to poor coordination, poor implementation, and bickering between the departments and the White House staff, but also to disloyalty on the part of several key cabinet officials.²⁰ He allowed the secretaries to appoint their own subordinates and thought that the department secretaries should create and build their own management teams.²¹

Cabinet members were elated by this decision, but staffers objected because they thought it infringed on their duties of overseeing and coordinating the administration. Departments naturally compartmentalize into closely guarded areas of authority, and each cabinet office wants to have sole domain over a specific area like commerce or labor. No

other department or staff office is allowed entry into another without expressed permission.²² However, departmental proposals often affect more than one narrow area. Part of the staff's job includes resolution of conflicts emerging from departmental turf struggles. Giving the cabinet secretaries more authority fostered a mistrust between the staff and cabinet. In allowing the departments to set their own policy priorities without White House interference, the President gave up a significant amount of policy making authority.²³

Departments were permitted policy development leeway without White House knowledge or coordination over proposals. While Carter spent so much time working through the details of White House initiatives, departments formulated and proposed their own measures. Thus, the administration ended up advancing several conflicting policy programs.²⁴ During the Spring of 1978, the Cabinet continued to make announcements contrary to White House policy. For example, the Secretary of Agriculture announced a bigger increase in price supports for grain than the White House determined necessary. In another incident, the Secretary of the Treasury, Ted Blumenthal, denied the possibility of tax reform at the same time that the White House planned a reform package. He also publicly contradicted the policy statements of the presidential economic advisors. The Department of Housing and Urban Development criticized Carter's monetary policy and decided to draw up plans for programs that far surpassed the President's more conservative budget.

Since the White House did not actively partake in, or direct, policy formation, the secretaries could not resolve conflicts when they arose. The problem emanated from the fact that no one cabinet agency fit neatly into one policy area. For example, a president cannot direct

one department to solve the trade deficit problem because that agency would cross many jurisdictional lines: Labor, Transportation, Defense, Treasury, Energy, and the CIA.²⁵ Carter could not take the time to solve conflicts that surfaced between departments because he did not have time. Thus, he could not make sure the secretaries forwarded initiatives that agreed with White House proposals. Some scholars argue that as a result of Carter's limited time, the department heads took liberty to act as if their organizations were "personal fiefdoms."²⁶ They forged ahead with their personal proposals without any regard for what other departments might be planning or advancing.

Hamilton Jordan commented that the departments "were independent of one another and thus oblivious to the political relationships of their programs."²⁷ He noted in a memo to Carter that "we have a major problem in the coordination of goals and objectives of your administration."²⁸ All departments considered themselves equal in importance and would not yield to the other; they jockeyed for position over turf rather than working together. Policies written to accommodate both sides were incomprehensible.²⁹ However, even if they did work together, they had "no clear sense of where the president was leading" the administration.³⁰ The lack of direction from the administration provoked several concerned memos addressed to the President. For example, Hamilton Jordan wrote:

We should develop a system for identifying goals and objectives of this administration. We should translate those goals and objectives into specific tasks and assign each task to a responsible person with a work plan and a timetable. Finally, we should develop a system for monitoring progress and problems. We should also develop a system for scheduling the major activities of the President and Vice-President that reconciles their limited time with the priority activities of the Administration.³¹

A.D. Frazier, a staffer on the Chief Executive Reorganization Project, wrote that the White House staff needed either a chief of staff or some kind of staff coordinator.³² Frazier thought that a coordinator could provide the President with a plan for dealing with issues in a timely manner and ensure implementation of those decisions. But Carter made it clear that his administration did not need either position.

Two months after the Frazier memo, eleven months after the inauguration, Eizenstat wrote Carter expressing his concern about the lack of coordination:

There is no mechanism by which, on a regular basis, we can find what the other is doing that may have impact on an area in which we are working...no one has been given the directive to sift out the various priorities of our work, to coordinate our work and make sure it is all going in the same direction, before it all pours in to you.³³

Soon after the Eizenstat memo, the White House staff tried to convince the President that government business had become too complex to leave in the disparate hands of the departments. Jack Watson, the Assistant for Cabinet and Intergovernmental Affairs, originally supported Carter's commitment to cabinet government. However, he eventually criticized the "spokes of the wheel" structure because the administration lacked cohesion.³⁴ Watson began to advocate a more hierarchical staff system to rein in the unruly department secretaries.

The most vocal department head was Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary Joseph Califano. He decided to offer a plan banning smoking in all public places, but he forwarded this proposal to Congress without discussing it with the White House. Califano reasoned that Carter would approve of the announcement because the President stated during the

campaign that he wanted to develop preventive health care policies.³⁵ However, Carter did not know Califano proposed the ban until the congressional delegation from North Carolina--representing the nation's largest tobacco industry--notified him of the proposal.

In response to the continual coordination problems between the White House and the cabinet, in 1978 Carter limited the power of the departments by requiring all domestic proposals to go through Eizenstat for approval. Additionally, all international proposals were to be filtered through Zbigniew Brzezinski. Hamilton Jordan also began to monitor the departments. Some secretaries responded by becoming even more vocal and rebellious. Califano publicly criticized the White House for being behind the curve on everything. He also opposed the creation of the Department of Education: Blumenthal continued to differ with the White House on tax policies. Echoing Califano's complaint, Blumenthal said the he was "sick and tired of seeing the president and administration two and three and four months behind the curve on everything."³⁶ He added that Carter's "presidency [was] looking so foolish, being dragged hind tail by events."³⁷

Generally, the cabinet believed that the problems with the administration were the result of the White House staff who leaked negative information to the press. They also blamed the staff for seldomly returning departmental calls.³⁸ The problems between the cabinet and staff originated from the organizational structure set up by Carter. Part of these problems were allayed when Carter gave the Domestic Policy Staff more control under Stuart Eizenstat.

When Carter granted them more authority and appointed Stu Eizenstat as the Assistant for Domestic Policy, they became increasingly

organized. Eizenstat immediately disbanded the Domestic Council, formed the Domestic Policy Staff Office, and hired twenty-five experienced professional Washington insiders who had the ability to influence Congress. They advised Eizenstat on proposals under development in the departments.

The Domestic Policy Staff also established policy objectives and then invited relevant agencies and departments to submit memoranda which would then be summarized in short memos to Carter. These memos contained yes/no boxes for Carter to check so he could relate which ideas he supported. The inclusion of the policy staff improved communication and increased the administration's cohesion. However, while they had more authority, Carter insisted on keeping them on a short leash--not granting them the authority necessary to do their job. The staff still did not have power to coordinate domestic policy over the cabinet.

The inability of the Domestic Policy Staff to work to its fullest capacity inhibited them from settling many disputes among agencies, departments, and staffers.³⁹ Eizenstat did have some success in mediating a conflict between the Energy Department and the Treasury Department. The Energy Department wanted a twenty percent tax credit instituted for those citizens who installed solar energy equipment to help heat their homes. Conversely, the Treasury Department wanted to limit the same tax credit to ten percent. Seemingly at an impasse, Eizenstadt forced a compromise by splitting the difference to a fifteen percent credit.⁴⁰ In reality, however, the secretaries still retained much of their influence over their departments and the proposals that emanated from them.

Several scholars have taken a second look at the Carter administration's insistence on pursuing a cabinet government. They conclude that he was naive about the effects of the decentralized/spokes-of-the-wheel organizational structure.⁴¹ For instance, when Carter called cabinet meetings, he would ask his secretaries about several different issues and expect all of them to be as informed as he was on the issues in question. Instead, the departments wanted to focus on area effecting their own interests. If an issue crossed departmental lines, as frequently occurred, all agencies in question wanted to have a say in the policy. Without a centralized staff to enforce decisions, the departments continued to pursue their own agendas. Frustrated by the difficulty of getting his executive house in order, Carter's weekly cabinet meetings became informational rather than decision-making sessions.⁴²

Carter's initial vision of cabinet government lasted only six months. Jordan slowly restricted access to the President, and Eizenstat increased the prominence of the executive staff. Major policy initiatives, like energy and welfare reform, were filtered through the "Georgia Mafia"--those Georgians whom Carter appointed as White House advisors upon taking office. After discussing the issues with his staffers, Carter would retreat to the oval office, alone, to make a decision. Some suggest that this isolation guaranteed failure: "He did not work 'with those who have spent their careers coming to know what can be done' or 'what the people will accept.'" ⁴³ Consequently, when he and his advisors did meet, they rarely disagreed with him since Carter discouraged forcing problems into the open for debate.⁴⁴

Carter was an extremely intelligent President, possibly the most intelligent one in the modern era. His acumen prompted him to expect others to know the issues thoroughly before speaking. This attitude intimidated staffers and quelled honest and open discussions about the issues. One White House aide recalled a time when Carter asked all those in a meeting what the administration should do concerning an issue. When this aide began speaking, Carter interrupted him and ridiculed his opinion.⁴⁵ Thus, Carter lacked the capability to force disagreements out into the open.

Even though several staffers and advisors in the White House wanted to discuss the mistakes they believed their President made, they did not speak up for fear of losing their position and Carter's respect. The advisors rarely disagreed in meetings or in other open atmospheres. Carter promoted this fear whether he knew it or not, and thus deprived himself of valuable information.⁴⁶ Carter once berated Secretary of State Cyrus Vance for disagreeing with the President's foreign policy objectives. An angry Carter "lit into Vance" and accused him of leaking embarrassing information about the administration to the press.⁴⁷ Carter further told Vance that "if this goes on, I will make my decisions only with Fritz [Mondale] and Zbig [Brzezinski] and simply not tell anybody else."⁴⁸ When Vance continued to oppose the President's Iranian foreign policy, he was excluded from the rescue mission of the American hostages.

Despite Carter's warning, Vance opposed the rescue mission because he believed it was "poorly conceived" and "difficult to execute."⁴⁹ When Vance decided to take his long planned vacation in Florida, Carter called a meeting of his top foreign policy advisors who favored the

rescue attempt. A stunned Vance became angry that the administration made such a monumental decision in his absence. Inevitably, Vance resigned because he believed that he had no latitude to do his job properly.

The White House Staff Begins to Speak Up

Since the atmosphere within the White House appeared hostile to dissent, advisors and staffers failed to discuss difficult questions. Carter's beliefs remained unchallenged, and he was unaware of his policy problems. No rigorous evaluation of policy existed--especially in the first year of the presidency. Jordan echoed his concern at lack of White House debate in a memo he wrote to Carter:

I have been concerned that you and all of us talk too much to one another and don't have the benefit of different points of view that challenge some of the basic premises on which our decisions are made. I think the real challenge is to assemble a small group of people that you trust and are comfortable with and have collective experience to provide you with advice on...issues.⁵⁰

Jordan suggested a more open dialogue and a request to centralize the executive by giving the staff more authority. Despite Jordan's urging, some suggest that Carter had faith only in himself and not the staff.⁵¹ But a collegial, or spokes-of-the-wheel, system that promotes a decentralized system, requires input from all offices and departments invited to the decision-making table.

Furthermore, collegial systems cannot organize policy analysis or encourage policy development without direction from the Oval Office. In many ways, the collegial system demands more time from the president because of the many staffers and aides who have direct access to him.

Because Carter was "down in the weeds...[and] did not have a global view of what he wanted" the White House personnel were beleaguered on two different levels. They could not argue against Carter substantively on the issues because his knowledge created the atmosphere that any staffer or cabinet member who spoke up looked ignorant.⁵² Additionally, both the staff and the cabinet did not know specifically how they should go about achieving all that Carter wanted.

This organizational and implementation dilemma serves as an example of the complexity and controversy within the White House. Paul C. Light, a presidential scholar, believes that the decision making process eventually spanned many offices and departments, and thus decisions took several weeks to complete.⁵³ The problem with having so many people involved in the decision process is that what may begin as a bold and clear initiative in the beginning becomes unrecognizable and hard to understand in the end, frustrating and alienating the staff.

The Assistant for Cabinet and Intergovernmental Affairs, Jack Watson, echoed these problems encountered in the early part of the administration:

In 1977, when we came in, there were simply too many initiatives of too high a level of controversy and complexity that he wanted to do all at once. Let's pass a national urban policy. Let's pass a national comprehensive national energy policy. Let's reorganize the executive branch of government, and so on...Those were things involving huge political capital expenditures, and we did too many things at once.⁵⁴

Frank Moore, the Assistant Congressional Liaison, wrote to the President: "The consequence of Cabinet Government is that the administration's programs lack coherence...too often departments pursue their own interests even if those interests conflict with stated

administration goals."⁵⁵ One White House aide expanded on Moore's statement by pinpointing the problem emanated in Carter's original cabinet structure:

All of our problems are aggravated by the so called 'cabinet government' efforts...But you can't run the government that way from 10 department locations. It is just too difficult to get government together. There are so many agencies involved in one issue. People don't understand that five agencies all going in different directions create chaos. There needed to be a coordinating place. There had to be a legislative package prepared by the administration...It took us most of the year to figure this out and to begin to iron it out.⁵⁶

James Fallows, Carter's chief speechwriter, echoed the aide's comment. He thought the administration wasted the first year in office while groping for answers and that an administrative coordinator would have helped. Without a coordinator, Fallows reasoned that there was no way of knowing how all the policies generated would relate to one another once presented to Congress and in what priority.⁵⁷

This disorganized approach to staff direction in general affected the legislative agenda of the administration. The president determines how the office runs, and how it is organized and operates.⁵⁸ The question that constantly arises within the White House 'is how to organize the executive office to ensure presidential priorities are carried out.'⁵⁹ Carter's rejection of hierarchy made it difficult to coordinate and enforce his goals. The inflow of briefing and reading material from various secretaries and staffers further took away from the President's time to coordinate or set priorities.

Carter tried to do more than many presidents, but with a less orderly hierarchical organization. Because he wanted to know everything generated from the administration right down to the finest detail, he

did not delegate responsibility. The spokes of the wheel system served to bog down the decision making process. The system overwhelmed the President and thus took away from the effectiveness at setting a clear agenda.⁶⁰

The breakdown in the way Carter managed his White House became most evident in his relationship with the Office of Congressional Relations. The problems with the White House organization would have detrimental effects on not only his relationship with the OCR, but also his relationship with Congress. These difficulties would have a detrimental effect on his energy bill. Before understanding the problems that Carter faced concerning the OCR, one needs to have knowledge of the formal structure and duties of the OCR.

Notes

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Chapter 4

THE OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS AND THE ENERGY PROPOSAL

Though its duties and responsibilities are wide and varied, the OCR provides a necessary link between the White House and Capitol Hill. Once the functions of the office are known, then a glimpse into how Carter did or did not effectively manage may be understood. Though the institution is a modern creation in the Executive Branch, much of the traditional functions of the office were formed during the 1950s.

Organization and Duties of the Office of Congressional Relations

President Dwight Eisenhower created the OCR, also called the Legislative Affairs Office, to facilitate relations with Congress. While subsequent presidents have organized the office differently, the OCR has four main objectives: (1) lobbying, (2) intelligence gathering, (3) representation, and (4) interdepartmental organization.¹ To make sure these are being carried out requires the constant attention of the OCR head. The central function of the liaison office lays with lobbying Congress to pass the president's initiatives. In a mutually supporting way, when liaisons lobby the Hill, they communicate with legislators and inevitably discover their concerns. Thus, intelligence gathering involves the liaison to gather information on the status of the president's initiatives. It also includes the liaisons to keep track of what congressional members are thinking. Representation combines what is learned in the prior objectives and the OCR relays information from the Hill to the president and vice-versa. In this sense the OCR

communicates both the legislator's concerns and White House concerns. Finally, the office should be organized in such a way that the liaisons knows what their duties are and what committee assignments must be attended on the Hill. However, the objectives involve more than just accomplishing these general responsibilities.

Under the lobbying category, the OCR should know which pieces of legislation the White House considers most important in order for the liaisons to prioritize the initiatives for Congress. Once the legislature knows what legislation the President deems most important, they can confront each program in relation to what the White House considers most important. Lobbying also includes responding to congressional requests for favors, thus fostering a better negotiating climate for consideration of the president's initiatives. For example, some members of Congress might ask the president to appoint one of their political supporters to an executive post. The OCR fields these requests and maintains communication between the legislator and the chief executive while the appointment process is underway. This kind of communication with Capitol Hill also contributes to the OCR's intelligence gathering responsibility.

Many requests come to the White House via the mail. The Legislative Affairs Office acknowledges receipt of the mail. The letters are also catalogued for the president. Finally, with the president's direction, the OCR prepares a response stating the president's position. The OCR receives and answers mail coming from Capitol Hill addressed to most executive offices. It answers the mail in coordination with the department or staff office to which the letter was directed.

In conjunction with gathering information through the mail, the OCR also conducts head counts for the president on measures, and assesses the probability of passage of these measures coming up for a vote. The head counts assist the OCR in deciphering what developments on Capitol Hill might disturb the president's agenda. For example, when a representative's constituency does not like the president's programs, the legislator will most likely not support the White House proposal. As long as the OCR maintains contact with the Hill, the White House will be able to find out what legislators will and will not vote for. This information enables the chief executive to bargain with congressional members and thus produce a bill that the majority of both houses will accept.

Representation brings together both lobbying and information gathering responsibilities. The OCR must not only relate the president's wishes to Congress, but also express congressional views to the chief executive. It is only through this relationship that both branches may engage in a bargaining relationship. To represent the president and congress member effectively requires interdepartmental organization.

Interdepartmental organization requires the OCR to oversee individual liaison members to make sure they are performing their duties: properly representing the president, attending committee meetings, relaying all the information certain legislators are feeling. The fulfillment of these responsibilities requires liaisons to spend much of their time on the Hill.

The OCR is usually divided into Senate and House groups. Within each group, individual staffers are assigned to specific committees

where they follow the president's initiatives and communicate with legislators. This organization helps the office track certain proposals emanating from the White House. Staffers find themselves rotated between committees so as not to wear out their welcome with one congressman. Former presidential aide Richard Patterson explains that the rotation of liaisons occur so the politician does not: "look up and exclaim 'Oh, it's you again!'"² This rotation keep a legislator from becoming annoyed at a particular persistent liaison. Once a congressional member becomes wearied by a certain staffer, that liaison's effectiveness in lobbying and gathering information declines. If the OCR has its liaison team effectively organized, rotating liaisons also demonstrates the administration's competence.

The advancement of the president's agenda is the first priority of the OCR.³ Beginning at 7:00 in the morning the liaisons report for several rounds of staff meetings. Afterward they head to Capitol Hill to lobby congressional members and sit in on committee hearings. Other staffers back at the White House many attend cabinet meetings or other executive sessions. Their presence is especially valuable for the administration because they will likely know what proposals will and will not get through Congress. Since the liaisons have more contact with Capitol Hill than most staffers, they know what politicians will accept and what initiatives will face opposition.

The OCR does not have an office on the Hill, but the individual staffers usually use the vice-president's Senate office as a coordinating center while the House group utilizes the various rooms delegated to congressional leaders as office space.⁴ There are also several places inside the Capitol building that are restricted. The

House and Senate floors, as well as the cloakrooms, are off limits to liaisons as well as lobbyists. However, the space granted to the White House staffers by Capitol Hill serves as needed coordinating centers especially when crucial measures come up on the legislative agenda.

The liaisons conduct head counts on these crucial votes "since the presidential party leaders don't know the opposition's head count and the opposition leaders won't share it."⁵ These numbers of those who support the executive are relayed back to the president so he can make any last minute calls to shore up votes. If the staff identifies an undecided member, the liaison tries to get past the politician's staff and talk to him/her directly.

One Republican White House staffer describes the last-minute lobbying just before the members go in to vote on legislation:

I would station myself by the door which the Democrats used. There might be ten to fifteen people lined up on each side of the entryway--mostly union lobbyists. The congressman might have a last question before going in, or I could remind the member that I had come to his or her office beforehand. Maybe I could convince them to hold their votes until the very end. At the very least, my standing there was a signal to them that I was watching the members, that I cared enough to stand out there and be there. I would go around later and say a personal thank you for a vote, or remind them that they had promised me but had backed down. If they had not shown up, I could ask, "Where were you?" But standing in that throng was an intimidating experience [for the legislator]....⁶

This statement demonstrates the positive influence the OCR liaison team may have in lobbying legislators to vote for the President's proposals if not in the short term, the long term. The OCR's presence at least lets members of Congress know that the White House is concerned about its legislative program.

As both houses conclude their business for the day, the liaison's job does not end. The Congressional Relations Office is located in the East Wing of the White House. It is here that the lobbyists prepare briefings and bios of members coming to see the president in the near future, writing up one-pagers for the presidential phone calls, or inquiring in the agencies about the status of an issue or project.⁷

The OCR must also demonstrate to Capitol Hill that their message receives the full support of the chief executive. To help the OCR accomplish its responsibilities, the staff needs to confirm that they speak on behalf of the president. For instance, Eisenhower would direct one of his staffers, General Parsons, to bring congressional members to the Oval Office. These meetings with the President bolstered Parsons's credibility on Capitol Hill because Eisenhower would repeat and confirm the messages Parsons relayed to Congress. After these meetings the legislator would go back to the Hill and say: "I talked with the president."⁸ This process confirmed to the legislators that when Parsons spoke with them, he did so with the President's full support. In essence, bringing the congressional member to the Oval Office confirmed Parson's believability to many on the Hill.

To make sure the tactic used by Eisenhower works effectively, the congressional liaison head must have access to the president so he can tell a Senator or Representative that he has spoken with the president about the issue. This communication may occur in face-to-face meetings and/or through memoranda. For example, Frank Moore, the head of the OCR under Carter, would compile a legislative report for President Carter who would in turn mark up the report and send it back to Moore with the

following comments: "'Make it clear I will veto'; 'Don't push it'; or 'Move on him, I can help.'"⁹

In a similar way, before Reagan called on a congressional member, his staff would prepare "talking points" enclosed in a folder.¹⁰ While speaking, Reagan would scratch notes in the margin's of the memo: "Send the Senator more information;" Follow up on point 3."¹¹ These instructions were sent to the legislative liaison's office where the staffers would act on the president's instructions. In these ways the congressional liaisons for both Reagan and Carter found it much easier to advance the president's legislative programs.¹²

Communication between the chief liaison and the president fosters coherency in White House legislative planning. The president instructs the OCR when to compromise and when to stand firm on issues. The staffer will also know specifically when to pressure the congressional member who might want favors from the White House. For example, a staffer might pressure a legislator to extract a vote favorable for the president: "If you can't help the president on this vote, that's going to make it awfully hard for the president to help you on that appointment" for your friend or political supporter.¹³ Once the president has let the OCR know what should be accomplished and how, the bargaining process functions more smoothly. Ultimately lobbying Congress resembles a two-way street between the president and his staffers and members of Congress--communication decreases misunderstandings between the two branches.

The ability to bargain with congressional members is an arduous process. One of President Kennedy's staffers, Larry O'Brien, noted what was entailed in the bargaining with Congress:

It becomes a way of life in which you are engaged in human relations and constantly working out compromises. You listen to and solicit support from everybody on the Hill. You cajole, urge and plead. There's always the hot breath of opposition; don't resent it, understand it. You have to appreciate that at times there are those, even among your friends, who can't go along with you, that there is a line that they can't cross. Just remember, there is always tomorrow.¹⁴

One can see in O'Brien's statement the frustrating nature of trying to get others to agree with the White House. One Reagan White House aide commented that inevitable disagreements do not necessarily damage the future bargaining atmosphere:

We may never agree on an issue, but legislative affairs people always discuss, even with their opponents, why the disagreement is there, get their views, and they realize that while they don't agree on a given question they may agree on the next issue coming up.¹⁵

The examples portrayed by O'Brien and the Reagan White House illustrate how the OCR fulfills its responsibilities with the president's guidance. With direction, the White House moves one step closer to realizing its goals.

The OCR was developed as a tool for the White House to build congressional coalitions for its programs. Given the growing independence of the members of the legislature and the increased White House participation in initiating legislation, the OCR provides the necessary bridge between the two branches. Seen in this light, the OCR requires White House coordination so that the staff office knows how to best serve the president in his efforts to pass his agenda. Above all, the president must inform the OCR on which legislation the White House deems most important and instruct them to lobby Congress accordingly.¹⁶ Yet this complicated process concerning the organization of the White

House and management of the OCR is a recent phenomenon. Still, the growth of the government demonstrates the necessity of staffers in order to help the president accomplish his job. Yet lobbying Congress became more difficult after 1973.

Like the Carter administration, Congress reacted to the effects of Watergate. While Congress has always tended to mistrust presidential leadership, the Watergate scandal exacerbated their suspicion.¹⁷ After Nixon's resignation, a whole new class of independent minded politicians took their seats in Congress. Though many of the newcomers were Democrats, they raised their own money, ran their own campaigns, and thus had little loyalty to the Democratic Party.¹⁸ Part of Carter's problem with Capitol Hill over his legislative proposals originated from this increased assertiveness of congressional members.¹⁹

The more independent legislators are, the less deferential they are to presidential leadership. The autonomous legislator tends to become more attentive to constituency needs and demands. One Nixon administration aide remarked that "Congress certainly isn't going to be...sympathetic" to the president's agenda because they have their own constituents to think about and their own political agendas which differ from the president's goals.²⁰ As a result, the ability of the chief executive to build legislative coalitions becomes more difficult because congressional members are more responsive to their constituents than to him. The new political class heightened legislative difficulties and tensions between legislators and the President. This reality only enhanced the importance of maintaining good relations. But Carter did not appreciate the importance of the legislative branch in general.

Thus, his problems with Congress did not solely originate from Watergate and congressional mistrust.

As Governor of Georgia, Carter developed a negative impression of the state's legislators. During one presidential campaign stop on a farm in South Dakota, a reporter asked whether the cows reminded him of Georgia's legislators. Carter replied, "No, they're [the cows] more intelligent."²¹ He appeared to hold much of this same disdain for the United States Congress. He believed that Congress could not assist in formulating his programs because doing so would violate the public trust.²² He saw the presidential office as above the influences of special interests that plagued congressional politics. The President thus frequently attempted to bypass Congress by appealing directly to the public for support. Nevertheless, while the people elect the president, Congress is the only body that can pass the chief executive's initiatives into law. The executive must communicate with, and respect, the legislative branch in order to build coalitions. In many respects getting a bill through Congress is difficult. As President John F. Kennedy explained:

It is very easy to defeat a bill in the Congress. It is much more difficult to pass one. To go through a subcommittee...and get a majority vote, the full committee and get a majority vote, go to the Rules committee and get a rule, go to the floor of the House and get a majority, start all over again in the Senate, subcommittee and full committee, and in the Senate there is unlimited debate, so you can never bring a matter to a vote if there is enough determination on the part of the opponents, even if they are a minority, to go through the Senate with the bill. And then unanimously get a conference between the House and Senate to adjust the bill, or if one member objects, to have it go back through the Rules Committee, back through Congress, and have this done on a controversial piece of legislation where powerful groups are opposing it, that is an extremely difficult task.²³

Congress must be courted into partnership.²⁴ The president, along with the Office of Congressional Relations, provides the means for overcoming the divisions that exist between the executive and legislative branches. Working with legislators entails a "social exchange" between the chief executive and members of Congress.²⁵ Both institutions request support for the various programs advanced by each branch. Former Secretary of Defense, Clark Clifford, observed the essential nature of this exchange in an interview with Bill Moyers:

Clifford: ...if a president fulfills his obligation, then he must have a program. And if he has a program, then he must try to get the Congress to pass the program. And in doing that, there occurs one of the most skillful areas...So you've got a program. You want to get it through. You have an energy program. You have a civil rights program. You have a human rights programs. A president has to have a program. He absolutely flounders if he doesn't know politics.

Moyers: Which is trading, which is compromise....which is persuading.

Clifford: Sure. Which is saying, 'I have certain things that you want. But you have certain things that I want. And I will work out arrangements with you in which you will get some of what you want if you will give me some of what I want.' And it goes very nicely. And what you do, too, is you invite congressmen to the White House for dinner...And after a while you can call [the congressman] in. And [the president] says, 'Does that law partner of yours still want to be a federal judge?' 'Oh,' he says, 'he certainly does.' 'Well,' he says, 'you know I've been thinking about that lately and we're going to talk about that. But in the process of talking about that, I want to talk with you about the fact that I think we've got to increase our Social Security program.' 'Well, Mr. President, I've spoken against that.' 'Well, I know Joe. But times have changed. And you think about it awhile, you see. Let a week go by, you call me.' Joe calls him in a week and says, 'Mr. President I've been thinking about that and I think there's a lot of merit to your position. And I believe I can change on the Social Security. I want to come over and talk to you. And, incidentally, I talked to my partner, and he is just tickled to death.' Now people say, 'Well, that's politics.' That's the way the country runs. That's the

way business runs...That's the way our government runs.
[It] is that you're constantly trading back and forth to
get your program.²⁶

The president cannot be the sole player in the exchange process with Capitol Hill. With 535 members of Congress, the chief executive cannot possibly deal with all the representatives. Therefore, the Office of Congressional Relations assists the president in communicating with Congress.

Carter and his Relationship with the OCR

President Carter had a very distant relationship with his Office of Congressional Relations. Carter was an introvert and tended to withdraw from most people in the administration.²⁷ Because he tended to isolate himself from staff members, he did not communicate with them extensively. Barbara Kellerman states that a president's lobbying team is a reflection of the man: If a president is withdrawn, so too will his staff become withdrawn.²⁸ It is difficult for a liaison team to lobby for programs, though, if the staffers are withdrawn from the very people they need to lobby.

Since Carter was an introvert, he not only refused to play the political game, but also failed to make sure others played the game for him and bargained on behalf of him.²⁹ The lack of communication between the President and his liaisons became evident soon after the election.

Once elected, a president's staff receives a flood of requests from Congress to have their political supporters appointed to governmental positions. The nomination of congressional supporters warms the negotiating atmosphere between Capitol Hill and the White House by

fostering goodwill on the part of the Congress member. Fulfilling some of the representative's wishes opens the door for the administration to capitalize on the good relationship with legislators by asking, in the future, for support of legislative proposals. Capturing early support from the legislature requires the OCR to hit the ground running by being prepared to handle the influx of requests. The congressional liaison office must field the flood of calls and correspondence, and establish communication with Congress. But the OCR's head liaison, Frank Moore, without having much contact with the President, did not have a clear idea of what to expect after the election.

In the administration's first week of office, Moore received hundreds of calls and over 1,100 letters.³⁰ Moore found himself immediately behind in the requests for favors and members of Congress. These members of Congress frowned on Carter's lack of responsiveness to these requests and thus viewed the incoming administration with suspicion that it would be combative with the Hill. When Moore failed to return the calls and correspondences of several legislators, they believed Carter intended to treat the Congress hostilely.³¹ For example, Oversight Committee Chairman, Representative John E. Moss, who had a reputation as an outspoken foe of government corruption but who supported open government processes, tried to call several staff offices and did not receive any return calls. Moss hoped the staff just got behind the avalanche of requests. But after a lengthy period of time without a return call, he believed Carter's staff was employing stonewalling tactics like Nixon employed in order to thwart the legislature's will.³² During the Nixon administration, chief of staff H.R. Haldeman came under fire for erecting a "Berlin Wall" around the

president.³³ In a similar way Carter's distant relationship with the OCR fostered ill will between the OCR and Congress because the Hill saw the President as erecting another "Berlin Wall." Because of Carter's continued reticence, his staff did not know how to consult and bargain with congressional members. This negative perception of the OCR on Capitol Hill eventually spilled over to affect their opinion of other White House staffers.

Carter was in office for only one week when House Speaker Thomas "Tip" O'Neill complained that the White House failed to consult adequately with Congress.³⁴ The problems with the Speaker began when the White House staff denied O'Neill inaugural tickets with favorable seating customarily provided for congressional leaders. The administration fueled the controversy by replying publicly that O'Neill received his tickets but wanted more. Hamilton Jordan stated that if O'Neill did not like his tickets he should exchange them for a refund. Insulted, the Speaker began referring to Carter's assistant as "Hannibal Jerkin."³⁵ O'Neill responded: "if you're going to do petty little things like this you have no respect for me as a Speaker or as an individual...the problem with the people around Carter is that they spend so much of their time running against Washington they don't know they are now part of Washington."³⁶ Tony Lake, a staffer in the State Department under Cyrus Vance, explained the administration's error: "Washington hates it when presidents don't treat it with the respect it believes it deserves."³⁷

In addition to the negative perceptions of staff, Carter personally angered the Speaker. In their first meeting, Carter did not give the impression that he would work with the legislature. For example, the

President stated that, when pressed, he would go over the heads of legislators and appeal to the public directly instead of cutting a deal with congressional leaders. The Speaker replied that if he followed through on his threat, it would only further alienate legislators.³⁸

Carter also angered O'Neill by appointing two Republicans from Massachusetts. He named Eliot Richardson as Ambassador-at-Large, and Edith J. Dobbins as Chief of Protocol at the State Department.³⁹

O'Neill responded that "as a Democrat, I'm upset that the first two appointments from Massachusetts are Republicans."⁴⁰ The Speaker quipped, "we won the election, but you'd never know it."⁴¹

Carter's unwillingness to communicate with the OCR, combined with his attitude towards Congress, created a tenuous atmosphere which made it more difficult for the White House to get legislation passed by Congress. Many of the problems Carter and his liaison team experienced with the Hill upon taking office surfaced with the presentation of his energy initiative.

Carter and the Energy Bill

When Carter entered office in 1977, the nation was faced with an energy crisis. The United States could not meet the domestic demand for oil on its own. To meet the need for oil, the United States had to import one-third of its oil from the Arab countries. In 1973 the nation imported six million gallons of oil--roughly half of all the oil the citizenry consumed.⁴² By 1974, the energy needs deepened resulting from the Arab oil embargo and the formation of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). After his election, Carter stated that he

would have an energy plan ready to present to Congress within ninety days of the inauguration to deal with the crisis.⁴³

The President asked James Schlesinger, a Republican economist and former Nixon and Ford cabinet member, to work on a comprehensive energy program. Schlesinger balked at the limited amount of time allowed to put together a program, but, as one aide commented, the President thought that people worked better when operating against a tight deadline.⁴⁴ However, Schlesinger lamented that he could not develop a detailed plan and get Congress and other interest groups on board to support the plan within the ninety days. Nevertheless, Carter maintained the deadline. After making the initial public announcement, however, he removed the issue from public debate by falling almost silent on its development. His discussions about the bill were limited to vague references and sketchy details. Not only did his staff not know what the proposal included, but he also refused to include legislators in the policy formation of the bill.⁴⁵ Carter reasoned that the secrecy would decrease the amount of time to put together a proposal by avoiding an "inside the beltway" uproar that would inevitably come when the administration released the plan.⁴⁶

On February 2, 1977, Carter went on national television and asked the American people to conserve energy. On February 22, he told a bipartisan group of congressional leaders that he had almost completed the outline of the energy program and would reveal the contents in a major speech to Congress in mid-April. While he said that he needed congressional help in passing the bill, he refused to let them know what they might vote on. After the meeting, several members of Congress criticized the President publicly for keeping the plan secret. Even

White House staffers were kept in the dark about the plan. Carter ordered Schlesinger to "refrain from contact with other parts of the government--both Capitol Hill and the executive branch."⁴⁷ One staffer lamented that only Schlesinger and some White House staff knew what the plan looked like.⁴⁸ Many legislators beseeched the President for inclusion in the policy process. A frustrated Robert Byrd, the Senate Majority Leader, asked Carter on April 5 whether he consulted any legislators in developing the energy bill.⁴⁹ Offended, Byrd did not see the bill surviving the Senate. Still, the plan arrived on time to Congress.

On April 18, 1977, Carter went on national television to give an "unpleasant talk" and present the plan to the public.⁵⁰ He described the energy situation as one that required public sacrifice: higher prices and higher taxes were necessary to bring about an end to unlimited energy consumption. He stated:

We do have a choice about how we will spend the next few years. Each American uses the energy equivalent of 60 barrels of oil per person each year. Ours is the most wasteful nation on earth. We waste more energy than we import...

I am sure each of you will find something you don't like about the specifics of our proposal. It will demand that we make sacrifices and changes in every life. To some degree it will be painful...It will lead to some higher costs, and to some greater inconvenience for everyone.⁵¹

He said that the plan would test the character of the American people and that the difficult effort resembled the "moral equivalent of war."⁵²

On April 20 he addressed a joint session of Congress in an apparent attempt to underscore the seriousness of the crisis, but he did not speak as apocalyptically as he did on the 18th. Instead, he emphasized

that the initiative would protect jobs and the environment. The contrasting messages confused Congress in light of the television address two nights earlier. Some questioned the administration's competence because of the switch in focus.⁵³ Even though the bill included tax credits for those who insulated their homes and provided incentives for development of alternative fuels to reduce domestic dependence on foreign oil, other legislators became concerned over the proposal's tax increases on natural gas, owners of older cars or gas guzzlers, and domestic oil.

Given its size, the bill traversed several congressional committee jurisdictions. Carter was surprised to learn that the energy proposal might be considered by as many as seventeen committees and sub-committees in the House of Representatives alone.⁵⁴

Senator Byrd warned the President that the Senate would have to halt all other work to handle the energy package. Undaunted, Carter insisted that the Congress consider the entire proposal and added that he would not accept anything less. When one reporter queried, in response to Carter's intentions, that legislative success required a long and hard battle with Capitol Hill, Carter interrupted "it's one I don't intend to lose."⁵⁵

The President's resolve to propose the bill in its entirety did not bode well for the administration. His attitude solidified the perception inside the beltway that he did not intend to work with the legislators. By keeping the proposal secret he neglected congressional input. By not providing his own staff with information on the bill, the OCR could not garner support to advance the legislation on the Hill. Aside from Schlesinger's continual lobbying efforts and testifying

before various committees, few staffers worked on behalf of the proposal.⁵⁶ Therefore, upon entering the House, the energy package did not have much support. Complicating the chances for success, the administration's lobbying efforts dwindled because Carter believed the Congress would act on the proposal favorably. Therefore, the energy package left the Oval Office without the White House to guide it through the legislature.

Speaker Tip O'Neill took it upon himself to assist Carter by appointing an ad hoc committee to facilitate the administration's desire for consideration of the energy package as one complete bill. At one point Carter called O'Neill to ask whether he should go on television to denounce some congressmen whose committees he believed gutted the bill.⁵⁷ Carter was "perplexed and frustrated by the complexity of the legislative process and the Democrats lack of loyalty to his leadership."⁵⁸ He believed that the House of Representatives wanted to compete, not cooperate, with the White House. The Speaker convinced the President, however, that the bill would turn out virtually identical to the one the administration proposed. O'Neill's leadership and skill at building coalitions kept the bill moving through the House with minor conflicts. At the Speaker's urging, Carter dispatched four lobbyists to the House. Carter even made personal phone calls, and wrote letters to House members to support the package. Four days later, on August 5, the House passed the proposal. Many credited the Speaker's guidance and leadership for its passage.⁵⁹ But Carter did not learn from O'Neill's legislative persuasion when the bill moved to the Senate.

In the Senate, the administration reverted back to silence on the issue and did not appoint lobbyists to see the package through.

Further, complicating the legislative process, Senator Russell Long (D-Louisiana), the powerful Finance Committee Chairman, opposed the tax increases in the bill. Even though Long, who represented one of the largest oil and gas producing states, feared that the energy package would harm his state's economy, the White House did not make an attempt to cut a deal with him. He announced his plan to modify significantly the plan's increased taxation of industry. Even more disheartening for the administration, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources committees wanted to review the bill as well. The more committees that requested to review the bill, the more opposition the bill would likely face.

In October 1977, the situation worsened when Senate liberals invoked the first filibuster in thirteen years to stave off deregulation of gas prices proposed by Senator Long. But even though White House supporters of the initiative started the filibuster, the administration moved to quash the stalling tactic. Carter wanted to get the bill through Congress as quickly as possible. In a telephone conversation with Senator Dale Bumpers, the President struck a deal to let the liberals back out of the legislative maneuver gracefully.⁶⁰ Since the filibuster was started by supporters of the administration's version, not to allow them to quit the filibuster on their own volition would be embarrassing. However, Senator Byrd and Vice-President Walter Mondale moved to kill the filibuster without warning the Senate liberals. Administration supporters believed that Carter betrayed them. Those who planned to end the debate as per Carter's agreement with Bumpers became angry at the President's double-cross to force an end to the filibuster without warning. For example, an enraged Senator James Abourezk from South Dakota called the president a "liar."⁶¹ The New Republic wrote

that Mondale's "dismantling of the filibuster conducted by allies of the administration...assured that nothing resembling a Carter energy bill [would]...emerge from [the Senate]." ⁶² Even though Carter addressed the nation again claiming that that the energy legislation did not represent a contest of strength between him and Congress, the filibuster debacle assured that nothing close to Carter's original proposal would come out of the Senate. ⁶³

After the end of the filibuster in the Senate, Carter sensed the proposal's opposition mounting. To speed passage of the bill, Carter instructed his staff and cabinet secretaries to lobby for the bill. Carter also took a more active role in the lobbying effort in hopes of counteracting the damage caused by ending the filibuster. ⁶⁴

On October 31, the Senate passed the initiative fifty-two to thirty-five. However, the Senate bill did not resemble the House version, much less Carter's original proposal. Further, the chances of getting a bill Carter could sign seemed minute because the House-Senate conference committee members were split on many points in the proposal. In response, the President canceled a trip overseas for fear that the compromise energy package would fail in his absence. Canceling the foreign visits three weeks before his scheduled departure embarrassed the administration because of the short notice, but the President wanted to make sure he would have a bill he could comfortably sign before the new year. ⁶⁵

Carter again encouraged Schlesinger to lobby on behalf of the bill. In a November 21 press conference, the Energy Secretary stated that Carter might make significant concessions to get the comprehensive package through Congress. The White House tried to distance themselves

from Schlesinger's comment. Jody Powell replied that "anyone who believes the President will sign a bad bill is seriously mistaken...no bill may be better than a bad bill."⁶⁶ Carter added that he was in "no mood to compromise."⁶⁷ These contradictory statements reinforced the conclusion that the President was isolated and did not communicate with his staff. The conflicting statements projected an image of a White House in disarray. Conceding that passage of the plan remote, Carter left for his foreign tour on December 29, 1977. But the President vowed to try again when he returned. Reflecting on this time period, Carter wrote that the energy debacle "was one of my few major disappointments of the year, but it was serious, because everyone realized the bills were our most important legislation."⁶⁸

Because of its importance, the administration went to work again on the proposal. January 1978 began on an upbeat note. Carter began to reach out and bargain with the members of Congress and more actively recruited public support. However, despite the early optimism, enthusiasm for the bill dwindled.⁶⁹ Instead of the expected energy shortages, surpluses surfaced in early 1978.

In late summer the same year, the Carter compromised on the natural gas portion of the energy package: prices would increase by fifteen percent and would be allowed to climb in price each year until 1985. Carter also began to engage in the bargaining process with the Hill in other ways. For the next month-and-a-half the administration coordinated its activities regarding the bill. Every morning, the White House lobbying teams met in Moore's East Wing office to plot the day's strategy.⁷⁰ Since the energy crisis seemed over, the administration no longer tried to sell its program as the "moral equivalent of war."

Instead the White House adopted the stance that passage of the energy bill would halt the recent slide of the dollar and inflation. The White House also insisted that getting the whole package out of conference would signal to other nations that the United States could put its own house in order. Carter announced that "the entire world is looking at our government to see whether we have the national will to deal with this difficult challenge. If this legislation is not enacted, it will have a devastating effect on our national image, the value of the dollar, our balance of trade, and inflation."⁷¹

Eventually, Carter signed the five-part compromise legislation passed on October 15, 1978--one year, six months, and nineteen days after sending it to Capitol Hill. The energy battle with Congress ended up as one of the longest legislative conflicts in recent times.⁷² Even though he signed the initiative, the bill emerged from conference without many points that Carter wanted.

Carter's experience with the energy proposal prompted several criticisms of his administration. Many perceived the White House in disarray. In response to these criticisms, Carter reexamined his organizational style. After signing into law the energy bill, Carter moved to reorganize his White House.

The President broadened the responsibilities of his personal advisor, Hamilton Jordan. Jordan coordinated the activities of the White House staff, thus freeing Carter to focus on more important matters. By April of 1978 the White House severely curtailed the Cabinet's authority to appoint their own subordinates. All department policies and speeches had to go through Jordan's and/or Stuart

Eizenstat's office for approval. Carter also began directing people, who previously had unlimited access to him, to Jordan or Eizenstat.⁷³

Despite the improvements in the administration, countless criticisms still emanated from within the administration. These critiques convinced Carter that he needed to further reorganize. The White House therefore began to include Congress in the formation of its policy initiatives. However, the internal workings of the executive were still tumultuous.

The constant bickering between cabinet members and White House staffers intensified as the energy bill came out of conference in 1978. Several cabinet secretaries stepped up their criticisms of the White House and made statements contrary to White House policy. The Secretary of Agriculture announced higher price supports for grain than the White House determined necessary. The Secretary of the Treasury said there would be no tax reforms yet the administration was putting together reform packages.⁷⁴ The disjunction between the administration and cabinet thus exacerbated the disarray in the executive and alienated and confused the Congress. In an attempt to get the cabinet and staff working together, several meetings were arranged.

In a meeting between staffers and department secretaries, Jack Watson, the Assistant for Cabinet and Intergovernmental Affairs, exclaimed that "the erosion of our loyalty to each other is eroding our loyalty to the president."⁷⁵ The Secretary of the Treasury, Ted Blumenthal, disagreed, claiming that there was a big difference between arguing for a point and disloyalty, Carter hardly listened. Carter stated that he was bothered by the lack of "team spirit" and cohesion. Eventually, the President announced that he wanted to review many of his

appointments and fire those who were no longer reliable. Jordan then distributed to the cabinet secretaries and staff heads some "tough forms" for them to complete.⁷⁶ They contained thirty questions for staff heads or cabinet secretaries to evaluate their subordinates.⁷⁷ Jordan stated, with Carter's approval, that he wanted each one to evaluate their subordinates and "get rid of those who are incompetent."⁷⁸ When United Nations Ambassador, Andrew Young, questioned the way Jordan dealt with the issue, Carter questioned Young's loyalty, thus killing any meaningful comment for the rest of the meeting.

The July Massacre

Disappointed with the length of time taken to get the compromise energy bill out of Congress, and concerned with the perception of an ineffective administration, Carter went to Camp David to discuss with several friends and advisors the effectiveness of his term. Since he told everyone why he was going to Camp David, rumors ran rampant back in Washington as several staffers wondered who might be fired. This only exacerbated the already disorganized atmosphere in the White House. While at Camp David, many of Carter's advisors told him that he delegated too much authority to the cabinet and that he seemed bogged down in the details of the administration.⁷⁹ Carter decided to restaff and reorganize the White House.

On July 15, 1979, Carter delivered a televised speech to the nation. He stated that he had failed to lead the nation properly and as a result the country was in the midst of a "crisis of confidence," but that he would restore the public's confidence in government and his

administration.⁸⁰ Two days later, Carter demanded pro-forma resignations from all cabinet secretaries and senior staffers. Despite warnings from some inside the White House that the move would seem too much like Nixon's demand for resignations in 1972, Carter went ahead with the plan. He told them that he would evaluate whose resignations to accept. The President eventually "accepted" the resignation of so many staffers and secretaries that it resulted in the largest turnover in the executive since 1841.⁸¹ He fired half his cabinet. The White House turnover became known as the "July Massacre."⁸² Carter and Jordan believed that the bold changes in the administration would buttress the President's image both in the eyes of the public and Congress. However, instead of building Carter's reputation with the Hill, it worked in reverse. House Majority Leader, James Wright (D-Tex), said the resignations demonstrated the administration's instability.⁸³

On July 17, the President also announced that Hamilton Jordan would formerly become Chief of Staff. Jordan suggested to Carter a new organizational plan. Jordan called for better cooperation between the White House and cabinet and better staff coordination.⁸⁴ This centralization signaled White House determination to keep the departments and the Oval Office focused on the same goals. Jordan's plan signaled the rejection of cabinet government, and ended unlimited access to the President. Jordan coordinated policy, included staff in the lobbying process, settled disputes, and read and summarized staff memorandum. However, it was the firing of some of the most experienced Washington politicians reinforced the perception espoused by Wright.

Joseph Califano and Michael Blumenthal were among the first who were fired. Jordan elevated the controversy over the changes when he said on the *MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour* about Califano's firing that "you don't see me crying" and added, "it's not a question of loyalty--it's a question of competence."⁸⁵ Ralph Nader responded that letting Califano go "was like firing Mickey Mantle because he couldn't get along with the bat boy."⁸⁶ But Carter reinforced the perception of disarray by stating in response to Jordan's interview that Califano had done an outstanding job for the administration.

The controversy over the firings prompted other appointees to criticize the administration. In an obvious critique of Jordan's new organizational authority, Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams stated his "reservations about the responsiveness of those with enhanced authority at the White House to the Congress, and the American people."⁸⁷ When Jordan heard of Brock's comment, the Treasury Secretary was fired. The same day James Schlesinger, the one largely responsible for putting together the energy package, received word the President had "accepted" his resignation. These high profile "resignations" caused the media to question Carter's stability as president. In the final analysis, the staff criticisms, and ultimately the firings, resulted from Carter's organizational approach.

Notes

¹Lester G. Seligman and Cary R. Covington, The Coalitional Presidency (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989), 86.

²Richard H. Patterson, The Ring of Power (N.Y.: Basic Books, Inc., 1988), 154.

³Ibid., 155.

⁴The reasons for there being no office delegated to the liaison team in part has to do with the historical reality of the United States. The founders did not trust the executive branch in general. Since the King of England frequently sought to interfere with the Parliament, the founders wanted to prevent such an occurrence from happening in the newly formed Republic. The use of the vice-president's office on the Senate side because he is rarely there--the only time a vice-president is needed is to break a tie vote. Anti-Federalists like George Mason of Virginia did not like the vice-president's position in respect to the Senate. Because of his limited role, however, most thought his presence would not be a threat. Nevertheless, the suspicion still exists.

⁵Patterson, 156.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., 157.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Patterson, 153.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Martin Tolchin, "Carter's Congress Lobbyist Battles Problems of Office." New York Times, 24 February 1977, sec. 2, p. 4.

¹³Ibid., 160.

¹⁴Ibid., 164.

¹⁵Ibid., 151.

¹⁶James P. Pfiffner, The Strategic Presidency: Hitting the Ground Running (N.Y.: Dorsey Press, 1988), 139.

¹⁷For an account of the trepidation many had regarding presidential power see Lester G. Seligman and Cary R. Covington, The Coalitional Presidency, (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989), 72-73. For an account of the mistrust after the Watergate scandal see Seligman, 82.

¹⁸Garland A. Haas, Jimmy Carter and the Politics of Frustration (Jefferson, North Carolina: MacFarland and Co., 1992), 64.

¹⁹Roger H. Davidson, ed., The Postreform Congress (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 213.

²⁰John H. Kessel, The Domestic Presidency: Decision-Making in the White House (North Scituate, Mass.: Duxbury Press, 1975).

²¹Glenn M. Abernathy, et al., The Carter Years (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 179.

²²Charles O. Jones, The Trusteeship Presidency: Jimmy Carter and the United States Congress, (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 81.

²³Thomas E. Cronin, The State of the Presidency, 2d ed., (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1980), 169.

²⁴Nigel Bowles, The White House and Capitol Hill: The Politics of Presidential Persuasion (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 3.

²⁵Barbara Kellerman, The Political Presidency: Practice of Leadership from Kennedy Through Reagan (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1984), 18.

²⁶This exchange may be found in *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁷James G. Benze Jr., Presidential Power and Management Techniques (N.Y.: Greenwood Press, 1987), 59.

²⁸Kellerman, 217.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 216.

³⁰James P. Pfiffner, The Strategic Presidency: Hitting the Ground Running (N.Y.: Dorsey Press, 1988), 139-140.

³¹Charles O. Jones, The Trusteeship Presidency: Jimmy Carter and the United States Congress (Baton Rouge Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 102-103.

³²Clark R. Mollenhoff, The President Who Failed: Carter Out of Control (N.Y.: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1980), 25-26.

³³John P. Burke, The Institutional Presidency (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 41-42.

³⁴Carl Brauer, Presidential Transitions: Eisenhower through Reagan (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1986), 201.

³⁵Dennis Farney, "Tough Transition," Wall Street Journal, 30 August 1977, p. 23.

³⁶William F. Mullen, "Perceptions of Carter's Legislative Successes and Failures: Views from the Hill and the Liaison Staff." Presidential Studies Quarterly (Fall 1992): 201; and Kellerman, 189.

³⁷Kenneth W. Thompson ed., The Carter Presidency: Fourteen Intimate Perspectives of Jimmy Carter (N.Y.: University Press of America, 1990), . 147.

³⁸Abernathy, et al., 183.

³⁹Hoxie, 391.

⁴⁰Maurice Carroll, "Carter Appointment of Two Republicans Upsetting O'Neill." New York Times, 28 January 1977, sec. 1, p. 12. On this issue Joseph Califano wrote that the administration's arrogance greatly offended O'Neill. See Joseph Califano, Governing America (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 405.

⁴¹Gordon Hoxie, "Staffing the Ford and Carter Presidencies." Presidential Studies Quarterly (Summer 1980): 391.

⁴²Kellerman, 185. Before leaving office, Nixon stated that the energy shortage was the most serious since World War II.

⁴³Hargrove, Jimmy Carter as President, 48-49.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Kellerman, 187.

⁴⁶Hargrove, Jimmy Carter as President, 48.

⁴⁷Patterson, 45.

⁴⁸Ernest Holsendolph, "Energy Plan Said to Lack A Public Transport Aspect." New York Times, 20 April 1977, sec. 1, p. 18.

⁴⁹Hargrove, Jimmy Carter as President, 50.

⁵⁰Kellerman, 189-190.

⁵¹Ibid., 190.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid., 188.

⁵⁵Ibid., 192.

⁵⁶Jimmy Carter, Keeping the Faith (N.Y.: Bantam Books, 1982), 105. According to Carter's memoirs, Schlesinger spent countless hours on the Hill lobbying individual members of Congress, seemingly without much help from the OCR.

⁵⁷Kellerman, 195.

⁵⁸Jones, 128.

⁵⁹Kellerman, 196.

⁶⁰Ibid, 199.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Abernathy, 17, and Kellerman, 199.

⁶⁴Ibid., 199-200.

⁶⁵Abernathy, and Kellerman, 201.

⁶⁶Kellerman, 203.

⁶⁷"Carter Says He Won't Offer Compromise on Energy, but Expects One by Conferrees," Wall Street Journal 1 December 1977, 4.

⁶⁸Carter, 105.

⁶⁹Kellerman, 205.

⁷⁰Ibid., 207.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid., 208.

⁷³John P. Burke, The Institutional Presidency (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1992), 133. Carter was overheard saying "Speak with Eizenstadt if you want to know my mind."

⁷⁴Bradley D. Nash, et. al., Organizing and Staffing the Presidency (N.Y.: Center for the Study of the Presidency, 1980), 74.

⁷⁵Joseph A. Califano, Governing America (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 413 and 431.

⁷⁶Ibid., 413,

⁷⁷Herbert D. Rosenbaum and Alexej Urgrinsky, eds., The Presidency and Domestic Policies of Jimmy Carter (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), 384.

⁷⁸Califano, 413. Jordan also added "except women and minorities."

⁷⁹Carter, 117.

⁸⁰The material in this paragraph taken from Califano, 428 and 430; and Nash, 76.

⁸¹Nash, 76.

⁸²Gordon R. Hoxie, "Staffing the Ford and Carter Presidencies," Presidential Studies Quarterly (Summer 1980): 395-396.

⁸³Ibid; and Nash, 76-77; and Rosenbaum, 370.

⁸⁴Cited from John P. Burke, The Institutional Presidency (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 135-136. This memo is actually earlier than the one generated from the Camp David meetings. However, Jordan reiterated these concerns following the discussions. See also Stephen Hess, Organizing the Presidency (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1988), 147.

⁸⁵Califano, 443.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Nash, 76.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Carter wrote in his autobiography that "there was never a moment when I did not consider the creation of a national energy policy equal in importance to any other goal we had."¹ Thus, the administration's failure to get the proposal they wanted reflected poorly on Carter's political skill. The bitter struggle with Congress left Carter without fond memories of the energy battle with Congress:

In looking back on the moral equivalent of war against energy, waste and excessive vulnerability...I see nothing exhilarating. It was a bruising fight, and no final clear-cut victory could be photographed and hung on the wall for our grandchildren to admire.²

His energy package capped a bitter struggle with Congress. Clearly, President Carter had become frustrated with the political process in Washington. The final bill did not include many of the major provisions Carter had proposed.³ For example, the final bill did not raise as many taxes on various energy sources as Carter wanted. Also, the bill deregulated the natural gas industry while Carter wanted regulation.

Carter's image "as a bumbling legislator had become well established [in Congress]...by 1979."⁴ Since the "July Massacre" helped to solidify this opinion, some House Democrats began a "Dump Carter, Draft Kennedy movement" to challenge Carter in the primaries.⁵

Carter's Organizational Problems and Lessons

This thesis has addressed two major questions:

1. How the management of Carter's staff affected the likelihood of congressional passage of legislation, and

2. The lessons from the Carter administration are useful in learning how to manage and organize future White House staffs.

The experience of Carter's energy bill demonstrates the important relationship between the organization of staff and legislative success. Without a properly managed staff, the chances a president will pass his proposals is decreased.

The criticisms of Carter's administration focused on three elements: (1) the Congressional Liaison Office's ineffective lobbying, (2) Carter's mismanagement of not prioritizing his legislative agenda for the OCR, and (3) his unwillingness to compromise.⁶ These criticisms illustrate the importance of establishing good congressional relations. While the constitutional relationship between the executive and legislative branches was designed for conflict, the White House can minimize the discord by organizing the administration before taking office. Carter admitted he did not approach the legislature with this constitutional reality in mind. To make matters worse he did not realize how fragmented Congress had become after Watergate. As a result, his approach only exacerbated the tensions between Congress and the Oval Office. Nevertheless, he thought that he could persuade Congress to pass his legislation by demonstrating his intellect.

Believing that knowledge of the issues would prevail over politics, Carter neglected the liaison's office. As a result, the staff spent much of their time just trying to learn how to do their job.⁷ The decentralization of power, combined with the final decision-making authority in the Oval Office, promoted a multitude of semi-autonomous

fiefdoms quarreling among themselves. The disorder within the executive branch confused Congress as to what the President wanted.

His perception of Congress contributed to the poor relationship between the Hill and White House staffers: he "felt morally superior to the Congress."⁸ Carter believed that there was something fundamentally corrupt about the governmental Washington politics. He thought that national problems grew because of irresponsible legislators in D.C. He believed that Washington politicians were beholden to special interests and thus could not pass laws that were in the best interests of the country. According to Cyrus Vance, this contempt for Congress fed his hostility for the institution. For instance, when someone told Carter that he should slow down on the reforms he planned and pursue more incremental change, he replied "it's people like you that I've been sent to Washington to shape up."⁹

Carter believed that only the president could act out of concern for the whole country. Carter said before his 1976 election that "I want them [members of Congress] to know that we represent the same people. There's no one in any congressional district in the nation that won't be my constituent if I become president...I want to do a good job for them."¹⁰ This statement offended members of Congress because of Carter's arrogant way of stating it. Carter did not understand that legislators, especially after winning a tough campaign, believe that no one else can know their constituents and geographical area as they do.¹¹ Still, the President had firm ideas about the policies he wanted enacted, and therefore was always hesitant to compromise or include anyone in the negotiating process.

By not appreciating the nature of Congress, the administration failed to establish the connection necessary to increase its chances of legislative success. Carter was not willing to work with Congress and therefore did not gain knowledge of how they worked. By remaining reticent throughout much of his term he failed to flatter or pressure them when necessary.¹² Democrats became offended. They believed his proposals were made at the expense of consensus within his own party.¹³ This resentment was reinforced when Carter invited a ranking Republican and several junior Democrat and Republican members to join him in a signing ceremony but did not invite any of the Democratic leadership.¹⁴ The President thus thought that because he had familiarized himself with the details of the issues in the best interests of the nation, Congress should support his programs. For example, he told Jack Nelson, the Washington Bureau Chief of the Los Angeles Times, that when congressmen came to him about certain policies, they had better know the substance and details of the programs because he sure did.¹⁵ Carter regarded his approach as pragmatic: if one can find the best policy, persuasion would naturally follow, and the program would pass. He thought he could lead by simply being correct.¹⁶ He advanced programs based solely on merit.

Carter's failure to appreciate Congress affected the way he organized his staff. Because the President ignored the importance of Congress, he did not take time to communicate with the Office of Congressional Relations (OCR). Because Carter did not organize his liaison's to bargain with the Congress, legislators believed that the White House did not treat them as important people in their own right. Administrations must have the capability of influencing Congress because

the White House cannot claim victories for much of anything without its consent. This political reality makes it essential for the White House to develop a good relationship with the House and Senate. One political science scholar stated that:

Because they [the Carter administration] did not recognize the importance of coalition-building through brokerage, they did not, at the very outset of the administration, make an effort to establish cooperative lobbying relationships with the other important participants in the legislative process...Since these relationships were not established, the White House had to rely on its own resources to obtain legislative success. Therefore, legislative defeats resulted. And these defeats fed upon themselves, creating the image of ineptitude, in turn has led to members of Congress being less willing to rely on White House judgments and to accept White House analysis of issues.¹⁷

Carter did not understand something President Johnson practiced: the only way to deal with Congress is "continuously, incessantly, and without interruption."¹⁸ Rather, Carter seemed hesitant to get involved in the political process.¹⁹ Carter's liaison team did not attempt to discover their concerns and failed to cultivate congressional support for executive proposals. Without the President's direction, the OCR did not know how to politic on the chief executive's behalf.

Before his loss to Ronald Reagan in the election of 1980, Carter acknowledged that his initial approach to Congress was wrong:

I think just a few personal moves on my part--treating Congress members as though they were presidents themselves, returning their telephone calls, letting my staff members respect them thoroughly, dealing with the problems that they presented to me, making my own presence felt in the Capitol building itself on occasion, would be contributions that might alleviate the present disharmony and total separation of the White House...and Congress.²⁰

Yet this realization came too late to save Carter's presidency. This example explains two of the earlier criticisms from the Hill: because

he did not believe he needed to compromise with Congress, the OCR was left to organize itself. In essence the White House failed to make sure the OCR performed its duties: lobbying and communicating with Capitol Hill and making sure the OCR knows what the president wants and how he expects the liaison to carry out the job.²¹ To engage in an exchange with Congress requires a response to congressional requests to create a sympathetic context for consideration of White House initiatives.²²

Carter eventually realized that he needed to articulate a coherent vision for both his staff and for the Congress. Jordan echoed this realization and said after the 1980 defeat that Carter should have set priorities and not jumped into the many issues he found important.²³ White House staffer Richard Harden said that they tried to do too many things and thus ended up not doing anything well. The Chief of Staff stated that advancing several policy fronts only confused the public, the Congress, and those inside the White House. As a result, Congress had to piece together the "domestic agenda with minimal White House impact" on the issues.²⁴ Many issues and proposals got lost in the complex and overloaded legislative process on the Hill. Without help from the liaison's office, White House initiatives competed for congressional attention with other bills introduced by members of Congress.

Because of the immense amount of legislation emanating from the White House, the President's staffers spent much of their time trying to learn what the Chief Executive wanted accomplished.²⁵ Cabinet secretaries tried to decipher what Carter wanted, but had "no clear sense of where the President was leading."²⁶ The plethora of bills emanating from the White House, and the lack of clarity regarding

Carter's goals, greatly complicated the lobbying successes of the administration. He added that a system to monitor projects did not exist and that Carter did not sit down with the staff to organize them and lay out how the administration should work together.²⁷

The problems the administration experienced over the energy debate also illustrates the importance of getting off to a quick and smooth start. Stuart Eizenstat offered insight about the necessity of "hitting the ground running": "I don't think Carter's image ever recovered from some of those early mistakes."²⁸ President Lyndon Johnson's once said about the importance of the transition period that:

You've got to give it all you can that first year [and it] doesn't matter what kind of a majority you come with. You've got just one year when they treat you right, and before they start worrying about themselves. The third year you lose votes...The fourth year's all politics.²⁹

Johnson understood that presidents have only one year to establish their effectiveness at getting legislation through Congress. The chief executive must be able to capitalize on the electoral success early on to increase legislative victories. The Carter presidency demonstrates what happens when chief executives approach government transition and management distantly.³⁰

On many other bills of lesser importance Carter did achieve victories, but the press picked up on his lack of success by stating that if the President did not get what he wanted, he would be perceived as ineffective.³¹

Carter's attitude toward Congress explains why it took so long for him to learn the ropes of effectively passing legislation. The major flaw resided in his unwillingness to consult members of Congress about

White House proposals. For instance, he could have avoided a compromise on the natural gas tax in the energy bill had he consulted two committee chairs reviewing the increases.³² Congress prefers consultation so they can take credit for helping formulate the plan or avoid blame if the proposal does not have a legislator's constituent's support. Consultation allows legislators to affect a bill--generating ownership--so that the representative's constituents might support a piece of legislation. In this sense, politicians can take credit back in their home states for helping the president formulate a good piece of legislation. The representative or senator can gain electoral support for the next state election. Carter did not take into consideration the need for legislators to protect their constituent's interests.

Consultation and bargaining also assist the president's agenda because, once many members come on board, the White House has support for its proposals. Unfortunately, Carter neglected the practice of negotiating with Capitol Hill. Legislators thus became less willing to rely on, and accept, White House analyses and proposals on important issues.³³

Staffers had only a vague sense of what the administration planned legislatively. Carter did not develop a coherent and consistent strategy or relay his methodology of advancing the goals of the White House to the liaison staff. For a majority of the energy battle, the OCR was confused about their role in the legislative process. For example, Frank Moore said that the administration failed to define the internal staff procedures; therefore, Congress had no idea who to talk to and negotiate with.³⁴ He lacked salesmanship and neglected to use his lobbying offices to assist in the advance of his program. Declining

to organize and enlist the OCR's assistance in forwarding the energy package, he lacked supporters when he spoke at the joint session of Congress on April 20.

Several members of Congress criticized Congressional Liaison, Frank Moore, for being "poorly organized, displaying lack of knowledge and understanding of Congress, and failing to exploit the resources available to the administration [through consultation]." ³⁵ While some singled out Moore as a poor legislative liaison because of his inexperience and failure to respond to the legislature's complaints, others had no idea the administration had a congressional liaison. Well into the second year of Carter's term, Moore invited the Democratic leaders to meet the administration's top aides. After introducing himself, one congressional leader asked: "Who are you?" ³⁶

Some suggested that Carter appointed Moore "on the basis of his needs rather than on the basis of congressional needs." ³⁷ Presumably, the President chose Moore because of his desire for staff loyalty, rather than staff competence and experience in the ways Washington politics operated. Carter did not fill his top posts with professionals but rather loyalists from Georgia who did not know how to advance initiatives inside the beltway. This inexperience exacerbated the problems with Congress. These Georgian outsiders came to Washington rejecting the "folkways of the Capital" and they made it clear to the Democratic establishment that they were not needed. ³⁸

At least one congressional aide believed that the "Georgia Mafia" had the capability to understand the way Washington worked: "This isn't ignorance, it's arrogance. They don't really like Congress." ³⁹ Indeed, the OCR just did not ask members of Congress if there was

anything that they could do for them. Another aide commented that Moore's staff "don't seem to understand the mechanics of the art, and when they do figure out where to apply the pressure, it is usually too late."⁴⁰ The OCR just did not keep in touch with congressional members. They also did not dole out favors so the President would receive favors from Capitol Hill later on. Simply put, they did not learn to become sensitive to the legislature's needs.⁴¹

Making matters worse, White House lobbyists came under criticism for not understanding the energy program they were dispatched to advance. This is not surprising considering the fact that Carter did not involve them in its formation. When the OCR did participate late in 1977 and early 1978, they did not have time to go over the details of the plan.

White House legislative programs suffered because Carter lacked the foresight to ensure that the OCR clearly understood how to accomplish its responsibilities. Carter simply believed that he could capitalize on the goodwill of the honeymoon period by flooding the legislature with several proposals.⁴² Congress rejected many of these bills because the OCR did not lobby or guide these proposals through the legislative process. Given the fact that the OCR did not properly respond to congressional requests for favors, the administration did not have a sufficient "reservoir" of goodwill that the White House could draw upon.⁴³ Thus, many legislators reacted to White House programs coolly. Furthermore, the OCR did not consult legislators while the White House formed the programs which alienated many from the legislative process. Carter's style made for a complex legislative agenda without

facilitating the mechanisms to increase the likelihood of passage of those programs.⁴⁴

Since the functioning of the staff reflects the President's style, the previous examples explain why Carter did not achieve what he wanted. While Carter's knowledge concerning details of the issues surpassed many, he had no idea about how his policies should go together.

When Speaker O'Neill's advised the administration to lobby for the energy bill, the White House organized and coordinated a lobbying effort. As a result, the package passed more easily. Similarly in the Senate, even though Carter did not lobby for the issue, when he and his staffers organized to sell the program, the measure passed. These two instances illustrate that, regardless of the administration's inexperience, they could positively affect the outcomes of their proposals as long as they put together a planned effort. The administration finally gave the Congress what they wanted: the opportunity to affect White House legislation and contact with the administration's staffers.

Learning from his mistakes, in 1978 Carter realized the importance of the liaison's job.⁴⁵ The President began to coordinate his initiatives with Congress and prioritize the more visible proposals. Carter even started to politick on his own behalf by making calls to members and inviting Democratic leaders to the White House to discuss legislation. His appointment of Jordan as Chief also displayed his ability to learn and adjust to the political realities. However, the President's efforts seemed too little, too late, for by the time he fully instituted a new organizational structure he had little over a year to go in his term.

Possible Problems with Relying on Staff

Maintaining constant communication with such staff offices as the OCR benefits the president in formulating policy because it airs differing opinions and exposes errors--thus making decisions more effective.⁴⁶ Since the liaison team acts as the president's eyes and ears on Capitol Hill, problems that might arise from legislators are relayed to the White House. Solving these problems makes the executive proposals more likely to pass.

In the modern presidency, the staffers can no longer do everything and be knowledgeable on all issues. Because of the complexity of governmental solutions to domestic problems, one person can no longer advise on policy, draft legislation, or write speeches.⁴⁷ White House staffers now act in specialized areas but this begs for White House coordination since it takes more staffers to complete a job. The problem is that this specialization of staff has the tendency to tie staffers too closely to a certain constituency than might be the case if there existed a more flexible method of distributing staff assignments.⁴⁸

The risk is that a staffer who identifies and deals with one specific constituency constantly will identify so closely that the liaison ends up becoming an advocate for the interest inside the White House. In a sense, staffers could have the tendency to forget for whom they worked. James Rowe, an FDR White House aide, opposed the creation of a liaison office for this reason. He argued that as soon as the staff dealt with a congressional member's requests and complaints that

the staffer would in effect become the employee of the legislator as well as the president.⁴⁹ Franklin Roosevelt somewhat echoed this concern: if staffers failed to respond to the requests of legislators, the members would lose confidence in the White House lobby team and thus, either way, become ineffective.⁵⁰

Richard Neustadt once wrote President-Elect JFK urging him to "go slow on staffing up the congressional liaison. An overorganized White House liaison operation...tends to turn Presidential staffers into choir boys for congressmen and bureaucrats alike. From this the president has more to risk than gain in my opinion."⁵¹ Seemingly proving Neustadt's point, Lawrence O'Brien came under fire for overly representing the interests of Congress in the Kennedy administration. In the 1980s, one Reagan staffer was fired for overrepresenting state and local governments against a proposed round of budget cuts.⁵² This concern has similarities to what Nixon experienced with Watergate. As the executive staff increases in size, they exceed the president's span of control. The result can be detrimental for an administration as staffers may thus "go into business for themselves."⁵³

One way to decrease the possibility for staffer's to pursue their own agenda is to install a chief of staff. Carter could not keep up with the immense workload he tried to tackle. Carter eventually realized he needed a more hierarchical staff system "to impose order on policy development, guard access to the Oval Office, and settle administration disputes that are not of presidential importance."⁵⁴ Presidents must be freed up to bargain with congressional members, meet with leaders from the Hill, and make phone calls. This freedom allows

the chief executive to cultivate coalitions.⁵⁵ However, there are problems with this system.

Hierarchical systems do risk having too much information being screened by the staff chief thus leaving the president ill-informed about major policy issues. A good chief of staff will expose the chief executive to differing opinions. However, a staff chief could easily quell dissent in the administration and instead substitute his own proposals to the president. In some areas, then, these problems have no easy solutions. In the end, the way a staff functions is a reflection of the president.

The Personality of the President

Jack Watson, the Assistant for Cabinet and Intergovernmental Affairs, stated that "the way the White House is organized and the way that it functions are both very much reflections of the man."⁵⁶ Because the Constitution does so little in bestowing presidential power, the president must rely on his own personal resources.⁵⁷ Therefore, the sources of success in an administration are extra-formal. Given this factor, no organizational flow chart can overcome a president's personal weaknesses.

In order for the president to garner support for his programs, he must have the willingness to actively pursue his goals. The most important characteristic in this arena is the chief executive's interpersonal skills. In order to persuade and manipulate others, the president must be able to communicate well and use others for his own purposes. He must be active enough to be able to politick on his own behalf and compromise when the issue demands it. Many of these skills

are difficult to measure, but Barbara Kellerman notes that good political skills require good timing: the ability if the president's initiatives to fit the mood of the moment.

Gathering support for White House programs requires a certain type of personality. Kellerman asserts that a good political leader must be an extrovert. An extrovert prefers to be in the outer world engaging others and being active in the environment. This type of person is sociable, likes to be with other people, and enjoys social activities. Since extroverts like to function around others, the skills one possesses to conduct in a social exchange with others are refined. These social skills are a must if the president is to get his way.

A president will find it difficult to get his way if he is an introvert. A chief executive who prefers to be in small groups of intimate friends, or to be alone, will more than likely not be able to get what he wants. Kellerman puts Carter in this category. He liked to isolate himself, did not like to be out in public, had a few intimate friends and relied on few for advice. Since he did not pursue social activities, he had few allies who would lend him political support. These introvert qualities hurt the effectiveness of his administration. Kellerman argues that those who are socially inadequate will find politics a difficult profession. In order for one to be effective, one must create and maintain a great number and variety of relationships; only the extroverted type pursues these kinds of associations.

No organizational structure will be able to overcome the personal inability of the chief executive. The questions of whether an extroverted president will organize his office in such a way that will

increase legislative success is another question and beyond the scope of this thesis.

This work illustrated the problems that result from a poorly organized White House staff. The question of management will remain critical as the government increases in size. Historically, the more the public wants an activist presidency, the more powers and functions staffers assume. Given the complex problems facing society, the public will most likely ask for more governmental assistance. However, if the answer to more assistance is the increase in the staff's numbers and powers, there will be much debate among scholars because of the Nixon administration's executive excesses.

Notes

¹Jimmy Carter, Keeping the Faith (N.Y.: Bantam Books, 1982), 91.

²As quoted in Barbara Kellerman, The Political Presidency: Practice of Leadership from Kennedy through Reagan (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1984), 186.

³"Washington Wire," Wall Street Journal, 11 November 1977, 1.

⁴Rosenbaum, 289.

⁵Califano, 425.

⁶Victor Lasky, Jimmy Carter: The Man, The Myth (N.Y.: Richard Marek Publishers, 1979), 15.

⁷James P. Pfiffner and Gordon Hoxie, The Presidency in Transition, with a foreword by Gerald R. Ford (N.Y.: Center for the Study of the Presidency, 1989), 358; and Burke, 130.

⁸Hedley Donovan, Rooseveltdt to Reagan (N.Y.: Harper and Row Publishers, 1985), 239.

⁹Hargrove, 18.

¹⁰Charles O. Jones, The Trusteeship Presidency: Jimmy Carter and the United States Congress (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 5.

¹¹Ibid., 69.

¹²Stephen Hess, Organizing the Presidency (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1988), 151-152.

¹³Haas, 65.

¹⁴Mullen, 528.

¹⁵Hedrick Smith, The Power Game (N.Y.: Ballentine Books, 1991), 454.

¹⁶Burke, 118 and 135; Hess, 152. He viewed his approach to Congress as "doing what's right, not what's political."

¹⁷Thomas E. Cronin, The State of the Presidency, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1980), 236.

¹⁸Edwards, 293.

¹⁹Abernathy, 180. Carter stated: "Horsetrading and Compromising...have always been difficult for me to. I just don't feel at ease with it."

²⁰William F. Mullen, "Perceptions of Carter's Legislative Successes and Failures: Views from the Hill and the Liaison Staff," Presidential Studies Quarterly (Fall 1982): 523.

²¹Kenneth W. Thompson, ed., The Carter Presidency: Fourteen Intimate Perspectives of Jimmy Carter (N.Y.: University of Press America, 1990), 241

²²Lester G. Seligman and Gary R. Covington, The Coalitional Presidency (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989), 86.

²³Charles Paul Light, The President's Agenda: Domestic Policy Choice from Kennedy to Carter (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 230.

²⁴Ibid., 231.

²⁵Robert C. Wood, Whatever Possessed the President? Academic Experts and Presidential Policy 1960-1988 (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 126.

²⁶Califano, 405.

²⁷Patricia Dennis Witherspoon, Within these Walls (N.Y.: Praeger, 1991), 118.

²⁸Pfiffner, The Strategic Presidency, 137.

²⁹Cronin, 169.

³⁰Colin Campbell, Managing the Presidency: Carter, Reagan, and the Search for Executive Harmony (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986), 275.

³¹"Selling the Eskimos." Wall Street Journal, 26 October 1977, p. 22.

³²Charles Mohr, "President and Congress May Have Trouble Staying in Step," New York Times, 13 February 1977, sec. 4, p. 1.

³³Bradley D. Nash et. al., Organizing and Staffing the Presidency (N.Y.: Center for the Study of the Presidency, 1980), 63.

³⁴Pfiffner, Strategic Presidency, 140-141. One aide commented that "we just didn't know what was on the stove."

³⁵Herbert Rosenbaum et. al., The Presidency and Domestic Policies of Jimmy Carter (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), 288-

289. One congressman commented on the overall functioning of the White House:

They haven't got their act together on lobbying the important issues...there's been inadequate use of carrotstick tradeoffs. And with almost no exceptions every issue that has come down from the White House or agency has been viewed as THE big issue. There is no sense of priorities. Also, they haven't developed an early warning system. They don't know when a problem exists or develops until it's already out of control. That can be potentially fatal. And they're not using their sources of information. There are congressmen--natural allies--they ought to be tapping constantly. They could have saved themselves so much aggravation that way---it's sad." See Abernathy, 155.

³⁶,"Washington Wire," Wall Street Journal, 26 may 1978, p. 1.

³⁷Jones, 120 and Rosenbaum, 364.

³⁸Hess, 146.

³⁹Kellerman. 216.

⁴⁰Ibid., 216-217.

⁴¹Pfiffner, Modern Presidency, 148.

⁴²Hargrove, Jimmy Carter as President: Leadership and the Politics of the Public Good, 179.

⁴³Pfiffner, Modern Presidency, 148.

⁴⁴Jones, 94.

⁴⁵Kellerman 218-219.

⁴⁶Theodore C. Sorenson, Decision Making in the White House, with a foreward by John F. Kennedy, (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1963, 89.

⁴⁷John Hart, The Presidential Branch, 2nd ed., (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham Publishers Inc., 1995), 130.

⁴⁸Hart, 2nd ed., 133.

⁴⁹Ibid., 133.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

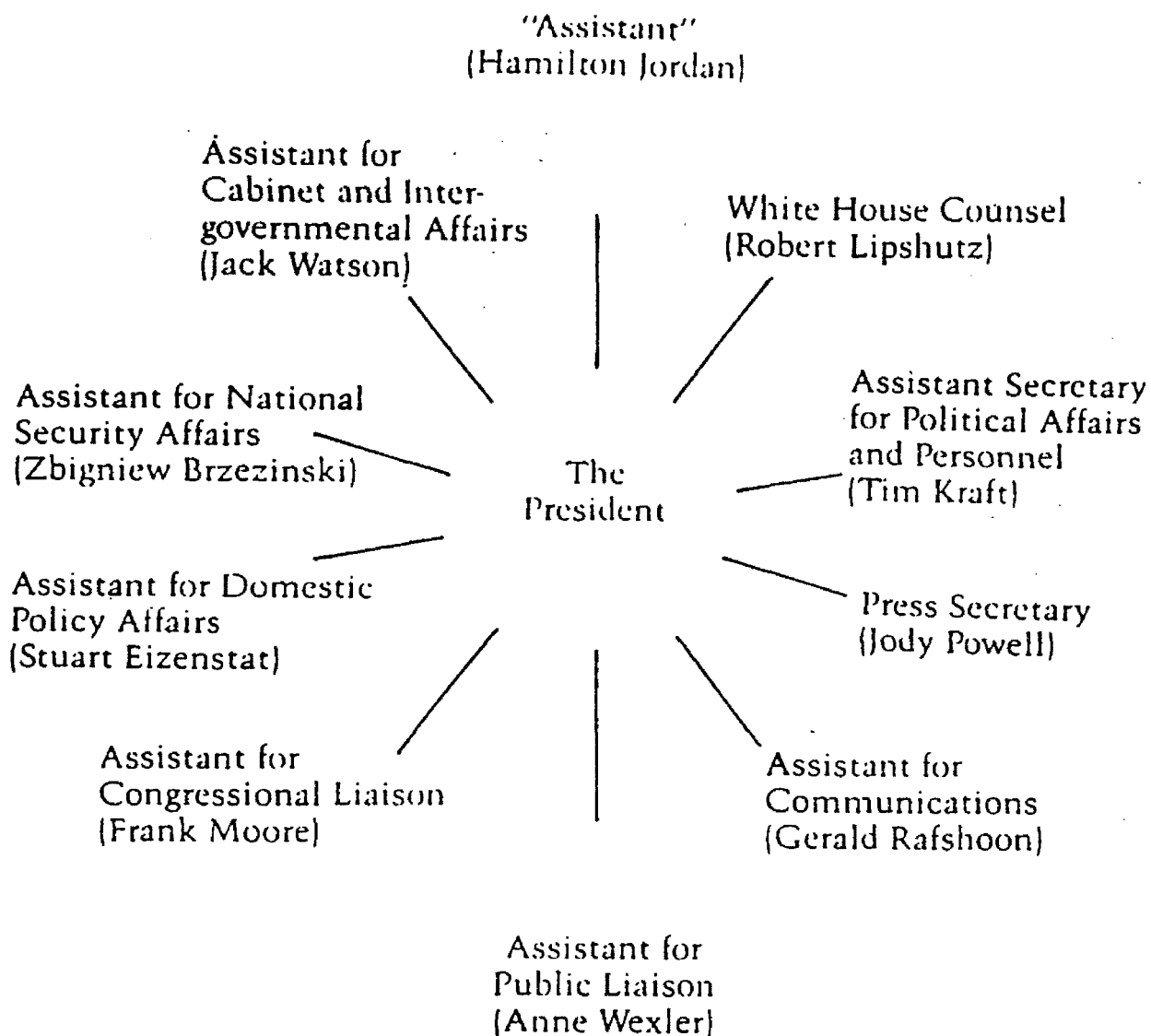
⁵³Hess, 118-119.

⁵⁴pfiffner, Modern Presidency, 87.

⁵⁵pfiffner/Hoxie, 354.

⁵⁶Samuel Kernell and Samuel L. Popkin, eds., Chief of Staff: Twenty-Five Years of Managing the Presidency, with a foreward by Richard E. Neustadt (Berkley: University of California Press, 1986), 70.

⁵⁷The material in this section is drawn from Kellerman, The Political Presidency, 15-16, 39-43.



FRINGE POSITIONS

Staff Secretary (Hutcheson)
 Appointments Secretary (Wise)
 Reorganization Secretary (Pettigrew)

Special Assistants:
 for Administration (Harden)
 for Administration (Carter)
 for Special Projects (Mitchell)
 for Consumer Affairs (Peterson)
 Ombudsman (Aragon)

The White House under Carter

*Source Colin Campbell, Managing the Presidency,
 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh,
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