

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

8 Jan 69

Colonel Haig

Al - I took the liberty of extracting a thinkpiece on NSC organization for your personal consideration. While it has no official status, it has value as an honest critique of the past and is based on considerable experience by the author.

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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

11 December 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL WHEELER

1. Attached are my thoughts on national security organization for your possible use in conversations with Dr. Kissinger.

2. In addition to discussing structure for national security, I believe it would be worthwhile to emphasize that the effectiveness of the machinery depends not only on sound organization but also on

- leadership, and
- how the machinery is used -- that is, whether it is relevant to real problems in timely fashion.

3. To attempt to insure the relevancy and usefulness of a revised NSC organization, it should be important to set out early in the game a series of key policy issues and planning tasks. The following is an illustrative, but by no means comprehensive, list of issues and tasks:

- U.S. National Objectives and Policies (I suggest that the term BNSP be avoided).
- Regional Policy Papers -- to be produced by each of the Regional Groups.
- Policy Papers on Selected Countries -- consistent with the Regional papers.
- Strategic Arms Control Talks -- review U.S. position.
- Policy toward NATO.
- Policies Toward Other Regional Defense Organizations (existing and possible new ones).
- AID Policy and Program.
- MAP Policy.

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- Strategic Balance and Strategic Superiority.
- Vietnam Military Strategy.
- Vietnam Negotiating Objectives, Strategy and Tactics.
- Balance of Payments Issues.
- International Monetary Policy.
- Post-Vietnam Military Policy, Strategy and Posture.
- Oversea Bases.
- Arms Control Policies.

4. In addressing these problems, it would be important:

- to establish general priorities for studying the issues;
- to keep in mind that one of the major benefits of a more formal approach is to encourage a sense of participation by the relevant agencies and to promote understanding of the rationale for the resulting decisions and policies;
- to recognize that basic policy reviews contain the inherent danger of promoting undesirable dissent. In this connection, I believe it worth pointing out to Kissinger that (1) the Johnson Administration has not suffered from lack of dissent but rather from (2) continuing dissent after the President had reached a decision, which (3) in some cases bordered on absolute disloyalty on the part of the dissenters who leaked their views to the press.

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National Security Organization

1. In my view, the main deficiencies in the present organization are:

- ✓ - It does not insure adequate staff work prior to Presidential decisions.
- ✓ - Inadequate records of Presidential meetings and inadequate promulgation of Presidential decisions and rationale -- resulting in inadequate guidance because of uncertainty as to whether the President has made a decision; if so, what it was and why.
- Lack of precision in relating the various parts of the inter-departmental machinery.

2. On the other hand, it has certain advantages as compared to previous organizational arrangements:

- Membership of the Tuesday Lunch Group excludes individuals not primarily concerned.
- Informality of the entire organization tends to provide freer exchange of views earlier in the policy process -- and potentially faster action.
- SIG/IRG structure seems to be less rigid than previous NSC/OCB and provides machinery for interdepartmental coordination which was nonexistent after OCB was abolished.
- Permits State Department leadership -- but White House participation.
- Provides for JCS as well as OSD representation.

3. It seems to me that the current advantages could be preserved and the disadvantages minimized by some or all the following actions:

- Establish an NSC Executive Committee. This could consist of the present Tuesday Lunch Group: President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Director of CIA, Chairman of JCS, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and other Special Assistants as desired. This would enable the President to exchange views informally with key advisors without constraints of full NSC meetings. Informality could be maintained -- but on a more business-like basis by:

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- earlier circulation of agenda;
- maintaining minutes of meetings;
- recording of Presidential decisions;
- distribution of Presidential decisions as appropriate;
- having the meetings other than at lunchtime.

- Regularize NSC Meetings. Meetings could be reinstated on a weekly or biweekly basis. However, if the Executive Committee is to meet every week, regular meetings of the full NSC might be limited to once a month. Membership should be reviewed to insure it meets Presidential desires. NSC staff would have to be reoriented -- at least in part -- to provide proper flow of paperwork and staff briefing and advice to the President on papers for NSC consideration.

- Establish an NSC Standing Group. Assign to it the present functions of the SIG and previous functions of the NSC Planning Board. Retain State chairmanship. Consider deletion of AID and USIA members -- or perhaps their participation only when directly concerned. Consider substituting (1) Deputy Special Assistant to the President in place of the Special Assistant and (2) Assistant to the Chairman in place of the Chairman, JCS.

- Establish NSC Regional Groups. These could be essentially a renaming of the present IRGs.

- Establish NSC Functional Groups. The first one could be created by simply adding NSC to the present Political Military Group. Consideration should be given to establishing similar groups for Economics, Educational and Cultural Affairs, Scientific and Technological Affairs, and Public Affairs. Instead of -- or perhaps in addition to -- an NSC Economics Group (under State chairmanship), it might be advisable to set up an NSC Economics Subcommittee under the chairmanship of the Secretary of the Treasury, and reporting directly to the NSC rather than via the Standing Group. This would supplant the informal working arrangement currently chaired by the Secretary of the Treasury. Similarly, in the field of public affairs, it might be useful to have an NSC Public Affairs Subcommittee under the chairmanship of Mr. Klein.

4. The above could constitute the major elements of the structure. In addition, each of the existing committees listed below should be reviewed to decide whether they should be retained, and, if so, how they should be integrated into the NSC machinery.

- Committee of Principals -- could be designated an NSC Subcommittee.

- Interagency Planning Group -- under the aegis of the Chairman of State's Policy Planning Council, this could be established as an NSC Planning Group. It could function either at the level of (1) the regional and functional groups or (2) the NSC Standing Group or (3) as a subelement of the Standing Group. Alternatively, it could be established as an NSC subcommittee under the chairmanship of the Special Assistant to the President for National Security.

- State-Defense Study Group -- could be retained to perform longer studies than are appropriate for ad hoc committees under the politico-military group. It could be renamed, if desired.

- "Non-Group" or "No Committee." ~~In effect, this is currently a kind of informal executive committee for the SIG. Alternative solutions~~ (1) retain it on an ad hoc basis, (2) disestablish it, (3) replace it by an executive committee of the Standing Group or eliminate some of the current members of the Standing Group, or (4) establish it as an ad hoc subcommittee of the NSC.

- Vietnam Information Group -- alternatives: (1) continue ad hoc, (2) NSC subcommittee, (3) subgroup of NSC Public Affairs Subcommittee, (4) subgroup of Public Affairs Group or East Asian Regional Group, (5) subordinate to Non-Group or its successor.

- Vietnam Back-up Group -- alternatives: (1) continue ad hoc nature, (2) formally subordinate it to East Asian Regional Group, or (3) formally subordinate it to Non-Group or its successor.

- 303 Committee -- continue as NSC subcommittee.

5. Attached are two possible alternative organization charts.



