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13 December 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Organization and Procedures for the Conduct of National Security Affairs

1. Attached are two sets of notes I have prepared:

a. Notes on organization for the conduct of national security affairs. This paper addresses organization and procedures for the Executive Branch as a whole, as well as organization and procedures within the White House.

b. Supplementary notes on staff procedures. These spell out in some detail (and somewhat mechanically, I am afraid) the various component steps involved.

2. I have tried to avoid recommending a particular organizational form, or overall procedural mode, at this time. I feel that these, so far as I am concerned, could better grow out of our discussions.

3. Regardless of such restraint, however, there are certain main functions that practically define themselves. They are "building-blocks" out of which the organization inevitably will be formed. In brief, they are:

a. The NSC itself as the President's highest deliberative, advisory and policy-formulating body. The staff functions here are to prepare for, conduct, and take further action on the meetings, and to manage the NSC supporting structure.

b. The policy planning function. Here the role of a Planning Board, or something like it, is central. The main staff functions are to run the Planning Board and direct the preparatory planning work and studies, and, in addition, to pursue broader, more speculative, more creative studies of a longer-range character -- drawing from sources within and without the Government, keeping channels open to all centers of thought and study.

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c. The handling of current operational matters involving Presidential participation. The functions are those of an executive advisor -- giving a staff-type review to material from the departments and agencies, presenting it to the President and, discussing it with him, and taking follow-up actions; initiating action on the President's behalf, arranging top-level meetings on specific subjects; "keeping the system honest" as to policy-observance and responsiveness; maintaining a limited information bank; and encouraging a flow of new ideas and fresh thinking from every source to the President.

d. Closely related to this -- merging with it, in fact -- is the briefing function of providing a flow of current intelligence and operations information to the President, and proceeding with follow-up action in response to the President's reactions and desires.

e. Next is the handling of interdepartmental operations in the security field not involving the direct participation of the President. Some mechanism along the lines of the OCB or the SIG/IRG structure is required. The problems of achieving and maintaining effectiveness, of relating these operations to Presidential policy and to the policy-planning and current operations functions, and the task of getting the departments and agencies to bring in the problems that should receive this treatment are difficult but inescapable. The main staff functions are to manage the machinery and the program of work, participate in whatever committee structure is maintained, and initiate action to obtain policy guidance where needed.

f. A final function meriting specific recognition is that of formulating broad and far-reaching conceptions of a long-range character, providing the main structure of the nation's approach to its international and security problems. This work should provide coherence and reasoned dynamism, together with a sense of direction, to the whole complex of policy and action. It should be, I believe, the highest preoccupation of the President's top assistant for National security affairs.

4. Additional procedures internal to the security affairs staff should facilitate the work of the whole structure, keep up momentum, bring in new approaches and new issues, and perform an overview of departmental and agency operations.

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5. I believe there is some range of latitude in how these functions can be successfully combined, and fitted into an overall security structure, and will be prepared to consider specific possibilities with you.



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