

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 7, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL HAIG
RON ZIEGLER

FROM: DAVE GERGEN *DG*

SUBJECT: ORGANIZING FOR IMPEACHMENT

You asked for thoughts on ways that the White House should be organized for the impeachment process.

It seems evident that the President needs not only a top-flight legal team but also a strong communications arm. My own opinion is that the communications apparatus is now sadly lacking and accounts in part for the President's continuing problems.

I recommend that a communications team be formed on an urgent basis. It will not produce any instant miracles, but at least it will help. The prime responsibility of this team would be to find better ways to present the President's case to the public. It would figure out what needs to be said, help to organize speakers, and provide all spokesmen with relevant speaking materials. It would be action-oriented and would be the key WG strategy group within the White House.

There should be two basic components of this team:

(1) A planning group composed of high-level White House staffers and cutting across departmental lines. This group would meet briefly every day to assess, plan and assign tasks for that day and thereafter. It would be essential that the group:

(a) Be able to act on its own within a broad mandate determined by RN, Haig, et al. If every single decision or paper of the group has to be cleared at the top, it would be virtually useless.

(b) Be privy to, and coordinate with, the unfolding legal strategy. The excessive secrecy which has plagued us time and again -- and hurt badly last week when most WH staffers were the last ones to see any transcripts -- should be scrubbed.

(c) Be able to call upon anyone in the WH for immediate help. For instance, if they want five Hill speeches, my staff should be ready and available to write them. Similarly, Clawson's operation should be primed to handle whatever distributions are necessary.

(2) A full-time operational group: In addition to the planning group, a staff, operational group will be necessary to do much of the actual labor. Research and writing are a prime example of what is needed, but there will be other requirements as well such as leg work, distribution, calling of spokesmen, etc. It is time we faced up to the fact that this operational work is a full-time task; it can no longer be done with the left hand. The only solution is to break some of our people off their normal duties and assign them full-time roles on this task force; it is late in the day to be hiring new hands.

Personnel

(1) The Planning Group: It seems evident that while both of you should be heavily involved, neither of you has the time to devote to organizing this effort. It is also clear that you will frequently be out of town. Therefore, I would recommend that Dean Burch head it up: he apparently has the confidence of all key personnel, knows the Hill, etc.

Other members:

Ex Officio
Haig
St. Clair
Ziegler

Essential Members

Buzhardt
Buchanan
Baroody
Burch (Chairman)
Clawson
Khachigian
Parker
Timmons

Optional

Gannon*
Garment
Gergen
Herschensohn
Higby*
Moore*
Price*
Whelihan*

*Would personally recommend inclusion

(2) The Operational Group: The very best leader now on the staff would be Khachigian; he could act as a deputy to Burch, ensuring that all the work is completed and properly reviewed. The group that should be broken off to work with Ken full-time should include:

Gannon
Speaks
Whelihan
One lawyer (perhaps Hauser)
Present WG Research team (three members)

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I would picture the planning group meeting each morning at 9:15. General Haig should attend at least once each week (preferably on Monday); RZ should attend if he has anything from early a. m. session with RN. Joulwan could perhaps attend in Haig's absence, or alternatively, Burch could fill in Haig's office on each day's developments. The operational group should be underway each day no later than 10 a. m.

No doubt improvements can be made in this plan, but the need for such a full-scale effort should not be under-emphasized.

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