

January 16, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: ALEXANDER P. BUTTERFIELD  
RE: Sanitization of the EOB

Recalling your word of caution to me that a sweeping order to take down from EOB walls all pictures of past Presidents -- coming on the heels of your December 24th walk-through -- might well be taken as "Presidentially-directed", I did not move on this project until after your departure for San Clemente. However, on New Year's day I made my own inspection of EOB offices occupied by White House Support Staff personnel and less than a week later spoke to Bill Hopkins about general policy on the matter, his views, etc. I couched my pitch to Hopkins in terms of my surprise discovery ... i. e. learning that civilian government employees, unlike military personnel, do on occasion display pictures of past commanders or commanders-in-chief on (Federal) office walls. I took time to elaborate on the fact that the taking down of pictures of former chiefs, in offices or other official business environments, is only a gesture of common courtesy to new chiefs -- a gesture of "pledged loyalty" ... with no disrespect whatever intended for those who have served and moved on. Bill Hopkins knew all of this, of course, so was naturally understanding of the position I was taking. I asked him to make a detailed check (not telling him of my earlier check) ... which he did prior to your return to Washington. Here is a recapitulation of results:

- Of 35 large and small offices occupied by White House Support Staff personnel, 6 displayed photographs of one or more former Presidents ... in addition to your own.
- 27 offices (including the 6 mentioned above) displayed your picture.
- 8 offices displayed no pictures of U. S. Presidents.

-- The office which you mentioned to me specifically -- the one in which you noticed 2 pictures of President Kennedy -- is supervised by Edna Rosenberg, a civil servant at the GS-9 level, who has the distinction of having served on the White House Staff longer than anyone else . . . . 41 years this coming March 7th. I have checked her file very carefully and found that the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the Civil Service Commission's Bureau of Personnel Investigation, the State Department and its Passport Office, the CIA, the Secret Service, and the FBI have all rendered continual reports to the effect that she is a "completely loyal American whose character, reputation, and associations are above reproach." Born in 1902 here in Washington, D.C., she has remained single all of these years, and lives now with a sister (Miss Janette Rosenberg) in Silver Spring, Maryland.

-- One of the Kennedy pictures bore a personal inscription of good wishes to the personnel of that office, and undoubtedly for that reason had been retained and displayed by those who work there.

-- Using to best advantage the fact that your new official photographs have just been printed and made accessible to Federal offices and employees, I instructed Bill Hopkins to see to it that every office supervisor received one and in the process of hanging it on the wall took all others down . . . "in accordance with normal policy".

-- On January 14th the project was completed and all 35 offices displayed only your photograph.

The second half of this project -- i.e. to ensure across-the-board loyalty of all White House Support Staff personnel even if we find it necessary to "abolish current office arrangements and start over from scratch" -- is underway; but I cannot yet report results. I am in the process of screening personnel records and within 2-3 days will be ready to suggest possible courses of action to Bob Haldeman.