

OFFICE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20504

June 7, 1974

DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM FOR

General Al Haig  
The White House

I have been informed that the President has disapproved the long-range funding proposal for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which I forwarded on April 2, 1974, and wants to "end" public broadcasting or submit a "very limited" budget proposal. I strongly disagree. I cannot support such an action, and request an appeal to the President.

Our funding strategy, which is intended to gain substantial involvement by the local stations in the structure of public broadcasting and to assure their direct access to Federal funds, was approved by the President. His budget requests for CPB have increased each year, as have public and corporate contributions to CPB and the local stations. Rightly or wrongly, the commitment to Federal funding of public broadcasting has been made. For the President to attempt to back away from that commitment now is unwise, unworkable, and quixotic. An attempt to do so would isolate the President from public and Congressional opinion, and thus would deprive him of any effective participation in the constructive shaping of public broadcasting policy.

Moreover, the nomination of Mrs. Nancy Chotiner to the Board of CPB, is most inappropriate. While I do not know Mrs. Chotiner personally, and have no adverse information about her, she appears to have no particular qualifications for the Board, and her appointment would be widely perceived as a purely political action. At this pivotal time in the course of public broadcasting's development, this nomination, together with the reversal of direction on funding, would throw public broadcasting back into the political arena -- exactly contrary to our efforts over the last five years.

I was told by your office that I would have an opportunity to discuss these issues with you before they went to the President. I continue to be disturbed that our arrangements for communication policy decision-making are inadequate. In view of these strong considerations, I would like to meet with you (and perhaps Cole and Burch) as soon as possible for a full discussion.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clay T. Whitehead', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Clay T. Whitehead