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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 3, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: DONALD RUMSFELD
FROM: JAMES E. CONNOR
SUBJECT: ATTENDANCE AT
CABINET MEETINGS

I understand that the President has expressed concern at the size of Cabinet meetings. Accordingly, you may wish to review with him the attendance list at such meetings in order to determine whether it is necessary or desirable for all those currently attending the meetings to continue to do so in the future. Attached is a paper outlining the problem and proposing alternative solutions.

Attachment



BACKGROUND

There are now eighteen individuals whose rank entitles them to attend Cabinet meetings. In addition to the Vice President and the heads of the eleven executive departments, those with Cabinet rank are:

Counsel to the President Buchen)	
Counsellor Hartmann)	
Director of OMB Lynn)	6
Counsellor Marsh)	
Assistant to the President Rumsfeld)	
Ambassador to the UN Scali)	

Ten others have been attending Cabinet meetings regularly, although they do not hold Cabinet rank. These are:

White House and Executive Office

Seidman, Executive Director, Economic)	
Policy Board)	
Cole, Executive Director, Domestic Council)	
Greenspan, Chairman, CEA)	
Nessen, Press Secretary to the President)	
Baroody, Assistant to the President for)	7
Public Liaison)	
Friedersdorf, Assistant to the President)	
for Legislative Affairs)	
Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President)	
for National Security Affairs)	

Agencies

Train, Administrator, EPA)	2
Zarb, Administrator, FEA)	

Other

Smith, RNC)	1
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Junior staff members of the White House have also attended meetings with some degree of regularity. There is at least one person acting as secretary and usually several other staff members present. Thus, total attendance

at meetings ranges between thirty and thirty-five. This number may be so large as to produce unwieldy meetings and inhibit useful and candid discussion. The alternatives for dealing with Cabinet attendance are outlined below:

Alternatives

Option 1. Status quo - keep current list and permit other staff to attend informally (30-35 attendees).

Advantages:

- . continues a pattern people may have grown to expect.
- . avoids perception of being slighted on the part of those left off the list.

Disadvantages:

- . continues a larger group than desirable.
- . likely to swell further in the future.

Option 2. Maintain present attendees but prohibit ancillary staff members (30 attendees).

Advantages:

- . lessens tendency to swell size of meeting.
- . eliminates some notetakers.

Disadvantages:

- . meeting still may be too large to be useful.
- . does not establish a clear standard for attendance.

Option 3. Reduce number of attendees by inviting only WH staff who report directly to the President. This option would remove the following people from the list:

Baroody (reports to Marsh)
Friedersdorf (reports to Marsh)
Scowcroft (reports to Kissinger)

Seidman, Cole, Greenspan and Nessen would continue to attend under this approach (27 attendees).

(Option 3)

Advantages:

- . reduces numbers at meetings, thereby permitting more useful discussion.
- . establishes a rational and defensible standard of attendance which could be invoked whenever pressures for growth started to appear.

Disadvantages:

- . may displease those no longer invited.
- . responsibility to inform subordinates is placed directly on attendees.

Option 4. Same as #3, but also delete Smith of RNC (26 attendees).

Advantages:

- . same as above. In addition it makes the Cabinet a purely governmental institution.

Disadvantages:

- . same as above, may also appear as a slight to the Party.

Option 5. Same as #4, but invite Train and Zarb to sit in only on discussions which directly concern them rather than having them attend the entire session (24 attendees).

Advantages:

- . advantages are similar to those outlined above.
- . their attendance would cease when their areas of competence were no longer at the top of the President's agenda. Conversely, others could begin to attend when necessary without swelling the size of the meeting.

Disadvantages:

- . same as those outlined above.
- . may inadvertently exclude both men from discussions they should hear.

Discussion

The decision on Cabinet size parallels the decision to reduce the number of commissioned officers on the White House Staff. Such a reduction markedly raises the status of those who remain on the list, but, of course, would displease those who were excluded. In the case of the Cabinet, the smaller numbers would also raise its status in the public mind and, in addition, would be more conducive to useful discussion.

Option #5 reduces numbers most sharply and provides a logical and defensible basis upon which to keep attendance within tolerable limits. Option #4 or Option #3 would also achieve this latter benefit, but with some increase in numbers. Option #2, although reducing numbers somewhat, does not provide a basis for maintaining control over attendance. Option #1, of course, would continue any disadvantages in the present system.

APPROVE:

Option #1 (status quo)

HR 7.

Option #2 (restrict other staff)

Option #3 (only WH staff reporting to the President)

Option #4 (same as #3, delete Smith)

Option #5 (same as #4, Zarb and Train as needed)

Let's Try This

