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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

JAN 8 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

ROY L. ASH

SUBJECT:

Presidential Management Meetings
with Cabinet Officers and Agency
Heads

BACKGROUND

You told the Cabinet recently that two Saturday sessions would be held soon to discuss the important matters they are working to accomplish. Since that time, I understand from Don Rumsfeld that you are thinking of holding these meetings shortly after the first of the year, probably in January. In considering my previous memos to you on this subject (attached at Tab A) and the format for these meetings between you and Cabinet Officers and Agency Heads to review Presidential objectives, I have come up with a plan that may be even better.

THE PLAN

You would meet individually with each of your Cabinet Officers and with heads of some of the major agencies in their offices to review the important matters they are working on and to follow up their accountability for accomplishing them. Beginning, for example, with an hour meeting at the Labor Department with Secretary Brennan and his assistants on one day, you would then meet a week or so later with another Cabinet Officer or an Agency Head, and so on.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The results of this series of meetings would be to:

- Visibly emphasize your executive leadership of the Departments and Agencies
- Illustrate your affirmative involvement and interest in all the important activities the Departments and

Agencies are carrying out, over and above just reacting to selective matters they from time to time bring up.

- Enhance the effectiveness of the existing Presidential management and accountability system.
- Provide an opportunity for the President to interact with Cabinet Officers and Agency Heads and their primary assistants.
- Improve Department and Agency motivation and effectiveness in attaining Presidential objectives.
- Provide a direct Presidential imprint on Department and Agency priorities.

PROCEDURE

Each meeting would be held in the Department or Agency with the Cabinet Officer and his chief assistants attending. I would provide an agenda that would focus on the most important four or five Presidential objectives, and briefing materials for your use at each meeting. The briefing materials would include a background statement and key facts for each meeting along with a lead question and detailed follow-up questions for each Presidential objective on the agenda. They would also include possible conclusions and directions, some new objectives that you might suggest, and questions on objectives not included on the meeting agenda. An example of the materials that would be prepared for your review and use at each meeting is attached at TAB B. These materials, as well as some assessment of the management capabilities of the people with whom you would be meeting could be discussed with you for a half hour or so in a pre-briefing for each meeting. The meeting itself would take an hour, and travel time to and from departments and agencies might total another half hour. Thus two Presidential hours, in total, would be invested for each department.

If you agree to such a series of meetings, I suggest that the first meeting simply occur, rather than publicly announcing the series in advance. This would provide a new, visible sense of Presidential management of the important activities of the departments and agencies in a matter-of-fact way and would not seem to be an "overly planned" exercise. Of course, each Cabinet Officer and Agency Head would be notified as the date for each meeting became firm on your schedule and each would be provided with the agenda of the general subject areas (not specific questions) you intend to cover at the meeting.

