

The original documents are located in Box 3, folder “Domestic Council - Meeting, June 10, 1975” of the Richard B. Cheney Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 9, 1975

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MEMORANDUM FOR: DON RUMSFELD

FROM: DICK CHENEY *Dick*

SUBJECT: Domestic Council Meeting Scheduled for Tuesday, June 10th *file*

Background

I have some reservations about the Domestic Council Meeting scheduled for Tuesday. It is a very important meeting because it is the first session of the entire Domestic Council since the President took office. The agenda that has been prepared is very broad. It is based upon recommendations submitted to the Vice President by the Departments and Agencies as to what areas the Council should focus on in the coming months.

The meeting is intended to get Presidential approval of task forces to develop policies which presumably will be incorporated in the State of the Union Address next January. In a very real sense, the decisions made will determine the Administration's platform for re-election in 1976. The assignments given to the Domestic Council will result in the commitment of major resources to these activities. It is important that we remember that the results will be perceived as the 1976 platform, and that the effort lead to policies consistent with the President's principles and political strategy.

Problems

The following factors seem to me to be relevant in considering the proposed agenda for the Domestic Council:



1. The agenda should be limited to domestic policies, traditionally defined. The proposal includes many issues that should be considered by the Economic Policy Board or the Energy Resources Council. If the Domestic Council is given the lead responsibility on economic or energy issues, we will generate confusion over who is responsible for what policies. It would be helpful if the President could make clear that he wants the EPB and the ERC to take the lead in their respective areas. These activities should be coordinated by having representatives of each policy group sit in with each of the other groups. But the Domestic Council should not have the lead responsibility in economic and energy policy.

2. The mere creation of a task force makes a major assumption. It assumes that there is a problem. Once a task force is established, it becomes very difficult to "do nothing" although that might be the best course of action. After a task force spends months studying a problem, they have to come up with policy options to "do something". Otherwise, there is no justification for having a task force in the first place. It is very unlikely that a group will come back with a "do nothing" recommendation. Thus, the Domestic Council should be directed to develop clearly written statements of what the problem is in a given area before the President finally approves the establishment of a task force to solve "the problem".

3. The statement of principle and political strategy for 1976 should be developed before the individual policy. If we wish to continue to resist efforts designed to increase the size and scope of government, we should be very cautious about such concepts as "land use planning" which would open up a whole new area of government regulation of the private sector. I would hope that a small group of people could be given the responsibility of writing a statement of principles. It should not be done in the larger meeting with the Domestic Council.



But once it is written, we should again review the assignments given the Domestic Council to make certain they are consistent with principles and strategy.

4. I am concerned about the political consequences if the Vice President is perceived as the man responsible for drafting the agenda for 1976. Without in any way criticizing the Vice President, the fact of the matter is that he is a "lightning rod" for conservatives. Ronald Reagan can be expected to take advantage of a situation in which the Vice President is perceived as responsible for writing the platform. I believe the potential for conservative criticism can be reduced if it is made clear that his jurisdiction includes only domestic policy, and not economic or energy policy.
5. Finally, we should begin now to coordinate domestic policy development with the preparation of the budget and the economic forecast for next year. Budget projections of a deficit for FY 77 of \$40 billion or more lead us to believe that we may want to continue a "no new spending" position through next year. Certainly, guidelines on new spending should be considered in conjunction with the development of welfare reform proposals or other "new" programs.

Recommendations

1. Give specific guidance that the EPB and the ERC have the lead in energy and the economy. The Domestic Council should deal only with other domestic policy areas.
2. Before final approval is given to the establishment of a task force, the President wants to review written statements of the alleged problems.
3. All task forces are to consider "doing nothing" as an option, and also the possibility of "doing less" as they develop options



for the President to consider. Many of our problems are caused by previous, misguided efforts to fix something.

4. Direct OMB and CEA to provide economic and budgetary forecasts to be considered early in the development of these proposals.
5. After the Domestic Council meeting, we should establish a small, private working group to develop the basic policy strategy for 1976. This should then be approved by the President and used to evaluate the various recommendations from the task forces.

