

The original documents are located in Box 10, folder “Rockefeller, Nelson - Role as Vice President” of the Richard B. Cheney Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 20, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Role of the Vice President

It is my understanding that you will be meeting with Vice President Rockefeller tomorrow afternoon to discuss generally his role in this position. Don indicated it might be helpful to pass along some of my thoughts or suggestions.

It is my understanding that you are desirous of having the Vice President undertake a meaningful role in your Administration. To achieve this it is my view that it is not simply the assignments of substantive areas of responsibility that must be considered but also operational and staff procedures insofar as his working relationship with the White House is concerned. Basically, I think the Vice President and his people must be treated more as insiders than outsiders if the office is to be as effective as it might.

Based on my experience when you were Vice President, I feel there was a lack of communication and interrelationship with the Nixon White House. This arose because of the unique circumstances involving Watergate and it was helpful to maintain an arms length relationship. You will recall that Bob Hartmann was the focal point in your office for White House contact. This was both effective and essential; however, the situation that dictated your relationship with President Nixon no longer prevails and I am of the view that considerable thought should be given to the relationship between the two offices with far broader contact and endeavors than have existed in the past.

To help achieve this I suggest the following as possible examples:

1. A representative of the Vice President's office attend your junior and senior staff meetings in the morning.
2. Access to and exchange of information between OMB, the Domestic Council, etc. and the Vice President's staff.
3. Closer coordination between both press offices.



4. Vice Presidential staff representation in Congressional relations meetings, and perhaps energy and economic meetings.
5. Inviting occasionally one or more members of the Vice Presidential staff to accompany you on official Air Force One travel as well as having White House senior staff travel on Air Force Two from time to time.
6. Solicit inputs for major Presidential speeches and policy statements beginning with the State of the Union.

The working relationship with the White House bears on both the substantive role and the effectiveness of the Vice President. To what extent should he and his staff participate in staff processes in the White House that result in programs and policy? A question also occurred as to what extent he and his staff will separately develop position papers and staff studies. What considerations will the White House give to them?

I would be one of the first to admit broader incorporation into staff operations of the Vice President would be a departure from the past; however, I am also of the view that greater incorporation is necessary to achieve greater effectiveness in that office.

My suggestion would be to consider the question of incorporation rather carefully and approach it in a gradual way both to avoid misunderstandings and to achieve greater success.


Jack Marsh

