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National Security Adviser. Legislative Interdepartmental Group Files, 1971-1972 (1976)

Collection Type

White House Office Files

Extent

1.2 linear feet (ca. 2,400 pages)

Record Type

Textual

Access

Open, but some materials continue to be national security classified and restricted. Access is governed by the donor's deed of gift, a copy of which is available on request, and National Archives and Records Administration regulations (36 CFR 1256).

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Processed by

William McNitt, January 1997; Revised, March 2000; Revised by Ellen Wilson August 2010

Scope and Content Note

The Legislative Interdepartmental Group Files is one of many sub-collections that comprise the National Security Adviser Files. The provenance of the Ford National Security Adviser Files and an explanation of the designations "Presidential" and "Institutional" are provided in [Appendix A](#).

The role of the Legislative Interdepartmental Group (LIG) was to coordinate administration efforts in dealing with Congress on questions involving defense or national security matters. Although a LIG was formed early in the Nixon administration, it soon became inactive. Then in April 1971, staff members from the White House Congressional Relations Office met with congressional relations officials from Departments of State, Justice, and Defense; the Central Intelligence Agency; and the National Security Council (NSC) to reconstitute the LIG.

The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Henry Kissinger, chaired some of the early meetings of the LIG. Over time it became much more common to find his deputy, Alexander Haig, handling the duties. Occasionally a staff member from the NSC office handling congressional relations, or a representative from the White House Congressional Relations Office, stood in for Haig.

After meeting three times in April 1971 and four times in May, the LIG settled down to a pattern of meeting once every month or two for the rest of 1971 and on through September 1972. There is no evidence in this collection of any further LIG meetings until June 1973, after which the every-other-month pattern resumed and continued until May 1974. When Gerald Ford succeeded Richard Nixon as President in August 1974, the LIG began meeting regularly again until about the middle of 1975. After that, only two meetings were held, one in September 1975 and one in January 1976, and then the group became inactive again.

Meetings of the LIG varied in length from less than half an hour up to two hours and 45 minutes, with the majority lasting an hour or more. Early in its history, the LIG held its meetings in the White House Situation Room, but in later times they were held in the Roosevelt Room or, occasionally, in the Cabinet Room. Depending on the topic, sometimes officials from other agencies such as the Department of the Treasury or the Agency for International Development attended.

Before an LIG meeting, attendees usually received an agenda and background memoranda on the issues to be discussed. A representative of the NSC (often Staff Secretary Jeanne Davis) took notes on the discussions and usually produced either minutes or a record of decisions that was circulated to all members of the group.

This collection contains materials on the work of the LIG and was maintained by Jeanne Davis, the NSC staff secretary. Many of the documents are addressed to Henry Kissinger or Alexander Haig, often from NSC staff members John Lehman, Richard Kennedy, or Les Janka. Many documents have profile sheets added by the Secretariat that indicate the routing of the document and its final filing designation.

Documentation on individual meetings varies greatly. Many folders, but not all, contain minutes or a record of decisions (sometimes handwritten, sometimes typed, sometimes both). Some folders contain agendas and background papers on the topics being discussed. The most complete documentation covers the

meetings from 1971 and 1972. More than two-thirds of the collection dates from that time period. The folders for later meetings are much thinner, often containing only a briefing paper or only the record of decisions. The Chronological File contains significant materials on legislative liaison that do not relate to specific meetings.

The collection is useful for studying the planning of congressional relations efforts on foreign affairs and national security issues, especially during the Nixon administration. Most of these issues involved legislation, budget decisions, or treaty ratifications. Frequent topics of discussions were antiballistic missiles (ABM), the Vietnam War, foreign aid, security-classified information, the defense budget, Radio Free Europe, treaties and international agreements, foreign affairs, NATO, military bases, arms transfers, arms control, and attempts to cut the number of American troops in Europe and elsewhere.

Related Materials (August 2010)

Small amounts of material concerning LIG meetings during the Ford administration appear in the files of White House staff members involved with congressional liaison, including Max Friedersdorf (Box 4), William Kendall (Box 3), John Marsh (Box 20), and William Timmons (Box 4). Additional materials on the LIG and NSC congressional relations appear in the unprocessed files of Robert C. McFarlane, Military Assistant to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and the processed files of the NSC Press/Congressional Relations Staff. A large file on Congress in the collection Presidential Subject File does not contain any LIG materials, as it concerns only congressional meetings and contacts at the presidential level.

Last Modified Date

2025-03-17

Boxes 1-3

Meetings File, 1971-1972 (1976). (1.0 linear feet)

Memoranda, agendas, briefing papers, minutes, telegrams and records of decisions. The materials concern meetings of the Legislative Interdepartmental Group (LIG) during the Nixon and Ford administrations. At these meetings, representatives from the various departments and agencies involved in foreign

affairs and national security questions met to discuss the administration's strategy for dealing with Congress on legislative or budgetary issues or the ratification of treaties. Documentation is most complete on meetings from 1971 and 1972, with relatively small amounts of material for meetings in later years. Arranged chronologically in case files by the date of the meeting.

Box 1 - Meetings File

| Status | Title |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| OPEN | April 14, 1971 |
| OPEN | April 20, 1971 |
| OPEN | April 21, 1971 |
| OPEN | May 5, 1971 (1)-(2) |
| OPEN | May 12, 1971 |
| OPEN | May 13-14, 1971 |
| OPEN | May 27, 1971 (1)-(2) |
| OPEN | June 9, 1971 |
| OPEN | July 20, 1971 |
| OPEN | August 17, 1971 (1)-(3) |

Box 2 - Meetings File

| Status | Title |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| OPEN | October 8, 1971 (1)-(3) |
| OPEN | October 25-26, 1971 |
| OPEN | November 1, 1971 |
| OPEN | November 24, 1971 (1)-(4) |
| OPEN | January 26, 1972 |
| OPEN | March 10, 1972 |
| OPEN | April 25, 1972 |
| OPEN | May 25-26, 1972 |
| OPEN | June 12 and 16, 1972 |
| OPEN | July 7, 1972 |
| OPEN | September 13, 1972 (1)-(2) |

Box 3 - Meetings File

| Status | Title |
|---------------|--------------|
|---------------|--------------|

| | |
|------|--------------------|
| OPEN | June 22, 1973 |
| OPEN | August 31, 1973 |
| OPEN | October 12, 1973 |
| OPEN | November 9, 1973 |
| OPEN | January 14, 1974 |
| OPEN | February 7, 1974 |
| OPEN | March 1, 1974 |
| OPEN | May 7, 1974 |
| OPEN | August 19, 1974 |
| OPEN | September 24, 1974 |
| OPEN | November 22, 1974 |
| OPEN | December 3, 1974 |
| OPEN | December 9, 1974 |
| OPEN | February 7, 1975 |
| OPEN | April 14, 1975 |
| OPEN | September 12, 1975 |
| OPEN | January 13, 1976 |

Box 3

Chronological File, 1971-74. (0.2 linear feet)

Memoranda, briefing papers, correspondence and notes concerning the LIG, legislative coordination, or administration relations with Congress that do not relate to specific meetings of the LIG. Materials cover a broad range of topics, including foreign aid, national security, NATO, treaties and agreements, foreign affairs, and atomic energy. Arranged chronologically.

Box 3 (Continued) - Chronological File

| Status | Title |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| OPEN | April 1971-December 1971 |
| OPEN | January 1972-April 1972 |
| OPEN | May 1972-July 1973 |
| OPEN | August 1973-July 1974 |
| OPEN | August 1974-October 1974 |