

Jack Anderson and Les Whitten

An Energy Superagency

Getting the jump on Jimmy Carter, President Ford is preparing to demonstrate that he can knock bureaucratic heads together and get more efficiency out of the federal government.

He will begin, unless plans go awry, with a dramatic overhaul of the scattered bureaucratic enclaves that deal with energy problems. His reorganizers have been busy behind closed White House doors since May 20, pulling together the widespread energy functions and putting them under one giant superagency.

The reorganization plan is supposed to be ready, according to White House documents, on Aug. 20, which happens to be the day after the Republican National Convention concludes.

If the President wins the nomination, he could beat Carter, his likely Democratic presidential opponent, to the punch with a move to streamline the federal bureaucracy. The former Georgia governor has made an issue of the cumbersome bureaucracy, promising a shake-up if he becomes President.

Inside the Ford administration, meanwhile, the reorganization has touched off some savage infighting. Critics claim that not only is it a campaign stunt but that the proposed superagency would rival the departments of Health, Education and Welfare and Housing and Urban Development in mind-boggling unmanageability.

But White House advocates believe the reorganization would increase bureaucratic efficiency and speed U.S. energy independence, thereby saving billions of dollars.

As laid out in the documents, the superagency might include the Federal Energy Administration, Energy Research and Development Administration, Federal Power Commission and Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

It probably also would draw in bits and pieces of the Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Interior, State, Transportation and Treasury departments, not to mention the Council of Economic Advisers, Energy Resources Council, Environmental Protection Agency and Water Resources Council.

But the machinery to reform the bureaucracy has developed its own bureaucratic barnacles, with the resulting inevitable delays. The timetable, therefore, may be extended.

The new superagency would be charged with responsibility for developing a "comprehensive energy policy" to replace current catch-as-catch-can methods of dealing with crises.

Nixon vs. Press—The hostilities between the press and Richard M. Nixon during his White House years produced some extralegal and illegal government harassment. Now Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), citing our own case, has called upon the Justice Department to investigate whether "any violation of federal law" occurred.

Here are a few of the allegations, which Church has called to the attention of Attorney General Edward H. Levi:

- The Central Intelligence Agency illegally assigned 20 agents to keep us under surveillance. They allegedly took photographs of people entering our offices and planted a microphone in the office ceiling.

- White House plumbers G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt sought poison from the CIA to slip into our drinks or to apply to our car's steering wheels. The plumbers also directed an intensive investigation of us.

- The FBI arrested Les Whitten and obtained a list of our long-distance telephone calls from the phone company. No charges were brought against Whitten, and U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica ordered the FBI to destroy the long-distance telephone records.

- W. Donald Stewart, the Pentagon security chief during the Nixon years, has stated that the military conducted at least 11 investigations of us. One suspected source, Gene Smith, was hauled before a grand jury but nothing came of it.

- The Justice Department cooperated with International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. in investigating us. ITT hired the detective firm, Intertel, which worked with the Justice Department in an attempt to discredit us.