

White House Staff

Nixon's Is Record in Size

By Lou Cannon

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The White House staff has rather grown like Topsy. It has grown in every administration.

—President Nixon, Nov. 27 speech at Camp David.

But with the inauguration of Richard M. Nixon in 1969 . . . the addition of staff quite suddenly and without apparent reason skyrocketed beyond all previously known limits.

—Rep. Morris K. Udall, April 24 report.

The White House staff and its surrounding bureaucracy has grown to an unprecedented size and scope during the first four years of the Nixon administration.

In his reorganization message of 1970 the President used the word "mushroomed" to describe the expansion of the Executive Office of the President during the past three decades. That mushrooming has proliferated ever since, with these results:

Since Mr. Nixon took office, the cost of operating the Executive Office of the President has risen from \$31 million to \$71 million. The

size of the Executive Office has more than doubled, to 4,216 persons. The White House staff has increased from 250 to 510 persons plus an uncounted number of other persons detailed there from various agencies.

It is the contrast between this growth and the President's announced plans for federal fiscal austerity that prompted Mr. Nixon's Camp David comment about Topsy-like growth.

"I felt from the beginning that it was important that the White House establish the example for the government in terms of cutting down on personnel, doing a better job with fewer people," the President said at Camp David. "Consequently, while there will be cuts in personnel across the government, throughout the departments, the biggest cuts will be made in the White House staff itself."

The staff cutback announcements are scheduled within the next week to 10 days, domestic affairs adviser John D. Ehrlichman

See STAFF, A14, Col. 1

STAFF, From A1

said Friday. He made the comment while answering questions about the President's new proposal to streamline the executive departments, an action which Ehrlichman predicted would cut the payroll of the Executive Office of the President in half by the end of the fiscal year, June 30.

Within the vast executive office—which includes 18 separate groups ranging from the National Security Council to the Office of Economic Opportunity—the vital core of the White House staff has grown steadily.

That staff, which had been increasing in size ever since the Truman administration, declined slightly on paper in the final years of the Johnson administration—but only on paper.

When President Nixon took office, he found 250 persons formally on the staff and 326 persons more who were detailed from other agencies and carried on other payrolls or paid out of a White House "special projects" fund.

President Nixon proposed, "in the interest of candor and accuracy" to count detailed personnel as staff members and to pay their salaries out of White House funds. Though the White House staff in 1971 jumped to 548 from its 250 figure of the year before, Budget director Robert Mayo said the figure actually was a decrease of 28 in the number of persons working at the White House.

"or the first time in many years this estimate combines into one appropriation the actual White House staff costs that traditionally have been dispersed and obscured," Mayo told a House appropriations subcommittee in 1970.

Congress responded enthusiastically to this call for candor and gave the President the \$9.5 million he requested for the payroll.

With the appropriation went the understanding that the staff count would henceforth be an accurate one.

The Nixon administration subsequently requested appropriations for a White House staff of 540 in the 1972 fiscal year budget and a staff of 510 in the 1973 fiscal year ending June 30.

"In 1972 we have no details from other agencies not shown in the 540 and we do not have any details shown from other agencies outside of the 510 we requested for 1973," budget director Caspar W. Weinberger testified before the same House appropriations subcommittee in May, 1972.

Though Mayo and Weinberger apparently were unaware of it, the information supplied to them about the White House's new policy of "accurate counting" came from a person who was himself a detailee not included in the White House staff totals.

He was Noble Melencamp, chief executive clerk at the White House, who was then and is now on detail from the State Department.

Nor was Melencamp an isolated case.

The foreign service list published by the State Department at approximately the time Winberger was testifying showed eight persons detailed to the White House. The latest such list, for October, 1972, shows nine such detailees.

Though Melencamp will not discuss these discrepancies publicly—"White House policy requires me to refer these calls to the press office," he told a reporter—he admitted the presence of three of the State Department detailees in a reply to questions submitted by the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress.

There is every indication that the State Department detailees are only the tip of the iceberg.



JOHN EHRLICHMAN
... predicts payroll cut



ROBERT P. MAYO
... claims accurate costs

Other departments are less candid than the State Department about the existence of their detailees. But an examination of available records and a spot check of various White House offices shows at least 80 employees who do not appear on the White House payroll records and are not members of either the National Security Council Staff or the Domestic Council staff. The latter two groups, while headquartered in the White House, are part of the Executive Office of the President rather than the White House staff.

A Civil Service Commission report published in November found that in August the White House staff included 606 employees compared to 311 in June of 1970. This figure includes some part-time employees not in the 510 figure, but it includes none of the detailees.

In contrast to the "candor and accuracy" declaration made in 1970 when Mayo was talking about detailees in the Johnson administration the White House now refuses to identify the number of persons who serve on the staff but whose names do not appear on White House payrolls.

"We don't have any figures available," deputy press secretary Gerald Warren said Friday. He declined to give a reason as to why the figure would not be made public.

In the recent past, Congress has usually declined to press the President for any accurate compilation of White House staff.

"It's insignificant from what payroll a staff member is paid," says Aubrey A. Gunnels, the ranking staff member of the House Treasury, Post Office and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee before which Mayo and Weinberger testified.

"We would give the President the tools he needs to do his job just as we wouldn't expect him to tell the Congress how many people we need. It's called the rule of comity."

This rule has not been without its benefits for the chairman of the appropriations subcommittee, Rep. Tom Steed (D-Okla.).

A Republican supporter of Jay Wilkinson, the son of former Oklahoma football coach Bud Wilkinson, recalls that the White House showed "considerable reluctance" to involve itself in the 1970 congressional election when the younger Wilkinson was the Republican nominee opposing Steed. The election ended in a runaway victory for Steed, who won with 85 per cent of the vote.

This same Republican believes that any President of either party behaves pretty much the same.

"There is sort of an aura of protection," this Republican says. "No matter who the President is, the



CASPAR WEINBERGER
... says detailees listed

committee treats him pretty much with kid gloves and no President is anxious to change that."

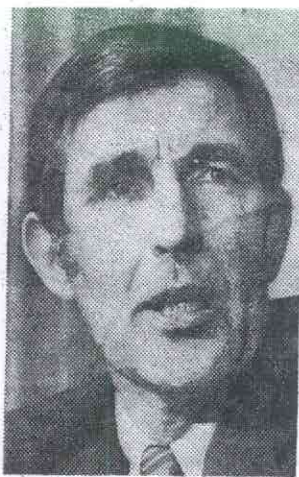
Other congressmen have been less reluctant to criticize the growth of the White House staff.

A report by the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee prepared under the direction of Rep. Morris K. Udall (D-Ariz.) contrasted Mr. Nixon's reorganization pledge "to reduce duplication, to monitor performance and to promote greater efficiency throughout the executive branch" with the staff growth and with what Udall called "new layers of bureaucracy" in the executive office.

"The personal staff of Richard Nixon, with its overwhelming size, shadowy functions and obvious influence has undermined the traditional decision-making rules and inter-relationship of the other branches of our government," Udall charged. "Not only has this affected the powers of Congress, but it has unquestionably eroded the responsibilities of the Cabinet and the stabilizing controls of the Civil Service."

In a letter yesterday to Steed and Sen. Joseph Montoya (D-N.M.), two other Democratic congressmen—Rep. Phillip Burton of California and Rep. Les Aspin of Wisconsin—accused the White House of using its allocated funds for unauthorized purposes.

Burton and Aspin forwarded numerous examples of discrepancies between White House actions and the testimony of Mayo and Weinberger before congressional committees. The ma-



REP. MORRIS K. UDALL
... attacks staff size

terial was prepared by Gary Sellers, a Burton employee who once worked four years for the Budget Bureau.

The criticisms for the most part have been dismissed by the White House.

Ehrlichman referred to Udall's report as a "political handbill" and said that the Nixon administration, unlike its immediate predecessor,

was practicing "truth in advertising."

In the opinion of one White House source with a wide knowledge of the budget process it is the repeated claims of "candor and accuracy" and "truth in advertising" that make it difficult for the administration to give a full staff count.

"It isn't that we have so many detailees," says this source. "It's simply that we made a claim before Congress that we weren't going to follow the practice of hiding people anymore and now we've got to seem purer than Caesar's wife. We should have admitted that we need some detailed personnel."

Matthew Coffey, a personnel recruiter during the Johnson administration who now works for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, holds a similar view. Coffey, who worked four years in the White House while on the Civil Service Commission payroll, believes that Presidents al-

ways will use detailees because of the necessity of hiring specialists in a hurry.

"You don't eliminate detailing to cure the problem of not admitting having people on the staff," Coffey says.

Even if all the detailed persons were counted, it would be almost impossible to obtain a fully accurate picture of the number of people working at the White House.

The staff figures, with or without detailees, do not include any of the 1,286 Secret Service agents, the 305 members of the Executive Protective Service, the uncounted numbers of military personnel detailed to the White House mess and to the medical care of the President and his staff, a score of Army sergeants who chauffeur Mr. Nixon's principal assistants, 15 archivists who are preparing files for the Nixon library and various gardeners detailed by the National Park Service for the White House grounds.