

How Nixon Is Choosing Staff of Team Players

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Washington

Phase two of President Nixon's second-term restaffing and reorganization plan has seen the emergence of a White House control mechanism relying, in major roles, on men whose credentials have been proven to the President's satisfaction in previous assignments on his personal staff.

With less fanfare than attended the job announcements of their nominal cabinet-level superiors, the White House has been trickling out word of the movement of these executive office functionaries into key spots in the departments and agencies.

The transfers and announcements are far from complete, but already there is evident a centrally directed network of decision-making and reporting jobs quite different from the formal structure of cabinet responsibility.

Some Administration enthusiasts see this as an answer to the President's often-expressed desire for more responsive government and a command system that will cut through the red tape and bureaucracy.

SHIFT

Some Capitol Hill critics see it as an end around Congress' reluctance to accept the President's reorganization plans and a move that will shift decision-making power away from the Cabinet secretaries, who are accessible to congressional pressures.

Whatever it proves to be in practice, the evident purpose of the new arrangement is to put some of the "President's men" into key spots in the major government departments and in the agencies that can cause trouble when they are not, in the White House phrase, "run by team players."

The decision to staff these vital second-echelon spots with Nixon loyalists is exactly opposite what the President did at the outset of his first term.

When he assembled his first cabinet, Mr. Nixon — then imbued with the doctrine of decentralized administration, with each Cabinet officer supreme in his own area of responsibility — told his appointees they would have a free hand in selecting their subordinates.

CHANGES

The reorganization efforts he has undertaken since then — the creation of the Domestic Council, the Office of Management and Budget and the congressionally stymied plan to reorganize the Cabinet departments — were designed to centralize authority for domestic programs in the hands of people appointed by and responsible to the President.

That same pattern is discernible in the incomplete roster of new administration assignments.

The top two men in the Office of Management and Budget — the President's principal tool for shaping bureaucratic budgets and decisions — are moving into the top two jobs in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the largest and, in many ways, the most intractable of the domestic departments.

WELFARE

Caspar Weinberger, longtime Nixon political associate in California, has been shifted from director of OMB to secretary to HEW. Frank C. Carlucci, his deputy at OMB, is to be his undersecretary at HEW.

Meanwhile, Fred Malek, a troubleshooter for the President at the White House and on his re-election campaign, will move into Carlucci's old slot, with Roy Ash, a part-time consultant to the President for the past four years and the principal architect of the reorganization plan, moving into the key role as head of OMB.

Three of the principal staff members of the Domestic Council are moving into major operating jobs in three domestic departments.

Edward L. Morgan is becoming assistant secretary of treasury; John C. Whitaker, undersecretary of interior; and Egil (Bud) Krogh Jr., undersecretary of transportation.

All three have worked closely with John D. Ehrlichman, the President's assistant for domestic affairs, and Kenneth R. Cole Jr., Ehrlichman's deputy, who is slated to take over as the principal staff man for the Domestic Council.

Three other White House staff men are moving into top jobs in agencies that have had more than their share of controversy and problems.

Frank C. Herring will run the Urban Mass Transportation Administration; Alexander P. Butterfield, the Federal Aviation Administration, and Ronald H. Walker, the National Park service.

The President has also reached into his staff for two major diplomatic assignments, sending Donald Rumsfeld, a counselor to the President and head of the Cost of Living Council, as ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and naming John Scali, a former newsman and public relations consultant as ambassador to the United Nations.

William L. Gifford, a member of the White House legislative liaison team, is going to the Treasury Department as its assistant secretary for legislative affairs, and Kenneth Dam, an assistant director of OMB, will become a deputy to Secretary of Treasury George P. Shultz in Shultz's role as a presidential assistant for economic affairs.

Administration officials indicate these are by no means the last of the movements from White House staff to departments. Major sub-cabinet jobs are open — with resignations announced but no successors named in Housing and Urban Development, Health, Education and Welfare, Labor and Commerce, among others.

UNDERSTANDING

All four of those departments have new secretaries and White House officials say they were named with the clear understanding that their deputies would be people selected by the White House.

This clear assertion of White House primacy in staffing the departments has led to questions about the extent of the Cabinet secretaries' authority even within their own jurisdictions.

There are suggestions that the President may be seeking to accomplish, through his appointive power, the consolidation of domestic departments along functional lines which he recommended to Congress two years ago. The legislation required for that consolidation never came to a vote.

