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Nixon Seeks to Keep Staff From 'Politics'

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 3— President Nixon reportedly plans to reorganize Republican political operations so as to divorce day-by-day politics from the Presidential staff.

A separation of functions would enable the President to assert that he had "taken the White House out of politics," even if, as expected, he and some of his aides retained control over party affairs.

It would fit with Mr. Nixon's privately expressed intention to seek re-election, like most past Presidents, as a "statesman" and not a political partisan.

In its present form, sources close to the White House said, the reorganization plan calls for Bryce N. Harlow, a counselor to the President, to take over as chairman of the Republican National Committee. The present chairman, Representative Rogers C. B. Morton of Maryland, will be nominated soon as Secretary of the Interior.

The sources also said that Mr. Nixon's two principal political liaison men, Harry S. Dent and Murray Chotiner, would accompany Mr. Harlow to the National Committee.

Whether the plan will be put into effect will depend in part on whether the President is able to persuade Mr. Harlow, an old friend from the Eisenhower era, to make the switch. Mr. Harlow, who is 54 years old, has expressed some reluctance.

Harlow Reluctant

Friends of the White House aide said that he wanted to return as soon as possible to his lucrative job as chief Washington lobbyist for the Procter & Gamble Company. They questioned whether the company would be willing to continue his leave of absence if he involved himself overtly in political management.

Asked about reports linking him with the chairmanship, Mr. Harlow replied:

"I can categorically confirm that there are such rumors and

they are all-pervasive. You can write that Harlow's comment was obfuscating."

Most White House and National Committee officials believe that Mr. Nixon will succeed in persuading Mr. Harlow to take the new job. If the President does not — either because he decides not to "lean" very hard or because Mr. Harlow is adamant — the situation could become confused, with no clear alternate candidate.

Donald Rumsfeld, the director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, who had been prominently mentioned for the job, has reportedly persuaded the President or his advisers that he was not the man for the job. Representative George Bush of Texas, another early possibility, had not been approached as of yesterday.

Many leading Republicans have said, publicly in some cases and privately in others, that they would not want the job because the National Committee has not had and will not have real power.

Suggestion by Tower

Senator John G. Tower of Texas, chairman of the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee, said today that the new chairman should be someone the White House trusts and that the committee should be given more authority for setting political strategy.

"I think it is proper to say," Senator Tower remarked at a news conference, "that there is some sentiment for placing more of the Administration's political operations with the National Committee and National Chairman."

Of the 1970 campaign, he

said, "Morton and I worked very well together, but very often we were not aware of what the White House was doing."

Much the same view has been expressed privately by the professional staff at the committee in recent days. Sources there said they would not be surprised to see Mr. Harlow and Mr. Dent moved over from the White House, although one official said he did not expect Mr. Chotiner to be involved.

Mr. Nixon's projected reorganization would give at least the appearance of substantive duties for the national committee.

But few Republicans doubt that Attorney General John N. Mitchell will organize and operate Mr. Nixon's 1972 campaign, probably from an office separate from the committee.

Both Mr. Rumsfeld and Robert H. Finch, another Presidential counselor, are expected to continue to provide political counsel to Mr. Nixon from within the White House.

According to a well-placed Republican Senator, an informal selection committee has been set up at the White House to handle the reorganization. The Senator said its members were Mr. Nixon, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Finch and Mr. Harlow, with the President obviously holding veto power.