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That White House 'Shakeup' Was Not Really a Shakeup at All

THERE ARE TWO reorganizations underway these days in the Nixon administration, one the "major shakeup" promised by the White House in the aftermath of the election and in the other the reorganization which is actually taking place.

The annotated reorganization was a top-to-bottom affair that would revitalize government and prevent what President Nixon sees as an "historical pattern" in which administrations suffer from tired blood in their second four years.

"The only way that historical pattern can be changed is to change not only some of the players but some of the plays," Mr. Nixon said in his Camp David speech two weeks ago.

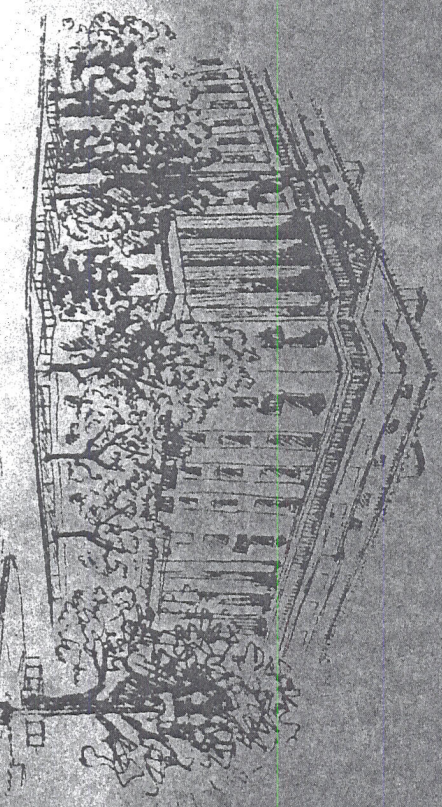
IT WOULD BE more accurate to say that the President is keeping most of the players and changing their positions. Only Labor Secretary Peter Brennan, Transportation Secretary Claude Brinegar and prospective Commerce Secretary Frederick Dent are new faces. In the government though it could be argued that Roy Ash, who headed a reorganization task force for the President, also is new to the administration.

What changes have occurred are almost entirely at the cabinet and sub-cabinet level where Mr. Nixon believes his appointees are most susceptible to becoming captives of the bureaucracy. Though the President promised in his Camp David speech the White House

would set the example for reorganization and personnel reductions, the announcements indicated that the President's men in the second term will be the same as they were before. After announcing the retention of 11 White House officials ranging from No. 1 assistant H. R. Haldeman to presidential secretary Rose Mary Woods, Presidential Press Secretary Ron Ziegler concluded last week that the reorganization was not a shakeup "in the traditional way the words are used."

In fact, on the White House staff level the shakeup is not really a shakeup at all. The impression conveyed by Ziegler's barrage of announcements is that everybody is going and that Charles Colson, the controversial special counsel, has been kind enough to stay or for 60 days and help in the transition. What is actually happening is that almost everyone else is staying and that Colson is going. A few other administrative figures, notably Bob Finch and Harry Dent, are also departing, but their intentions were announced at least a year before the election.

THE ANNOYING FACT is that haven't been made as revealing as the ones that have been. Two other administration officials, in addition to Colson, were linked by pre-election reports to the still-unproven charges that the administration played a direct role in espionage against the Democratic opposition. These two, White House Appointments Secretary Dwight Chapin and Deputy Communications Director Kenneth Clawson, also are staying if they want to stay. Additionally, Chapin has been told to make himself unavailable to questions from the press.



There is always the possibility, of course, that sweeping changes will be made in the staff at some distant remove from the elections. Some administration insiders, for instance, believe that the communications division headed by Herb Klein will be phased out at some point and the entire propaganda apparatus of the White House placed under Ziegler when and if Klein leaves. President Nixon's pledge to cut back a staff which he said had "grown like Topsy" during his first term was unequivocal, and there is a widespread belief within the White House that further changes are coming in the spring and summer. But they have not occurred thus far, even though the impression of vast change has been created.

So far, the White House staff shakeup remains a paper proclamation.