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**FROM CARTER TO REAGAN: FORMULATION OF AMERICAN  
FOREIGN POLICY DURING A TIME OF TRANSITION**  
*An Explanation of Foreign Policy Decisions Based  
on the Initial Presidential Transition Period*

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

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## ABSTRACT

Domestic and foreign policies are made, not born. Some policies are reworked and redefined. Some policies stagnate due to a lack of interest. In more unfortunate circumstances, policies are adapted from deteriorating policy situations.

During the transition between the Carter and Reagan administrations, the Reagan administration established a navigational course 180 degrees from that of the Carter administration. This was especially evident in the area of foreign policy and the use of the National Security Council.

This essay will explore the foreign policy of the Carter and Reagan Administrations, examine the presidential management styles of each president, discuss the transition between the different administrations, and attempt to draw some conclusions for developing an effective presidential transition period.



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## INTRODUCTION

Domestic and foreign policies are made, not born. Some policies are reworked and redefined. Some policies stagnate due to a lack of interest. In more unfortunate circumstances, policies are adapted from deteriorating policy situations.

During the transition between the Carter and Reagan administrations, the Reagan administration established a navigational course 180 degrees from that of the Carter administration. This was especially evident in the area of foreign policy and the use of the National Security Council.

This essay will explore the foreign policy of the Carter and Reagan Administrations, examine the presidential management styles of each president, discuss the transition between the different administrations, and attempt to draw some conclusions for developing an effective presidential transition period.

The 1980 election led to the 15<sup>th</sup> presidential transition of this century and the eighth transition involving a party change since the four-term presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR). Since FDR, presidential transitions have come with increasing frequency – seven since 1950. Constitutionally then, it is logical that a domestic and foreign policy transition plan should be formulated.<sup>1</sup>

Because the United States (U.S.) government is dynamic, it must constantly be mobilized for change. New directions established by incoming administrations must be skillfully articulated to ensure current policy is not damaged thereby ensuring smooth policy transitions. The ripples of change begin when the president-elect is identified and end when the presidential inauguration takes place. Normally this period is no longer than three months. The transition of the 1980-1981 demonstrates this ripple of change.

The Reagan transition of 1980-1981 can be set aside from post FDR political transitions for several reasons: first, a decisive victory was obtained; second, the Republican Party gains throughout Congress produced a majority of conservatism within the Senate; and, finally, a viable Ronald Reagan presence dominated the White House.<sup>2</sup>

At this juncture, we may ask: what political variables influenced such a dynamic of change to the existing political environment? Is there any way that an incumbent's administrative domestic and foreign policy decisions create a caustic political environment as to be self-defeating? And if so, then what would the interim foreign policy transitional environment be like? To set the stage for a presidential transitional discussion, a brief review of the Carter and Reagan administration's foreign policy is warranted.

## FOREIGN POLICY IN THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION

Foreign affairs within the Carter administration went through three periods. The first period, 1976-1978, I refer to as the “evangelical” period.<sup>3</sup>

During the “evangelical” period, the Carter administration reintroduced foreign affairs to human rights<sup>4</sup>, i.e., the calculus of human rights became a prominent policy issue during foreign affairs discussions. Upon taking office in early 1977, President Carter appeared determined to reverse the preoccupation with containment of communism that had dominated American Foreign Policy for the past three decades. The time had come, he announced in his first major speech on international affairs, to move beyond the belief “that Soviet expansion was almost inevitable but that it must be contained,” beyond “that inordinate fear of communism which once led us to embrace any dictator who joined us in that fear,” beyond the tendency “to adopt the flawed and erroneous principles and tactics of our adversaries, sometimes abandoning our own values for theirs,” beyond the “crisis of confidence” produced by Vietnam and “made even more grave by the covert pessimism of some of our leaders.” “It is a new-world,” Carter stressed, “but America should not fear it. It is a new world; we should help to shape it. It is a new world that calls for a new American foreign policy—a policy based on constant decency in its values and on optimism in our historical vision.<sup>5</sup> During this period, Carter’s foreign policies (injected with a human rights quality) were articulated by Andrew Young, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (UN). The Carter administration continued this tact despite overt protests by the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> To further promulgate this adaptation to foreign policy, the U.S. voted for a UN embargo of arms sales to South Africa and ended importation of chromium from Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). In May of 1977, restrictions on arms sales to all nations not linked to U.S. treaties or alliances were announced. In February of 1978, the U.S. extended fishing rights to 200 miles

off shore (this gave priority to fishing to U.S. fisherman and limited foreign fishing). This period closed with the U.S. and Panama treaties, September 7, 1979. The U.S. and Panama treaty provided for full control of the Panama Canal to Panama at the end of 1999.<sup>7</sup>

The second period, from 1978-1979, was characterized by a continued conciliatory line in dealing with the Soviets, some foreign policy victories; however, concerning foreign policy promulgation, the period can be summed up as generally a period of ambivalence.<sup>8</sup> In a follow-up response to the joint U.S. and Soviet communiqué, 10 Oct 1977, the U.S. sponsored a meeting at Camp David, Maryland, 6 December 1978. These accords brokered between President Carter, Menachem Begin (Prime Minister of Israel) and Anwar Sadat (President of Egypt) initiated the signing of the initial peace accords between Egypt and Israel, 26 March 1979. This particular accord is considered the most important achievement of the Carter administration.<sup>9</sup> However, this achievement would slip away under the vivid realization of Soviet expansionism, thus closing the period of ambivalence

The final period, 1979-1980, can be characterized as non-conciliatory. It starts with the seizure of American hostages in the U.S. embassy in Teheran, Iran, 4 November 1979, and concludes with the boycott of the Summer Olympic Games in Moscow, August 1980. On 27 December 1979, Soviet troops entered Afghanistan. This reassurance of reality (maintenance of the status quo) towards Soviet expansionist policy ended the liberal conciliatory line. In a wordy protest, President Carter called the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan a most serious threat to the peace of the world since World War II. Later, in response to Soviet expansionism, President Carter boycotted the Olympic Games and advocated for a real three percent increase in overall military outlays.<sup>10</sup>

Even though there was nothing epochal about the Carter administration, he will be remembered as a failure in both domestic (inflation rocketed into double digits) and foreign policy (his inability to deal with the Iranian hostage crisis). Inflation and retreat, thus, characterized his administration's historical record.<sup>11</sup>

President Carter began his presidency with a call for a "New World Order" based on human rights and an abrupt cut in military expenditures.<sup>12</sup> However, the President's plans ended in vacillation and later outright contradiction.<sup>13</sup> Although there are many reasons for his failure in foreign policy, I believe two reasons surface above the rest.

The first is a total acceptance of the Trilateral Commission (TC) perspective. The TC perspective embraced a program for inter-capitalist cooperation (notably between the U.S., Japan, and Western Europe), based on a post-Vietnam analysis of America's place in the world.<sup>14</sup> The commission's key concept was complex interdependence'.<sup>15</sup> In essence, the American drive toward military and economic global superiority was over!

The second failure had to do with the appearance, planning and subsequent execution of foreign policy. Carter's two principal foreign policy advisors, Cyrus Vance and Zbigniew Brzezinski, generally held two opposing views regarding the entire basis of America's position in the world.<sup>16</sup> Essentially, Vance leaned towards detente and Brzezinski towards containment. Details of these positions were formulated in two important position papers. Vance's paper was presented to candidate Carter in October 1976<sup>17</sup> while Brzezinski's was given to President Carter in April 1977<sup>18</sup>. In fact, Vance, Carter, and Brzezinski all wished to modify what the latter described in his memoirs as America's hysterical preoccupations' with the Soviet communism.<sup>19</sup> As Alexander George would later comment concerning the Carter Presidency, he was not a comfortable president, "...he was one who could not execute effective policy decisions in

tranquil times.”<sup>20</sup> During this period of time, you could almost hear the country yearn for an executive who would take charge and make the complicated instrument of government work!<sup>21</sup>

The following Cabinet members made up the Carter Administration: Secretary of State: Cyrus R. Vance (1977-80); Edmund S. Muskie (1980-81); Secretary of the Treasury: W. Michael Blumenthal (1977-79); G. William Miller (1979-81); Secretary of Defense: Harold Brown; Attorney General: Griffin B. Bell (1977-79); Benjamin R. Civiletti (1979-81); Secretary of the Interior: Cecil D. Andrus. Secretary of Agriculture: Robert S. Bergland; Secretary of Commerce: Juanita M. Kreps (1977-79); Philip Klutznick (1979-81); Secretary of Labor: F. Ray Marshall; Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare: Joseph A. Califano, Jr. (1977-79); Patricia R. Harris (1979-81); Department divided in 1980 into the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education; Secretary of Education: Shirley Hufstedler (1980-81); Secretary of Housing and Urban Development: Patricia R. Harris (1977-79); Moon Landrieu (1979-81); Secretary of Transportation: Brock Adams (1977-79); Neil E. Goldschmidt (1979-81); Secretary of Energy: James R. Schlesinger (1977-79); and, Charles W. Duncan, Jr. (1979-81).<sup>22</sup>

### **In summary**

Carter’s foreign policy often stressed moral principles. His goals, he said, were peace, arms control, economic cooperation, and the advancement of human rights. His efforts toward peace in the Middle East were widely acclaimed. In the fall of 1978, the leaders of Egypt and Israel met with him at Camp David, Maryland, and agreed on basic principles for a peace treaty. A treaty was signed in 1979. But negotiations on details of the peace made slow progress.<sup>23</sup>

Carter concluded new treaties with Panama, giving the country control of the Panama Canal by the year 2000. These treaties were controversial, but the U.S. Senate ratified them in

1978. Diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China were established in 1979. In June, 1979, Carter signed a new strategic arms limitation treaty with the Soviet Union. But this treaty met with strong opposition in Congress.<sup>24</sup>

At the end of 1979 two issues arose that severely tested Carter's leadership. In November, Iranian militants seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held the Americans hostage. In December, the Soviet Union sent troops into Afghanistan to put down a rebellion against that country's Communist government. To free the hostages, the United States attempted to negotiate with Iranian leaders. Carter also halted trade with Iran. He appealed to the United Nations and the World Court. When these measures were not successful, Carter ordered military action to try to free the hostages, but the rescue mission failed.<sup>25</sup>

As a result of the Soviet action in Afghanistan, Carter asked Congress to delay consideration of the new arms treaty. He limited trade with the Soviet Union and called for a boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympic Games, which were held in Moscow.

## FOREIGN POLICY IN THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

As Garry Wills notes in his 1988 book entitled *Reagan's America*, President-elect Reagan "...used the bureaucracy in ways consistent with its structure and, if anything, sharpened such structural attributes as role differential, communication channels, and command and control mechanisms."<sup>26</sup>

Prior to the Republican Party nomination, Reagan began to plan for a transition. His approach seemed so deliberately chosen to avoid what were considered millstones by the Carter transition team four years earlier.

In retrospect, the Carter Administration was muddled with confusion, a general lack of guidance throughout the chain of command, and consistent power struggles within the top cabinet positions.<sup>27</sup> These problems hampered Carter's effectiveness and seemed to remain with him throughout this administration, as evidenced with his reputation with Congress.<sup>28</sup> However, Reagan all but resolved most of these issues during his transition.

Unlike the Carter debacle, Reagan's team was cohesive, focused, and oriented towards the stated campaign platform. His programs offered an economic strategy constructed on integrity, such as a balanced budget<sup>29</sup>, and a foreign policy strategy emphasizing an increase in defense spending.<sup>30</sup> To effectively manage these programs, President-elect Reagan relied on a team composed of California loyalists and conservative policy advocates to manage the government and direct national domestic and foreign policy toward the President's new priorities.

President-elect Reagan's priorities were accomplished through William J. Casey, Director of the Transition Team and former Campaign Director.<sup>31</sup> In addition to Casey, the



intricacy of transition operations revolved around Edwin Meese III, former campaign chief of staff and trusted Reagan confidant.<sup>32</sup>

Through Meese, priorities established by the President-elect were managed aggressively and executed quietly. Meese's ability to provide effective direction and willingness to let staffers develop and execute plans proved invaluable to the new Reagan team. Staffers such as Ronald Franklin, a California lawyer, developed the transition organizational diagram flow charting responsibilities of the staff within the team; Pendelton James, an executive recruiting consultant who served in the Nixon administration's personnel office, provided the plan and guidance for internal personnel operations; Peter McPhearson, a Washington attorney, performed confidential missions and maintained liaison with the General Services Administration concerning the transition headquarters.<sup>33</sup>

Rounding out the remaining senior transition advisors were: Richard V. Allen, foreign affairs and national security; Martin Anderson, domestic and economic issues; and Casper Weinberger for budget and management. All three of these individuals served in the Nixon administration and came with a wealth of experience. Weinberger also served with Reagan in California as Reagan's finance director.<sup>34</sup>

Hand-picked personnel, selected on loyalty, bathed in experience and conservatism, provided the mechanism for the young Reagan administration to formulate and execute a cohesive domestic and foreign policy from the start.

From the evidence, it is easy to see how Reagan's upper level transition network resolved the numerous managerial and organizational problems encountered by the previous administration. The majority of mid and lower transition staff planners were selected from pre-election transition planners, campaign staffers, issue advisory members, academicians (which

included conservative think tank personnel), friendly business and law firms, and veterans of the Nixon and Ford administrations. Mid and lower Reagan advocates were also based on loyalty and conservatism.

## **PRESIDENTIAL MANAGEMENT MODELS, THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, AND FOREIGN-POLICYMAKING**

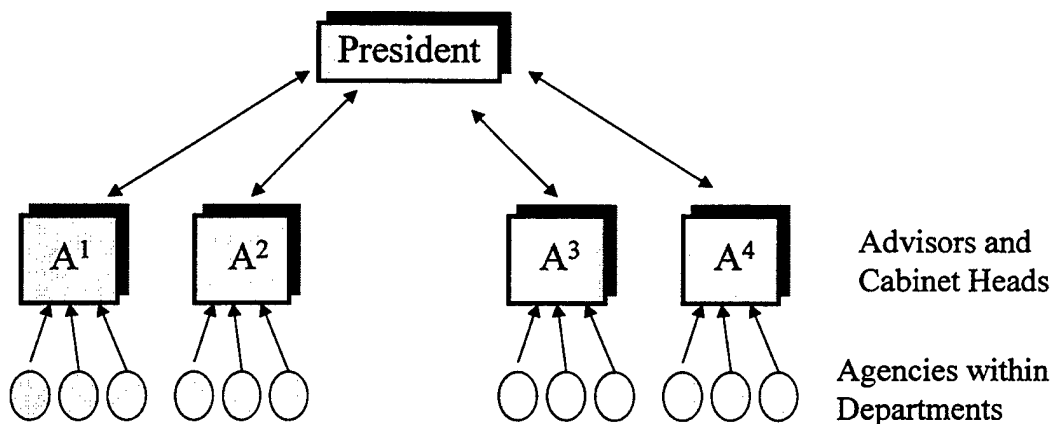
Every new president faces the task of deciding how to structure and manage high-level foreign-policymaking in his administration. This task is formidable since responsibility for different aspects of national security and foreign policy is distributed over a number of departments and agencies. Relevant information, competence, and influence over policy are widely dispersed within the executive branch. This imposes on the president and his assistants the task of mobilizing available information, expertise, and analytical resources for effective policymaking. The president and his closest associates have the responsibility for providing policy initiative and coherence throughout the executive branch.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, how well the president manages information, including the organization he establishes, will directly impact on how well the policy is executed by his administration.

Three management models have been identified that characterize at least in general terms the approaches displayed by different presidents in recent times.<sup>36</sup> These are the “formalistic,” “competitive,” and “collegial” models. The formalistic model is characterized by an orderly policymaking structure, one that provides well-defined procedures, hierarchical lines of communication, and a structured staff system. While the formalistic model seeks to benefit from the diverse view and judgements of participants in policymaking, it also discourages open conflict and bargaining among them.<sup>37</sup> Listed below is a brief discussion of the three types of formalistic models.

Characteristic features of the formalistic model as used by Truman: (1) specialized information and advice flows to the president from each of his cabinets and advisors; (2) the president tends to define the role of each cabinet head as a functional expert on some aspect of national security or foreign policy; each official briefs the president authoritatively on that aspect

of a policy problem for which he has jurisdiction; (3) each adviser receives information and advice from his subordinate units; (4) the president does not encourage his advisors to communicate with each other or to engage in joint efforts at policy analysis and problem-solving; (5) the president sticks to channels and seldom reaches down to bypass a cabinet head to get independent information and or advice from one of his subordinates; and, (6) the president takes responsibility for intellectual synthesis of specialized inputs on a policy problem received from his advisers.<sup>38</sup>

### The Formalistic Model, as used by Truman



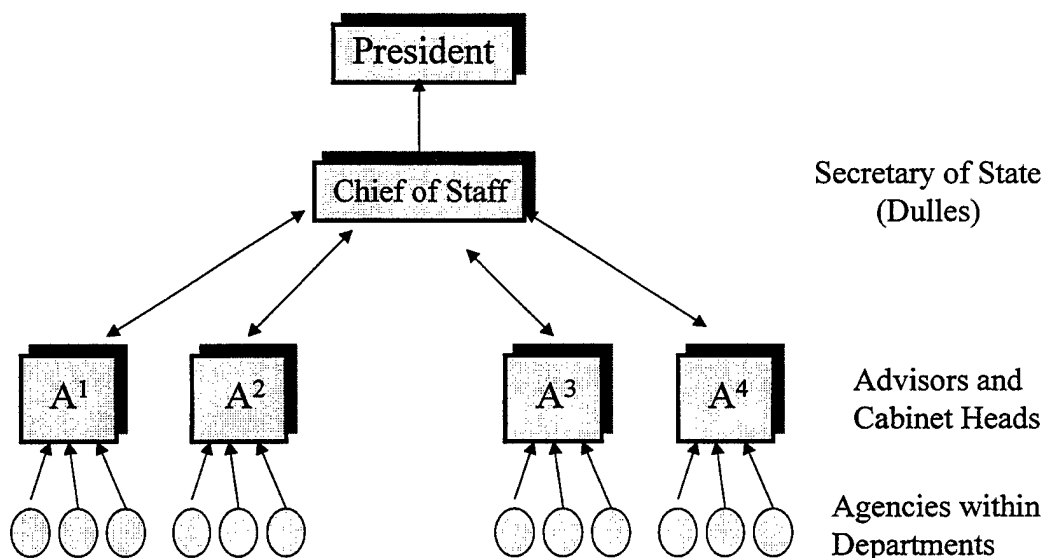
Dwight D. Eisenhower avoided personal involvement as much as possible in the bureaucratic politics aspects of policymaking within the executive branch and in less savory aspects of politics generally.

The Eisenhower variant of the formalistic model encompassed advocacy and disengagement at lower levels of the policy-making system, even though he wanted subordinates eventually to achieve agreement on recommendations for his considerations.

Characteristic features of the Eisenhower model: are similar to the Truman variant with two notable exceptions: (1) a "chief of staff" position is created to be utilized, when the president

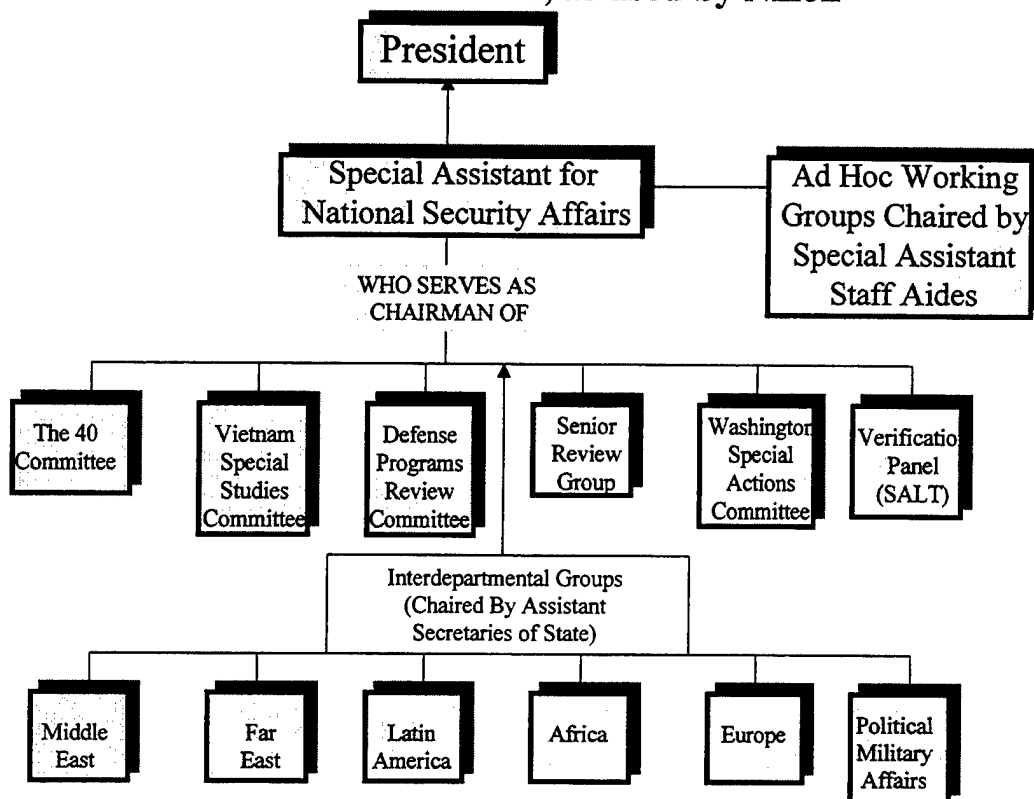
wishes, as a buffer between himself and cabinet heads and to arrange for preparation of formal recommendations to the president; and, (2) unlike the Truman model, the president attempts to protect himself from being overloaded by using advisers/cabinet heads to analyze problems and resolve policy differences wherever possible at lower levels.<sup>39</sup>

### The Formalistic Model, as used by Eisenhower



The Nixon variant was established to eliminate bureaucratic and cabinet politics as much as possible and to enhance and protect his personal control over high policy development. The Nixon model took the “chief of staff” concept to another level in that six special committees was set up operating out of the NSC, each chaired by Kissinger. Thus, the Nixon model is viewed as the most centralized and highly structured model yet employed by any president.<sup>40</sup>

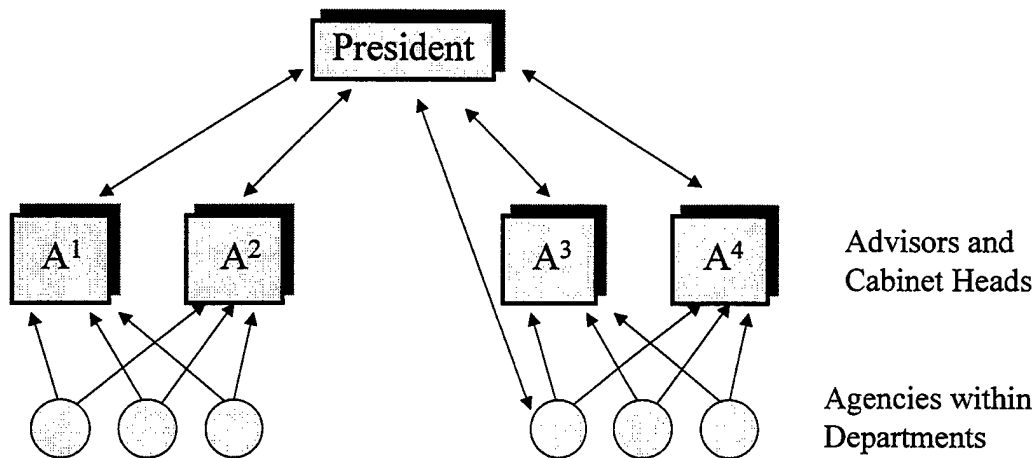
## The Formalistic Model, as used by Nixon



The competitive model places a premium on encouraging a more open and uninhibited expression of diverse opinions, analysis, and advice. To this end the competitive model not only tolerates but also may actually encourage organizational ambiguity, overlapping jurisdictions, and multiple channels of communication to and from the president. Franklin D. Roosevelt employed the competitive model.

FDR viewed politics and the games that go with it as a useful and enjoyable game and saw politics, if properly managed, as a means to provide informational and political needs.

## The Competitive Model, as used by FDR



Roosevelt deliberately exacerbated the competitive and conflicting aspects of cabinet politics and bureaucratic politics. He sought to increase both structural and functional ambiguities within the executive branch in order to better preside over it. He manipulated the structure of relationships among subordinates in order to control and profit from their competition.

FDR created fuzzy lines of responsibility, no clear chains of command, overlapping jurisdictions in order to promote stimulating inter-departmental conflict which could and did eventually land in his own lap.

Characteristic features of the competitive model (FDR): (1) the president deliberately encourages competition and conflict among advisers and cabinet heads by giving them policy areas; (2) relatively little communication or collaboration among advisers; (3) the president reaches down on occasion to communicate directly with subordinates of cabinet heads to get independent information and advice; (4) relevant information on important policy problems is forced up through the network to the president himself; competing advisers are forced to bring important policy problems to the president for resolution and decision; (5) the president avoids

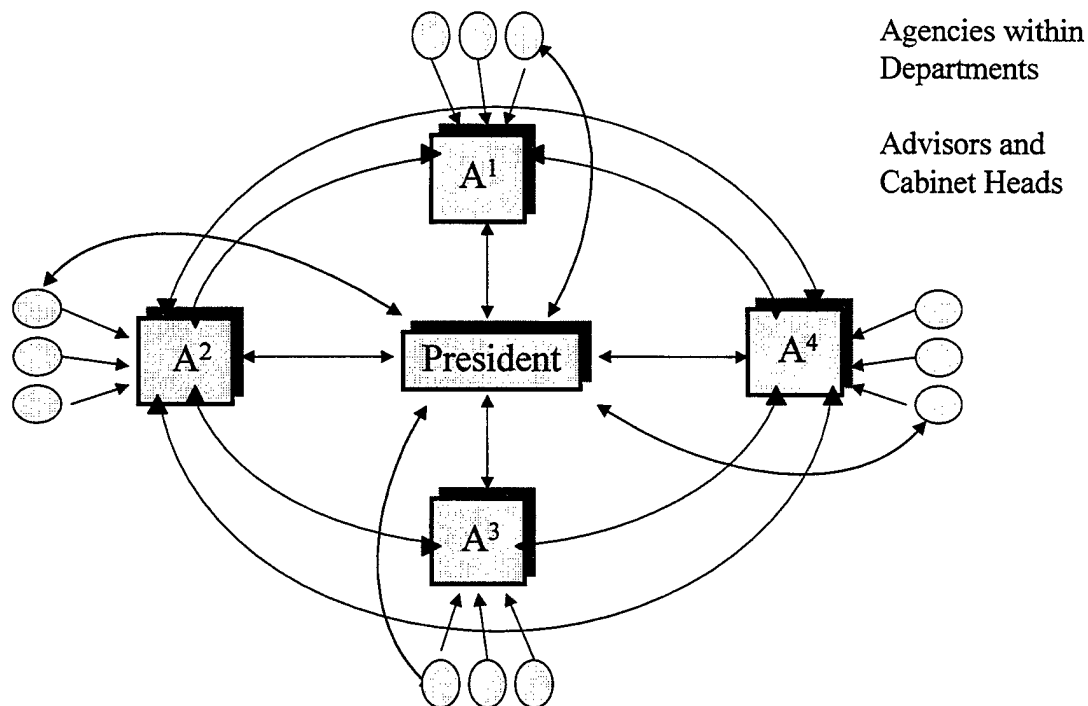
risk of becoming overloaded or involved by operating this system selectively; on occasions, encourages and insists that subordinate officials settle things themselves and refuses to become identified with their policies or pet projects.<sup>41</sup>

The collegial model attempts to achieve the essential advantages of each of the other two while avoiding their pitfalls. The president attempts to create a team of staff members and advisors who will work together to identify, analyze, and solve policy problems in ways that will incorporate and synthesize as much as possible divergent points of view. The collegial model attempts to benefit from diversity and competition within the policymaking system. It also attempts to narrow parochialism by encouraging cabinet officers and advisors to identify at least partly with the presidential perspective. This approach attempts to avoid the worst excesses of infighting, bargaining, and compromise associated with the competitive model. John F. Kennedy used the collegial approach.

Characteristics of the Collegial model: (1) president is at the center of a wheel with spokes connecting to individual advisors/cabinet heads; (2) advisors form a “collegial team” and engage in group problem-solving; (3) information flows into the collegial team from various points lower in the bureaucracy; (4) advisers do not perform as individual filters to the president; rather, the group of advisers functions as a “debate” team that considers information and policy options from the multiple, conflicting perspectives of the group members in an effort to obtain cross-fertilization and creative problem solving;



### The Collegial Model, as used by JFK



(5) advisers are encouraged to act as generalists, concerned with all aspects of the policy problem, rather than as experts or functional specialists on only part of the policy problem; (6) discussion procedures are kept informal enough to encourage frank expression of views and judgements and to avoid impediments to information processing generated by status and power differences among members; and, (7) the president occasionally gives overlapping assignments and occasionally reaches down to communicate directly with subordinates of cabinet heads in order to get more information and independent advice.<sup>42</sup>

Considering the above organizational models as a point of departure, from 1940 up through 1988, there were two predominant patterns of presidential leadership. The first is where the president becomes deeply involved with the day-to-day decisions and the second is just the opposite – deliberately abstaining from the day-to-day operations.<sup>43</sup> While President Carter fit the first leadership pattern, he did not have a pronounced organizational management model for

running the administration's foreign policy machine. President Carter oscillated between the Formalistic and Collegial Models, never really coming to grips with either one. On the other hand, President-elect Reagan fit the second leadership pattern and had a clear organizational and management style, the Collegial Model. This was evidenced early on as he discussed policy issues with the Carter domestic and foreign policy teams, received state department and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) briefings and participated in state visits with foreign leaders.

Reagan used the Collegial Model during his transition for three important reasons, it clearly allowed him to define his foreign policy position in broad terms, it ensured that important topics affecting national security reached his level, including use and control of nuclear weapons; and, it portrayed him in the public eye as a strong conservative leader restoring America to its rightful place as the watchdog of democracy within the global community.

Carter attempted to use a hybrid organizational management model, a mix between the formalistic-collegial models. Instead of allowing the special assistant to become the dominant actor in the system and a virtual chief of staff, Carter relied on collegiality among his principal national security advisors – the secretary of state, the secretary of defense, the special assistant, the vice-president-to achieve the necessary interaction and coordination. Accordingly, then, the NSC organization under Carter was more modest than Nixon's (formalistic model) both in centrality, structure, and operations. Weakness within the Carter system quickly developed and proved difficult to cope with.<sup>44</sup>

## **EVALUATING THE CARTER – REAGAN TRANSITION PERIOD**

### **Crafting American Foreign Policy**

United States foreign policy is generally crafted at the highest levels of the state by the president and his principle advisers. The positions occupied by these officials require them to consider two potentially contradictory sets of interests. On the one hand, the president is uniquely vested with responsibility for pursuing policies that further broad national interests. Unlike bureaucrats, members of Congress, or private lobbyists, the president speaks for a national constituency and is therefore less likely to become the captive of special interests when formulating the broad objectives and strategies of U.S. foreign policy. While this role does not automatically endow the president with special wisdom, it does provide him with a broader perspective than other actors when judging American interests and selecting policies to advance them.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the foundation of future foreign policy is constructed during the “lame duck” administration, the eleven weeks between election and inauguration<sup>46</sup> and the subsequent 100 days following inauguration.

### **A Brief Discussion on Containment**

Containment was a strategy to limit and prevent Soviet expansionism. It was a theory that said that communism was like water and would trickle into countries that were weak and unstable. In response, the US had to bolster the strength of other nations around the world in order to defend democracy and the open market. Truman made this his doctrine in 1947, as justification for intervention in the Greek Civil War (where the Soviets were *believed* to be involved in aiding the leftist rebellion) and aid to Turkey (which the Soviet Union was pressuring for concessions). George Kennan, a senior Soviet and foreign affairs policy analyst within the State Department, presented containment as a policy option. In describing the USSR's

expansionist tendencies, he concluded that "Its political action is a fluid stream, which moves constantly, wherever it is permitted to move, toward a given goal. Its main concern is to make sure that it has filled every nook and cranny available to it in the basin of world power." Kennan called for "a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world." He wanted the U.S. to determine its spheres of interest and to defend only those interests, which were most vital. For Kennan, that meant centers of military-industrial power, meaning Western Europe and Japan. He also emphasized that containment did not mean backing the Soviets into a corner; they should always be left an honorable way out.<sup>47</sup>

Kennan had analyzed Soviet society and government and had concluded that it could not continue indefinitely as it stood. Since there was no mechanism for real change, the regime would eventually have to fall. He said that if anything happened that disrupted "the unity and efficacy of the party as a political instrument, Soviet Russia might be changed overnight from one of the strongest to one of the weakest and most pitiable of national societies."<sup>48</sup>

The ultimate objectives of containment were to prevent the expansion of Soviet power. This was an essentially contested concept, however, since there was no firm agreement on the limits. Major problems arose when one considered the psychological consequences of losing peripheral interests; hence, the transformation of containment as a limited, realistic appraisal to the lines of NSC-68. This document claimed that the Soviets were aggressively expansionist and had to be countered wherever they attempted to do so; a policy of crusading activism was called for in the face of overwhelming Soviet power. More importantly, NSC-68 also recognized that force was all that could be used because that was all that the Soviets would understand; diplomacy and negotiations were useless and could only serve to reaffirm U.S. superiority.

NSC-68 said that the U.S. should massively increase its military power and cut its social spending in order to do so; 50% of the Gross National Product (GNP) could be viably used for the military, if necessary, the paper said. This came out in 1950 as a policy response to the Korean War. Thus were Kennan's originally limited proposals turned into an open-ended policy of containment everywhere. His prescriptions were from a realist's perspective; although he recognized the vast ideological chasm between the two societies, he did not countenance simply going to war with the Soviets, or even engaging them everywhere. American idealists grasped only part of his arguments, and developed a policy with the ultimate goal of overthrowing the Soviet regime. Ronald Reagan spoke this most specifically, and he did indeed see this end result.<sup>49</sup>

From the idealist standpoint, this strategy was a success in its day, and if it were not for Nixon's attempts at détente, it would have worked out better, and sooner. The realists, such as George Kennan, found the strategy flawed; it went far beyond any possible national interest and committed the US to innumerable conflicts where the US had no interest. The radicals, such as Fred Block, found the strategy to be a simple push for capitalist and Western world domination; the Marshall Plan for aid to Europe was simply to provide money that the Europeans could use to buy US goods. This was said similarly for the NSC-68 plans for the military buildup, that it was simply to feed the US capitalist economy.<sup>50</sup>

The strategy can be deemed a success in the long run, since it is almost accepted wisdom that it was the Soviets' forays into empire that drained away its power; that competing with the US wore it out completely. Examined from Carter's (as well as Kennan's) standpoint, one would more likely conclude that containment was in fact a very dangerous policy, which placed the world on the brink of nuclear holocaust over non-essential interests. It also spawned an

unrealistic American policy to the rest of the world, making it support brutal dictatorships simply because they were anti-Communist. The risks and costs of the implemented policy of containment were far too high compared to the relative gains.<sup>51</sup>

Containment had a price, there were various domestic effects resulting from the strategy. First of all, the government expanded. More bureaucracies were created to deal with a larger perception of the world, and new organizations and positions were created such as the National Security Agency. This governmental expansion saw the movement away from professional diplomats toward more political appointments. Second of all, there was the creation of the Iron Triangle, or the military-industrial complex. This was the cooperation between members of congress, the Pentagon, and business. Each one needing the other for survival; therefore, it became a growing, self-perpetuating cycle of cooperation in allocating government funds in Congress for the military to buy weapons that it would contract businesses to build, which would create more jobs, making the Congress more popular, and electable. Eisenhower warned this against, in his farewell address. A third effect was the anticommunist hysteria. The fifties saw the rise of Senator Joseph McCarthy, who led the nation in bashing leftists, blacklisting innocent people, and calling for a tougher foreign policy. Thus were many of the aforementioned professional diplomats weeded out of the Foreign Service as suspected reds. A final effect was inside the universities. The social sciences received grants to develop new strategies, such as game theory, and new strategic-study think tanks, such as the RAND Corporation, were developed. In addition, the universities were contracted to develop new weaponry and to create a discipline focusing understanding the Third World.<sup>52</sup>

## The Transitions

Unlike Carter who brought into the White House scores of Georgians<sup>53</sup> without the Washington “administrative” know-how, Reagan’s operative policy was controlled through Edwin Meese III, functioning as counselor to the President-elect. The National Security Advisor, Richard V. Allen, and Domestic Policy advisor, Martin Anderson, reported directly to Meese. This organizational innovation intended to solve historic problems of power, status, and personal control. This approach also suited Reagan’s “collegial” transitional management style.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, decisions regarding cabinet and top White House appointments were an open process, reminiscent of Reagan’s Kitchen Cabinet from California.<sup>55</sup>

The selection of policy advocates followed a conservative and logical course. Under the chairmanship of French Smith, 21 senior advisors met on 21 November 1980 to assemble, discuss, and recommend lower level cabinet posts. By 22 November 1980, the group was ready to brief President-elect Reagan on White House appointments. All in all, this conservative decision-making process appeared to be in contrast to the initial partisanship displayed by Reagan on November 20th, 1980, when he was in Washington.<sup>56</sup>

Throughout the month of December 1980, cabinet choices were announced. On 11 December, Donald Regan for Treasury; Casper Weinberger for Defense; William French Smith for Justice; Malcolm Baldrige for Commerce; Richard Schweiker for Health and Human Services; David Stockman for Office of Management and Budget; and William Casey for the Central Intelligence Agency. On 16 December, Alexander Haig for Secretary of State and Raymond Donovan as Secretary of Labor. On 23 December, James Watt, for Secretary of the Interior; John Block for Agriculture; Samuel Pierce for Housing and Urban Development; James Edwards for Energy; and Jean Kirkpatrick as Ambassador to the United Nations.

Even though the appointments were complex and took longer than expected, the cabinet choices were well received and generally judged to be balanced with executive experience, regional party affiliation, and were hard core Reagan loyalists.<sup>57</sup> Partisanship took the form of appeasement in the appointment of Jean Kirkpatrick as the young administration moved along a conservative course. To set the conditions for his national strategy, Reagan needed the Democrats to participate. One way to garner this support was to include them in the Administration. Therefore, the placement of Kirkpatrick at the United Nations can be viewed politically strategic, a way of capturing Democratic support for the Administration's actions. As a side note to the transitional National Security Council, the NSC was very fluid and dynamic and consisted of the usual members except the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

At best, President Carter's foreign policy was fragmented. Unlike Truman, who in 1950 conducted an asymmetrical approach to containment, or George Kennan, who approached foreign policy symmetrically (read NSC-68), the Carter administration had difficulty aligning its policy into either tradition, or indeed with any coherent and discernible conception of American interests in the world, potential threats to them and feasible responses.<sup>58</sup> One of the reasons for the disconnect included a resistance to systematic<sup>59</sup> thought on the part of Carter and his advisors.<sup>60</sup> Given this reason, the mix of personalities involved within the Carter administration, and the fact that the containment policy was in its fourth decade, no wonder foreign policy during this period can best be characterized as over-active (floating too many specific policy issues over a short period of time); unrealistic (a tendency to initiate attractive, desirable policies without sufficient attention to feasibility); poor synchronization (lack of conceptualizing overall foreign policy goals and a failure to recognize that individual policies conflicted with each



other); a poor sense of strategy and tactics (especially with the Soviets); and, a badly designed and managed policy system.<sup>61</sup>

Unlike Carter, Reagan understood his limitations concerning foreign policy. Reagan refused to make the same hyperkinetic mistakes as Carter. His anti-Communist rhetoric, cries of immediate peril over SALT II, Soviet expansionism, and allied disorder would lay the foundation for a consistent foreign policy. Not only would the American people back him, but his European counterparts as well. Reagan's view of containment, was indeed a change of tune along the American foreign policy story line.

Throughout the transition period, the foundation of Reagan's foreign policy rested with his personal position concerning the Soviet Union. Reagan's view was similar to the Washington intelligence community, in that the Soviets could not be trusted. During this period of time, the Soviet Union sought, not strategic parity, but nuclear superiority over the U.S.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, it is no wonder that Reagan filled his transition advisory team with hard line conservatives who shared the same alarmist outlook.

Articulating his position of foreign policy matters, on 7 November 1980 Reagan announced his Foreign Policy Advisory Board. The board was predominately Republican' however, it did contain three Democrats.<sup>63</sup> At the core of Reagan's conservative brain trust were institutional hard liners such as William R. VanCleave, a defense analyst from the University of Southern California; Richard E. Pipes, a Harvard University historian; and, Richard V. Allen, a Senior Soviet specialist.<sup>64</sup>

As in most policy groups organized by a semi-collegial leader, there were divisions over policy direction and implementation. But as expressed by Allen "...if we have any area where there is unanimity, it would be for increased defense spending....".

In his first post-election press conference, President Reagan stated "...I want the world to know that there is no political division that affects our foreign policy...". It is at this time that President-elect Reagan enumerated his discord with the Carter Policy on human rights and the Soviet arms negotiations.<sup>65</sup> President Reagan's reassertion of the Kissinger-era linkage and consistency on human rights sent an uncoded message to all communist and authoritarian regimes that American foreign policy will be articulated with one voice.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, one can conclude, that there was no lack of ambiguity in the Reagan rhetoric concerning foreign policy direction.

During the eleven-week transitional period, the Reagan advisory group established congressional liaison to track international policy developments. This group would monitor the ongoing Carter Doctrine and at the same time have a hand on the pulse of Congress to better understand its intent. The group included two Republican and two Democratic senators, minority leader Howard M. Baker Jr., R-Tennessee; John Tower, R-Texas; Henry M. Jackson, D-Washington; and, Richard Stone, D-Florida. Presiding over the group was Richard Allen, a specialist in foreign policy and international affairs. This foreign policy team mustered into 132 policy advocates divided among 25 working groups.<sup>67</sup> It is through this cohesive policy team that the nuts and bolts of Reagan's foreign policy took shape. Thus, Reagan's anticommunist theme was echoed throughout the administration and National Security Council.

Does the president elect have any real authority for policy direction before inauguration? And, is it true that foreign policy direction, development, management and control come only after a new president is elected?

Constitutionally, the 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment establishes the legal period of time for the transition: from Election Day to inauguration day, eleven weeks. Throughout the transition

period, the president-elect has no legal authority for policy direction. Therefore, any policy direction must come from two established principles. The first principle is ideological philosophy and the second is the structure of the transition team. <sup>68</sup>

President-elect Reagan, unlike his predecessor, conveyed strong policy overtones through the media and initiated a perception of policy direction through a network which was established to control the flow of information. Throughout November, President-elect Reagan supported the existing Carter administration's doctrinal position (the basic foreign policy as articulated in the Vance and Brzezinski position papers); however, Reagan made it clear that there were major policy differences (such as the administration's handling of the Soviet Union). These media prompts provided the American people and the international audience with first hand experience of the new direction within the upcoming administration.

For President-elect Reagan, the Soviet Union was the focal point confronting U.S. foreign policy.<sup>69</sup> The tasks, then, of managing relations with the Soviets, preventing nuclear war, containing Soviet expansion, and improving Allied and friendly relations rested with Richard V. Allen and the NSC.<sup>70</sup> Since the transitional NSC was developed around conservative senior advisors who echoed Reagan's anti-Soviet rhetoric.

The selection of Richard V. Allen to manage national security was atypical of the Reagan "cluster" program.<sup>71</sup> This cluster program created a policy structure of like minds and like national objectives.<sup>72</sup> Reagan's transitional NSC included: James Baker III, White House Chief of Staff; Alexander Haig, Secretary of State; Casper Weinberger, Secretary of Defense; William Casey, Director of the CIA; Richard V. Allen, National Security Advisor; Martin Anderson, Chief of Domestic Policy; and Edwin Meese, Special Counselor to the President. These individuals shared similar views and objectives with the President and each other. These

objectives included that the U.S. could best regain its capacity to shape events and support friends readily by restoring the country's power and prestige.<sup>73</sup>

Reagan's transitional team wasted little time moving towards articulated priorities. Using Reagan's rhetoric to outline broad foreign policy guideline, the conservative advocates pushed ahead with policy. Van Cleave, Defense Department Transition Team Director, and Casper Weinberger worked out plans focused on increasing the defense budget.<sup>74</sup> Meanwhile, during his confirmation, Alexander Haig reminded the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the nation had no choice but to marshal its resources to shape the future. Unchecked, the growth of the Soviet Union's military must eventually paralyze Western foreign policy altogether.<sup>75</sup>

In El Salvador, Robert E. White, a long-term diplomat, was listed as a social reformer (heavy human rights focus without the emphasis on containment) by the Reagan administration. Therefore, the administration felt that he should be removed from his post as U.S. Ambassador as quickly as possible. White's departure was defined by the administration strictly in east (democratic)-west (communist) terms.<sup>76</sup>

U.S. policy towards Vietnam would no longer be paralyzed. In the view of the Reagan administration, Vietnam was responsible for the decline in U.S. global affairs set the tone for actions elsewhere around the world in dealing with less developed countries.<sup>77</sup>

Concerning policy in Southwest Asia, in particular Iran, and the Reagan Administration essentially sought to consolidate the security framework initiated by the Carter Administration. Reagan worked to strengthen existing ties with the Saudi Government.<sup>78</sup>

In the Middle East, Reagan would strongly support the Camp David Accords and continue negotiations that would foster hopes for future peace in the region. Middle-East policy

was coordinated by Sol Linowitz, Carter's Special Ambassador to the Middle East, under close supervision of Richard Allen.<sup>79</sup>

Unlike the Carter administration, whose use of foreign policy senior advisors can be characterized as fragmented resulting in disjointed policy, the Reagan administration demonstrated a consistent and focused effort. The bottom line, despite the infighting at the lower staff levels<sup>80</sup> and open criticism of Carter policies, the Reagan transition team accomplished much.<sup>81</sup>

In the Real National Interest, Alan Tonelson states "...formulating foreign policy in universal terms is fine for an omnipotent country. But today even President Ronald Reagan and his top aides regularly concede the need to recognize limits of American power...."

Unlike Carter, the Reagan transition took the longest to develop and implement in American political history. The transition lasted until after Reagan's inauguration, exceeding Eisenhower's (November 25<sup>th</sup>, Nixon's (December 11<sup>th</sup>), Kennedy's (December 17<sup>th</sup>, and Carter's (December 23<sup>rd</sup>). However, his cabinet maintained good relations with Congress, which enabled major policy decisions to garner support.<sup>82</sup>

Private and public circles alike applauded Reagan's appointment of Edwin Meese III to direct the transition. Meese's keen administrative skills enabled the transition team to maneuver the political backwater and around the lame-duck administration. Meese delegated the policy of the transition team to William E. Timmons. Timmons coordinated the 100 Reagan transition teams into five issue clusters: economic affairs, national security, human services, resource and development, and legal/administrative. Each cluster team was responsible for examining ongoing policy issues, developing recommendations for policy change, and submitting the recommendations through the appropriate transition channel.

Concerning the lower staff positions of the NSC during the transition, there are no legal or statutory limitations concerning composition or size. However, the following information is provided as guidance to presidential transition teams.<sup>83</sup> (1) The number of lower level staffers used in the Reagan transition was ten; composition did not include four military (two Army and two Air Force). This was one-third the size of Carter's staff at the same level. Reagan's personnel worked along side Carter's until January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1980. (2) Policy direction was given through Richard V. Allen with the following priorities: (a) arms negotiations with the Soviet Union, (b) the Camp David Accords and Middle-East, (c) Southwest Asia, (d) Human Rights, (e) Asia to include Korea; (f) and, Central America. (3) Funding for the transition clusters was tight, including travel. This was Reagan's commitment on reducing government spending. The shortage of funds had little impact on the overall transition effort. (4) Referencing academic backgrounds, all transitional personnel had a Master Degree or Doctorate and could easily migrate from government to academia as required. This degree requirement also applied to the military. As an interesting note, lower level staffers said that academia has no real measurable impact on policy development during this time since policies were being established by Reagan senior advisors.

Reagan's "troika" (James Baker, III, Edwin Meese, III, and Michael Deaver) created a smoothly run operation. James Baker, had roots in the Eastern Establishment, with outstanding political and analytical skills and was an effective manager. Edwin Meese was an excellent counterweight to Baker. Meese was a Westerner as well as a longtime Reagan aide and intimate. Meese was a more "rough and tumble" politician, known for his skills in rewarding friends and punishing enemies. His origins are in the ideologically more conservative wing of the Republican Party, and he was perceived as the keeper of Reagan's ideology. Of the three

members of the group, Michael Deaver was the fulcrum. He had long been a close personal associate of Reagan and had the role of the gatekeeper, with special responsibility for keeping track of Reagan's time and temperament. He kept affairs running smoothly in a way that involved substance as well as process.<sup>84</sup>

Reagan's whole transition process utilized 1,200 individuals of which no less than 10 were Foreign Policy Board Advisors (FPBA). Leaks, restrained infighting, and controlled criticism of the Carter administration characterized the FPBA. Allen tried to reduce the leaks by sending a memorandum to all personnel in the FPBA, however it did little good.<sup>85</sup>

I speculate that part of the problem at the lower level was Reagan's collegial management style, which transcended all levels of the transition.<sup>86</sup> In any case, the infighting and criticism were downplayed in the public eye, mainly because of the Reagan policy rhetoric.

Management of presidential transitions is a complex business. The development of the Presidential Transition Act (PTA), 1963, was created to promote the orderly transfer of executive power in connection with the expiration of the term of office of a President and the inauguration of a new President. Amended in 1976, the PTA provides two million dollars for incoming administrations and one million for the outgoing President.<sup>87</sup> President-elect Reagan used the two million and established a separate fund, the Presidential Trust, which raised an additional million. Thus, of the 1,200 individuals related to the transition, over 500 were on the payroll.<sup>88</sup>

President-elect Reagan's transition was organized in the Washington style – conservative and expensive. He used a private foundation to develop policy recommendations and an executive talent service to screen personnel for the new administration.<sup>89</sup>

Presidential administrations since the Kennedy era regarded the PTA as cumbersome but a necessary requirement. Though unintentional, the PTA has directly effected the size of each

new transition, delayed Cabinet selections, and sensitized inter-administration problems.<sup>90</sup> Still, the PTA has succeeded in accomplishing its main objective, to control the transition process during a transition.



## **CONCLUSION - A Memo on a Presidential Transition**

I define the "Presidential Transition" period as that time from when the candidate is elected to 100 days into the new administration. This period of time, some 155 days, establishes what I call the creditability period. During this creditability period, the administration will have the opportunity to establish a first impression, set direction, and demonstrate resolve. This is also a benchmark period for Congress, the American people, and the international community concerning administration expectations. However, nothing is more important to the new Administration than providing that first impression of energy, direction, action, and accomplishment.

Unlike Clinton, the next president *may* come into office in the midst of some sharp, overt international emergency, or in the train of a sharp economic slump. In this situation, the new administration projection of a dynamic image will be critical in establishing confidence with the public.

The guideline for the transition period between election and inaugural should be: *Postpone whatever is postponable* in the mechanics of administration building. Put off the novel ideas that have not been thought through. The key weeks after the November election *concentrate upon the things that are immediately relevant to showing real effectiveness* on and after January 20<sup>th</sup>. Listed below are those things that I believe cannot be postponed. They are *roughly* in the order in which it seems desirable to deal with them, starting November 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Organizing for a First Message to Congress**

The most important task in the transition is *the working out of strategy and tactics for an exploitation of the "honeymoon" ahead*. This means decisions on the substance, timing, publicity, *and priority* of legislative proposals to Congress. It means decisions of the same sort

on discretionary executive actions. It means decisions on relationships between projected proposals and actions. It means weighing short-range gains against long-range troubles, e.g. political. It means judging what should be done openly in the President's name, and what should not, and how to enforce the distinction. It also means evaluating fiscal implications of proposals and of actions, both, and making some immediate decisions on taxation and the budget.

Not all of these decisions can be taken before January 20<sup>th</sup>, but then preparatory work needs to be far advanced by then. The key issues should have been identified, the arguments defined, preliminary judgments entered well before Inauguration Day. Once all of this is accomplished, the Presidential Transition Team could target the issues outlined below.

*First make a plan, deciding tentatively on the timing and the scope of such a message.* This provides a target for everybody who has ideas, views, concerns about the program objectives of the new regime.

*Secondly, establish "working groups" and get them moving* with the message. Target both on issues that should be addressed with Congress and on matters that could be pronounced done or underway administratively.

*Third, get a "bird-dog" on the scene, putting somebody in charge of the staff working on the message.* This should be someone close to the President-elect, very much in his confidence and very much a tough-minded staffer. His job should be to see that all the working groups are working, the competitors competing, gaps filled, issues raised, arguments brought to focus, and the President-elect informed on who is doing what, with what, to whom. *This is a full-time job, for the whole transition period and after.* Its holder has to be much more than a draftsman; drafting is merely his hunting license; his hunting ground is foreign *and* domestic program, legislative *and* administrative. This is somewhat like Rosenman's work at message season in the

Roosevelt White House<sup>91</sup>. But in many ways it is a broader and rougher job than theirs; they worked in an established context; this man will not.

### **Designating White House Aides**

After Election Day the President-elect will need a *small personal staff* to operate through the transition period and to take office with him. A few staff aides are immediately necessary; their names and jobs should be announced *at once*, so that importunate office-seekers, ideapeddlers, pressmen, legislators, diplomats, and cabinet-designers can be divested to these staffers and further decreases the President-elect's distractions. These necessary jobs include:

Press Secretary: The tasks after the inaugural will be so much like his work before that he should have the title at the outset. On November 9th, the President-elect will be transformed in the eyes of Americans *and foreign governments*. He will no longer have the leeway of a "campaigner." His statements will be taken with the utmost seriousness. *Everything* said and done in public need be weighed as though he were already President.

An Appointments aide: To guard the door and manage the daily schedule. Whether this person should be designated "Appointments Secretary" depends on whether he is meant to have autonomy, after inaugural, or to work as a subordinate of some other aide. If subordination is intended, hold off on the "Secretary" part of that title.

A "Number-one Boy," serving as a sort of first assistant on general operations, day by day. He could be called "Executive Assistant to the President-elect" and he could carry that title into the White House.

The message-and-program aide: If the man is a lawyer, and if the President-elect wants him around for comparable work in later months, he might be designated "Special Counsel." But he could just as well be called "Special Consultant" and his long-run status left in abeyance for the

time being. What counts in the short run is his standing with the President-elect, not his title. (This is an idea borrowed from FDR and the way he used Judge Samuel Rosenman).<sup>92</sup>

Personnel consultant. Here again, it would be well to treat the job as ad hoc and avoid traditional White House titles for the time being.

Personal secretary who might remain just that after January 20 or who might carry higher status and more general duties afterwards, depending on the President-elect's convenience and capabilities. Meanwhile, it would be well not to dispose of any traditional titles one might ultimately want.

These six should suffice as a nucleus to move into the White House, January 20, where they will find the Executive Clerk and his career assistants on the job for routine paper processing. Additional aides will certainly be needed for ad hoc trouble-shooting before inaugural; still more so afterwards. But until the needs are felt to be both clear and continuing, and until the men have been tried on the job, there is no reason to announce their designation as permanent members of the White House staff. Nor is there reason to give them traditional White House titles. In designating personal staff, two rules of thumb are indicated: *first*, appoint personnel only to jobs for which the President-elect, himself, feels *an immediate and continuing* need, a need he has defined in his own mind, and can at once define for them. If the need is immediate but not continuing, offer a "consultant-ship," or put the man in a department and borrow him back. *second*, give appointees titles that square with the jobs to be done and choose no titles without thinking of their bureaucratic connotations in the outgoing regime. A title may attract a lot of "customary" business that the President-elect wants handled somewhere else, or not at all, or on which he prefers experimentation. A title also may connote a ranking in the staff that he does not intend.

If these rules of thumb are followed, most of the sitting President's current staff positions will fall into abeyance on January 20. There is nothing wrong with that.

### **Designating a Security Aide**

The Special Assistant for National Security Affairs in the White House could present special problems. There will be no outside pressure for filling this post and NSC can operate without it for a little while. But, if for reasons of his own, the President-elect wants to make an appointment, both the title and the duties should be considered, in advance, with particular regard for the intended role of the Secretary of State, *vis-a-vis* NSC.

### **Designating Executive Office Aides**

Soon after November 8, the President-elect will have use for *a principal assistant*, one removed from personal aides, who can backstop the White House in coping with programming and administrative problems from Inauguration Day on. If this person is to be of maximum assistance from the start, *the job to give him is the Budget Directorship*. This Budget Director-designate (Office of Management and Budget) should be conceived as someone capable of broad-gauged, general-purpose service to the President, *picking up the staff work that personal aides cannot give time to on a continuing basis*.

### **Designating Cabinet Officers**

There is no *operating* reason why Cabinet officers and heads of major agencies need to be designated immediately after election. With "working groups" established and key staff aides appointed one does not need Cabinet officers in order to get moving toward a fast start after January 20. Indeed, there is advantage in delaying most Cabinet appointments until staff and working groups are launched. Cabinet members then would have a framework to fit into and

could not wander off on their own. A recommendation is to *defer cabinet and major agency designations until early December.*

*An exception is the Secretary of State.* Appoint early and use the Secretary not just as a department head but as a principal assistant *in the whole sphere of national security policy.*

*A second possible exception is the Cabinet post, if any, where the present incumbent would be retained* as a gesture of bi-partisanship. Nothing of the sort may be contemplated. But if it is, then obviously the sooner it were done the better.

*In choosing Cabinet officers* (and heads of major agencies), the President-elect will naturally consider the usual criteria of geographic, party, and interest-group "representativeness."

*Three additional criteria are worth bearing in mind: first,* competitive balance among major differences in policy outlook. I see this as a very tricky and important problem in "representativeness." If the President-elect wants both "conservative" and "liberal" advice on economic management, for example, and wants the competition to come out where he can see it and judge it, he needs to choose strong-minded competitors *and he needs to put them in positions of roughly equal institutional power,* so that neither wins the contest at a bureaucratic level too far down for the President to judge it. For example, if the Treasury (a powerful post) were given to a "conservative," it would not suffice to put his competition on the presidential staff; at least two *Cabinet* competitors would be needed in addition.

*Second* is the chance for useful reorientation of a department's role with a change in its Secretary's traditional orientation. As an example, in The Eisenhower Administration, Eisenhower had an industrial relations specialist as Secretary of Labor, instead of the traditional union president or politician avowedly representing "labor's voice in the Cabinet." As a result, Mr. Mitchell has been able to act for the Administration in labor disputes and to keep a

supervisory eye on "independent" labor relations agencies to a far greater degree than his predecessors. Another example is offered: Treasury, for one, has often been a drag on State and Defense, in part because of the traditional orientation of its Secretary. Changing the conservative orientation could make a substantial difference in the future.

*Third* is the effect on long-run organizational objectives and options inherent in the personalities and interests of particular appointees. The case of the NSA has already been mentioned. Another example is the General Accounting Office. One more cost accountant in the place would finish it off as a useful source of staff work for the President. Especially in the sphere of national security, the personalities and interests of initial appointees at State, Defense, Budget, and Treasury *will go far to decide* what can and cannot be done thereafter by way of improving "national policy machinery."

### **Organizing for Appointments below Cabinet Rank**

This is an area in which the President-elect and his whole staff could easily get bogged down at no profit to themselves. The word should be passed to incoming department and agency heads that they will make nothing but trouble for themselves and the Administration by unselective replacements or massive importations of persons at Assistant Secretary level and below. Changes should be made selectively and at leisure, using the guideline, "Know who your replacement is before you make a change."

### **Reassuring the Bureaucracy**

This calls for an early public statement to the effect that government careerists are a national resource and will be treated as such by the new regime. The reality of that intention will be demonstrated as those steps are taken. It will be demonstrated further if the working groups

as suggested above begin, informally, to draw upon the expertise of selected bureaucrats long before Inauguration Day.

The more career officials can look forward to January 20 with hopeful, interested, even excited anticipation, the better the new administration will be served in the weeks after. To provide needless worry and instill negativism is to disenfranchise one's own organization.

### **Consulting with the Legislative Leadership**

From Election Day on, several things should be kept in mind: (1) the Vice-President-elect will be looking for work; (2) will new Senate and Congressional leadership be chosen just before Congress meets, and if so, how will this effect the President-elect's plan; (3) Congress meets two weeks before the inaugural and looks for the "customary" laundry-list of Presidential proposals. That custom helps to dissipate presidential *honeymoons*; (4) Congress will be awaiting signs of recognition from the President-elect; (5) Congressional leaders will have to be consulted on, or at least informed of, the President-elect's immediate legislative plans. Their help will be needed in considering and above all in sustaining priorities. But consultation *with whom, how* above all, *when*? These questions will not necessarily look the same from the Executive side as from the Senate; (6) the first *formal* meeting with the legislative leaders, whether before or after Inauguration Day, will tend to set the form, tone, membership, and timing of future meetings. What purposes are these meetings to serve? Are they to be intimate sessions or ambassadorial encounters with staffs present and minutes taken?

### **Giving Congress an Agenda Before the First Message**

Hopefully, some non-controversial, simple, quick-action items could be introduced *before* Inauguration Day "on the President-elect's behalf," to "facilitate the work of the new Administration." Within reason, the more of these the better, and the greater dispersion across



committees the better. More small victories will establish a track record of success that can be leveraged during difficult times that are surely to come.

### **Establishing Liaison with the Future Administration**

There seems to be no need for "general" liaison and no point in assigning anyone to do that meaningless job. Presumably, President-elect will suggest a courtesy meeting and briefing, as was done in the past, and will offer assistance toward a smooth transition. If he does not offer, he should be asked. Once the offer is made it should be used to establish several *specific* liaison arrangements. These include: (1) access for the President-elect to all government intelligence sources and for the prospective Secretary of State to all the cable traffic he may want to see; (2) arrangements with the FBI for prompt security clearance of appointees; (3) access for a reliable associate of the prospective Budget Director to all aspects of the Budget Bureau's work in preparing the future presidential budget and in clearing legislation before January 20. This action should be for the purpose of obtaining information and not participating in decisions; (4) arrangements for use of Civil Service Commission staff and facilities, and for information on expiring appointments in the hands of the White House Executive Clerk; (5) arrangements for consultation by incoming officials with their outgoing opposite numbers and with departmental staffs. No limitations should be accepted on the freedom to inquire and consult; (6) arrangements for taking over White House offices and budget.

It may turn out that the international or economic situation requires more than a courtesy consultation between the out-going and in-coming presidents. If so, the situation should be met with the proviso that the in-coming president need make none of the current President's decisions or accept commitments carrying past January 20. *This proviso cannot be a prohibition; the situation may be unprecedented.*

The President-elect must be prepared for a variety of international complications before the inaugural date. What those complications are and how to address them should be discerned by the designated Presidential-working group.

### **Organizing for Reorganizing**

Not long after Election Day (within two weeks) the members of the President's Advisory Committee on Government Organization should be designated.

### **Setting Ground Rules for Press Conferences**

The big televised press conference is an innovation that has served some badly and others well. The first press conference after inaugural will set a pattern hard to break. Therefore, timing must allow for adequate preparation so that the appropriate image is displayed.

### **Installing the "Shadow Government" in Washington**

Very soon after Election Day, the President-elect will want to decide how fast and how formally and in what facilities at whose expense he wants his staff and Cabinet designees, and *ad hoc* working groups in Washington. This automatically involves a decision on the timing of vacations and of reconnaissance trips abroad by presidential designees, or by the President-elect.

### **Preparing the Inaugural Address**

It would be well *not* to begin this too early, but instead to wait until the main lines of a first message (i.e. initial program) has emerged. The Inaugural Address has to be a tone-setter. It will help to have a notion of what is to follow, before spending much time on this introduction. It will also help to wait until one knows what international and economic conditions to expect by January 20.

## **Arranging the Physical Take-Over**

A number of troublesome details will have to be attended to. Some of them are unlikely to be settled without reference to the President-elect. These could include arranging White House office space and Executive Office building space.

## **Arranging Initial Cabinet and NSC meetings**

Some past Presidents (Eisenhower) have surrounded these meetings with elaborate paper work and preparatory consultations. Other Presidents created elaborate staffs (Nixon) in each department to assist with preparations and follow-up. Cabinet meetings (Clinton) now include more Presidential aides than department heads. Somewhat the same thing occurs in NSC meetings. It is important that only the most effective and efficient none of these procedures and arrangements continues. It is important to realize that the first meetings of these bodies could automatically perpetuate all sorts of practices and that past procedures will be carried on by career staffs unless they are deliberately interrupted.

It would be well to confine early Cabinet meetings to department heads of Cabinet rank, along with the President's Executive Assistant ( if one is appointed), and to have only such agenda as the President may choose in consultation with his personal staff. Concerning initial NSC meetings, it would be well to confine them to statutory members, including the President's Budget Director.

Presumably the first message will not have been completed by January 20. This will remain to be put into final form. As that is done, attention would shift to amending the budget, the next great action with a deadline attached around which to organize Administration planning and decisions. At the same time, it will be desirable to get study groups working, in or out of

government, on the desirable projects and programs, administrative and legislative, which are not to be, or cannot be, acted upon immediately.

These three steps completing the first message, amending the budget, getting long-range studies started will be major items of concern for the President's first weeks in office. They represent a late stage in "transition" and set the tone for future policy decisions.

### **One Final Word Concerning Reagan**

Reagan's cabinet selection at the lower levels lasted into 1981. This was characteristic of the Reagan Kitchen Cabinet, who made it clear from the onset that the Reagan administration would take its time.<sup>93</sup> For the Reagan administration, foreign policy was developed not at the lower levels nor even at the senior advisor level, it was developed based on rhetoric established by the President-elect, his ideology and philosophy. Reagan's policies filtered down through the cluster transition teams and into the media.

What did the Reagan transition team do that was different from the Carter team? For one thing, the Reagan team used Congress.<sup>94</sup> This is most clearly illustrated by the enactment of two laws during his first six months in office – the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 and the five-year \$737 billion "supply-side" tax reduction act, both of which were signed into law on the same day, August 13, 1981.<sup>95</sup> It also provided a strong message to the Soviets and other foreign head of state concerning the direction of the Reagan Presidency; it provided a unified front.

Finally, the transition was successful in accomplishing the division of responsibilities between the White House and other governmental agencies. This allowed the President to select personnel who would advocate his policies and thus present a cohesive foreign policy picture to Congress, Allies and friends and adversaries alike.

WORD COUNT 11,171.

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Henry, L.L. (1982), The transition: From nomination to inauguration. Election and Transition. (page 196).

<sup>2</sup> Peirce, N.R., & Hagstrom, J. (1980), Political report, the voters send Carter a message: Time for a change to Reagan. The National Journal, Vol. 12: 1876-1878.

<sup>3</sup> In constructing this periodical breakdown, I used major events and situations that transpired in the Carter administration. For the period topic headings, I used events that were most appealing to me, as an example, the evangelical period was named after reading the seventh chapter in Theodore White's book The Masking of a President, (1956-1980)

<sup>4</sup> Speech at the University of Notre Dame, May 22, 1977. This speech provided a new attitude towards the policy of containing communism. Human rights, rather than anti-communism, would guide the new Administration. As an additional reference, see The Carter Presidency, A Re-Evaluation, (1995), Dumbrell, J., Manchester University Press, page 4.

<sup>5</sup> Speech at the University of Notre Dame, May 22, 1977, Public Paper of the Presidents: Jimmy Carter: 1977, pp. 956-957.

<sup>6</sup> During the early part of 1977, the Carter Administration tried in earnest to speed up talks for a new Strategic Arms Limitation (SALT II) Treaty. The Soviets rejected Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's arms cuts proposals. These talks stalled in Moscow. In addition, the Soviets did not want to discuss human rights variable in any foreign policy equation.

<sup>7</sup> Roberts, S.V. (1981, January 19), Analysts give Carter higher marks in foreign affairs than domestic policy, The New York Times, page 22.

<sup>8</sup> This conciliatory line can be attributed to a general lack of organization and management within the administration's senior advisory level. It is not totally clear if this was intentional; however, at the "conceptual level" fragmentation of which Alexander L. George speaks, Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy, The Effective Use of Information and Advice, Westview Press, 1980, page 163, must have caused a breakdown in the control and coordinating mechanism, lower level staff planning, directing and implementation. I am convinced that the senior leadership style demonstrated during this timeframe (micro-manager) contributed much to the foreign policy hick-ups played out within the administration.

<sup>9</sup> Roberts, S.V. (19 January 1981)

<sup>10</sup> Strout R.L., (6 November 1980), Next Reagan Taking the Reins, Christian Science Monitor, 72:5.

<sup>11</sup> Smith, T., (1981, 8 January), Experts See '76 Victory as Carter's Biggest Achievement, The New York Times, page 24.

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<sup>12</sup> This appeal to reduce overall military expenditures were immediately rejected by the Soviets. The Soviet leadership was caught off guard by the proposal and Mr. Brezhnev charged “psychological warfare... a normal development of relations on this basis is, of course, unthinkable...” Keeping in mind that the average age of the Politburo during this time was 67! The Soviets were use to dealing with the secretive and sometimes “realpolitik” of the Nixon – Ford - Kissenger years.

<sup>13</sup> Why Carter Failed, Report From the Top Aide, (1982, 4 October), U.S. News and World Report, page 6.

<sup>14</sup> Dumbrell, J., (1995), The Carter Presidency, A Re-Evaluation, Manchester University Press, page 111.

<sup>15</sup> Gill, S., (1990), American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission, Cambridge University Press, page 222.

<sup>16</sup> Dumbrell, J., 1995), The Carter Presidency, A Re-Evaluation, Manchester University Press, page 110-111.

<sup>17</sup> Vance, C. (1983), Hard Choices, New York: Simon & Schuster, page 441-442. Vance’s position paper outlined five foreign policy themes: the U.S. must protect its interests vis-à-vis the Soviet union, but the Soviet relationship must not be allowed to distort American relations with other countries; North-South issues must be addressed, along with global questions relating to energy, the environment and nuclear proliferation; the U.S. must take a stand on international human rights; the new Administration should focus on long term objectives rather than short term crisis management; the new President must seek to educate both the Congress and the American people in the complexities of international affairs, and take them into a new, democratic foreign policy consensus.

<sup>18</sup> Brzezinski, Z., (1983), Power and Principle, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, page 52-54. Brzezinski’s memorandum addresses an unstable world organized almost entirely on the principle of natural sovereignty and yet increasingly interdependent socially and economically. The paper proposed ten objectives: new economic cooperation between Western Europe, Japan and the U.S.; the development of relations with regional influences – especially oil producers; prioritization of North-South relations, involving a decrease in Third World hostility to the U.S.; pursuit of strategic arms limitation and achievement of an actual strategic arms reduction in a U.S.-Soviet treaty by 1980; normalization of relations with mainland China; a comprehensive Middle Eastern settlement; the moving of South America towards multi-racial democracy and the achievement of a majority rule settlement in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe by 1978; restriction in international arms transfers; enhancement of global sensitivity over human rights; and development of a defense posture which would deter the USSR, while reelecting broad changes in the world.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid,page 149.

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<sup>20</sup> George A.L., (1980), Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy, The Effective Use of Information and Advice, Westview Press.

<sup>21</sup> Strout, R.L., (1980, 17 October), Carter, four years later, tracking foreign affairs, Christian Science Monitor, page 15.

<sup>22</sup> This information was obtained from the Carter Center located on the world wide web; <[http://www.emory.edu/carter\\_center/bios/pcbigo.htm](http://www.emory.edu/carter_center/bios/pcbigo.htm)>; internet; accessed 23 Nov 98.

<sup>23</sup> See <<http://www.presidents/nbk/side/congus.html>>; internet; accessed 23 Nov 98.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Wills, G., (1988), Reagan's America, New York, Doubleday, page 313-314.

<sup>27</sup> Mollenhoff, C.R. (1980), The President Who Failed, Carter out of control, New York: MacMillian Publishing Company, page xvi-xvii. In his book, Mollenhoff analyzes a series of strategic personnel and management errors brought on by the Carter administration. These cases include: A. Ernest Fitzgerald (the Air Force Cost Analyst whose reputation was distorted as a result of being a whistle blower); the appointment of Dr. Harold Brown (one of McNamara's whiz kids) as Secretary of Defense; the naming of Atlanta attorney Griffin Bell as Attorney General (Carter's pledge and subsequent failure to take politics out of the Justice Department); and the Bert Lance controversy.

<sup>28</sup> One of the most immediate results of Carter's 1976 transition was an early and violent collision with Congress, Carter's attempt to yank funds out from a group of major water projects.

<sup>29</sup> Roberts, P.C., (1980, 24 October), Constraints on change, The Wall Street Journal, page 34.

<sup>30</sup> Beacon, D.U. (1980, 3 November), Promises into policies: A tough transition, The Wall Street Journal, page 1.

<sup>31</sup> Wills, G. (1987), Page 339.

<sup>32</sup> Kirschten, D. (1980, 15 November), The Reagan Team Comes to Washington: Ready to get off to a running start, National Journal, page 1924.

<sup>33</sup> Keeland, D.E. (1980, 7 November), Triumphant Reagan starting transition to the White House, The New York Times, page 1.

<sup>34</sup> Henry, L.L. (1982), page 197

<sup>35</sup> George A.L., (1980), Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy, The Effective Use of Information and Advice, Westview Press, page 145.

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<sup>36</sup> These three management styles are described and evaluated in Richard T. Johnson, Managing the White House (New York Harper and Row, 1974). See chapters 1 and 8.

<sup>37</sup> George A.L., (1980), Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy, The Effective Use of Information and Advice, Westview Press, page 148-150.

<sup>38</sup> George A.L., (1980), Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy, The Effective Use of Information and Advice, Westview Press, page 152. For a detailed account of the Nixon architecture, see Chester Crocker, "The Nixon-Kissenger National Security Council System, 1969-1972: A Study in Foreign Policy Management, vol. 6, Appendices, Commission on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy, June 1975, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1976), page 79-99.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Brzinski, A. (1987-88, Winter), NSC's mid-life crisis, Foreign Policy, 69: 80-100.

<sup>44</sup> George A.L., (1980), Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy, The Effective Use of Information and Advice, Westview Press, page 160.

<sup>45</sup> Skidmore, D. (1996), Reversing Course, Nashville and London: Vanderbilt University Press, page xiii.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> This is an extract from a much larger document detailing the aspects of containment. This summary is from the Carnegie Mellon University. To find out more on this topic using the internet, see [www.contrib.andrews.cmu.edu/usr/hfien/contain.html](http://www.contrib.andrews.cmu.edu/usr/hfien/contain.html) internet accessed 2 Nov 98.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.



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<sup>53</sup> Mollenhoff, C.R. (1980), The President Who Failed, Carter out of control, New York: MacMillian Publishing Company, page xvi.

<sup>54</sup> Biggart, N.W. (1981), Management style as strategic interaction; The case of Governor Ronald Reagan, The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 17(3): 295-301.

<sup>55</sup> Here I am referring to the sometimes unofficial input from Reagan loyalists at the mid and lower staff level. I am inclined to believe the conservatism displayed in selecting mid and lower positions was in tune with the political plans of spring 1979. M. Destler points out that "the public wanted to see increased defense spending and a more vigorous assertion of American economic and political positions abroad. But a majority of Americans were also "weary of the kind of direct involvement in the affairs of other countries that characterized the U.S. foreign policy" in the 1960s. We should defeat our enemies and impose our will; we should not pay any substantial price for it." (Gelb, L., and Lake, A. Our Own Enemy, page 79.

<sup>56</sup> Weisman, S.R. (1980, 21 November), List of possible Reagan cabinet choices lengthening, The New York Times, page 22.

<sup>57</sup> Reagan's cabinet took three weeks longer to fill than most recent presidential transitions; however, unlike the Carter cabinet, the Reagan cabinet was user friendly towards Congress and oriented on Reagan's priorities.

<sup>58</sup> Gaddis, J.L., (1982), Strategies of Containment, A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy, New York: Oxford University Press, page 346.

<sup>59</sup> Neustadt, R.E. & May, E.R., (1986), Thinking in Time, Free Press, page 89. Neustadt and May discuss analogies and their usefulness in the Truman, LBJ and Carter administrations. In short, Carter and his staff would have been better off if they would have used analogies for dealing with situations, especially developing domestic and foreign policy, and should have viewed the "honeymoon" period as part of the whole presidential historical experience.

<sup>60</sup> Hoffmann, S., The Hell of Good Intentions, Foreign Policy, #29 (Winter, 1977-78), page 3-26.

<sup>61</sup> George A.L., (1980), Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy, The Effective Use of Information and Advice, Westview Press, chapter 8.

<sup>62</sup> Graebner, N.A. (1981), From Carter to Reagan: An uneasy transition, Australian Journal of Politics and History, 27(3), 304-339.

<sup>63</sup> Gwertzman, B. (1980)

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Schlesinger, A.M. (1984), The Imperial Presidency, Popular Library.

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<sup>67</sup> Kirschten, D. (1980) As a side note, depth was provided using William R. Van Cleave to head the National Security Study Panel. Van Cleave was assisted by LTG Edward Rowng (ret) who resigned from the Carter administration's SALT II talks in protest to concessions.

<sup>68</sup> Neustadt, R.E. & May, E.R., (1986), Thinking in Time, Free Press, page 109-167. It is important to realize that the president elect's ideological philosophy must be understood and tracked so that an accurate assessment can be made for quantifying foreign policy direction in a transitional period. How the president elect establishes organizational and operational control of his transition directly impacts on the expected leadership style in the White House. Combining these two principles, one can make a presumption as to the direction that foreign policy will take.

<sup>69</sup> Graebner, N.A. (1981)

<sup>70</sup> Bowie, R.R., (1984), The president and the executive branch, The Making of America's Soviet Policy, page 63.

<sup>71</sup> Biggart, N.W. (1981), Management Style as strategic interaction: The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 17(3), page 301.

<sup>72</sup> Ressel, J.H., (1984) The structure of the Reagan White House, American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 28, page 235.

<sup>73</sup> Graebner, N.A. (1981)

<sup>74</sup> Burt, R. (1980, 19 December), Reagan group see a big raise in outlay for nuclear weapons, The New York Times, page 1.

<sup>75</sup> Pastor, R. (1984), Continuity and change in U.S. foreign policy, Carter and Reagan on El Salvador, The Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Vol. 3, page 2.

<sup>76</sup> Graebner, N.A. (1981)

<sup>77</sup> Graebner, N.A., (1985), America foreign policy after Vietnam, Parameters, Vol. 15, page 3.

<sup>78</sup> Kuniholm, B.R. (1986), The Carter doctrine, the Reagan corollary, and prospects for the U.S. policy in Southwest Asia, International Journal, Canada, 41(2), page 313

<sup>79</sup> Henry, L.L., (1982)

<sup>80</sup> Rubin, B. (1985), Secrets of State, Oxford University Press. Mr. Rubin states that Richard Allen's poor staff operation stymied effective meetings. In fact, Mr. Rubin states that follow-up to meetings was rare and that position papers were contradictory.

<sup>81</sup> Henry, L.L. (1982)

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<sup>82</sup> Smith, S. (1981, January 9), Reagan's plan: Reality set in, The New York Times, page 4.

<sup>83</sup> In researching for this paper, I was hard pressed to find data on the transitional lower staff of the NSC. There are no public records on this matter and it seems that the composition is purely dependent upon the President (if he elects to go plan that low) or his delegated staff.

<sup>84</sup> Palmer, J.L., (1986), Perspectives on the Reagan Years, The Urban Institute Press, Washington, D.C., page 124.

<sup>85</sup> Henry, L.L., (1982)

<sup>86</sup> Biggart, N. W., (1981)

<sup>87</sup> Pfiffner, J.P., (1983, Fall), The Carter-Reagan transition: Hitting the ground running, Presidential Studies Quarterly, 13(4), page 625.

<sup>88</sup> Henry, L.L., (1982)

<sup>89</sup> Pfiffner, J.P., (1983, Fall)

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Larrabee, E, Command in Chief, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants, and Their War, Simon & Schuster, 1988, page 27

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Smith, S. (1981, January 9), Reagan's plan: Reality set in, The New York Times, page 4.

<sup>95</sup> Palmer, J.L., (1986), Perspectives on the Reagan Years, The Urban Institute Press, Washington, D.C., page 124.



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