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Presidency: Comment

C-15

COMMENTToothless Congressional Watchdog
(Editorial, Excerpted from the Wall St. Journal)

The recent House vote allowing President Ford to increase substantially the number of top-level White House staff members is of more than usual interest. It would seem that House Democrats, who outnumber Republicans two-to-one, aren't persuaded that Watergate can be blamed on a bloated White House staff. And maybe that's something to be grateful for, in view of the tendency to blame all recent political sins, shortcomings and lapses on the Watergate episode. But while the President clearly should be permitted to have the best staff possible, we question whether enough attention has been paid to the appropriations for the Executive Branch, which have been rising in real terms for about as long as anyone can remember.

It should be noted that the new staff levels voted by Congress are ceilings, dependent on appropriations and on presidential willingness to fill the extra slots. A White House spokesman says the President has no present plans to fill them. Still, the opportunity is there, and even the most conservative politicians have trouble resisting that sort of temptation. Even the present nominally conservative White House continues to "detail" federal employes to various agencies for less than six months, thus circumventing the need to list them as permanent employes.

The problem is compounded by the fact that Congress really can't say an awful lot about this presidential staff accretion, not without calling attention to similar generosity of its own. So what you have in effect is a Congress bent on further proliferation in its own work force and therefore unwilling to scrutinize White House spending. As the chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee commented, Congress should be "almost as generous with the President of the United States as we are with ourselves" when it comes to staffing. In other words, a quid pro quo that satisfies everybody but the taxpayers. There's a lot of truth in the adage about people who live in glass houses. But it makes for a heckuva way to run independent branches of government. --(7/23/75)



COMMENT

The Specter At The Feast
(Editorial excerpted from the N.Y. Daily News)

By presidential proclamation, the nation begins its annual observance of Captive Nations Week today.

President Gerald Ford, two days after urging Americans to remember the oppressed of the Communist world, pointedly passed up an opportunity to meet Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who personifies the sufferings and the yearnings of those people. The subsequent disclosure by White House sources Saturday that the President was now "willing" to meet Solzhenitsyn came only after the Russian novelist accepted an invitation to meet 24 senators on Capitol Hill next Tuesday. This whole performance must be disheartening for the millions of wretched slaves who hoped detente would be used by America as a lever to pry open the Iron Curtain. (7/13/75)

The Private Ford Is All Staffed Out
By Jerald terHorst
(Excerpted from the Chicago Tribune)

Some of President Ford's most endearing qualities, the traits of sincerity, warmth, and easy informality which set him apart from Richard Nixon, are in danger of being staffed out of existence by the White House bureaucracy. More of his consultation time, his policy options, and his decision-making are being programmed for him by appointed aides obsessed with their own workloads and jurisdictional responsibilities to a point where they unintentionally risk turning Ford into a mechanical man behind a rubber stamp.

Two recent examples reveal the bureaucratic mindset that threatens the Ford Presidency.

Something is amiss in the White House when the President cannot meet Alexander Solzhenitsyn for fear of offending the Kremlin's masters. And something has gone askew when the President is persuaded to tell the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People that blacks will simply have to sweat out their extraordinarily high unemployment until the free enterprise system has a cure for the recession.



C-10

Solzhenitsyn had come to Washington to give his first major address in America. He wanted to see the man who, in the minds of millions of enslaved people, presides over the land of the free and the home of the brave.

It seems incredible that detente is so flimsy that it cannot endure a White House invitation for a literary giant pushed out of the Soviet Union because of his disgust with the regime. But Gerald Ford listened to Henry Kissinger instead of his own heart. The result was that the world was given a very unflattering impression of this President's concern for individual freedoms.

The human Ford was also absent from the NAACP podium here the other day. Totally missing in his address -- which would have been perfect for a Wall Street audience -- was any personal compassion for the plight of the nation's blacks.

Staff efficiency has become so highly prized and his time so rigidly controlled that Ford's human side suddenly seems scarcely visible in decision-making. The responsibility for that, in the end, rests with Ford. He has tightened up everything that is loose, as the saying goes. Perhaps now is the time to loosen up everything that is too tight. (7/13/75)

Ford's Refusal To See Solzhenitsyn Has Created A Furor
"Washington Week In Review"

The President's refusal to see Alexandr Solzhenitsyn has created somewhat of a furor around the country, the participants of Washington Week in Review agreed.

Solzhenitsyn may address a joint session of Congress next week which would, "be a real slap in the face to President Ford...he chose, obviously now, very unwisely in political terms, not to see a man who represents a champion of human liberty," remarked Peter Lisagor. (7/13/75)



N-10

It will be the seventh White House road show since Jan. 1 and the 11th since the Baroody program was started. The topics vary somewhat, but the heavy concentration is on inflation, unemployment and the energy crisis.

"Up to now the energy crisis has been sort of invisible, but now people are becoming more and more aware of the nature of the problem," Baroody said a few days ago in Chicago. Baroody admitted the White House has been severely criticized at its conferences across the country, but, he said: "We (the White House) have the only energy program in town, but we haven't been able to put it into practice."

He pooh-poohed predictions by some critics that citizens will be paying 90 cents and \$1 for a gallon of gasoline by the end of the year.

At the on-the-road White House conferences, Baroody is the moderator, a task that begins at 8:30 a.m. and usually lasts to 5:30 p.m. So far, he has not banned a single question from the audience. It wouldn't surprise him, he said to have somebody ask the President questions about Betty Ford, who herself placed no question off limits. (8/24/75)

White House Staff Awaits Ford and Ax
by Aldo Beckman

(Excerpted, Chicago Tribune)

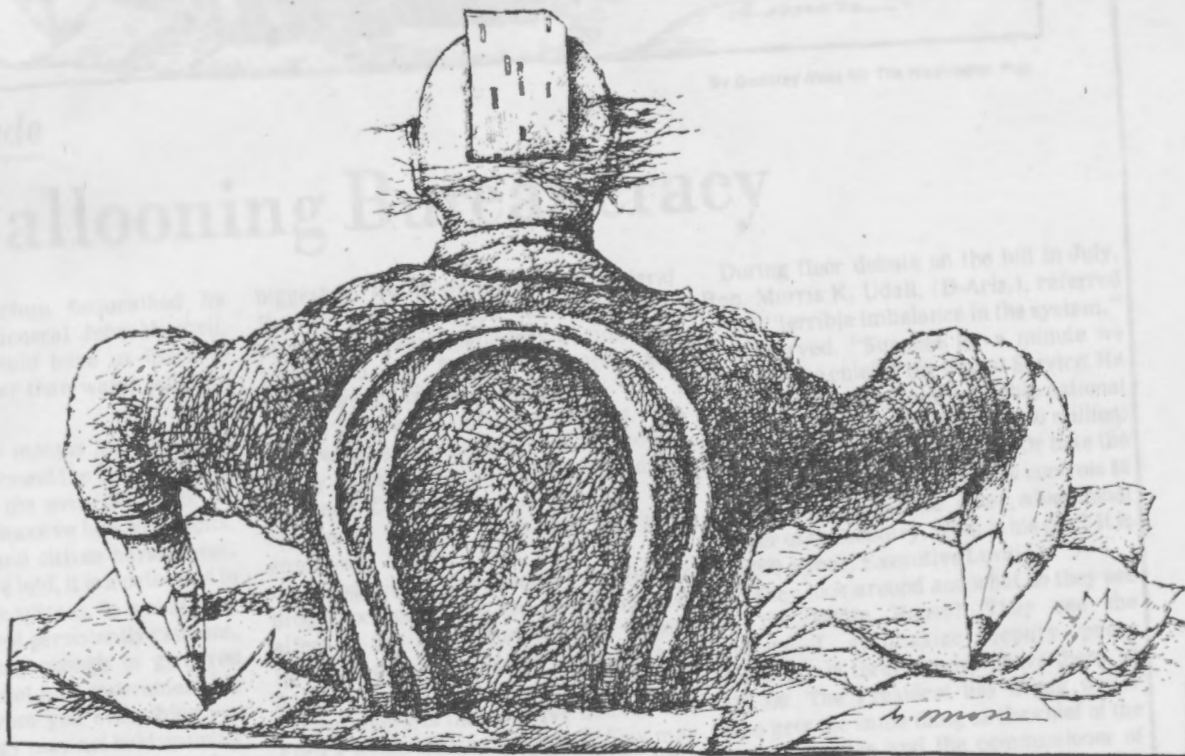
An exceedingly nervous White House staff awaits President Ford as he heads back for Washington, with the long-promised staff reduction in full swing. Thirty-five have resigned, been transferred or fired, or have retired since spring and 25 others -- some still not notified -- will get their notices in the next several months.

The President, determined to stem the bureaucratic tendency to grow and grow, decided last January to ask Congress for only 500 White House slots, a reduction of 40 from his staff at the time.

While few persons would quarrel with the need to reduce federal payrolls, Ford and his top aides discovered that accepting the principle and enforcing the reduction were two different things. (8/25/75)



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By Geoffrey Moss for The Washington Post

Dom Bonafede

The Ballooning Bureaucracy

Reversing a dictum bequeathed by former Attorney General John Mitchell, President Ford would have us listen to what he says rather than watch what he does.

For the last few months Mr. Ford has been jet-hopping around the U.S. assailing Big Government, the evils of which, he contends, lead to massive budget deficits, chronic inflation and citizen harassment. Worst of all, we are told, it is a deterrent to the free enterprise system. In a sing-song litany, the President persistently cautions, "A government big enough to give you everything you want is a government big enough to take from you everything you have." The analogy may not hold up under inspection but, like most TV deodorant commercials, it is just catchy enough to sound convincing.

Indeed, the President, nobly intent on delivering a pestilence from the land, evokes visions of St. George challenging the fire-breathing dragon.

Mr. Ford's style of theater may play in Peoria, even in Poughkeepsie—until one is able to see through the mists of political rhetoric.

Like his predecessor, who denigrated the federal bureaucracy as a "faceless machine," Mr. Ford has promised to diminish it in size. Yet, even while he is

biggest in the government: the Federal Energy Administration lists 3,245 employees, Nuclear Regulatory Commission 2,300, and the Energy Research and Development Administration 8,262.

With apparent self-consciousness, the new National Commission for Manpower Policy has only 11 staff members, and the National Commission on Supplies and Shortages operates with but a single employee.

Among the few agencies reporting a drop in personnel was one that could least afford it, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, down from 2,293 to 2,171.

Then, there is the sensitive issue of Mr. Ford's White House Office staff. Few may remember it, but it was barely a little more than a year ago that it was universally agreed that a "swollen presidency" resulted in the aggrandizement of the office and the usurpation of executive

power. During floor debate on the bill in July, Rep. Morris K. Udall, (D-Ariz.), referred to the "terrible imbalance in the system." He observed, "Suppose for a minute we consider the chief of the Forest Service. He has 200 million acres of valuable national resources. He has a budget of \$660 million. He has a staff of 22,000 people. Or take the commissioner of education. He controls \$6 billion, and he is the chief educational officer of the country. What is his pay? It is \$36,000 a year, Executive Level 5.

"They look around and what do they see at the White House? They see the deputy—I emphasize deputy—press secretary is three grades above them, at \$39,000. The President has a gag writer who gets the same thing as the chief of the Forest Service and the commissioner of education, at \$36,000. The associate counsel to the President, someone these two men have never heard of, is at the same level or a level above them, at \$38,000."

Later, another opponent of the proposal, Rep. Patricia Schroeder, (D-Colo.), said it was "clearly understood" that the House would support the White House staff bill in exchange for the President's endorsement of a congressional pay hike. Anticipating public criticism, Vice President Rockefeller, according to an aide, told congressional members he had intended to

The writer is White House correspondent for National Journal.

Effort to Trim Ford Staff Lags Behind Overall Drive

BY DON IRWIN

Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—President Ford's efforts to prune the government's permanent civilian work force appear to be less successful in the White House than elsewhere in the executive branch.

Figures produced by the White House Thursday showed that the permanent staff of the White House office decreased from 524 on Sept. 30,

At the same time, presidential Press Secretary Ron Nessen said, OMB figures show that the goal of reducing the government's civilian work force by 40,000, set by Mr. Ford during his first month in office, had been more than met.

The authorized civilian total stood at 1,968,100 when Mr. Ford took of-

The FDA report, while concluding that heavy metals

in such pro... about half what they were when the tests were made.

one and two-child families is a source of concern.

Flash Post 10/24/75

Ford Denies Payroll Rise

White House press secretary Ron Nessen yesterday called "inaccurate" and "misleading" a report that President Ford, despite his promise to cut the federal payroll, has added to

National Journal, also said the White House staff had swollen rather than shrunk between August, 1974, when Mr. Ford took office, and July, 1975, the date of the latest Civil Service Commission statistics.

postal workers but said their increase accounted for only about 1,000 of the increase revealed by the Civil Service statistics. He said Nessen's claim that the White House was cutting down on its own staff was based on incomplete

Ford Pressing Personnel Cuts but Own Staff Grows

BY GAYLORD SHAW
Times Staff Writer

L.A. Times
9/8/75 P. 1

WASHINGTON—In his recent travels from Maine to California, President Ford drew applause nearly every time he called for cuts in "the massive, muscle-bound bureaucracy of government."

However, presidential aides are learning that it is easier to talk about chopping the President's own payroll than it is to do it.

At midsummer, Civil Service Commission statistics show, the White House office staff was large than ever—although Mr. Ford promised soon after taking office to cut it by 10% as an example for the rest of government.

Now a fresh cutback campaign is under way. As part of a drive to cut the White House staff to below 500 by autumn, some lower-level employes have been dismissed in recent weeks and some have been told to look for other jobs.

"It's harder than it looks," Jerry Jones, White House staff secretary

said of the cutback attempts. "We simply are having to stop some functions and force anything possible outside the White House and let someone else do it if we can get them to do it."

The cutback efforts are complicated by differences in accounting procedures—differences that make it virtually impossible to tally the precise number of White House employes or the precise cost of the Presidency.

For example, presidential spokesmen say there now are about 520 members of the White House staff. But the Civil Service Commission's monthly count showed 625 employes for the "White House office" at the end of June, as well as 1,300 additional employes in a dozen offices, councils and commissions grouped under the "Executive Office of the President."

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