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**Series:** Hamilton Jordan's Confidential Files

**Folder:** WH Staff Coordination/Changes Memo, 1978

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Office of the Chief of Staff Files, Hamilton Jordan's Confidential Files,  
WH Staff Coordination/Changes Memo, 1978, Container 37

Ham Jordan

PERSONAL

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

1-24-78

To Senior Staff

I have asked Hamilton Jordan  
to:

Provide overall political & policy  
coordination and communication among  
the White House staff;

Convene weekly meetings of the  
senior staff & regular meetings of  
other staff members, & file reports  
of these meetings with me;

Convene bi-weekly meetings of  
the foreign policy - domestic political  
staff;

Advise me on better staff  
coordination & communication.

This will in no way effect the  
direct access and relationship you  
have with me. Give him your help  
& support.

Jimmy Carter

Ham Jordan

PERSONAL  
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

1-24-78

To V.P. Mondale  
Sec. Vance  
A. Brzezinski

In order to insure closer coordination of the political and staff dimensions of foreign policy decisions, I have asked Hamilton to participate more formally in discussions of foreign affairs. He will attend our weekly breakfasts and have access to all reports except the PDB.

Let's use Ham's political judgment & strategic planning ability.

Jimmy

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CANCELED PER E.O. 12958, SEC. 1.3 AND  
ARCHIVIST'S MEMO OF MARCH 16, 1983"

Jimmy Carter Library Staff Processing Note: (2/13/87)

Staff archivists have determined that Hamilton Jordan's office staff transferred these materials to Susan Clough, the President's secretary, sometime near the end of the administration. In June 1986, they were subsequently transferred to the Jimmy Carter Library by the Office of Jimmy Carter. The folder titles appear to have been created by Hamilton Jordan.

~~TOP SECRET~~

TO: PRESIDENT CARTER  
FROM: HAMILTON JORDAN *HJ*  
RE: FOLLOW-UP TO MY EARLIER MEMORANDUM

On the memorandum that I gave you prior to your trip, you made several notations including "discuss all of this thoroughly with the VP" and "comply with my notes".

I discussed all of these matters with the Vice-President as directed and went over my memorandum with him in detail. It is my understanding that he was going to submit his thoughts to you in writing as he is out of town for a day or so. He did not want to comment in writing on the personnel changes that I recommended but went over them with me orally and authorized me to convey his feelings to you.

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ARCHIVIST'S MEMO OF MARCH 16, 1983"**

At a convenient time when these things can be discussed in a way that will allow you time to reflect on them, I would like to pursue the following items:

- The possibility of using Tim or Phil to coordinate and direct our political activities
- The replacement and/or better utilization of certain staff members
- Better White House/Cabinet coordination and cooperation
- Setting a date for special meeting with Cabinet to review problems and recommended changes

I personally believe that the real challenge is to make these changes and improvements in a positive way and not to allow an "us and them" mentality develop between the White House staff and the Cabinet. At the same time, it is equally important that we face up - as a group - to the real problems that confront us and reach a consensus as to how they can be solved.

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*FOR YOU*

I am anxious<sup>^</sup> to make final decisions on these matters that I can begin to implement so that we will be in the best possible position for the tough issues that will confront us in the next several months.

I will need to pursue these with you in a meeting. Do you want to talk about these this afternoon or to wait until Mondale's return? Without involving other staff members in the details of our discussions, I would like for you to have the benefit of Jody, Frank and Stu's comments on certain of the White House staff changes that I have recommended.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

TO: PRESIDENT CARTER  
FROM: HAMILTON JORDAN *HJ*  
RE: PLANS FOR STAFF COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION

As relates to the new responsibilities that you have assigned me, I want to keep you informed of my plans and would appreciate your suggestions and reactions.

Staff Meetings

Although it will not solve all of the problems, I believe that regular staff meetings involving different levels and combinations of White House staff members will allow us to identify and solve some of our problems before they reach the crisis stage. I don't believe in

having meetings for meetings sake, but I do plan to begin the following on a regular basis:

*I agree*

Monday. Continuation of the 8:30 senior staff meeting. I plan to expand it to include Esther Peterson, Peter Bourne, Greg Schneiders and others who complain about not being included. The purpose of this meeting will be limited - mainly to review and discuss the coming week's activities. I believe that your participation in this meeting should be optional. You certainly don't need to spend more than five or ten minutes when you come. As most topics covered at this meeting by you are repeated at the Cabinet meeting, you should only attend this meeting with you have a special gripe or request.

Tuesday. Foreign policy/domestic staff meeting from 8:30 - 8:45. Includes Brzezinski, Powell, Moore and Jordan. Brzezinski reviews status of foreign policy decisions and activities.

Wednesday. No meeting scheduled.

Thursday. Foreign policy/domestic staff meeting from 8:30 - 8:45.

Friday. Meeting with Jordan, Powell, Eizenstat and Moore. Jordan reviews relevant matters discussed at the foreign policy breakfast earlier that day.

#### Other Meetings

In my earlier memorandum to you, I alluded to the fact

SECRET



loyalty of many of these people. Many are from Washington and worked on the Hill. These people are generally bright, energetic and more liberal than you. They want to be involved in everything but feel that they know nothing. I plan to begin to meet each week with persons at the deputy level. I will review with them generally our plans and actions, defend the decisions that we have made and seek their criticisms and advice. I believe that this kind of frank exchange is needed with this particular group of people.

White House Staff Briefings. I am going to schedule this week a briefing for everyone on the White House staff in the room in EOB where you hold your press conferences. We will have to have two meetings to accomodate the entire staff. At this meeting, Stu will present our domestic agenda for this year and take questions and Zbig will do the same in foreign policy. I am going to ask the Vice-President if he will preside at these meetings. I plan

to do this quarterly on a regular basis and believe that it will engender a positive feeling among the staff members who are seldom exposed to "the big picture".

White House Daily News. I plan to begin to produce immediately a simple, mimeographed newsletter which will be put out every day and distributed to the White House staff. It will be informal, newsy and will attempt to keep everyone generally informed. A mock-up of this newsletter follows.

↑  
It will certainly  
wind up on wide  
services - if item  
is erroneous or embarrassing

RECEIVED  
JAN 1 1964

White House News

Friday, January 27th

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JOHN WHITE ELECTED DNC CHAIRMAN at Friday morning meeting attended by the President. Former Deputy Secretary of Agriculture John White was unanimously elected Chairman of the DNC today. Despite bad weather in many areas of the country, the DNC barely managed a quorum for the election of White and passed a resolution in support of White giving him broad authority. The DNC members were entertained last night at a reception at the residence of the Vice-President.

STRAUSS AND SCHLESINGER ON SUNDAY PROGRAMS. Special Trade Representative Bob Strauss will appear on "Meet the Press" Sunday and Secretary of Energy Jim Schlesinger will be on "Issues and Answers". Be sure to watch them.

ADDRESS TO NATION ON PANAMA SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY. The President will go on national television Wednesday night to present to the American people his reasons for supporting the treaties negotiated and signed in September. This has been a good week in the Senate for the treaties and a good vote out of the Foreign Relations Committee is expected.

PRESIDENT ATTENDS 30TH PANAMA CANAL BRIEFING. On Thursday, the President participated in the 30th briefing on the Panama Canal Treaties. Thanks go to Betty Rainwater, Joe Aragon, Vivian Lichman and Laurie Lucey for their efforts in making these briefings so successful.

NEWS TIPS.....UAW President Doug Fraser got snowed in in Detroit Friday and had to reschedule his appointment with the President for Tuesday....  
.....The President will hold his regular news conference on Monday at 2:30.....The ILGW (International Ladies Garment Workers) will be honored by the President and First Lady at a reception Monday night at the White House.....We are still getting compliments from the Machinists for the reception they had at thw White House earlier in the week.....CEQ member Marion Edey withdrew her name from consideration by the Senate.....After receiving a letter from the President reaffirming our countries policy of opposing the military presence of the Soviets in our hemisphere, Senator Richard Stone announced he would support the Panama Canal Treaties.

These are some of the more obvious and simple things that I can do around the White House to improve staff coordination and communication. There are some tougher and more complex problems that I also plan to study and work on, including:

- Development of systems and procedures
- Utilization of our political resources
- Improved political utilization of the Cabinet

I will need your help and support in all these areas.

ok  
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For the time being, I would like to ask you to help me in the short run by asking the senior staff members at our Monday meeting to cooperate with me by attending those meetings that I schedule. I will be filing regular reports with you of these meetings.

EYES ONLY

TO: PRESIDENT CARTER  
FROM: HAMILTON JORDAN

After you called me last week to convey Jody's suggestion that I begin to chair a regular meeting of the senior staff, I told you that I would give you my own frank analysis of our situation and my own suggestions for improvements and/or changes at the White House.

I have been embarrassed by and am sure you are getting tired of several of my colleagues lobbying to have me designated chief of staff.

We don't need a chief of staff, but we do need and should have a greater amount of coordination among your staff than exists at present. This can be accomplished with some minor adjustments in our present structure and in the decision-making process. You will have to determine whether these adjustments are merited.

#### Personal Situation

As I have been the subject of these recommendations from Stu, Jody and others, I am going to respond frankly to you without any pretense at being modest.

As you know, I have not sought any additional titles or responsibilities. I have recently expressed my feeling to you that I could be much more helpful to you in the future than I have been this first year. I feel that I have been underutilized. Your response was understandable - that you were anxious for me to have a larger role if you had some sense that I would not leave shortly after you made this investment of time and exposure to new problems in me. I have - as you know - made such a commitment.

## Analysis of Our Problems and Needs

In analyzing the White House staff, its functions and processes, I would start from the premise that you have assembled a very talented and harmonious group of men and women to serve you. Some areas of our operation are stronger than others, but fortunately the strongest people are in the key positions.

Perhaps the most unique quality that exists among this group of people is their ability to work together. Many of these same people have worked together for you over a long period of time and are secure in their relationship with you. One of the great ironies of our present situation is that we are not taking full advantage of their potential to work together for lack of a better structure or coordinating mechanism.

In summary, I would contend that some improvements can and should be made - not because things are so bad but because things are good and could be much better.

What are our problems and/or needs? I don't want to overstate or exaggerate them, but I realize that some of them are not obvious to you from your own perspective. They are:

1. We need better staff coordination. At present, staff coordination is practically nonexistent. To the extent that any coordination takes place, it is voluntary. Communication among the staff is loose and not structured. We have very little idea or understanding of what each other is doing. There are no staff meetings or opportunities which force us to share our work, our ideas and our problems with each other.

2. Because coordination and communication among the staff is poor, morale among the White House staff is not good. Senior staff members are stimulated by their contact with you, but beyond the senior staff there is a morale problem that results from individual staff members not having a clear idea of how their own work and contribution relates to the "big picture". There are no staff meetings or devices

for communication among the staff.

3. Because no one is in charge (at the staff level), no one is held accountable for their mistakes. This means that there is a great reluctance for any of us to worry with or do anything about the problems and mistakes of other members of the staff. The result is that many small problems (which could be solved) are either ignored or never confronted unless they become big enough to merit your own attention.

Consequently, many small problems that involve the areas of several senior staff members are neither confronted nor resolved because we lack a simple mechanism which will force people at the White House to engage the problem. With so much to do and no coordinating mechanism apparent, there is a great tendency to ignore and/or tolerate each others mistakes.

4. There is no formal political input in the foreign policy decision-making process nor any standard procedure to inform

staff members with political responsibilities once decisions are made. You have agreed that this is a problem which requires our attention and have said that you are willing to make some adjustments. Let me give you the most recent example.

At some point prior to or during your foreign trip, the decision was made to proceed with the sale of F-15's to Saudi Arabia. You informed the Saudis of your decision at your meeting with the King.

First, I doubt if anyone familiar with the facts would question the decision that you made. However, anyone who is familiar with the mood of the Congress would tell you that this is going to be a very tough legislative fight. And Frank Moore, who is the person who will have to fight to have the sale approved and who is the person most familiar with our other legislative priorities, did not have the opportunity to comment on when to do it, how to do it or who should be informed of the decision in advance.

Secondly, not only did Frank not have an opportunity to comment on the sale itself, he learned about the decision

to sell the F-15's to the Saudis from a newspaper story. From that point on we were reacting politically instead of getting out in front of the decision. Frank had to call Lucy Benson at the State Department to confirm the story, and by that time was being deluged with Congressional calls questioning the story without being able to present our justification for the sale.

Consequently, you had the situation where twenty or thirty people at State and the NSC know about a decision that will require Congressional approval when the one person on your staff who will have to coordinate the fight to win Congressional approval has to read about it in the paper. This can and should be easily corrected.

### Conclusions and Options

In summary, we have a need for:

- Better staff coordination
- Better communication among all White House staff

- Improved political/policy coordination
- Improved foreign policy/domestic coordination

There are several options for dealing with these problems. None are perfect and all have some disadvantages. They are:

1. Utilize the Vice-President to work more closely with the staff on these problems. Mondale has the ability, the intelligence and obviously the clout to deal with the problems I have described.

On the other hand, I don't think you can or should expect the Vice-President to supervise and/or coordinate your own personal staff. He can and should continue to work with the senior staff on the agenda and long-range problems. But, I don't think it would be fair to him or the best use of him to involve Mondale in the day-to-day problems of your senior staff. To the extent that you decided to use him in this way, it would give him less time to work directly with you and the Congress on our priorities.

2. Designate a "staff coordinator" with specific but limited responsibilities. Make it plain at the outset that this person's job is to "coordinate". That he/she will not be anyone's boss nor will this person impede anyone's access to you nor change the direct relationship you have with the members of your senior staff.

The responsibilities of the "staff coordinator" would be:

- Convene weekly meetings of the senior staff and regular meetings of other White House staff persons.
- Convene bi-weekly meetings of domestic political-foreign policy staff (Moore, Powell, Eizenstat, Jordan and Brzezinski).
- Develop systems for improved communication among the White House staff.
- Provide overall political/policy coordination.

This person should be me - not only am I the best person to do this, but I am also the only person on the staff with the flexibility and perspective to perform such a function. This is not unlike what I did doing the campaign. While I was the "campaign manager" in title, key people in the

campaign (Powell, Rafshoon, Caddell, Lipshutz, etc.) had tremendous freedom and autonomy to work in their own areas without interference. My role was to relate the work of each unit to the other in a way that was compatible with our overall objectives. I like to see things go smoothly and take personal satisfaction in developing a esprit de corps among the people I work with.

The disadvantage of this approach is that it could be alleged that I was functioning in fact as "chief of staff" which would be reneging on your campaign promise not to have such a position. Jody would simply have to explain and define the position and its limitations.

3. Leave things basically as they are, rationalizing that the present "loose" structure has some disadvantages inherent in it. And that to try to tighten up our operation here is inconsistent with the loose structure that has served you well this first year. The argument for leaving things as they are is that we can't have it both ways.

## Decisions/Implementation

If you decide to utilize Mondale in solving these problems, you should talk directly with him about it. If you decide to leave things basically as they are, no action is necessary.

If you decide to designate me "staff coordinator" with specific but limited responsibilities, it will require some action on your part. There will be a direct relationship between my ability to help you on these problems and the degree to which you formalize my role.

You could present this decision to a meeting of the senior staff or in a memorandum. Whether written or verbal, the points which should be made are included in the following draft:

TO: SENIOR STAFF  
FROM: JIMMY CARTER

After much thought and consideration, I have asked Hamilton Jordan to assume the responsibilities of staff coordinator.

In this capacity, Hamilton will do the following things:

- Convene weekly meetings of the senior staff, regular meetings with other White House staff members and file reports of these meetings with me.
- Convene brief bi-weekly meetings of the foreign policy-domestic political staff.
- Provide overall political/policy coordination.
- Develop better systems for coordination and communication among the White House staff.

This new assignment of Hamilton's will not change in any way the access you have to me personally nor the direct relationships that I have with each of you. I know that you will give Hamilton your support.

Regardless of what decision you make on the question and problems of the White House staff, I do need to have my role in the foreign policy decision-making process formalized by you.

Because there is very little in the way of a direct contribution I can make in these decisions, the members of your foreign policy team will be less inclined to treat me as an equal participant. I don't need to see highly sensitive information or be involved in NSC meetings, but I do need to have formal access to the decision-making process. Unless I am automatically included in these things, it will be a hit and miss operation.

The points that need to be made are included in the following memorandum.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

TO: Vice-President Mondale  
Secretary of State Vance  
Dr. Brzezinski

FROM: President Carter

I would like to involve Hamilton Jordan in a more formal manner in the foreign policy decision-making process. I feel that it is important for one member of our group to focus exclusively on the political dimensions of our actions and decisions.

To implement this decision, I have asked Hamilton Jordan to attend our Friday morning breakfast meetings, review Cy's daily report and want him to have greater access to information and meetings. I would appreciate having your thoughts and suggestions on this.

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ARCHIVIST'S DEMO OF MARCH 16, 1983"**

## Conclusion

You asked me to tell you what I thought. I have tried to be objective in analyzing our situation although I realize that this memorandum is quite self-serving.

If you decide to go with a staff coordinator, I believe it will improve things generally. It will not be a panacea for all of our problems, but will provide - I think - a better mechanism and forum for dealing with a lot of our problems.

And again, it should be said that things now are not bad in terms of our staff operation. They simply can and should be better with a little work on everyone's part.