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SPOKES, PYRAMIDS, AND CHIEFS OF STAFF: HOWARD H. BAKER, JR. AND THE REAGAN PRESIDENCY

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Michael Lee Haynes
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family; my daughters Laura, Jessica, and Regan, and especially my wife, Mary, who I love with all my heart, for their love, support, and sacrifice throughout the process. Also, to my mother, Winnie who taught me to love books and the knowledge they provide.

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ABSTRACT

One of the most compelling areas of research when considering the modern presidency is the role of the White House chief of staff (COS) and the direct impact it has on the presidency. The office of the president's chief of staff is often referred to as the *power behind the throne*. Chiefs of staff exercise great authority and control within the White House Office (WHO) functioning as a *filter* or *gatekeeper* strictly controlling the access of information and people reaching the president. The COS is also one of the president's closest advisers. James Baker, former chief of staff for Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush has stated the White House chief of staff is the second most powerful job in government. However, the position has commanded relatively little attention from presidential scholars. Nevertheless, understanding this component of the modern White House is important if we are to better explain why some presidencies are more effective than others. This study focuses on the chief of staff and how the office functions within the organizational and managerial structure of the White House as a key to understanding the effective operation of the modern presidency.

Specifically the study considers Howard H. Baker, Jr. and his tenure during the Ronald Reagan presidency. Relatively little research has been conducted exploring Baker's tenure as COS, yet the Reagan presidency experienced a major transformation during this period – going from an administration in serious trouble to a stable presidency with high approval ratings. A closer study of the transformation process may provide a better understanding of the impact the COS has on the presidency. The study finds strong support for the thesis that the White House chief of staff is a critically important

component within the modern presidency and has a direct impact on the president and the potential effectiveness of his administration. Howard Baker's tenure as COS clearly demonstrates the dramatic changes chiefs of staff can produce within a presidency. In Baker's case the impact was both substantial and positive in the rescue and rehabilitation of the Reagan presidency.

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CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

> *The President needs help. His immediate staff assistance is entirely inadequate.*
>
> --The President's Committee on Administrative Management (1937)

Since the founding of the nation the American president has needed assistance in performing his duties. The Constitution makes no provision for a White House staff; however, all presidents have required at least one assistant. Prior to George Washington's inauguration he complained that his attention to presidential correspondence was becoming "an insupportable burden" (White, 1948, 496). As early as 1792 George Washington employed his nephew as his personal secretary and paid him $300 per year which came from Washington's own resources. Thomas Jefferson regularly spoke about the pressures and demands placed upon him. "It is not because I do less than I might do, but that I have more to do than I can do" (White, 1951, 71-72). John Quincy Adams wrote that "…irregularities happen for want of system in the multiplicity of business always crowding upon the President, and above all, from his want of an efficient private Secretary" (Adams, 1968, 374). Congress did not appropriate any funding for presidential staff until the Buchanan administration in 1857 – and then only one clerk. Not until 1929 did the number increase beyond the one secretary. Herbert Hoover employed three secretaries and one administrative assistant (Hart, 1987a; Hobbs, 1956; Pfiffner, 1994; Robertson, 1997; Walcott and Hult, 1995). Walcott and

Hult (1995) provide the alarmed reaction to Hoover's increase from a Washington correspondent in a quote from the December, 1929 issue of *American Mercury* magazine.

> It was to be expected that the appearance in the White House of a Big Executive should see an accompanying enlargement of office quarters, expansion of equipment and massing of secretarial help. In bygone days, the President had a secretary. Good, bad, or indifferent, but only one. But that was before the era of the Super-Administrator, before Efficiency came to the White House. Now there is a whole machine-gun squad to handle the work. (Walcott and Hult, 1995, 1)

The correspondent would have been stunned by the growth in the size and scope of the presidency that was about to occur. Franklin Roosevelt followed Hoover into the White House and at the end of Roosevelt's second term in office (1940) the number of White House staff stood at sixty-three[1], with budgeted outlays for staff of $304,000. By 1998, during William Clinton's second term, the number of White House Office staff was 400, with budgeted outlays of $51,000,000. (Ragsdale, 1998). The size of the United States government grew dramatically during the twentieth century, and the president could no longer be expected to effectively manage the executive branch alone.

"The president needs help" was one of the findings of the President's Committee on Administrative Management, more commonly known as the Brownlow Committee (Burke, 2000a; Hart, 1987a; President's Committee on Administrative Management,

[1] This number does not correlate exactly with the information concerning the Herbert Hoover administration. The number for the Franklin Roosevelt administration includes all White House staff and not just aides to the president. Allowing for White House domestic staff the number rose from 4 aides under Hoover to approximately 26 presidential aides in 1940.

1937; Robertson, 1997; Sander, 1989). During the Great Depression and in the run-up to the Second World War, President Franklin Roosevelt commissioned the Brownlow Committee – named after its chairman, Louis Brownlow – to complete a study and make recommendations on the possible restructuring of the executive branch of government. The committee subsequently issued its report in January 1937. Among the committee's findings was the determination that the demands and expectations on the office of president had developed to the extent that the president needed assistance in carrying out his required responsibilities (President's Committee on Administrative Management, 1937). Many scholars consider the Brownlow Committee and the subsequent creation of the Executive Office of the President (EOP) as the beginning of the institutional presidency which fully matured during the 1970s with the Nixon presidency (Burke, 2000a; Cohen and Krause, 2000; Dickinson, 2005; Krause and Cohen, 2000; Marcy, 1945; Pika and Maltese, 2004; Pfiffner, 1994; Ragsdale and Theis, 1997).

The power, influence, and importance of the presidency developed slowly but steadily throughout the history of the United States. The presidency has grown most significantly during the modern era – the period from Franklin Roosevelt forward. Along with power and influence, there has been an increase in the demands and expectations placed on the president. Because of these factors and the rapid growth of the executive branch of government, it is commonly accepted that the president must have help in organizing and managing the EOP and, more specifically, the White House Office (WHO). However, relatively little research has been conducted on the WHO's most critical member – the White House chief of staff. The success or failure of a presidency can often be traced directly to the organizational and managerial structure in which the

president's staff operates and, therefore, to its leader the White House chief of staff (COS).

The White House chief of staff is often referred to as the *power behind the throne*. Chiefs of staff function as filters or *gatekeepers* controlling access of both people and information reaching the president. Modern presidents tend to rely heavily on their chief of staff, turning over most managerial functions to them. The COS plays the role of an honest broker, providing the president with all relevant points of view, while at the same time managing the flow of people, paper, and information rushing toward the president. He determines when an issue has developed to the point it is ready for presidential intervention. He closely guards and directs the president's time and energies. Because of this, the COS is usually one of the president's closest advisors. The COS must also be capable of working effectively with the cabinet, Congress, the media, interest groups, and the president's political party. Vice President Richard Cheney, who was chief of staff during the Gerald Ford administration describes the importance of the president's staff, and of its leader – the COS.

> A President can do a lot based on his own personal skills, but there's a limit. His reach, his ability to guide and direct the government, to interact with the cabinet, to deal effectively with the Congress, to manage his relationship with the press… are all key ingredients to his success, and the presidential staff gives him these capacities (Kessel, 2001, 25).

James Baker, former chief of staff for Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, has stated that the White House chief of staff has the second most powerful job in government (Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

President Eisenhower is credited with the formal creation of the position of White House chief of staff, although John Steelman performed the same basic function for President Truman. Richard Nixon is recognized for standardizing the basic hierarchical model commonly used today, which centers around a strong White House chief of staff. Every president since Eisenhower, with the exception of President Kennedy, has eventually seen the need to operate with a person acting as chief of staff. President Gerald Ford explains his decision to appoint a White House chief of staff.

> I started out in effect not having [a] Chief of Staff and it didn't work. So, anybody who doesn't have one and tries to run the responsibilities of the White House, I think, is putting too big a burden on the President himself. You need a filter; a person that you have total confidence in who works so closely with you that in effect his is almost an alter ego. I just can't imagine a President not having an effective Chief of Staff (Sullivan, 2004, 4).

No president since Jimmy Carter has even attempted to manage the White House without a chief of staff. Scholars are in general agreement that the modern presidency, in order to be effective, must operate with a strong chief of staff (Cohen and Krause, 2000; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999; Sullivan, 2004).

The White House chief of staff is a critical component in the success of the modern presidency. However, a limiting factor when studying White House chiefs of staff is the number available for research – there have been fewer than twenty-five (see Table A-1)[2]. Because of this and other restricting dynamics there has been relatively

[2] All tables/figures are located in the Appendix

little investigation into the office of White House chief of staff, and even less research on what effect the performance of the COS has on the overall success or failure of a presidency – especially when considering what an important actor the White House chief of staff is in any modern presidency. Nevertheless, understanding this organizational and managerial component in the operation of the modern White House is important if we are to better explain why some presidents have been more effective in the office than others, and to establish which elements are necessary for the successful operation of a presidency. This study focuses on the White House chiefs of staff during the presidency of Ronald Reagan – in particular the tenure of Howard H. Baker, Jr. as COS – and how that position functioned within the organizational and managerial structure of the White House as a major component to understanding the successful operation of the modern presidency.

Another compelling motivation for this study is the need to create institutional memory within the executive branch of government. The presidency is unique in the American system of government in that every four or eight years the White House structural, operational, and managerial memory is wiped clean. In the other branches, continuity is built into the system. While the House of Representatives in its entirety is up for election every two years, the vast majority of its members are re-elected, thereby maintaining the bodies' institutional memory. In the Senate with only one-third of the body being elected every two years, continuity is guaranteed. Supreme Court Justices are appointed for life, or "during good behavior" as Article III of the Constitution describes it. The concept of precedent is deeply ingrained throughout the judicial system ensuring consistency and institutional memory within the judicial branch of government. The

bureaucracy, with the longevity of its career employees, creates an environment of stability and consistency.

With the presidency, a single individual is elected to the office of President and in a few short weeks he must put together a team – frequently starting from scratch – that is capable of managing the executive branch. Often the team begins with little experience or expertise in developing the organizational and managerial structure necessary to effectively operate the White House and the executive branch of government. During the critical early stages of a presidency the team may have little understanding of how Washington and particularly the Congress works. This lack of knowledge and skill can cause delays, setbacks, and failures in implementing the president's programs and policies, as was the case with the Carter administration and the first months of the Clinton presidency (Burke, 2000a; Henderson, 1988; Hess, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Robertson, 1997). Leon Panetta, White House chief of staff during the William Clinton presidency, sums it up this way: "Lessons that are so obvious in this town are never learned and everybody has to reinvent the wheel" (Sullivan, 2004, 125). This study – along with continued research – hopefully will encourage a better understanding of the office of White House chief of staff and its best practices, so that *reinventing the wheel* will not be necessary with each new administration.

The Reagan presidency is of particular interest when considering the COS for several reasons. President Reagan had a very hands-off management style. Reagan concerned himself with major policy issues – *the big picture* – and left it to his staff to work out the implementation details. This management style relies heavily on, and greatly empowers the White House chief of staff (Cohen and Krause, 2000; Cohen, 2002;

Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Hess, 2002; Jones, 1998; Pfiffner, 1994, 2005). Therefore, the chiefs of staff who operated under this system are important to consider because of the power and influence they had the opportunity to exercise.

There were four chiefs of staff during the Reagan presidency, James Baker, Donald Regan, Howard Baker, and Kenneth Duberstein. Three of them are widely considered to have been successful and one, Donald Regan, a failed COS. The sequence: success – failure – success – success allows for a comparative analysis of each the chiefs of staff. Also of interest is the major scandal which occurred during Reagan's second term – Iran-Contra – which threatened to bring down his administration. This study concentrated on the tenure of Howard Baker as COS. His position in the sequence – coming after a failed COS and during the Iran-Contra scandal – makes his tenure particularly interesting to study.

Upon accepting President Reagan's appointment as White House chief of staff Howard Baker's charge was to re-energize the White House staff; rebuild trust and credibility in the Reagan presidency; repair strained relations between the administration and Congress and the media; and get the president's policies and programs back on track. The study of Baker's tenure as COS is important because of the adverse conditions surrounding the Reagan presidency that were successfully overcome largely due to the COS and changes he implemented in the structure and management of the White House.

It is one thing to establish an efficient and effective organizational and managerial structure when just coming into a president's first term; everything is new and fresh, and the COS has the advantage of having input on staff selection from top to bottom. It is quite another to have the task when coming in midway through a second term which has

been shaken by scandal, the staff is demoralized, and where it is realistically impossible to replace much of the personnel. It is of interest to gain as much understanding as possible as to what structural and managerial changes Howard Baker implemented as COS, and how the successful turn-around of the Reagan presidency was accomplished. The White House chief of staff is a powerful position, and the COS's performance has a direct influence on the overall success or failure of a presidency, it is therefore of fundamental importance to have the most complete understanding possible of the office, its occupants, and its operation.

Analytical Framework

There are a variety of theories and approaches that can be considered when studying the various aspects of the presidency; however, there is little consensus among scholars as to which method provides the best vehicle with which to conduct research (Dickinson, 2005; Edwards and Wayne, 1983; Edwards, Kessel, and Rockman, 1993; Ragsdale and Theis, 1997). This study employed a case-study approach, grounded in presidential power theory and White House organizational theory to consider the question: What were the factors that marked the influence of Howard Baker's tenure as White House chief of staff on the performance of the Reagan presidency? The study looked at the role the White House chief of staff plays in the modern presidency, and more specifically what was the role of the White House chief of staff in the Reagan presidency? How did Howard Barker's tenure as chief of staff impact the Reagan presidency? And finally what lessons emerge from a study of Howard Baker's tenure as

COS, and how they might help to explain and predict future successes or failures of a modern presidency?

Scholars studying the organization and management of the office of the president differ in their approach. Some, such as Richard Neustadt, James Barber, and Fred Greenstein, have considered the personal style, temperament, and abilities of the individual president as the most important and controlling variables. Others, such as John Burke, Hugh Heclo, James Pfiffner, and Harvey Mansfield focus on the presidency as an institution, concentrating on the way the institution empowers and constrains the president's ability to act and react. More specific to this study is the type of organizational framework the president chooses when creating his White House operational structure. Presidents from Franklin Roosevelt through George W. Bush have chosen one of three fundamental approaches of organization as characterized by Richard Johnson (1974): a formalistic, hierarchical or pyramid model; a more collegial, hub and spokes-of-a-wheel model; and a lesser-utilized competitive model.

PRESIDENTIAL POWER THEORY

A study of the President's White House chief of staff must be grounded in theory which can explain the power and authority of the office of the president. The literature on the presidency manifests two main theories of presidential power. Both agree that the presidency as originally established by the Constitution was not a particularly strong office, and that the presidency has grown in power and importance, especially during the modern era. However, the two theories approach presidential power differently. One contends that power in the presidency is fluid and is dependent on the individual holding

the office. The other argues presidential power is derived from the institutions which have grown up around the president.

The individual

Probably the most recognized scholar in the theory of presidential power residing in the president is Richard Nuestadt, especially through his seminal work, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*, 1990. At the foundation of this theory is the assumption that presidential power resides not in the office of the president but in the person of the president. Three of the key rudiments of the theory are: 1) presidents operate from a position of weakness; 2) presidential power is derived from the president's ability to influence, persuade, and bargain; 3) presidents may increase or decrease their power according to the choices they make. "Roosevelt made clear… that the presidential power was pretty much what the President made it" (Loss, 1990, p. 111). Terry Moe and William Howell (1999) summarized the theory:

> Neustadt observed that presidents have very little formal power, far less than necessary to meet the enormous expectations heaped on them during the modern era. The key to strong presidential leadership, he argued, lies not in formal power, but in the skills, temperament, and experience of the man occupying the office and in his ability to put these personal qualities to use in enhancing his own reputation and prestige. The foundation of presidential power is ultimately personal. (Moe and Howell, 1999, 850)

James Barber (1992) agrees the man is the critical variable when studying the presidency, and when studying the president we should concentrate on his psychological

make-up. Political psychology suggests that you can explain and predict a president's decisions by studying his past, especially important is his childhood. Simply put, it is possible to evaluate a president by looking at five basic areas: 1) character, 2) world view, 3) style, 4) power situation, and 5) climate of expectations. Fred Greenstein (2000) suggests that an important factor to consider in studying the presidency is the leadership qualities of the man in the office; he believes the man shapes the office. There is "virtually unanimous agreement that White House operation is a reflection of the personal qualities and needs of the president" (Greenstein, 1977, 94). Critical to the success of any presidency is the development of the structure and organization which form the framework supporting the president. The successful design must take into account the president's personal, managerial, and work styles, as well as his overall strengths, weaknesses, and preferences. "Most aspects of the modern presidency, moreover, are doubly personalized. Not only are their effects realized through the president's personal filter, but the institution itself is taken to be highly malleable, its form intricately shaped and reshaped as presidents come and go" (Moe, 1993, 346). To more completely understand the structure of presidential organization the president as an individual must be considered (Edwards and Wayne, 1983; Kessel, 2001; Kowert, 2002; Ragsdale and Theis, 1997).

The institution

Institutional theory, when applied to the presidency, states presidential power can best be defined and explained by studying the institutions which have developed around the office of the president (Burke, 2000a, 2006; Dickinson, 2005; Plano, Riggs, and

Robin, 1982; Ragsdale and Theis, 1997). Phillip Henderson (1988) says of the growth and development of the institutional presidency, "As organizations and procedures designed to assist the President are emulated by successive administrations, a process of institutionalization unfolds" (Henderson, 1988, 14). The institutional presidency consists of the traditional constitutional powers and constraints as well as modern elements, such as the Executive Office of the President (EOP).

Although researching individual presidents and their personalities, style, and abilities has been the dominant approach in the study of the presidency, many scholars believe that examining the presidency by looking at it with an institutional focus is the best way to understand and explain the modern presidency. Matthew Dickinson (2005) argues that institutionalization is the logical response to the increasing demands on the president brought on by the post-World War II growth and complexity of government. He further argues the institutionalization of the presidency is caused not solely because of greater demands but by a combination of increased demands and the president's need for better, timelier information which can improve his bargaining position. Dickinson credits President Nixon with establishing the current *standard model* of White House organization with its formalistic or hierarchical structure and strong COS. Pfiffner (1999) contends the presidency, in itself, is not a powerful office; therefore, the institutionalization of the EOP allows for centralization of power in the office of the presidency which is a critical advantage in implementing the president's policies. He also cites the relative decline in the power and influence of political parties as increasing the president's desire to gain control of decision-making functions.

Charles Walcott and Karen Hult (1995) argue that an overemphasis on the importance of the individual president creates two critical weaknesses. First, it assumes the president has total control of the staff and neglects the diverse and increasing complex operations within the White House, and the inability of the president to competently provide oversight due to the large number of staff. Second, it does not take into consideration the political and institutional environment embedded within the White House structure. Terry Moe (1993) goes so far as to reject the importance of the personality, style, and skill of the president. He concludes that because of institutional constraints modern presidents tend to operate within similar limits once in the White House organizational structure.

It is clear that both the president as an individual and the institutional approaches have much to offer when studying the presidency. "One general conclusion to be drawn from this study is that both approaches are in part right" (Burke, 2000a, 205). Joseph Pika (1988) suggests:

> As in virtually all aspects of the presidency personal characteristics of the incumbent will play a vital role in how the presidency functions. Style, however, is not the sole determinan of performance. Organizational factors filter and potentially modify the impact of a president's management style and have an independent effect of their own. (Pika, 1988, 4)

To arrive at a more complete understanding of the organizational and managerial structure of the presidency, it is necessary to consider both the individual and the

institution in which he operates; to neglect either would result in an incomplete picture (Cohen and Krause, 2000; Dickinson, 2005; Moe, 1993).

THE WHITE HOUSE ORGANIZATION

In order for any president to have an effective and successful presidency, the organizational and managerial structure of the office must be compatible with his strengths, weaknesses, managerial style, work habits, and needs. The president must be comfortable with the staff that surrounds and supports him, and the staff must be capable of adapting to the president's requirements. Without the proper structure, the president may be enmeshed with the details of his administration, not having the time necessary to devote to the larger issues which require his attention and expertise. The organizational and managerial structure of the White House Office (WHO) dictates how all other departments within the government will interact with the president and, therefore, the policy and decision-making process within the executive branch (Bock, 1987; Henderson, 1988; Krause and Cohen 2000; Pfiffner, 1999).

No two presidents establish exactly the same organizational and managerial structures. Each modifies and adjusts a given approach to fit his personality, managerial style and work habits. However, looking at the presidencies from Franklin Roosevelt through George W. Bush strong similarities can be identified and can be ordered into one of three general organizational approaches. Richard Johnson (1974) categorized these approaches as Competitive, Collegial, and Formalistic or Hierarchical. Scholars have widely accepted Johnson's classification of WHO organizational structure. Each of these approaches provides a different framework with which to organize the White House, and

each has its strengths and weaknesses. (Burke, 2000a; Cohen and Krause, 2000; Hess, 2002; Hult, 1993; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Pfiffner, 1991, 1994, 1996, 2005; Ponder, 2000; Robertson, 1997; Walcott and Hult, 1995, 2005; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

Competitive Theory

During the modern era only Franklin Roosevelt utilized the competitive approach in organizing the White House (see Figure A-1). This method was somewhat one-sided in design as the president is the only person who sees the whole picture, while staff members report back to him on various parts of an issue. It tends to concentrate on narrowing the decision-making process to options which were politically feasible rather than necessarily attempting to derive the *best* policy option. The president seeks confrontation between members of his staff, turning the advisory system on itself. The theory argues that forcing staff members to compete with each other for presidential approval causes the staff to work harder and dig deeper for needed information in order to improve their position within the White House organization. This approach creates overlapping responsibilities and authority, and encourages intra-staff friction. There are few formal lines of authority, and the system can often appear to be chaotic (Burke, 2000a; George, 1980; Johnson, 1974; Ponder, 2000; Robertson, 1997).

Collegial Theory (Spokes-of-a-Wheel)

The Collegial, also known as the *Spokes-of-a-Wheel* theory sets the president in the center as the hub and the staff as the spokes, thus creating multiple points of access to the president (see Figure A-2). The approach encourages teamwork and creative problem

solving. It treats conflicting positions as a resource rather than a problem, and takes the strongest elements of differing viewpoints and forges them into workable solutions. However, this can also be a weakness in the approach. It can exert pressure on staff members to all agree on just one view of addressing an issue, thus creating a problem commonly referred to as the *group-think* phenomenon. The collegial approach is a horizontal rather than vertical organizational structure where the playing field is more level between staffers, and access to the president is more readily available. Presidents who may be less willing to delegate authority tend to prefer this type of system.

The system can become disorganized creating an overload of information for the president, and often places issues in front of the president before they are ready for his attention. By allowing multiple access points to the president it can encourage *oh by the way* decisions which are decisions made in the spur of the moment, often during casual conversation, and which have not been properly staffed out. Another concern with the collegial approach is that it consumes a lot of the president's time and energy, as well as requiring strong interpersonal skills. (Burke, 2000a; Cohen and Krause, 2000; George, 1980; Hess, 2002; Janis, 1983; Johnson, 1974; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Pfiffner, 1994; Walcott and Hult, 2005).

Formalistic Theory (Hierarchical - Pyramid)

The Formalistic theory is also known as a hierarchical or pyramid organizational structure (see Figure A-3). It incorporates a procedural system of decision-making, and discourages staff competition or conflict. The model is characterized by formal lines of authority, with a chief of staff controlling and funneling information to the president. The

COS also acts as a *gatekeeper* restricting access to the president. Issues are staffed out and an attempt is made to select the best possible decision in each case. A high degree of specialization in most policy areas is normal. President Dwight Eisenhower first introduced this formalistic or hierarchical model which resembles the traditional military pyramid command structure.

One weakness of the formalistic or hierarchical organizational approach is that the president can become disengaged, isolated, and it may become difficult for the president to gather differing points of view if the chief of staff becomes too restrictive with access to the president. An important aspect of the approach is it tends to consolidate power in the WHO and away from the departments and agencies. The hierarchical approach can also facilitate the problem of *group-think*. The hierarchical approach to White House organization has been utilized exclusively by every president since the Reagan presidency (George, 1980; Hult, 1993; Janis, 1983; Johnson, 1974; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Pfiffner, 1991, 1996; Robertson, 1997; Rudalevige, 2005; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

DATA AND METHODS

Studies dealing with the various aspects of the presidency more readily lend themselves to qualitative research methods than do most other areas of political interest. The presidency possesses some particular challenges for quantitative researchers, such as the number of units to be studied – twelve when considering the modern presidents; and fewer than twenty-five when considering chiefs of staff.

> No issue has plagued research on the presidency more than that of methodology. One of the principal challenges in researching the presidency has been dealing with the problem of "uniqueness," the infamous N = 1 issue. This apparent obstacle to systematic study has traditionally inhibited serious thinking about quantitative measurement, data generation, and data analysis. Much of the literature, consequently, has been qualitative and of a historical or biographical nature (Edwards, Kessel, and Rockman, 1993, 11).

Another concern in studying the power of the president is that it is an analysis of an individual and not a group.

> "Our research methods are designed to discover regularities in the behavior of aggregates of people, whether groups or institutions. We wish to generalize about these aggregates. The individual is lost in the search for statements of probability about groups and institutions that can be replicated and used for prediction… Leadership is ubiquitous in political life but is related to so many varying factors that general theories are impossible." (Edwards III, Kessel, and Rockman, 1993, 70)

Concepts are commonly defined narrowly to individual research and therefore there is little general acceptance of conceptual definitions. This can make the process of measurement difficult if not impossible. Another limiting factor is the difficulty in obtaining sensitive information regarding White House operations due to concerns for

secrecy. Also troubling for quantitative research into the presidency is how to deal with the personality, preferences, and strengths and weaknesses of individual presidents, and members of the White House staff. (Edwards, 1989; King, 1993; Moe, 1993). In recent years more quantitative research has been conducted on the presidency – predominantly studies dealing with voting behavior, the president and Congress, and public opinion – areas where data is plentiful and quantitative methodology is most fruitful. Quantitative research of the presidency is best utilized when the nature of the study provides a greater number of units of measurement. "Technically, a 'qualitative observation' identifies the presence or absence of something, in contrast to 'quantitative observation,' which involves measuring the degree to which some feature is present" (Kirk and Miller, 1986, 9). The research question determines the type of analysis which is necessary for a particular study. "…qualitative and quantitative methods are tools, and their utility depends on their power to bear upon the research questions asked" (Kvale, 1996, 69). Gary King suggests qualitative research methods are very effective when studying the presidency.

> We require systematic descriptive work to provide the basis for more parsimonious explanations of presidential behavior and its consequences. The traditional literature, emphasizing history and thick description, is most useful… for mining what needs to be explained by theory-driven research and for providing texture to more austere explanations or theories (Edwards, Kessel, and Rockman, 1993, 12).

A qualitative case study research design as the method of inquiry is appropriate for this type of project and can best be utilized to answer the research question put forward in this study.

Scholars recognize employing a triangular protocol of data collection as appropriate for the case study (Denscombe, 2003; Kirk and Miller, 1986; Kvale, 1996). This study utilized an interview procedure in order to gather primary data in the first phase of the protocol, in which I interviewed Thomas Griscom – a senior member of the White House staff. Second, information was gathered from Howard Baker's official papers, which are available for research purposes at the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy located on the Knoxville campus of the University of Tennessee. I also researched the Reagan presidency's official papers for the study period which are accessible at the Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California. Third, I drew from the available literature; scholarly journals, books, newspapers, and other articles as secondary data sources. From these three sources, I was able to gather the necessary information to answer the research questions (Denscombe, 2002, 2003; Dexter, 1970; Kirk and Miller, 1986; Kvale, 1996). Figure A-4 demonstrates the design that was utilized for this study. The research design is more easily followed when graphically represented. The data collected were analyzed, and the findings of the research reported, and conclusions offered. This three step protocol helps to increase the study's reliability and trustworthiness.

HOWARD BAKER AND THE REAGAN PRESIDENCY

During the Reagan presidency, there were two very successful chiefs of staff; James Baker and Howard Baker, and one failure; Donald Regan. There is much in White House chief of staff literature detailing the tenures of James Baker and Donald Regan. In addition Kenneth Duberstein was chief of staff during the last months of the Reagan presidency, July 1988 – January 1989. He served mainly as a caretaker as the Reagan administration was winding down and is noted for helping in a smooth transition to the Clinton administration. Duberstein is widely considered to have been effective in the position. He served for only a short period of time as COS, and few legislative or policy initiatives were put forward during the final six months of the Reagan presidency.

This study concentrates on Howard Baker's tenure as chief of staff during the Reagan administration. Relatively little has been written, and almost no research has been conducted, exploring Baker's tenure as chief of staff, and yet the Reagan presidency experienced a major transformation during this period, going from a scandal-ridden administration in serious trouble to a successful presidency with high approval ratings in a matter of just a few months (see Table A-2). A closer study of the transformation process may help provide a better understanding of the common components of a successful presidency. The Reagan presidency provides an administration with two successful chiefs of staff and one failed COS. The sequence of events is also of interest; success – failure – success. This offers a rich opportunity to compare and contrast White House organizational and managerial structures.

The selection of Howard Baker and his tenure as COS is appropriate in that Baker is in many ways representative of the modern White House chief of staff. Baker served

17 months as COS, with the average time spent in the position being approximately 26 months (see Table A-1and A-7). As a former United States Senator and Majority Leader Baker was a seasoned Washington *insider* with practiced knowledge and experience of the inner-workings of the national government – as were the majority of the chiefs of staff. Baker is considered by scholars to have been a strong, but non-domineering COS – as most have been.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter 2: The President and the Institution

Chapter Two gives a historical overview of the presidency, as it pertains to White House organization, and the two main approaches to the study of the presidency. This chapter establishes a foundation for Chapter Three which then considers White House organizational structure.

Chapter 3: The White House Organization

Chapter Three looks at the various organizational approaches utilized by presidents in structuring their White House operations. Both the strengths and weaknesses of each organizational model is discussed. The chapter examines how these approaches have been put into operation by presidents from Franklin Roosevelt to George W. Bush, and to what effect.

Chapter 4: The White House Chief of Staff

This chapter indentifies and describes the key components of the role of the White House chief of staff. The qualifications, abilities required, and demands placed upon the chief of staff are examined. Chapter Four considers the managerial and organizational style, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of those who have served as chiefs of staff – identifying those who have generally been recognized as successful as well as those who have been deemed failures.

Chapter 5: Howard Baker and the Reagan Presidency

Chapter Five concentrates on Howard Baker's tenure as White House chief of staff, and how he functioned within the established role of the COS. It looks at the conditions surrounding the Reagan presidency at the time Howard Baker assumed the position. The chapter then considers Baker's role as COS in regard to the key components identified in Chapter Four. Baker's working relationship with President Reagan, his management style, his choice of senior staff, his personal abilities and political skills are examined, and how each of these factors impacted the Reagan presidency.

Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusions

This chapter reviews the findings of the study, and details the impact Howard Baker's tenure as COS had on the Reagan presidency. The chapter identifies possible lessons learned that might assist in providing a more complete understanding of the modern presidency. Patterns which emerged which may help in explaining and predicting the

success or failure of a modern presidency are discussed. Suggestions for possible future research are advanced.

CHAPTER 2.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRESIDENCY

> *Washington placed his hand on the Bible, Livingston pronounced the oath, and Washington repeated it and kissed the Book. "It is done," Livingston declared, and, turning to the crowd, made a broad sweep with his hand and shouted, "Long live George Washington, President of the United States." The crowd roared back Livingston's words and "God bless our President"; church bells rang, and guns were fired from the Battery and a Spanish sloop of war in the harbor. The Presidency was now in being* (Koenig, 1975, 29).

Article II of the U.S. Constitution establishes the framework for the American president. The president's constitutional powers may be divided into five main areas of authority. First, the president is the nation's *Chief Executive* or administrator. Section 1 declares "The executive Powers shall be vested in a President of the United States of America". Along with this undefined executive power Section 2 provides for oversight of government departments and the ability to make personnel appointments within certain congressional restrictions. The administrator's role may be the most difficult of the president's responsibilities to perform successfully, especially with the major expansion of the national government which has occurred during the modern era. Second, Section 2 designates the president as "Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several states, when called into the actual service of the United States." Again the Constitution does not specifically detail the actual authority granted to the president by this designation.

Next, Sections 2 and 3 present the president as *Chief Diplomat*, allowing him, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties and appoint ambassadors and other public ministers. He may also receive foreign ambassadors and public ministers. Therefore, from the earliest days, the president has been recognized as the sole voice when representing the United States in foreign affairs. The Supreme Court in the 1936 *Curtiss-Wright* case officially recognized the president as the "sole organ" representing the United States in international affairs. Section 3 speaks of the president's power to provide leadership as the nation's *Chief Legislator*. Especially during the modern era, presidents have initiated national policy by presenting Congress with their legislative agendas. The president's leadership of the executive departments enables him to put forth cohesive and integrated policies and programs. Finally, "he shall take care that the Laws be faithfully executed." Section 3 empowers the president as the *Chief Magistrate*, charging him with the enforcement of the nation's laws (Henkin, 1990; Krent, 2005; Pika and Maltese, 2004; Rossiter, 1949, 1987).

Some of the frustration and uncertainty that exists in the study of the presidency is caused not in what is enumerated within the Constitution, but rather what powers may or may not be implied. The founding fathers when creating the office of the president left it loosely defined, allowing the president great flexibility to establish his role within the government. This elasticity has provided opportunity for the powers of the president to grow and evolve over time. The Constitution creates broad areas of presidential authority without defining or elaborating on those powers, leaving it up to the president, the Congress, and the Courts to determine the actually expanse of his authority (Barber,

1992; Corwin, 1984; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Neustadt, 1990; Pika and Maltese, 2004; Walcott and Hult, 1995).

> Article II is the most loosely drawn chapter of the Constitution. To those who think that a constitution ought to settle everything beforehand it should be a nightmare; by the same token, to those who think that constitution makers ought to leave considerable leeway for the future play of political forces, it should be a vision realized (Corwin, 1984, 3-4).

Edward Corwin (1984) goes on to say that while legislative and judicial powers have been fairly well defined, the power of the executive is still "indefinite as to its function." Terry Moe and William Howell (1999) agree with Corwin, suggesting the power of the presidency has developed and evolved expressly because of the ambiguity within the Constitution, and the lack of constraints placed upon the office. The president's ability to employ his implied constitutional powers has greatly facilitated the authority and scope of the office of president.

Throughout the traditional period – the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – the president's power and influence increased at a slow pace. Most legislative and policy-making functions were initiated by the Congress, with the president generally acting in an administrative capacity. Demands and expectations placed on the federal government by its citizens were limited; therefore the federal bureaucracy was relatively small, so there was little need for a large management and oversight capability centered in the office of the president. The United States role and involvement in international affairs was very limited. There was little need for a strong chief executive (Burke,

2000a; Corwin, 1984; Krent, 2005; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 2006; Patterson, 2008).

The modern era, the 1930's through today, has seen a rapid increase in the power and influence of the president domestically and in international affairs. A number of factors have precipitated this growth. First, beginning with the Great Depression, the American populace began to accept and then gradually to expect the federal government and the president, as its spokesman, to address the social welfare concerns of the nation. Second, the nation began moving away from the adherence to the concept of dual federalism toward one in which the national government is dominate and the state governments play a more subservient role. The Great Depression and World War II initiated the change, and the national government's strong taxing ability allowed it to provide the states with *grants-in-aid* programs which advanced the national government's position over the states. Supreme Court cases such as *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819) have established the precedent that constitutionally valid national law prevails over conflicting state law. The court's interpretation of the Constitution's implied powers, such as the *Necessary and Proper Clause* and the *Commerce Clause* have greatly empowered the national government in relation to the state governments (Caraley, 1986; Corwin, 1984; Dye, 2007; Golembiewski and Wildavsky, 1984; Gordon and Milakovich, 1998; Kettl and Fesler, 2005; Nathan, 1983).

Next, the president's control over the budget process, the creation of the Executive Office of the President, and the president becoming an active participant in the legislative process have blurred the lines of the doctrine of separation of powers. Congress has acquiesced in each of these areas, providing the president a much stronger

voice within the government. Next, President Lincoln's expansive interpretation of his role as *Commander in Chief* during the Civil War followed by World Wars I and II has greatly enhanced the president's power and influence. Finally, the ascension of the United States as a major power on the world stage, and the president emerging as the country's *sole organ* in international relations have placed the president in a position of leadership in foreign affairs (Burke, 2000a; Corwin, 1984; Hart, 1987a; Larcinese, Rizzo, and Testa, 2006; Nelson, 2006; Pika and Maltese, 2004).

As the power and influence of the presidency has multiplied so to have the demands and expectations placed upon the president. Clinton Rossiter (1987) has identified at least five areas of presidential responsibility in addition to his constitutionally mandated duties. The president is expected to be *Chief of his Political Party*. This is especially the case as political parties have lost some of their influence because of factors such as the selection of candidates by direct primary elections. The president is the *Voice of the People*. "the spokesman for the real sentiment and purpose of the country" (Rossiter, 1987, 19). He is to act as the *Protector of the Peace*, both domestically and in international affairs. He is to be the *Manager of Prosperity* maintaining a stable and prosperous economy. Finally, the president is to perform the duty of *World Leader* providing guidance not only for the United States but for the free world.

The demands the American people place on their president are far more than any one person could possibly fulfill.

> Our expectations are frequently too high; our conceptions of the presidency too fickle. We want strong leadership unless the strong leader

> gives us the "wrong" kind – and then we change our tune. We have done this time and again. Unquestionably, we give presidents more than they can do, more pressure than they can bear, and more paradoxes than they are able to reconcile or juggle. We often abuse them and seldom praise them. We wear them out, use them up, and yet we keep asking them for more (Corwin, 1984, 35).

The United States elects one person to be its leader and then expects him to flawlessly manage a government made up of hundreds of diverse departments and millions of employees. He is expected to be an expert in every area of national life. He is to maintain the economic health of the nation, the country's social welfare, and ensure security both at home and abroad. The president is ultimately held accountable for every aspect of American life and culture; with his political life and legacy held in the balance.

> Nothing about the presidency is as simple as it seems. How could it be? The office is more than a man but less than a fixed institution. It is a place where a never-ending stream of transient personalities are expected to perform vital, permanent functions for the rest of government, where an uncommon person is expected to act on the concerns of common people, to lead without being power-hungry, to manage without seeming manipulative, to speak for a nation that never expresses itself with one voice. The presidency is an alter erected by democratic opinion, sometimes for worship, sometimes for human sacrifice (Heclo and Salamon, 1981, ix).

For a president to have any hope of success he must surround himself with the best and brightest minds and talent available. To quote from the Brownlow Committee Report as to the type of person required:

> Men for these positions should be carefully chosen by the President from within and without the Government. They should be men in whom the President has personal confidence and whose character and attitude is such that they would not attempt to exercise power on their own account. They should be possessed of high competence, great physical vigor, and a passion for anonymity (President's Committee on Administrative Management, 1937, 5).

The president truly must have help in meeting the demands and expectations placed upon him. The staff he relies on will often have more to do with the success or failure of his presidency than many of his own actions.

> Yet the activities of this train of experts, the Executive Office and the Cabinet and all their offshoots and auxiliaries, must not draw our attention away from the man all alone at the head. The Presidency… has been converted into an institution during the past quarter-century, and we can never again talk about it sensibly without accounting for "the men around the President." Yet if it has become a thousand-man job in the budget and in the minds of students of public administration, it remains a one-man job in the Constitution and in the minds of the people… (Rossiter, 1987, 28).

Having briefly traced both the president's enumerated and implied constitutional powers as well as those responsibilities which have fallen to him as the office has evolved, let us now turn to a discussion of presidential theory, and look more closely at the president and the presidency. There is no one hegemonic theory in the study of the presidency, and there is no agreement as to a single best way to approach the research. Stephen Wayne in *Studying the* Presidency (1983) suggests "In the absence of a comprehensive theoretical formulation, a synthesis of existing approaches and models seems to offer the best hope for generating and accumulating knowledge about the presidency" (Wayne, 1983, 46). When studying presidential power two principal approaches emerge. Both start with the assumption that the presidency as set forth in the Constitution was not intended to be a strong and dynamic office, and the president's strength does not chiefly rest in its provisions. The two theories would also agree that the presidency has grown and developed into a powerful and influential office, especially during the modern era. However, the two differ in their approach to explaining presidential power. The first, states that power resides in the person of the president, and that he may make of the office whatever his talents and abilities allow. The second, argues presidential power can best be understood by focusing on the institutions which have developed around the president.

The President

The theory that presidential power can best be understood by focusing on the individual who holds the office has been a dominate theory within the field of presidential studies for more than fifty years. Richard Neustadt is considered the chief

architect of this approach to explaining presidential power. At the foundation of his theory are three generalized assumptions that apply to all presidents. First, presidents operate from a position of weakness. The formal powers of the president are inadequate to meet the demands placed upon him. The concept of *weakness* as defined in the theory is the gap between what is expected of the president and his guaranteed ability to deliver (Neustadt, 1990). Second, the president's real power is power to influence, persuade, and bargain. Neustadt defines the concept of *power* as: "personal influence of an effective sort on governmental action. This I distinguished sharply – a novel distinction then – from formal "powers" vested in the Presidency by constitutional or statute law and custom" (Neustadt, 1990, ix). According to Neustadt, power is something that the president must consistently conserve, guard, and attempt to increase.

> Governmental power, in reality, not form, is influence of an effective sort on the behavior of men actually involved in making public policy and carrying it out. Effective influence for the man in the White House stems from three related sources: first are the bargaining advantages inherent in his job with which to persuade other men that what he wants of them is what their own responsibilities require them to do. Second are the expectations of those other men regarding his ability and will to use the various advantages they think he has. Third are those men's estimates of how his public views him and of how their publics may view them if they do what he wants. In short, his power is the product of his vantage points in government, together with his reputation in the Washington community and his prestige outside (Neustadt, 1990, 150).

Finally, presidents increase or decrease their power by the choices they make. This concept is vital to our study in that the choices the president makes as to the type of White House organizational structure and the selection of the staff surrounding him play heavily into success or failure of his presidency. "But adequate or not, a President's own choices are the only means in his own hands of guarding his own prospects for effective influence…" (Neustadt, 1990, 49). To demonstrate this point Neustadt provides case studies of presidential choices having a direct effect on their influence and their presidencies. President Harry Truman inherited the presidency with the death of Franklin Roosevelt during the last months of World War II. Truman was not particularly popular within his own party and during the congressional elections of 1946 he was urged to not participate in the democrat's re-election campaigns. In November 1946, the republicans gained control of both houses of Congress. At that point Truman was considered a weak caretaker president and incapable of any major policy initiatives. By 1947 the Soviet Union's aggressive intentions in Eastern Europe were becoming clear and with Western Europe devastated by the war it was clear that the United States needed to do something. In 1948, which was a presidential election year, a weak President Truman got a republican Congress to pass his plan to rebuild our Western European allies (Neustadt, 1990).

The Marshall plan was a massive undertaking and it was successful because of the choices President Truman made. Which ultimately increased his influence, and in turn allowed the Marshall plan to make it through the Congress, and helped him win reelection?

> The President's own share in this accomplishment was vital. He made his contribution by exploiting his advantages. Truman, in effect, lent Marshall and the rest the perquisites and status of his office. In return they lent him their prestige and their own influence. The transfer multiplied his influence despite his limited authority in form and lack of strength politically. Without the wherewithal to make this bargain, Truman could not have contributed to European aid… In the fortunate instance of the Marshall Plan, what Truman needed was actually in the hands of men who were prepared to "trade" with him. He personally could deliver what they wanted in return. Marshall, Vandenberg, Harriman, et al., possessed the prestige, energy, associations, staffs essential to the legislative effort. Truman himself had sufficient hold on presidential messages and speeches, on budget policy, on high-level appointments, and on his own time and temper to carry through all aspects of his necessary part… Had Truman lacked the personal advantage his "powers" and his status gave him, or if he had been maladroit in using them, there probably would not have been a massive European aid program in 1948 (Neustadt, 1990, 46-47).

In June 1972 President Nixon, coming off a landslide re-election victory, learned that members of his staff had orchestrated a break-in at the Watergate Complex. The choices he made drained him of all the influence he had established and ultimately forced his resignation.

> Thereby Nixon mortgaged every aspect of his influence – prestige, reputation, ultimately formal powers – to the judgment exercised by Haldeman and others in directing a scratch team composed of misfits and incompetents, the so-called White House "plumbers." Then, in order to protect them from disclosure, Nixon took out a second mortgage, this time on the loyalty of a counsel he had scarcely met, John Dean, who handled the initial cover-up. In 1973, as Dean grew restive and afraid, Nixon tried to put in place through Haldeman and Ehrlichman a cover of the cover-up. After their forced departure he continued it himself, hiding some things even from their replacements. And all this time his conversations were recorded by an automatic system, Haldeman's device, that Nixon had accepted for the sake of history.
>
> The ultimate custodian of Nixon's power came to be his tapes which he – whether through prudence, confidence, short-sightedness, or indecision – left intact for the most part. Not surprisingly, except perhaps to him, their existence became public and the Supreme Court in time insisted upon treating them as evidence. Their record of his words then brought him down (Neustadt, 1990, 212-213).

During the sixteen months that it took for the Watergate scandal to run its course, the president's domestic and foreign policy ground to a halt. They became victims to the president's pre-occupation with the cover-up. "His mind reportedly was fixed for the most part upon his vanishing reputation, plummeting prestige, and possible impeachment. Thus loss of time as well as lost momentum – are the foregone opportunities that

momentum seemed to promise – were prices Nixon paid in coin of policy for his involvement with those *plumbers*" (Neustadt, 1990, 213). These two cases evidence the importance of the choices the president makes as to the people who will advise him, and serve in his administration.

James Barber is most closely associated with the theory *presidential character* or *political psychology* which states the best way to explain and predict the success or failure of a presidency is to study the person of the president, with special attention being placed on the president's formative years. Barber (1992) lays out his theory with four main assumptions. First, the president's psychological makeup strongly influences his behavior. Second, the president's personality is patterned and is understandable in psychological terms. Next, the president's personality interrelates with the climate of the nation, its demands and expectations, at the time he serves. The degree to which he is able to interact successfully with these outside forces establishes the tone and dynamics of his presidency. Finally, the best way to explain and predict a president's behavior is to look at the impact his early years had on him. The core of his argument is that we must be able to determine the president's psychological attitude in two crucial areas – how actively he approaches the job, and if he appears to enjoy political life.

> Political psychology explores the diverse ways in which people think they can reach their goals. Too often, rational choice approaches assume simple and direct linkages; this is unwarranted and is likely to produce misleading results… Often, we cannot understand what actors will do without knowing where they have been and what they have done (Jarvis, 1992, 359).

There is strong consensus among scholars that the person at the top – the president – is a vital component of any presidency. His leadership qualities; his strengths and weaknesses; his talents, abilities, and the choices he makes set the direction his presidency will take, and can greatly influence its success or failure (Barber, 1992; Burke, 2000a, Corwin, 1984; Greenstein, 2004; Hartmann, 1980; Koenig, 1975; Nelson, 2006; Neustadt, 1990; Randall, 1979; Rossiter, 1987; Skowronek, 2006). H. R. Haldeman, President Nixon's chief of staff, speaks to the control the individual president has over the office.

> You have to structure each President's staff to fit that President's method of working. You cannot institutionalize on any permanent basis the Office of the President. You must build a new Office of the President for each president, and it must evolve as that president evolves in office (Thompson, 1987, 85).

James Barber states while it is difficult to test empirically, commonsense and observation attest to the importance of the president as an individual leader.

> Who the president is at a given time can make a profound difference in the whole thrust and direction of national politics. Since we have only one President at a time, we can never prove this by comparison, but even the most superficial speculation confirms the commonsense view that the man himself weighs heavily among other historical factors (Barber, 1992, 3).

The president makes a difference, especially in difficult times when strong leadership is needed.

Benjamin Franklin spoke to the Constitutional Convention: "The first man put at the helm will be a good one… . No body knows what sort may come afterwards" (Milkis and Nelson, 2003, 27). The Constitution broadly lays out the office of president leaving the debate open as to how much energy should be in the executive. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, with the exceptions of the Jackson and Lincoln presidencies, the *Whig* theory of the presidency was commonly held by men holding the office of president. Whig theory stated the presidency was a limited office and empowered only by what was expressly enumerated in the Constitution. The president's main job was that of an administrator – to faithfully execute the laws passed by Congress. President James Buchanan expressed his adherence to Whig theory. "My duty is to execute the laws… and not my individual opinions" (Patterson, 2008, 341).

Early in the twentieth century and throughout the modern era of the presidency Whig theory has been replaced by Stewardship theory. This theory argues the office of president is not only empowered by what is expressly set out in the Constitution, but by implied powers as well. The presidency then, is an assertive office limited only by what the Constitution and constitutional law prohibits (Burns, 1984; Corwin, 1984; Covington, Wrighton, and Kinney, 1995; Fatovic, 2004; Jones, 1998; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 2006; Neustadt, 1990; Patterson, 2008; Rossiter, 1987). Theodore Roosevelt exemplifies this position.

> My view was that every executive officer… was a steward of the people, and not to content himself with the negative merit of keeping his talents undamaged in a napkin. I declined to adopt the view that what was imperatively necessary for the Nation could not be done by the President

> unless he could find some specific authorization to do it. My belief was that it was not only his right but his duty to do anything that the needs of the Nation demanded unless such action was forbidden by the Constitution or by the laws (Corwin, 1984, 175).

The change in the way we see the president has helped facilitate the increased power and influence of the office. The modern president has many more demands and expectations placed upon him than earlier men who held the office. Richard Neustadt quotes President Wilson. A president may retain liberty "to be as big a man as he can" then Neustadt adds "But nowadays he cannot be as small as he might like" (Neustadt, 1990, 6). World Wars I and II, the Great Depression, natural disasters – any major crisis can create an atmosphere where strong leadership is required. The president – a single figure at the head of the government – is forced to the front, and naturally becomes the nation's spokesperson. His words, his actions, the decisions he makes can and do greatly affect the country. "The United States is said to have a government of laws and institutions rather than individuals, but… it is one in which the matter of who occupies the nation's highest office can have profound repercussions" (Greenstein, 2004, 2).

The Presidency

The general acceptance of a more activist leadership role for the president helped prepare the way for growth and development of the office of the president. Institutional theory argues the best way to explain and predict presidential behavior is to focus on the structures, organizations, and processes which have developed around the president. "The institutionalization of the presidency involves the process by which the office as an

organization attains stability and value as an end in itself" (Ragsdale and Theis, 1997). Ragsdale and Theis go on to say the institutionalization occurs when four criteria are met – autonomy, adaptability, complexity, and coherence. The institutional approach holds the systems supporting the president both empower him and at the same time constrain and limit his ability to act (Burke, 2000a, 2006; Dickinson, 2005; Mansfield, 1989; Plano, Riggs, and Robin, 1982; Ragsdale and Theis, 1997; Rudalevige, 2005; Wayne, 1983).

> But the presidency is also an institution, and the individual who occupies the office at any given time is an institutional actor, his role well specified by law and expectations, his incentives highly structured by the system. Some portion of presidential behavior, then, and perhaps a very large portion, is quite impersonal. All presidents, whatever their personalities or styles or backgrounds, should tend to behave similarly in basic respects (Moe, 1993, 337).

Institutional theory asserts the structure and organization surrounding and supporting the president tends to influence the president's behavior as much or more than the president influences the institution. "In terms of its *deep structure*, however, the office is largely a given that a president can change slowly if at all. This structure is a web of other people's expectations and needs" (Heclo, 1999, 24).

The elections of 1932 signaled a major change in the American public's view and expectations of government's role in dealing with the economic and social issues. The Great Depression, and later World War II, altered America's attitude toward limited government and a limited presidency. The public demanded the government and the president take an active role in addressing the nation's debilitating problems. Franklin

Roosevelt won a landslide victory in the presidential election – wining the electoral vote 472 to 59 – carrying forty-two states. Democrats gained power in the Congress as well. In the House they increased their numbers over the Republicans by 310 to 117, and captured control of the Senate by a 60 to 35 margin. Roosevelt immediately set out to increase the power and influence of the presidency by aggressively proposing legislative and policy initiatives – his *New Deal*. The modern presidency had its beginnings during the term of President Roosevelt – he forever changed the office (Hart, 1987a; Milkis, and Nelson, 2003; Pfiffner, 1994; Pike and Maltese, 2004; Schlesinger, 1959).

In March 1936, President Franklin Roosevelt commissioned a three-member committee comprised of Louis Brownlow, Charles E. Merriam, and Luther Gulick. The committees charge was to study the function of the office of president and propose recommendations to reorganize the presidency in order to provide for improved management of the office. The President's Committee on Administrative Management, more commonly known as The Brownlow Committee so named after its chairman, Louis Brownlow, issued its report in January 1937. Among the committee's recommendations the report cited the growing demands on the president and the increasingly complex issues which the office of the president was required to address – the committee called for a restructuring of the presidency.

> While in general principle our organization of the Presidency challenges the admiration of the world, yet in equipment for administrative management our Executive Office is not fully abreast of the trend of our American times, either in business or government. Where, for example, can there be found an executive in any way comparable upon whom so

> much petty work is thrown? Or who is forced to see so many persons on unrelated matters and to make so many decisions on the basis of what may be, because of the very press of work, incomplete information? How is it humanly possible to know fully the affairs and problems of over 100 separate major agencies, to say nothing of being responsible for their general direction and coordination?
>
> These facts have been known for many years and are so well appreciated that it is not necessary for us to prove again that the President's administrative equipment is far less developed than his responsibilities, and that a major task before the American Government is to remedy this dangerous situation (The President's Committee on Administrative Management, 1937, 3).

The Brownlow Committee advised the Congress to implement the recommendations which would provide the president with additional staff support, as well as the authority to reorganize the executive branch. Roosevelt endorsed the report's findings and immediately forwarded the report to Congress for action on the proposals, stating.

> The committee has not spared me, they say what has been common knowledge for twenty years, that the President cannot adequately handle his responsibilities; that he is over-worked; that it is humanly impossible, under the system which we have, for him fully to carry out his Constitutional duty as Chief Executive because he is overwhelmed with

> minor details and needless contacts arising directly from the bad organization and equipment of the Government… The plain fact is that the present organization and equipment of the Executive Branch defeat the Constitutional intent that there be a single responsible Chief Executive to co-ordinate and manage the departments and activities in accordance with the laws enacted by the Congress (Roosevelt, 1938, 670).

The timing of the report's transmittal to Congress could not have been worse. Roosevelt's request for congressional authority to implement the recommendations came just after his failed "court packing" plan which angered many in the Congress, and as a result Roosevelt never fully regained his influence with Congress. The Congress had temporarily reasserted itself and refused to act on any of the report's proposals until April, 1939 when it passed the Reorganization Act of 1939 which authorized much of the Brownlow Committee's recommendations. Roosevelt moved quickly and submitted the Reorganization Plan No. 1, 1939 which created the Executive Office of the President (EOP), and transferred the Bureau of the Budget and the National Resources Planning Board into it. On September 8, 1939, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8248 which established the structure of the EOP. Its departments included the White House Office, the Bureau of Budget, the National Resources Planning Board, the Liaison Office for Personnel Management, and the Office of Government Reports. John Hart (1987a) calls Executive Order (EO) 8248 "a landmark document in the history of the modern presidency." Many scholars consider the Brownlow Report, Reorganization Plan No. 1, and EO 8248 the beginning of the institutional presidency. However, some such as

Ragsdale and Theis (1997) date the beginning in 1921 with the creation of the Bureau of the Budget which for the first time allowed the president to submit an integrated national budget request to Congress (Burke, 2000a; Dickinson, 2005; Hart, 1987a; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Pfiffner, 1994; Ragsdale and Theis, 1997; Robertson, 1997).

Another factor in the growth of power and influence within the presidency is the president's willingness to use direct unilateral action in the form of an executive directive. When properly executed by the president, these directives carry the force of law. Executive directives are generally divided into two basic arenas of policy. The first deals predominately with domestic affairs and is termed an executive order. Presidential proclamations, memoranda, national security directives, and presidential signing statements fall into this domain. The second has to do with international affairs and is termed an executive agreement (Campbell and Jamieson, 1990; Cooper, 2002; Howell, 2003, 2005: Mayer, 2001).

Executive orders constitute the majority of the domestic directives, and can originate from almost anywhere within the executive branch, and are employed largely as an alternative to legislation. U.S. courts have consistently ruled that executive orders have the same force of law as if they were enacted by Congress – *Dames and Moore v. Regan* (1981). However, Congress does have the ability to reject a given order if it chooses to do so within specific time constraints. Once published in the Federal Register an executive order has the force and effect of law. Haphazard record keeping early in the nation's history makes it impossible to be sure of the exact number of executive orders issued – well over 14,000 have been recorded (see Table A-3 and Figure A-5). The vast majority of executive orders have been issued during the modern era of the presidency,

with the highest numbers coming in the first half of the twentieth-century. While still substantial the numbers issued has steadily declined since the early 1950's. President Franklin Roosevelt relied heavily on his ability to issue executive orders. His actions helped to institutionalize future president's use of the executive directive to direct domestic policy (Cooper, 2001, 2002; Corwin, 76; Deering and Maltzman, 1999; Howell, 2005; King and Ragsdale, 1988; Krause and Cohen, 1997; Mayer, 1999, 2001).

In the area of international relations, the executive agreement is one of the tools which has enabled the presidency to capture and maintain a dominate role. The president because of strong persistence, congressional acquiescence, and judicial precedence has emerged with the power to execute international executive agreements which are utilized by the president as a substitute for the formal treaty-making process as provided in the Constitution. Over an extended period of time the Supreme Court in decisions such as *US v. Curtiss-Wright* (1936), *United States v. Belmont* (1937), *United States v. Pink* (1942), and *Weinberger v. Rossi* (1982) has recognized the legitimacy and authority of the president to issue executive agreements – which are equal to the formal treaty – solely on his authority as president. The practice of independent policy-making by the president in the area of foreign affairs developed gradually. While the executive agreement has been in use since the presidency of George Washington, the formal treaty process was the dominate tool utilized in international relations. It was not until the modern era that there was a rapid and sustained increase in the use of executive agreements to conduct U.S. foreign affairs policy (see Table A-4 and Figure A-6). The executive agreement, especially during the modern era, has developed into the preferred method of conducting foreign affairs. Since the time of Franklin Roosevelt the presidency has taken the lead in

policy initiatives both in domestic and foreign affairs which has greatly increased the demands and expectations placed on the office. (Cooper, 2002; Damrosch, Henkin, Pugh, Schachter, and Smit, 2001; Goldklang, 1984, Howell, 2003; Hyman, 1983; Johnson, 1984; Lesser, 1983; Margolis, 1986; Mayer, 1999, 2001; Vagts, 1997).

The Great Depression and World War II changed the presidency forever. The presidency was now the central hub of the U.S. government. Americans began looking to the president to voice their concerns and to advance policies which would address the nation's problems. The presidency which had traditionally consisted of very limited staff and resources began a rapid expansion. While some scholars such as Hargrove and Nelson (1984) suggest the Theodore Roosevelt presidency was the start of the institutional presidency, most point to the administration of Franklin Roosevelt and the creation of the EOP as the beginning of the modern institutional presidency. From the time of its inception in 1939, the EOP continued to develop and grow, supporting the presidency and facilitating the president's ability to increase in power and influence. The institutionalization of the presidency fully matured in the 1970's during the Nixon administration (Burke, 2000a, 2006; Pfiffner, 1994; Pika and Maltese, 2004; Schlesinger, 1973; Wildavsky, 1969). During Franklin Roosevelt's first two terms of office and up to the start of WWII, the average number of staff employed in the EOP was 237. By the beginning of President Nixon's second term the staff averaged 5,751 (see Table A-5).

The Executive Office of the President does not consist of one department but is rather a collection of many separate units. While every president makes changes in what constitutes the EOP's make-up, certain elements remain constant (see Table A-6). From its chaotic beginnings and structure during the Roosevelt presidency, President Truman

brought order and organization. Drawing on his military experience and expertise President Eisenhower did much to institutionalize the EOP, and President Nixon is credited with standardizing the structure of the modern EOP. The core of the EOP is the White House Office (WHO) – the most flexible of all the units within the EOP, and is staffed by persons most loyal to the president. The make-up of the WHO differs with each presidency, as it is organized and structured to meet the needs of each particular president. Since its inception in 1939 the WHO has grown in size and resources (see Table A-5). The WHO most closely advises, serves, and supports the president and is the command center for the modern presidency (Burke, 2000a, 2006; Cornin, 1975; Greenstein, 1982; Hart, 1987a; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Patterson, 1988; Pfiffner, 1999; Sander, 1989; Smith, 1988).

"A modest office since the time of its creation, the presidency developed after the 1930s into a full-blown institution" (Milkis and Nelson, 2003, 278). The impact of the institutionalization of the presidency is considerable. First, it has centered control over policy-making with the White House staff rather than in the various departments. In the modern presidency, the Cabinet plays a less important role in policy discussion than in previous times. The president's agenda is developed and initiated by the centralized White House staff. Second, institutionalization within the WHO has created a centralized often hierarchical structure where a few top advisors limit the access of people and information reaching the president. Next, because of the complexity of the WHO organization and the issues it is expected to address, the staff has moved from a generalized expertise, where a staff members might deal with many diverse issues, to a highly specialized staff with little cross-policy pollination. "In the 1930s and 1940s, the

aides to the president were most often generalists. In the 1980s, the presidency comprised a congeries of complex bureaucracies filled with specialists" (Pfiffner, 1994, vii). Next, increased politicization has become the norm. As the president is surrounded by a staff which is motivated by loyalty to him and his political party, the administrative process has become highly partisan in nature. Finally, as the EOP has grown and evolved into an institution, it behaves more like a bureaucracy within the bureaucracy (Burke, 2000a, 2006; Fenno, 1959; Hart, 1987a; Mikis and Nelson, 2003; Patterson, 1988; Pfiffner, 1994, 1999; Robertson, 1997; Smith, 1988). "Today, as we have seen, the staff is a large-scale organization with many bureaucratic characteristics: complexity, fragmentation, competition, and self-serving advocacy" (Burke, 2000a, 43).

> In contrast to the early days of the presidency, when presidents had little or no staff to help them, the modern presidential establishment is a bureaucracy with thousands of employees, all of whom work for the president. The Executive Office of the President (EOP) is the president's tool for coping with Congress and the far-flung executive branch (Robertson, 1997, 1).

The modern presidency has become a complex, highly sophisticated organization which no one person – president – could possibly manage successfully. The president truly "needs help."

Conclusion

A study of the presidency must allow for the influences of both the individual who holds the office and the institution which has evolved around the office. General

Andrew Goodpaster, President Eisenhower's staff secretary said: "The president's desk is where everything comes together, or where it comes apart" (Mosher, 1988, ix). However, the modern president is incapable of gathering and digesting all of the critical information necessary to competently address every complex problem his administration faces.

> … [G]iven the great demands and expectations placed upon the presidency and the complexity of those policy problems, both foreign and domestic, to which the chief executive is expected to respond, contemporary presidents must turn to others for aid and assistance, whether for policy advice or to implement policy choices. Given this context, which is unlikely to change in the near future, the president's staff system can powerfully affect his performance (Burke, 2000a, 206).

The president – his personality, leadership skills, management style, talents, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses – is a critical factor when attempting to understand the complexities of the American presidency. It is equally important to consider the institution which surrounds and supports the president. The institution both empowers and at the same time constrains the president's decision-making process and his ability to act (Burke, 2000a; Hargrove, 2001; Pfiffner, 1994; Robertson, 1997; Wayne, 1983).

> This dual role of president and staff as both determining and determined, independent and dependent, is useful not only in suggesting that each approach is in some way "right" in its insights, but that taken together both have something of merit to contribute to our understanding of the institutional presidency. By combining both perspectives we can gain

better insight into how the institutional presidency has developed over time and how it contributes to or detracts from effective presidential performance (Burke, 2000a, 26).

CHAPTER 3.

THE WHITE HOUSE ORGANIZATION

> *If the presidency is well-organized, the president is more likely to be successful. Poor administration can lead to blunders or disaster* (Pfiffner, 1994, vii).

The creation and development of the Executive Office of the President (EOP) has empowered the presidency, increasing its power and influence, and positioning it at the very center of American government. The EOP has also transformed the presidency from a man to a machine – going from a president with a few staff, limited in his ability to effectively meet the demands and expectations placed upon him to an institution with vast resources which both supports and at the same time constrains him. The EOP is not one monolithic organization but rather it is made up of many separate organizations. At the core of the EOP is the White House Office (WHO). The WHO is the command center for the modern presidency; it controls the flow of information reaching the president and directs the flow of instructions coming from the president. Therefore, the organizational and managerial structure of the WHO is of vital importance and interest as it is a major factor in the success or failure of a presidency (Cohen and Krause, 2000; Hess, 2002; Hobbs, 1956; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1996; Pika, 1988; Sullivan, 2004).

The morning after the national election the president-elect begins the task of putting together a team which will transition his successful political campaign into an organization capable of effectively governing the nation. "The implication is clear:

White House organization has an important and direct bearing on presidential performance" (Pika, 1988, 3). Many of his friends and strongest supporters are experts in getting a candidate elected; often knowing more about politics than governance, and may or may not have the talents and abilities necessary to successfully manage the presidency. Unlike the federal bureaucracy, and even the rest of the EOP, the White House Office is less institutionalized and is less capable of being institutionalized. Because each president is unique in his personality, experience, talents, skills, management style, and abilities much of the institutional memory of the WHO is wiped clean with each new occupant. This is especially the case when an opposing political party wins an election and is forced to establish its organizational structure with little, if any, holdover of personnel from the previous administration. Therefore, the president's choice of the organizational and managerial structure he will establish as the framework for WHO operations is critical to the success of his presidency (Burke, 2000a; Feldman, 1993; Hess, 2002; March and Olsen, 1976, 1984, 1989; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1996; Robertson, 1997; Sullivan, 2004; Waldo, 1948).

Three Approaches to White House Organization

Once the president establishes the type of organizational and managerial structure his presidency will operate under, the organization becomes an entity in itself and plays a major role in his administration. Organizational theory as it pertains to the presidency, and more specifically the WHO, is interested in the study of the structural and managerial make-up of the office.

> But anyone who has carefully studied bureaucratic behavior knows that patterns of behavior tend to persist regardless of who holds a position. Although no one in the U.S. government puts a personal stamp on a position as much as does the person who is the president, we do not hesitate to speak of " the presidency" or "the president" as an office with certain powers and a reasonably determinate scope of expected behavior, independent of the incumbent (Kettl and Fesler, 2005).

Understanding White House organizational structure helps to explain presidential behavior and its success or failure. "This topic is an important one because the organizational behavior of presidential administrations will have an impact on presidential action" (Cohen and Krause, 2000). While others have discussed White House organization in similar terms Richard Johnson (1974) developed three approaches to looking at White House organization; *competitive, collegial, and formalistic.* These models have been widely accepted by scholars of the presidency. While there are multiple variations of these three approaches White House organization during the modern period can be easily placed into one of the three basic models (Burke, 2000a; Cohen and Krause, 2000; George, 1972, 1980; Johnson, 1974; Kessel, 1984; Pfiffner, 1996, 2005; Pika, 1988; Ponder, 2000; Robertson, 1997; Rudalevige, 2005).

THE COMPETITIVE APPROACH

The competitive model of White House organization places the president at the apex of the information flow; with presidential advisers struggling with each other to gain the attention and approval of the president (see Figure A-1 and Table A-7). The

competitive model creates a fluid organizational structure with little in the way of jurisdictional boundaries. Policy arenas can become more a matter of conquest rather than expertise or delegation. The theory holds that because of the competitive fluidity of the process it tends to generate a broader base of policy options, as well as more creative ideas. However, this approach tends to encourage politically achievable solutions rather than developing optimal solutions. The president gathers information from various sources, so the system is more open to ideas coming from outside the White House organization. This can act as a guard against the president becoming isolated and can also help safeguard against the organizational problem of *group-think.* Because all information flows to the president and most of the decision-making process is handled by him he remains *plugged-in* to conditions surrounding him and supposedly in better control of his administration.

The president, in effect, attempts to create an atmosphere of *controlled chaos* where advisers are pitted against each other, and the president remains above the fray directing its outcome. If the approach is to be effective, the president must demonstrate strong interpersonal and management skills. The competitive model demands large amounts of the president's time and attention; and if not properly managed, the process can easily become overwhelming to the president, as he is forced to function as the final arbitrator in all policy and decision-making disputes. The model is not very efficient when considering time or other resources. Potentially multiple top staff members may be independently and unknowingly – to each other – assigned to work on the same issue and report back to the president. With little communication or cooperation between staff

members – and many times under planned secrecy – duplication of effort and result is a common problem.

The competitive approach to White House organization encourages *power politics* within the staff, which can exacerbate competition to the point of hostility. The antagonism between staff members may express itself in the deliberate withholding of critical information or *leaking* information that has the potential to damage another staff member's position within the organization. This can lead to staff members perusing actions they perceive to be in their own self-interests, rather than being concerned about what may be ultimately best for the president or the administration as whole. The model promotes generalization within the organization, rather than staff specialization into particular spheres of policy expertise. This can present a problem when considering the diverse and highly technical issues with which the president and his staff must frequently address (Anderson, 1968; Burke, 2000a; Cronin, 1969; George, 1980; Hess, 2002; Janis, 1983; Johnson, 1974; Patterson, 1988; Pika, 1988; Robertson, 1997).

THE COLLEGIAL APPROACH

The collegial approach to White House organization – also known as the *spokes-of-the-wheel* model – places the president at the center of information flow. The model is horizontal in structure and provides multiple access points to the president, with core staff having frequent, guaranteed contact with each other and the president (see Figure A-2 and Table A-7). Information flows into the core advisers from all points within the bureaucracy, as well as from sources outside of government. Another characteristic of this model is that the president does not adhere to formal lines of authority. The process

is more relaxed in nature with the president, at times, reaching down through various levels of the organization to gather information and advice, rather than following a strict chain of command. Multiple access points and information flowing directly to the president can provide a safeguard against the president becoming isolated, as can be the case when the president relies too heavily on only a few key advisers for information and advice. The approach seeks to create a *collegial* atmosphere within the organization, building a sense of community and loyalty among the staff. Team work is encouraged as staff members freely interact and share responsibilities in order to generate solutions to problems which will be both optimal and politically feasible.

Diverse opinion and open discussion are welcomed and is seen as a way to create cross-fertilization of ideas and, therefore, produce a better and wider range of options when problem solving. However, conflicting positions are not to be considered as adversarial or competitive in nature, but rather part of the process of arriving at a unified decision. The collegial model encourages presidential advisers to operate as generalists, participating in all phases of policy discussion rather than specializing in particular aspects of policy design and problem solving. This can be considered a weakness in the model when considering the complexity of many issues which must be addressed by the president and his staff.

The president is at the center of all decision-making which requires him to demonstrate exceptional interpersonal skills, and can consume large amounts of his time and energy. The president can become overwhelmed with information and unnecessary detail as issues often make their way to the president before they have been properly staffed out and are ready for his attention. With access to the president more readily

available to a larger number of staff and department secretaries the president may make a decision while meeting with one person – or with a small group – without discussing the decision before hand with his larger staff. These are commonly known as *oh by the way* decisions which can be problematic if the president has not fully thought out the ramifications of his choice.

One of the model's strengths may also be a potential weakness. The sense of community and loyalty created by the collegial atmosphere can cause staff to feel they all need to be *on the same page*. The deliberative process can pressure members of the staff to be unanimous in their position when coming to a final decision. This is referred to as the *group-think* phenomenon, and can be dangerous to the policy-making process in that staff members may withhold critically important view-points for the sake of being seen as a team player. This means that potentially valid options may be ignored which can be detrimental to the policy process – possibly with negative long-term repercussions (Burke, 2000a; Cohen and Krause, 2000; Cronin, 1969; George, 1980; Hess, 2002; Hult, 1993; Janis, 1983; Johnson, 1974; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Patterson, 1988; Pfiffner, 1994, 1996; Pika, 1988; Robertson, 1997).

THE FORMALISTIC APPROACH

The formalistic approach – also commonly referred to as the hierarchical or pyramid model – can be described as a top-down method of White House organization, and resembles a standard military organizational chart with clear lines of authority and jurisdiction (see Figure A-3 and Table A-7). It places the president at the pinnacle of a highly structured and organized operational system. While each presidency that chooses

this approach, develops it's on variations on the theme its basic elements remain unchanged. The formalistic model has been the most widely used approach to White House organization during the modern era, and every president from Ronald Reagan forward has employed this model.

An attempt to ascertain the one *best* solution for any given problem is an important characteristic of this model. "This approach assumes that an optimal solution exists and that it can be identified and implemented…" (Johnson, 1974, 4). Less emphasis is placed on the political practicality of the decision than on determining and executing a solution which will most thoroughly address the problem. The structured chain of command approach does not encourage staff generalization or cross-policy pollination. Instead individual presidential advisers are expected to be specialists in their given policy areas. This high degree of specialization tends to work well with the complexity of issues the modern presidency is forced to address on an increasingly more frequent basis. The formalistic approach calls for issues to be staffed out and systematically analyzed with all advantages and disadvantages, and detailed options presented in prepared briefs. This method facilitates the optimal decision-making process, rather than relying on decisions made during the often heated debate of the competitive and collegial methods.

A key element – arguably the most important component – of the formalistic model is the position of White House chief of staff. The president's chief of staff manages the White House Office (WHO), and acts as a *gatekeeper* or buffer between the president and his administration, controlling the access of information and people reaching the president. The chief of staff tracks all information and restrains issues until

they are ready for the president's attention. This guards against the president becoming overwhelmed with minor details, and leaves him free to concentrate on the administration's major policy initiatives. Therefore, the president's selection of the person to fill the position of chief of staff is critical to the successful operation of his presidency. Another key aspect is that power is concentrated in the WHO rather than in the various departments and agencies. The administration's policy-setting agenda is developed within the White House and then conveyed outward through the bureaucracy instead of being developed jointly by the president and his department heads.

A potential weakness of the formalistic approach is that it runs the risk of the president becoming isolated and disengaged from the rest of his administration. The chief of staff controlling access to the president potentially limits his ability to gain insight from the multiple points of view of his staff. The hierarchical structure of this model with its built-in screening process may also distort information reaching the president. The opinion of the chief of staff and a few other senior White House advisors may exert an inordinate amount of influence on the decision-making process, limiting the number of viable options presented to the president. If the chief of staff is too controlling or intimidates the White House staff, the problem of *group-think* can arise. The staff may feel pressured to agree with and support options favored by the chief of staff and other senior advisers in order to maintain favor with their superiors.

Power being concentrated in the White House and away from the departments can facilitate the implementation of the president's policies, but it also distorts cabinet governance which to many is the preferred method of executive governing. It can severely limit any expertise and advice which might be provided by department heads

outside the WHO concerning administration policy. Finally, another weakness of the formalistic approach is that it tends to be inflexible with information easily flowing downward through the organization, but information moving upward meets with road blocks and resistance. Herbert A. Simon referring to major organizations such as the WHO suggests:

> The information-processing systems of our contemporary world swim in an exceedingly rich soup of information, of symbols. In a world of this kind, the scarce resource is not information; it is processing capacity to attend to information. Attention is the chief bottleneck in organizational activity, and the bottleneck becomes narrower and narrower as we move to the tops of organizations (Simon, 1973, 270).

Because of its stringent hierarchical structure decision-making is slow and deliberate, and does not respond quickly even in times of crisis (Burke, 2000a; Cohen and Krause, 2000; George, 1980; Hess, 2002; Hult, 1993; Janis, 1983; Johnson, 1974; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kumar and Sullivan, 2203; Patterson, 1988; Pfiffner, 1994, 1996, 2005; Pika, 1988; Robertson, 1997; Stevens, 1990; Walcott and Hult, 1995, 2005).

The Presidents and their White House Organization

A presidential candidate is elected into office on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November, and by noon on January 20th he must be prepared to manage the government of the United States. This gives the president-elect a little more than 70 days to put together a team which has the talent, expertise, and cohesion to provide direction for the new president's public affairs and policy initiatives. The first few months of a

president's term – the honeymoon period – are typically the most productive. The president can utilize the political capital and goodwill from his recent victory to successfully maneuver legislation through the Congress in order to enact his policies and programs. Therefore, it is critically important for his administration to hit the ground running. One of the first and most important decisions the president-elect must make is the organizational and managerial structure of the WHO. This initial choice will establish the framework for how his presidency will operate and interact with the Congress, media, interest groups, executive departments, and the bureaucracy. Each of the modern presidents has chosen a variation of one of the three White House organizational approaches we have discussed.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, 1933-1945

The modern presidency originated during the Franklin Roosevelt administration with the creation of the Executive Office of the President and the White House Office. Roosevelt chose to structure his White House organization with a competitive style and is the only president to utilize this approach during the modern period. He deliberately selected senior advisers with clashing view points and temperaments to create an atmosphere of uncertainty and antagonism. Roosevelt often allocated assignments without regard to the adviser's expertise, and then expected the staff to run with the project even when it crossed policy boundaries. He regularly gave the same assignment to more than one staff member, creating a struggle for his acceptance and approval.

Roosevelt also gathered advice from sources outside his administration so that the staff never knew where he was getting his information, and then he kept his intentions

close to the vest never letting the staff know the exact direction he planned to take until he was ready for the implementation of his plan.

> Roosevelt gave his Secretary of War, Harry H. Woodring, an assistant who was often at odds with his chief. A variation of the theme was Roosevelt's assigning Ickes and Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace control over conservation and power, and giving rival chieftains in the party overlapping control over patronage. Roosevelt, acting as wrecker and salvage operator combined, was always on hand to pry the colliding personalities apart. He seemed to savor the crash – and ultimately forged workable compromises from the debris (Johnson, 1974, 17).

The Roosevelt White House organizational structure had no clear chain of command – except the president was the absolute authority at the top – and there was usually overlapping jurisdiction. He maintained these structural ambiguities in order to preserve absolute control over information and personnel.

The National Security Act of 1947 which created the National Security Council (NSC) and placed it within the EOP was a response to Roosevelt's management style during World War II. "… Congress's intent in creating The NSC was to check the foreign policy power of the president by creating a deliberative body whose members (set by law) would provide the president an alternative yet timely source of advice" (Burke, 2000a, 37).

President Roosevelt demonstrated the necessary strong management skills as well as excellent interpersonal talent, and was able to maintain the loyalty of the various

warring factions. The competitive approach worked fairly well for Roosevelt during the early stages of the institutional presidency; however, it is very questionable the approach could be employed effectively by current presidents with all the constraints of the fully institutionalized modern presidency (Anderson, 1968; Burke, 2000a; Garson and Kidd, 1999; George, 1980; Hess, 2002; Hirschfield, 1982; Johnson, 1974; Robertson, 1997; Robinson, 1955; Sherwood, 1950; Williams, 1987).

HARRY S. TRUMAN, 1945-1953

President Truman's management style required a White House Office which was more structured and formally organized than the one he inherited from Roosevelt. Truman felt the chaotic atmosphere of the Roosevelt presidency did not lend itself to good decision-making processes, and he personally disliked having to deal with conflict on a regular basis. Truman's variation on the formalistic approach to White House organization did not include a formal position of chief of staff; however, John R. Steelman was appointed as Assistant to the President and carried out many of the same duties that future chiefs of staff would perform. Steelman did not like dealing with conflict any better than Truman and many of the controversial arguments had to be settled by the president.

President Truman sought to strengthen and clarify the organizational structure by separating jurisdictions. Unlike more recent variations of the formalistic approach which attempt to consolidate power within the WHO, Truman used his cabinet as policy advisers. "Truman tried to weaken the game of bureaucratic politics by strengthening each department head's control over his particular domain and by delegating presidential

responsibility to him" (George, 1980, 151). He felt that issues should be properly staffed out and decisions made on the basis of fact rather than debate. Therefore, he relied heavily on trusted subordinates to come up with the best possible alternatives to problems facing his administration. Truman would then steadfastly stand behind their decisions, giving the staff the necessary confidence to provide him with honest opinions and credible solutions.

Initially upon taking office, Truman's intent was to reduce the size of the WHO back to pre-war levels. However, the demands placed upon the presidency after the war made any reduction of staff impossible – in fact the size of the WHO actually grew substantially during Truman's tenure (see Table A-5). Truman tended to be less accessible than Roosevelt had been, but still made himself available to a large number of his staff. This system kept channels open and enough information flowing upward to support good decision-making procedures. With Truman's emphasis on careful analysis and the orderly flow of information, delegating authority and responsibility to loyal staff members was essential (Anderson, 1968; Bernstein and Matusow, 1966; Burke, 2000a; George, 1980; Hess, 2002; Hirschfield, 1982; Johnson, 1974; Koenig, 1956; Lacey, 1989; Robertson, 1997; Williams, 1987).

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, 1953-1961

The first fully formalistic approach to White House organization was developed by the Eisenhower presidency. President Eisenhower did not like the chaotic and confused management style he witnessed in the Roosevelt administration. Relying on his military training, he employed a fairly strict hierarchical – top down – organizational and

managerial structure to White House operations. Eisenhower believed a highly structured and specialized staff would be more efficient and produce better results. He strongly supported delegating authority and responsibility downward though the chain of command, empowering his staff to act. A staff that is well organized throughout would be capable of handling details and solving minor problems at the lower levels of the organization leaving the senior staff and the president free to concentrate on the major issues facing the administration. Throughout his tenure, the WHO continued to increase in size and resources (see Table A-5).

Like Truman before him, Eisenhower actively sought advice from his cabinet, and expected cabinet members to be completely responsible for their departments. He saw the White House staff performing a research and analysis function, rather than in a policy-making or agenda setting role.

> Eisenhower believed that his staff should be subordinate to the cabinet and remain in the background, and he tried to operate his administration along those lines. To him, the staff was supposed to move information and help policy makers, not make policy itself (Robertson, 1997, 6).

Eisenhower preferred to make important decisions with his senior advisers around a table in a conference atmosphere, with all issues having been fully staffed out and potential options presented at the meeting. Eisenhower was the first president to employ a formal White House chief of staff (COS), although he did not use the title because he felt it sounded too militaristic; rather he named the position Assistant to the President. Sherman Adams was the first person to fill the office of chief of staff and established a pattern which was followed by future COSs. Adams assumed the role of a *gatekeeper* or

buffer, managing the access to the president of information and people, and protecting the president from an overload of unnecessary detail (Anderson, 1968; Branyan and Larsen, 1971; Burke, 2000a; Damms, 2002; George, 1980; Greenstein, 1988; Hess, 2002; Hirschfield, 1982; Johnson, 1974; Neustadt, 1990; Robertson, 1997; Rovere, 1956, Sander, 1999).

JOHN F. KENNEDY, 1961-1963

President Kennedy's collegial approach to White House organization was *person centered*, built around him and his personal strengths and abilities. He wanted to be at the center of the flow of information and activity (see Figure A-2). Kennedy did not like the strict hierarchical structure of Eisenhower's formalistic approach, feeling it was much too restrictive of the White House staff, and left the president isolated from his administration. He preferred his senior staff act as generalists becoming involved in all aspects of policy-making rather than specialist being concerned only with specific issues or pieces of policy. Even though Kennedy dismantled much of Eisenhower's White House organizational and managerial structure it did not result in a down-sizing of the WHO as its size and budget continued to grow (see Table A-5).

Kennedy's collegial model was more horizontal than vertical in design, with information flowing into the president and his senior staff from various points throughout the bureaucracy. He acted as his own chief of staff with no formal filtering mechanism buffering either the information or senior staff access to him. Kennedy preferred to select staff members on a basis of loyalty and personal commonalities. "Kennedy felt more comfortable with people with whom he had something in common. Among the factors

he considered in his appointment to the EOP were age, military service, quality of education, and participation in his campaign for the presidency" (Bledsoe and Rigby, 1997, 34). President Kennedy purposely sought out men of diverse opinions to serve in his senior staff, and encouraged them to speak-out when discussing issues; however, not to the point of interpersonal competition as was the case in the Roosevelt administration. Instead of conflict and hostility, the collegial approach valued loyalty, team work, and the reaching of a unified position when problem solving.

Kennedy did not enjoy extended formal meetings and insisted on keeping them as short as possible, with the average time of a meeting ranging from 15 minutes to seldom more than one hour. He preferred the more relaxed atmosphere within the environment of his senior staff for discussions and decision-making. A danger of this system of decision-making is it inherently pressures advisers to be team players and all agree on one course of action – the *group think* phenomenon, which according to Phillip Henderson (1988), Alexander George (1980), and other scholars may have led to the *Bay of Pigs* foreign policy disaster in the early months of his presidency.

The senior staff in the Kennedy administration exhibited far more power and influence than in any presidency before it. Instead of performing the traditional role of support to the president and department heads, they were actively involved in policy-making decisions to an unprecedented degree. Kennedy felt the bureaucracy was slow to respond and even hindered change within the government, so he turned to the White House staff to get things accomplished in a timely manner. Because of what he saw as the intrinsic reluctance to change within the bureaucracy he sharply curtailed cabinet meetings which he determined to be unprofitable, and transferred power away from the

departments and into the White House Office (Anderson, 1968; Bledsoe and Rigby, 1997; Burke, 2000a; George, 1980; Greenstein, 1988; Heller and Heller, 1969; Henderson, 1988; Hess, 2002; Hirschfield, 1982; Janis, 1983; Johnson, 1974; Neustadt, 1990; Opotowsky, 1961; Strober and Strober, 2003).

LYNDON B. JOHNSON, 1963-1969

President Johnson, after the assassination of President Kennedy, inherited a White House which was operating under the framework of a collegial organizational model. To ensure stability and continuity, Johnson outwardly maintained the organizational and managerial structure, though his management style greatly differed from that of his predecessor. "Johnson made no changes in the cabinet for thirteen months. And at the White House he combined his staff with Kennedy's staff, producing what an assistant called Noah's ark: there's two of everybody" (Hess, 2002, 78). Ultimately, however, he did reduce the size of the WHO staff – but not the budget – to levels below that of the Kennedy years (see Table A-5). Johnson wanted to be at the center of the flow of information and felt the need to be in control of his environment. Within the WHO there was no longer an atmosphere of relaxed collegiality or openness. He was a master at using fear and intimidation to control and motivate his staff; humiliating them and attacking their self-esteem in order to force the staff to work harder to earn his approval and respect. Richard Johnson (1974) says of the president "Johnson was a tyrant with subordinates" (Johnson, 1974, 170). He did not like to be confronted with disagreement among his staff, and would release his wrath in meetings where it occurred; squelching viewpoints that might differ from his own. This style of managing staff meetings greatly

increased the likelihood that the administration would have a problem with *group-think,* as few would want to openly disagree with proposals made in such an environment. Many of the decisions concerning the escalation of the Vietnam War may have been distorted by fear of disagreeing with the accepted paradigm.

Johnson slowly moved from the horizontal collegial system he inherited to a variation of a formalistic approach; positioning himself at the peak of a fairly structured pyramid organizational model. He selected W. Marvin Watson as his COS allowing Watson to manage the WHO, but not to restrict the flow of information coming into the president. The president leaned heavily on cabinet and department heads for advice and returned the WHO staff to more of a research and support role. Johnson preferred to gather and analyze his own information from various sources within the government, and insisted on being provided with information in short concise written presentations. He gave direction to the WHO through man-to-man contact instead of general staff meetings, which he greatly curtailed from levels of the previous administration. Johnson's personality dominated the White House. While he preferred an orderly hierarchical approach to managing the WHO his personal style constantly disrupted the orderly flow of business (Anderson, 1968; Burke, 2000a; Evans and Novak, 1966; George, 1980; Greenstein, 1988; Geyelin, 1966; Hess, 2002; Hirschfield, 1982; Janis, 1983; Johnson, 1974; Neustadt, 1990; Redford and McCulley, 1986).

RICHARD M. NIXON, 1969-1974

The formalistic approach to White House organization was fully developed with the Nixon presidency (see Figure A-3). Nixon strongly approved of the Eisenhower

model and employed the design, continuing to develop and refine it. The result was the most centralized and highly structured WHO to date. During his presidency the size, complexity, and specialization of the White House staff increased to the largest levels of any presidency (see Table A-5). The strict hierarchical system supported extensive delegation of responsibility and authority, with an emphasis on the orderly flow of information and direction. The president felt healthy competition within the lower levels of the White House staff would produce better information and optimal problem solving. "Nixon believed in and wanted to set up within the staff (and I think we succeeded in a lot of areas) a concept of adversarial relationships on a constructive and friendly basis" (Haldeman, 1987, 77-78). As a method of controlling and conveying his approval or disapproval of individual staff Nixon instituted a reward and punishment system. The reward was inclusion in important meetings; and, conversely, punishment was exclusion from meetings – staff quickly learned to read the message.

Nixon named H. R. Haldeman as his chief of staff; and Haldeman became an extremely effective *gatekeeper*; controlling virtually all access to the president (see Table A-1). The president highly valued his privacy and chose to make decisions in solitude; preferring to read and digest briefing papers presented to him. He avoided large meetings with his staff if possible, because he did not like to deal with – or be drawn into – open conflict between staff members.

> The President does his deciding on paper, in large measure, I think, because he hates to have to make tough choices in front of people and disappoint somebody. This way, decisions just sort of flow out of the

> Oval Office without the appearance of him having openly taken one man's side or the other (Johnson, 1974, 213).

He preferred the orderly flow of information up the hierarchical structure and decisions being passed down the chain of command.

Initially Nixon planned to rely on the cabinet and other department heads for advice, but he soon found that system was too slow and unresponsive to meet his needs. He quickly consolidated resources and power in the WHO to the exclusion of the rest of the executive branch. The White House became a small independent bureaucracy in its self and seldom asked for advice or expertise of other departments or agencies. Nixon directed foreign policy out of the White House with the aid of his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, and basically excluded and circumvented his Secretary of State, William Rogers. Nixon's desire for seclusion and a powerful and controlling COS isolated him from his administration, which may have caused some of the information reaching him to become distorted; affecting his decision-making process. The system put in place to protect him turned out to be a contributing factor to the Watergate Scandal, which ultimately forced his resignation (Anderson, 1968; Bledsoe and Rigby, 1997; Burke, 2000a; Ehrlichman, 1987; Finch, 1987; George, 1980; Greenstein, 1988; Hart, 1987b; Haldeman, 1987; Hess, 2002; Hoff-Wilson, 1988; Johnson, 1974; Neustadt, 1990; Robertson, 1997; Sidey, 1987).

GERALD R. FORD, 1974-1977

The abrupt resignation of President Nixon provided little time for Gerald Ford to plan and staff the WHO. Initially he flirted with the idea of dismantling Nixon's

hierarchical structure and replacing it with a more collegial spokes-of-the-wheel approach, but he quickly abandoned the concept and established a variation of the formalistic model. Foremost in Ford's mind was healing the wounds caused by the Watergate scandal and Nixon's resignation, and restoring confidence in the U. S. presidency. Therefore, much of his early decision-making was predicated on appearing conciliatory and non-controversial. Upon moving into the Oval Office, Ford established a modified formalistic system, keeping much of the hierarchical structure. Originally he kept most of Nixon's staff, gradually replacing them with persons loyal to him. There was no reduction in the total number of White House staff during his presidency and there was a substantial increase in the overall numbers within the EOP (see Table A-5).

Ford created an organizational and managerial structure which was more relaxed and open. He greatly increased the number of White House staff who had regular access to him, with senior advisers allowed to meet with him at anytime. In time this policy became more restricted as it was too time consuming and the president became bogged-down with detail. He continued Nixon's approach of maintaining a specialized staff which concentrated only in areas of their expertise. Ford named Donald Rumsfeld, who was later replaced by Richard Cheney, as his COS; although he refused to use the title of chief of staff and instead named the position Assistant to the President because of the perception of excess and abuse of power with Nixon's COS. Ford encouraged frank discussion and even open dissent in the decision-making process, and curtailed WHO power and influence returning to an emphasis on seeking advice from the cabinet and executive agencies (Anderson, 1968; Bledsoe and Rigby, 1997; Burke, 2000a; Ford, 1979; George, 1980; Greene, 1995; Greenstein, 1988; Hart, 1987b; Hartman, 1980; Hess,

2002; Neustadt, 1990; Porter, 1988; Robertson, 1997; Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, 1989).

JIMMY CARTER, 1977-1981

President Carter established a collegial/formalistic hybrid organizational approach for his White House operations, acting as his own chief of staff. He choose this arrangement partially because he approved of President Kennedy's collegial model and wanted to return to it and partially in response to what he saw as the excesses and scandal of the Nixon presidency with its strongly hierarchical system. Carter moved to reduce the size (see Table A-5) and influence of the WHO. He wanted to establish a more open White House with a more inclusive decision-making process. He believed cabinet governance was workable and desirable, and initially looked to his department heads for advice. As is central to the collegial model, Carter placed himself at the center of the flow of information and direction; insisting on being involved in every detail of the policy process. He felt "…a leader must intimately know the details of his command and duties and be exposed to the views of his subordinates directly rather than rely on what filters up from the hierarchy below" (Burke, 2000a, 118).

Although Carter wanted a relaxed collegial atmosphere within the White House he expected all issues to be fully staffed out and the optimal solution to be identified which is more consistent with the formalistic approach. Staff meetings were more formalistic as well, he was uncomfortable with debate and argument between advisers and somewhat impatient as he had already analyzed the issue and knew how he wanted to proceed. Staff roles were fluid and poorly defined which created problems with

jurisdiction and policy specialization. Foreign policy in particular became fragmented because of the failure to develop a structure for the organization and management of the policy-making process.

Carter's desire to be at the center, and deeply involved in all White House decision-making placed a heavy burden on his time and energy which began to overwhelm his ability to respond in a timely manner. He realized the need for help and in 1979 – two years into his presidency – he named Hamilton Jordan to the re-created post of COS. The Carter administration gradually shifted away from the collegial model and toward a more formalistic approach, with highly detailed written presentations preferred to deliberations. The administration also moved from a cabinet-based advisory system – which the president came to see as unproductive – to a heavy reliance on the WHO to get things done. Ultimately Carter did not have the necessary interpersonal skills which are required in the collegial model. His administration preformed better in the second half of his term utilizing a more formalistic approach to White House organization (Bledsoe and Rigby, 1997; Burke, 2000a; Dumbrell, 1995; George, 1980; Greenstein, 1988; Hargrove, 1988a, 1988b; Hart, 1987b; Hess, 2002; Neustadt, 1990; Robertson, 1997; Shoup, 1979; Spencer, 1988; Stevens, 1990).

RONALD W. REAGAN, 1981-1989

The Reagan White House structure was a variation of the formalistic approach incorporating components of the collegial model. The structural arrangement was a strongly hierarchical pyramid design except at the top level where it took on a more horizontal, collegial approach. The arrangement allowed the president and his senior

staff to operate as generalists while having lower staff divided into various specializations. It also freed him from involvement in minor decision-making which had consumed so much of Carter's time and energy, which Reagan saw as a major weakness. He followed Carter's lead with further reductions in the size of the WHO; however, the overall EOP increased in numbers during his tenure (see Table A-5).

Despite running as a Washington *outsider* Reagan staffed the White House with loyalists and experienced Washington *insiders* which enabled his administration to hit the ground running. Reagan chose as his first tier advisers Edwin Meese, Michael Deaver, and as chief of staff he selected James Baker. The three became known as the *Troika* and worked in concert with each other; all having unrestricted access to the president. However, within the first year James Baker had advanced his position and became the first among equals within the senior staff.

Like most modern presidents before him, Reagan came to Washington supporting the concept of cabinet governance. Rather than involving the entire cabinet in all policy areas Reagan developed cabinet councils which were based on the department head's expertise. This approach achieved more success than previous presidents had been able to attain in attempting to employ active cabinet participation, but it ultimately proved to be unworkable, and power again was centralized within the WHO. Reagan preferred to establish broad policy agendas with details worked out by lower levels of White House staff. He would initiate a policy which would be fully developed by a specialized staff and then the policy would flow down and out through the bureaucracy. Reagan's involvement in staff meetings followed his overall pattern of management. He would

listen to discussion of possible policy options and then inform the staff as to his preferred policy direction leaving the staff to determine the best way to implement the decision.

Donald Regan was named COS at the beginning of Reagan's second term and immediately altered the White House organization, transforming it into a strict hierarchical structure with little in the way of collegiality. Regan dominated the White House staff and closely controlled all access of information and advice reaching the president. This approach along with the president's lack of interest in detail contributed to the Iran-Contra scandal which nearly brought down the Reagan presidency. Regan was removed as COS and Howard Baker was brought in as his replacement. Baker restored a more open and collegial atmosphere within the staff, while at the same time maintaining the formalistic organizational structure (Barilleaux and Kelley, 2005; Bledsoe and Rigby, 1997; Burke, 2000a; Busby, 1999; George, 1980; Greenstein, 1988; Hart, 1987b; Hess, 2002; Johnson, 1974; Neustadt, 1990; Reagan, 1990; Regan, 1988; Robertson, 1997; Speakes, 1988; Strober and Strober, 1998, 2003).

GEORGE H. W. BUSH, 1989-1993

President Bush believed he was elected with the expectation that his administration would be a continuation of the Reagan presidency and its policies. While replacing Reagan's staff with people loyal to him, Bush maintained much of Reagan's formalistic organizational and managerial structure. His management style, however, was a *hands-on* approach as opposed to Reagan's less involved manner, and Bush reigned in some of the staff's ability to act autonomously which it had enjoyed in the previous administration. The president's criteria for selection of staff members were loyalty and

professional competence – the Bush presidency is noted for its efficient operation of the WHO (Burke, 2000a). The size of the WHO increased only modestly during his administration (see Table A-5).

Bush maintained open channels of communication with his staff, the cabinet, and other sources both in and outside of his administration; he preferred to have frequent, direct contract with his advisers. The atmosphere within the WHO was professional but relaxed with an emphasis placed on collegiality among the staff. The president's personal style was non-confrontational, which meant he favored reward to punishment in his dealings with the staff. When conflict did arise within the staff, the problem was expected to be dealt with by studying all sides of the issue and coming to an optimal decision in a non-adversarial manner. Initially Bush actively sought advice from his cabinet department heads, and involved them in policy-making decisions to a degree not seen since the Eisenhower presidency. However, as is the case with most modern presidencies cabinet governance was ultimately considered unworkable, and power over policy-setting and decision-making gradually shifted back to the WHO. Bush concentrated most of his time and attention on foreign affairs, while leaving domestic policy to his staff. This approach made him appear to be out of touch with the problems of the average American citizen and was a contributing factor in his unsuccessful bid for a second term.

John Sununu, the former governor of New Hampshire, was named to the post of chief of staff, and immediately began to position himself as a power player within the administration. He quickly blocked plans to bring in Robert Teeter to be Assistant to the President which would have placed Teeter on an equal footing with Sununu. He became

deeply involved in the details of domestic policy, attempting to control the flow of information and advice reaching the president concerning domestic affairs. President Bush's natural interest in detail and his openness and accessibility prevented him from becoming isolated from his administration, as was the case with a too-dominate COS in the Nixon and Reagan presidencies. Sununu's power base eroded because of his arrogant behavior in his dealings with the White House staff, cabinet, Congress, and the media which eventually forced his resignation (Bledsoe and Rigby, 1997; Burke, 2000a, 2000b; Derwinski, 1997; George, 1980; Gray, 1997; Greenstein, 1988; Hart, 1987b; Hess, 2002; Johnson, 1974; Neustadt, 1990; Robertson, 1997; Rockman, 1991; Untermeyer, 1997).

WILLIAM J. CLINTON, 1993-2001

The first modern Democrat to begin his presidency with White House operations based on a variation of the formalistic approach, President Clinton patterned his White House organizational and managerial structure loosely after Ronald Reagan's model.

> Clinton was the first Democrat president to come to office admitting that he needed a chief of staff – it took Carter until 1979 to abandon his "spokes-of-the-wheel" approach – but Clinton admitted it only intellectually; viscerally, he was not willing to delegate sufficient authority to McLarty to do the job (Hess, 2002, 156).

Like Reagan and Carter, Clinton ran for president as a Washington *outsider*. Reagan, however, brought in experienced Washington *insiders* to help in the operation of the WHO, while Clinton choose mainly friends and associates from his political career in Arkansas – who became known as the *Friends of Bill* (FOB) – this contributed heavily to

his administration's sluggish and disorganized start. During the transition period Clinton demonstrated little concern for organizing and staffing the WHO – the task was finally completed one week before the inauguration, which left little time for appointees to become familiar with their new responsibilities.

Another first for the Clinton administration was the inclusion of the First Lady, Hillary Clinton, as a member of the senior advisory staff. Clinton and the FOB, following Reagan's model, sought to centralize power and policy-making in the White House. He had little patience or interest in including the cabinet in domestic or foreign policy deliberations. Although, Clinton campaigned on cutting the size of the WHO it actually grew in size during his administration, however, he did reduce the overall size of the EOP. At the top of the organizational structure Clinton created more of a *spokes-of-the-wheel* approach placing the president at the center of White House operations. The structure was more fluid than typical hierarchical models with ambiguous jurisdiction and authority within the chain of command. Clinton wanted information flowing into him and liked being involved in the details of policy discussions. He maintained private channels of communications and – like President Bush – gathered information from sources both within and outside of his administration.

Clinton enjoyed the decision-making process participating in many lengthy staff meetings. He brought to the meetings a keen grasp of the policy detail and process, but was often disorganized and ill prepared – also many times the issues had not been properly staffed out and the meetings were unproductive.

> The detailed position papers and staff work undertaken before meetings with the president that characterized the Reagan, Bush, and even Carter

> presidencies were sometimes absent in President Clinton's White House. According to one account, "Harried presidential aides were typically scheduled to attend wall-to-wall meetings – with the President or otherwise – with little time to think… (Burke. 2000a, 181).

Little discipline or internal management were demonstrated in the policy process which led to uncertainty and factions within the WHO staff.

Thomas McLarty was initially named COS but was unable to function effectively in the position, and was replaced by Washington *insider* Leon Panetta in 1994. The organizational structure evolved into a more strict hierarchical system over time and the decision-making process improved. However, because of the constant barrage of investigations and scandals, the administration faced the staff became preoccupied with protecting the president, rather than concentrating on policy. The COS was not only responsible for WHO operations, but was forced to manage and run interference for Clinton's personal life as well. The Clinton administration concentrated on public opinion polling more than any other presidency to date, with more than two million dollars being allocated to polling in 1993 alone (Burke, 2000a, 190). Clinton proved to be both knowledgeable and capable in the policy-making process, but was unable to establish an organizational and managerial structure capable of facilitating the degree of success the administration might have otherwise achieved (Bledsoe and Rigby, 1997; Bostdorff, 1996; Burke, 2000a, 2000b; Cohen, 1994; George, 1980; Hess, 2002; Hohenberg, 1994; Johnson, 1974; Metz, 2002; Neustadt, 1990; Robertson, 1997).

GEORGE W. BUSH, 2001-PRESENT

The George W. Bush administration is still ongoing, but many of its main characteristics can be identified. Bush chose a formalistic organizational structure similar to President Reagan's and his father's. The confusion surrounding the outcome of the 2000 presidential election significantly delayed his ability to formally organize the EOP and WHO – his election was not decided by the Supreme Court and made official until December 12, 2000. Even with the truncated schedule, his transition team functioned in an organized and efficient manner. Bush's staff selection process placed an emphasis on loyalty and competence, especially for senior advisers surrounding the president. The hierarchical structure of the WHO stressed delegation of authority, and was well defined and enforced an orderly policy-making process. Issues were to be fully staffed out and optimal solutions identified before presentations were made to the president.

Bush learned from his father's mistake and attempted to concentrate on domestic policy early-on in his first term, but the 9-11 terrorist attack forced foreign policy to the top of the agenda, and has monopolized the national discourse since that time. As with other modern presidencies, Bush began with intentions to promote cabinet governance with attention played to his department head's advice, and as is common, power and policy-making eventually became concentrated within the WHO. Bush chose two strong personalities with his selection of Colin Powell to be secretary of state and Donald Rumsfeld as secretary of defense. The situation caused conflict over the general direction and implementation of foreign policy which eventually led to the resignation of Colin Powell and his replacement by a Bush loyalist, Condoleezza Rice. In his selection of Andrew Card as chief of staff Bush wanted a person who could manage the WHO

effectively, but without becoming territorial or domineering. Card stepped down as COS in 2006 and was replaced by Joshua Bolton (Burke, 2004; George, 1980; Greenstein, 2003; Hess, 2002; Hult, 2003; Johnson, 1974; Moens, 2004; Neustadt, 1990; Stevens, 1190).

Conclusion

Most modern presidents have preferred some version of the formalistic approach to White House organization, with all since Kennedy ultimately choosing some version of the hierarchical model. The only president to be somewhat successful with a pure collegial approach was John Kennedy, and even then some troubling problems arose which can be contributed to his White House organizational structure. FDR was the only president to utilize the competitive approach and it seemingly worked for him, however, the modern presidency was in its infancy at that time and it is highly questionable if the approach would be workable in today's institutional setting with all of its complexity and constraints. Of the three approaches it is clear that some variation of the formalistic approach is most appropriate and effective for the successful operation of the modern presidency.

It is also clear that the need for a talented, competent, and skilled COS is necessary to manage the WHO and to provide the president with needed advice and support.

> A president has many more important things to do than "manage" the White House. Still, the White House must be managed, and the president's agenda will suffer if it is not done well… The bottom line is

> that presidents should not be managers, but they must ensure that the White House is well managed (Hess, 2002, 163).

We will now take a closer look at the White House chief of staff, and the job which is so critical to a successful president and presidency.

CHAPTER 4.

THE CHIEF OF STAFF

> *Even so, the White House chief of staff becomes an officer of high importance to our constitutional system. He (or someday she) is nowhere mentioned in the Constitution, where the president stands alone. The duties of the chief of staff derive from nothing more than personal delegation. Constitutionally he is and has to be the president's mere dogsbody, to borrow a British term. Practically, however, he cannot help being more than that. Fore while he holds his boss's confidence he will be, in effect, a presidential deputy, sometimes even a substitute.*
>
> -- Richard E. Neustadt (Kernell and Popkin, 1986, xiv)

The organizational structure of the White House Office (WHO) is critical to the successful operation of a modern presidency. The shape and function of the WHO should be a reflection of the president and his personality, and must allow and compensate for his strengths and weaknesses as well as conform to his management style. Much of the president's success or failure can be laid at the feet of the WHO. A talented and experienced staff is essential if the president is to avoid being enmeshed in the micro-management of his administration, which, if allowed, will consume his time and energy (Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kessel, 2001; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1999; Robertson, 1997; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

No one organizational model will perfectly fit every president, as every president is unique with a different set of abilities and limitations. However, there is consensus among scholars and every president since Lyndon Johnson that some variation of the formalistic approach is the most workable and best fits the needs of the modern

presidency. Central to any variation of this hierarchical model is the White House chief of staff (COS) who in effect is the operations manager for the presidency. No president since Jimmy Carter has even attempted to manage the WHO without employing a chief of staff (Hess, 2002; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1999; Robertson, 1997; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

> At the superficial level a new President has a free hand in choosing how to organize the White House based on personal preference or management style. After all, the presidency is a very personal office. There are, however, two firm lessons of White House organization that can be ignored by Presidents only at their own peril. Lesson Number One: A chief of staff is essential in the modern White House. Lesson Number Two: A domineering chief of staff will almost certainly lead to trouble (Pfiffner, 1993, 77).

Modern presidents tend to consolidate and centralize policy and decision-making within the White House rather than at the department level. Presidents typically begin their administrations with at least a verbal commitment to cabinet governance, but quickly deem the approach unworkable and concentrate power and influence within the walls of the White House. President Eisenhower being the possible exception, as he did rely heavily on his department heads for advice and policy implementation. Because problem-solving, policy-making, and decision-implementation are initiated in the White House the president's choice of the person to be his COS is of utmost importance. The

chief of staff by virtue of his position becomes one of the most powerful and influential persons in the government (Hess, 2002; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1999; Robertson, 1997; Stevens, 1990; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001). James Baker, who served as chief of staff in both the Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations has stated the White House chief of staff has the second most powerful job in government (Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

> Beyond the chief of staff, there is only the president to try to knit the administration into a coherent set of institutions – and the president has vastly graver, and "undelegatable," responsibilities. The chief of staff is *system manager*: boss of none, but overseer of everything (Patterson, 2000, 348).

The chief of staff has no *formal* power or authority outside the president's delegation. Rather, his considerable influence comes from his ability to control the flow of information and people reaching the president, to exercise direct input on the president's schedule, and as one of his closest advisers, to shape the administration's agenda. "When you realize that even though the White House chief of staff has tremendous power, he or she, nevertheless, is not a principle but a staffer – face it, it's right there in the title…" (Sullivan, 2004, xiii). Even though the COS exercises considerable power and authority it is crucial that he understand he does not hold an elected office, nor has the president appointed him an executive official – such as a department head. He is not the *Secretary* of anything; rather the COS must function as a

member of the White House staff – the senior and most important member – but a member of the president's staff nonetheless. The Brownlow Committee opined the president must select persons for his senior White House staff "…whose character and attitude is such that they would not attempt to exercise power on their own account. They should be possessed of high competence, great physical vigor, and a passion for anonymity (President's Committee on Administrative Management, 1937, 5).

The Role of the Chief of Staff

The White House chief of staff must be a decisive leader with enough experience, credibility, and *gravitas* to enable him to successfully perform his complex and wide-ranging responsibilities. He must also be politically savvy and at the same time sensitive to the personalities interacting with the president, and to the demands and expectations placed upon the modern presidency. The COS should strive to stay as anonymous as possible – working behind the scene – staying out of the lime-light unless his being in the spotlight helps the president in some specific way.

The degree of the COS's public visibility should be determined by the COS and the president in advance of him accepting the position. The COS must be very sensitive to accepting gifts, and the personal use of government assets which may come with the office. The perceived abuse of these privileges have been a cause of the downfall of at least two past chiefs of staff, which will be more carefully discussed in the next section. For our purposes, the role of the COS is divided into three main components; his responsibility as manager/administrator; his advisory role; and his position as the president's guardian (Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Hess, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and

Sullivan, 2003; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1999; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

MANAGER/ADMINSTRATOR

One of the first positions the president fills in his new administration should be that of the White House chief of staff.

Staff Selection

The COS should have considerable input into the selection of the EOP and White House staff as well as the president's other appointments. He should help the president seek-out and bring into the administration the best talent possible to serve in the government. It is, therefore, crucial the COS is secure enough in himself so as not to feel threatened by strong talented aides. Former COS, James Baker agrees "… the people who succeed in Washington are the people who are not afraid to surround themselves with really good, strong people… A strong White House staff buys the president one hell of a lot, I think" (Kumar and Sullivan, 2003, 114). Just as with the president, the job of COS is too big for one person to execute adequately. The COS needs to have a deputy chief of staff as well as employee multiple support staff if he is to be expected to properly manage the president's affairs. Howard Baker, COS for a portion of the Reagan presidency:

> A chief of staff and a national security advisor… are now so loaded with responsibility and with paper… that they sort of get in the same category as the president does. If they don't have somebody prompting them or

watching out for them, they'll get in the same fix (Kurmar and Sullivan, 2003, 118).

White House Managerial and Operational Structure

The White House must be structured around the unique needs and personality of the president; in this regard it can never be fully institutionalized (Thompson, 1987). The COS is responsible to implement and maintain an operational structure within the White House which is compatible with the president's strengths, weaknesses, management style, work habits, and individual needs and preferences. The COS must ensure the president is comfortable with the staff that surrounds and supports him, and the staff must be capable of adapting to the president's requirements. Without the proper structure, the president may become overwhelmed with unnecessary detail, not having the time to devote his expertise to more important issues requiring his attention (Bock, 1987; Henderson, 1988; Krause and Cohen 2000; Pfiffner, 1999).

Comprehensive Control of the WHO

While the president may have multiple senior advisors, as was the case in the first term of the Reagan presidency – the *troika* – the COS is the first among equals. He is the final authority – subject to the president – of all White House staff and operations. For the COS to properly perform his duties for the president he is expected to be an active participant in all areas of policy discussion, problem solving, and decision-making, with no other policy centers allowed to operate independent of his purview. The president should grant the COS the right to attend all meetings where the president is present, and presentations scheduled for the president are subject to the COS's review and input

(Cohen, 2002; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1999; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001). Howard Baker, COS during the Reagan presidency, discusses the need for the COS to be aware of everything going on in the administration.

> The function of the chief of staff is to make sure that you know not only what the president may think but what the president has said. I had a minor flap with my good friend Frank Carlucci when I first got there. Frank had proceeded me by a few weeks. The [John] Tower Commission had provided that the national security advisor would always have access to the president. Frank came in and said, "Oh, by the way, I'm going to see the president at ten o'clock." I said, "Fine. I'm going with you." He said, "But the Tower Commission says I have access any time." I said, "That's right. And my manual here that I am now writing says ain't nobody going to see the president that I don't go with him" (Sullivan, 2004, 54).

The President's Schedule

The office of the COS is responsible for developing and maintaining the president's schedule. This includes the president's daily schedule as well as his travel plans in and out of Washington. The COS coordinates all of the president's appearances, speeches, and official statements. The president's schedule, while reviewed and approved by the COS, is usually developed by one of his deputies. Sensitivity must be maintained as to the president's preferences and work habits (Kessel, 2001; Kumar and

Sullivan, 2003; Nelson, 1989, 2006; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1999; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

The Gatekeeper

The COS functions as a *gatekeeper* or filter, controlling the flow of information and people reaching the president. He monitors issues as they develop restraining them until they have been properly staffed-out with viable options identified and are ready for the president's attention. Similarly, the COS must decide if an issue is important enough to warrant the president's attention, or if a decision can be made without involving the president. This protects the president from becoming overwhelmed with minor details, and leaves him free to concentrate on the administration's major policy agenda. The *gatekeeping* role allows the COS to bring order and discipline to the policy and decision-making process (Hart, 2001; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1999; Robertson, 1997; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

Relations with Congress, the Cabinet, the Media, and Concerned Interests

Cultivating and maintaining relationships with the Congress, the cabinet, the media, and concerned interests is one of the most important functions for any COS. If he fails to fully understand the importance of his *bridge-building* role or does not give it the attention it demands, he does so at his own peril, and to the possible damage of his president and the administration's policy agenda. A good working relationship between the White House and members of Congress is a factor which cannot be minimized if the president hopes to see his agenda enacted, and the COS should play a major role in

making the necessary connections. A collegial atmosphere among the members of the cabinet and the president; one in which they feel their input is important and being seriously considered encourages cooperation between the bureaucracy and the White House. It may also help to prevent negative leaks to the press by disgruntled department heads. The COS can do much to foster this atmosphere of cooperation between the president and the executive branch.

The media and its coverage of the White House can either greatly help or harm the president's national image, and therefore, his power and influence in the Congress. It is critical the COS nurture the best possible relationship between the White House and the media. Because of its critical importance to the overall success of the presidency the COS normally handles one or more of the *big three* himself. The COS is also responsible for maintaining the connection between the president and his political party. It is vital for legislative success and any potential re-election efforts that the political base remain solidly behind the president and his policies. Similarly, other concerned groups need to be nurtured or placated depending on the interests of the group and the situation. (Annis, 1995; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999; Robertson, 1997; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001). Referring to James Baker's tenure as President Reagan's COS James Pfiffner (1993) provided an example.

> …he was careful to keep open lines of communication to the right wing of the Republican party, and he assiduously maintained his ties to members of Congress. He was accessible to and trusted by the press and often received favorable news coverage which he used to the administration's

advantage. He thus was attentive to the major constituencies that Reagan would need in order to accomplish his agenda (Piffner, 1993, 86).

ADVISER

Because of his closeness in proximity and amount of time spent with the president – the average COS meets with the president several times a day – the COS usually becomes one of the president's closest senior advisers.

Champion of the President's Agenda

In order for the COS to properly serve and advise the president he must take the president's positions and policies as his own. The chief of staff's loyalty to the president and his agenda should be beyond question. There will be occasions when the COS may need to act as a negotiator for the president, and everyone involved must know the COS and the president are *on the same page* and in agreement on the issue – that the COS speaks for the president. When this is the case, the COS may be able to spare the president many unnecessary meetings by being able to make decisions without the president's personal attention (Cohen, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

Advising the President

One of the chief responsibilities for the COS is to manage the amount and type of information reaching the president, and to broker the opinions being advocated by various senior advisers and other policy centers. The COS is to act as an *honest broker,*

ensuring all relative voices are heard. As a senior adviser it is appropriate for the COS to provide his personal recommendation to the president; however, he should never push for the acceptance of his position while excluding other qualified opinions. The COS must insist that all issues be fully staffed-out before they are presented to the president, and that viable options are identified in order to facilitate the president's decision-making process (Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

GUARDIAN

The role of guardian is central for the office of chief of staff. The COS must shield and defend the president and his agenda at all times and from all foes – he must watch the president's back.

Protect the President Interests

The COS protects the president from his adversaries, his friends, and, at times, even from himself. Understandably, the COS works to makes sure the president is not placed in a situation where his political adversaries can gain an advantage over him or where the president will be put in a negative light, especially when the media is involved. At times the COS needs to protect the president from his friends. Often the president will appoint a life-long friend to a position within the administration, and the person may use his friendship to gain excessive access to the president. The COS must diplomatically restrict the access if he is to properly protect the president and his valuable time. Along

the same line, the COS guards against *oh by the way* decisions, which are decisions made on the spur of the moment – without being properly staffed-out – by the president, usually at the request of a friend or government official (Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001). James Baker addresses this problem.

> Everybody wants to get a decision from the president. I don't care how high ranking they are in the cabinet. They'll buttonhole the president after a cabinet meeting and say, "Mr. President. I'm going to do such and such." The president, of course, has a thousand things coming at him and he says, ""Sure, fine." If you don't know about it, that's a recipe for trouble. So you really need to have an arrangement with the boss that no decisions are taken, nothing happens that you don't know about (Sullivan, 2004, 30).

The COS must be willing to protect the president from himself if necessary. It is important the COS be able to temper the president – to act as his alter ego – to tell the president that he is about to make a mistake. The COS needs to be able to discern if the president is making questionable decisions because he is angry, tired, or frustrated and if that is the case to hold-up implementation of those directives. H. R. Haldeman, COS during the Nixon presidency tells how he dealt with this situation.

> I soon realized that this president had to be protected from himself. Time and again I would receive petty vindictive orders… after a Senator made

> an anti-Vietnam War speech: 'Put a 24-hour surveillance on that bastard.' And so on and on and on. If I took no action, I would pay for it. The president never let up. He'd be on the intercom buzzing me ten minutes after such an order… I'd say 'I'm working on it,' and delay and delay until Nixon would one day comment with a sort of half-smile on his face, 'I guess you never took action on that, did you?' 'No.' 'Well, I guess it was the best thing' (Kumar and Sullivan, 2003, 132).

Playing the Heavy

Chiefs of staff are expected to deal with situations the president would rather avoid, accepting the role of the *bad cop* while always placing the president in a positive light as the *good cop*. The COS is the deliverer of bad news, does all the firing within the White House, and tells cabinet members *no.* He absorbs the rancor of disgruntled members of Congress, cabinet, and other *supporters* – allowing them to vent their anger at him – while shielding the president from attack.

> As H. R. Haldeman, Nixon's longtime chief of staff, once noted, "every president needs his son-of-a-bitch" to do the dirty work. One major piece of dirty work fell to Haldeman after Nixon's landslide 1972 reelection. Nixon assembled his staff and thanked them profusely for their good work over the previous four years. He then turned the meeting over to Haldeman, who informed the assembled staff that all were required to turn in letters of resignation immediately; only later would they be informed whether they would keep their jobs during Nixon's second term. Nixon

had ordered the housecleaning, but Haldeman took the blame and carried it out (Burke, 2000a, 40).

Pitfalls for the Chief of Staff

The successful COS must avoid potential problems or pitfalls which are inherent with the job. If not, he runs the very real risk of losing the support of the WHO staff and other important actors in and out of government, of having the president lose confidence in his abilities, and ultimately of being asked to resign. A failure in the office of COS reflects on, and can bring harm to the presidency and the president he serves. There have been four chiefs of staff whom scholars and political pundits have viewed as having failed in the position – Sherman Adams, H. R. Haldeman, Donald Regan, and John Sununu (see Table A-1). Each of these were forced under varying degrees of pressure to resign. Certain common pitfalls can be identified which if not avoided can lead to disaster for the COS.

The chief of staff performs the function of *gatekeeper* restricting the flow of information and people reaching the president. This is a critically important component of the chief of staff's responsibilities; however, he must not allow the president to become isolated from his administration, which in the Nixon and Reagan presidencies resulted in debilitating scandals. The COS manages the White House Office, but if he is too domineering in his control, the staff may become embittered resulting in poor internal cooperation, loss of productivity, a high rate of staff turnover, and increased likelihood of damaging leaks to the media. Because of his position, the COS has opportunity to take advantage of certain *perks*, such as accepting gifts and using government transportation.

If the COS is perceived to be abusing his position – especially by the media – as was the case in the Eisenhower and George H. Bush presidency – it can cost him his job and harm his reputation. The COS should generally work behind the scenes as much as is possible; forcing himself into the spotlight is usually not beneficial for him or his president.

A COS who shifts blame away from himself and toward another administration official – especially the president – will be considered to have failed in one of his foremost duties – to protect and shield the president. Finally, the COS must be keenly aware and careful not to alienate members of the Congress, the cabinet, or the media as was the situation with all four of the failed chiefs of staff previously mentioned (Anderson, 1968; Bledsoe and Rigby, 1997; Barilleaux and Kelley, 2005; Burke, 2000a, 2000b; Cohen, 2002; Damms, 2002; Derwinski, 1997; Ehrlichman, 1987; Gray, 1997; Greenstein, 1988; Hart, 1987b; Hess, 2002; Johnson, 1974; Kessel, 2001; Neustadt, 1990; Pfiffner, 1993; Reagan, 1990; Robertson, 1997; Rockman, 1991; Strober and Strober, 1998, 2003; Untermeyer, 1997; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

The White House Chiefs of Staff

HARRY TRUMAN

John Steelman

John Steelman is technically not considered a COS, as the office is first officially recognized during the Eisenhower administration. He was, however, unquestionably a forerunner to the modern COS. As a close and trusted aide to President Truman, Steelman performed may of the duties which would become part of the job description of the COS. He received his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina in 1928 and

taught as a professor of sociology and economics until 1934. Throughout his career he served at various government posts, and was a special assistant to President Franklin Roosevelt. Steelman served as assistant to the president throughout the Truman presidency (Burke, 2000a: Hess, 2002; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Pfiffner, 1999).

DWIGHT EISENHOWER

Sherman Adams

President Eisenhower established a hierarchical, formalistic White House organizational structure, and is credited with the creation of the office of chief of staff, although he did not give the position that title. "I think of Adams as my Chief of Staff, but I don't call him that because the politicians think it sounds too military" (Pfiffner, 1993, 79). Adams had a background in the business world, but is considered a Washington *insider,* as he also served in the House of Representatives and as governor of New Hampshire before coming to the White House. He served a total of 68 months as COS and established an operational pattern which has been followed by subsequent chiefs of staff (see Tables A-1 and A-7).

Adams assumed the role of a *gatekeeper*, maintaining very strict control over the access of information and people reaching the president, which members of the Congress and the cabinet resented. Further Adams tended to be terse and abrasive in his dealings with the staff, colleagues, Congress, the cabinet, and the media. Finally, he was forced to resign when it was uncovered he had accepted expensive gifts from a textile manufacturer. While Adams was successful in carrying out many of his duties as COS and kept the confidence of President Eisenhower throughout, he had few supporters when

the scandal became public, and is listed as one of four failures as COS (Anderson, 1968; Branyan and Larsen, 1971; Burke, 2000a; Damms, 2002; George, 1980; Greenstein, 1988; Hess, 2002; Hirschfield, 1982; Johnson, 1974; Neustadt, 1990; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1999; Robertson, 1997; Rovere, 1956, Sander, 1999).

Wilton Persons

Persons served as Eisenhower's COS for 28 months during the last half of his second term with the same title as his predecessor – assistant to the president. He had a military background and is considered a Washington *outsider*, although he served as the congressional liaison before becoming COS and maintained a good working relationship with the Congress and the cabinet. Persons continued to function as a *gatekeeper*; however, he eased access to the president of important information and more readily opened the doors to people with legitimate need to see the president. He is credited with repairing the damage caused by Adams' resignation, and with helping to ensure a smooth transition to the Kennedy administration (Anderson, 1968; Branyan and Larsen, 1971; Burke, 2000a; Damms, 2002; Greenstein, 1988; Hess, 2002; Johnson, 1974; Kernell and Popken, 1986; Neustadt, 1990; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994; Robertson, 1997; Sander, 1999).

JOHN KENNEDY

President Kennedy chose a collegial approach to White House organization and served as his own COS.

LYNDON JOHNSON

President Johnson continued the collegial approach he inherited after President Kennedy's assassination, but soon shifted to a more formalistic structure for his White House operations. He too started off with no formal COS, however; at the beginning of his elected term named Marvin Watson as his COS.

Marvin Watson

Marvin Watson served as COS for 38 months during the period from 1965 through March of 1968 (see Table A-1 and A-7) and is considered to have been a fairly weak COS. President Johnson brought him in to manage the White House; however, he had little control over access to the president where much of the COS's power originates. Watson had little experience in Washington politics and was a long-time political supporter, working with Johnson from his first campaign for the Senate. He also acted as the president's appointment secretary and as the White House liaison with the business community. Watson left the White House in April of 1968 to become U. S. Postmaster General (Anderson, 1968; Burke, 2000a; Evans and Novak, 1966; Greenstein, 1988; Geyelin, 1966; Hess, 2002; Johnson, 1974; Nelson, 1989; Redford and McCulley, 1986).

RICHARD NIXON

H. R. Haldeman

> Richard Nixon wanted a COS that would guard the door and protect his privacy. From the beginning Nixon had wanted a chief of staff to run his White House, and the role came naturally to H. R. Haldeman, a brilliant and hard

> nosed organizer who had been with Nixon since the 1960 campaign for the presidency. To the rest of the executive branch and the outside world Nixon seemed isolated behind his "Berlin Wall" of Haldeman, Ehrlichman, and Kissinger (Pfiffner, 1993, 84).

Haldeman was fiercely loyal to Nixon, but had little Washington experience and often alienated colleagues, and members of the Congress and cabinet. He held the position of COS for 51 months – during all of Nixon's first term and three months into the second (see Table A-1 and A-7). Haldeman was extremely effective in his role as *gatekeeper*, filtering all information and access to the president – almost completely isolating Nixon from the rest of his administration. Because of this absolute control he became one of the most powerful chiefs of staff to date.

Haldeman implemented a *zero defects system* within the White House demanding all issues and options be fully staffed-out before they were presented to the president. There were no allowances made when it came to the quality and timeliness of the research. His no nonsense and sometimes rough and heavy handed approach in dealing with staff, the Congress, the cabinet, and the media left him with few supporters when the Watergate scandal broke. His involvement in the attempted cover-up of the break-in at the Democrat headquarters in Washington, D. C. eventually forced his resignation. Haldeman's pitfalls were he permitted and facilitated Nixon's isolation and was unable to work effectively with his colleagues – alienating many of them. This places him along side Sherman Adams as chiefs of staff who have failed the office. (Bledsoe and Rigby, 1997; Burke, 2000a; Ehrlichman, 1987; Finch, 1987; George, 1980; Greenstein, 1988;

Hart, 1987b; Haldeman, 1987; Hess, 2002; Hoff-Wilson, 1988; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Neustadt, 1990; Pfiffner, 1993; Robertson, 1997; Sidey, 1987).

Alexander Haig

Alexander Haig assumed the duties of COS after the Haldeman resignation and concluded the last months of the Nixon presidency and briefly stayed on until President Ford could name his own COS. Haig came to the White House with a long distinguished military career but up to that point had limited experience in civilian government operations. He was unable to effectively assist President Nixon in preparing a defense to the Watergate accusations in large part because accurate information concerning the degree of White House involvement in the scandal was kept from him. Haig attempted to *open up* the WHO and to temper Nixon's desire for privacy; however, the damage inflicted on the Nixon presidency by the Watergate scandal was irreversible and President Nixon was forced to resigned on August 9, 1974 (Burke, 2000a; Finch, 1987; George, 1980; Greenstein, 1988; Hart, 1987b; Haldeman, 1987; Hess, 2002; Hoff-Wilson, 1988; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Pfiffner, 1993; Robertson, 1997; Sidey, 1987).

GERALD FORD

Donald Rumsfeld

Before accepting the Vice-Presidency in 1974 Gerald Ford was the minority leader in the House, where he operated the post in a collegial or *spokes-of-the-wheel* approach. After assuming the presidency Ford wanted a similar organizational structure for the White House – with him at the center, operating as his own COS. Within the first

few weeks he realized he needed assistance in organizing and managing the WHO, and asked a close friend and colleague Donald Rumsfeld to act as his COS. Ford – trying to distance his administration from the perceived abuses of the Nixon presidency – gave Rumsfeld the title of staff coordinator instead of chief of staff; however, he functioned as the COS. Rumsfeld immediately began a slow movement toward a more formalistic White House organizational structure.

Rumsfeld had been elected to four terms in the House of Representatives, and served in various positions in the Nixon administration. As a Washington *insider* he understood very well capital politics and processes, and was able to quickly structure an effective WHO organization. Rumsfeld's management style was demanding but he was not overly domineering, leaving some of the staff to comment "He's another Bob Haldeman… only he smiles" (Hess, 2002,118). In his role as COS, he was the person who had to tell the vice-president no. This had to be done delicately especially considering the powerful role Ford had allowed Vice-President Rockefeller. After serving 15 months as COS (see Table A-1 and A-7), he left the White House to become President Ford's secretary of defense (Burke, 2000a; George, 1980; Greenstein, 1988; Healy, 1975; Hess, 2002; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; King and Riddlesperger, 1995; Pfiffner, 1994; Robertson, 1997; Tenpas and Dickinson, 1997; Thompson, 1992).

Richard Cheney

Richard Cheney came to the office of COS with considerable Washington experience, having worked as a congressional aide and in various positions in the Nixon administration. Like Rumsfeld, Cheney started off with the official title of staff

coordinator; however, he eventually assumed the title of chief of staff. Cheney kept firm control of WHO operations; however, his calm, unassuming, *nice guy* management style relaxed tensions in the White House and won him many supporters. He made sure channels were kept open between the White House and Congress and the cabinet. He played the heavy when necessary always allowing President Ford to appear to be above the fray. Cheney maintained a low key approach to the job, following the Brownlow Committee's counsel for anonymity. He served as President Ford's COS for 14 months successfully performing the role of COS, and is considered to be an example of the ideal approach to the job of the chief of staff (Burke, 2000a; Greenstein, 1988; Hess, 2002; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kessel, 2001; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

JIMMY CARTER

President Carter came into office with the intention of distancing the presidency from the abuses of the Nixon administration. He decided to install a version of President Kennedy's collegial *spokes-of-the-wheel* approach to White House organization, which places the president at the center of White House operations rather than at the apex. As with President Kennedy, Carter chose to be his own COS with advisers and information flowing directly to him and being managed by him. Half-way through his presidency he was overwhelmed with the details of management and was left with little time or energy to concentrate on his major policy agenda. With the WHO and his administration in disarray, Carter brought in Hamilton Jordan to act as COS.

Hamilton Jordan

During the third year of his presidency, Carter realized that a COS was necessary to manage the White House, bring order to the policy process, and coordinate relations between the president, Congress, and the cabinet. Hamilton Jordan was a long-time friend of Carter and an excellent political strategist, but had very limited Washington experience. He showed little interest in managing the details of the office or in supervising the staff which are critical aspects of the chief of staff's job. Members of the cabinet resented his irregular work habits, and at times he was curt and ill tempered in his dealings with members of Congress and the media. Hamilton was weak in organizational skills and left much of the *spokes-of-the-wheel* organizational structure in tact resulting in little improvement in White House operations. He held the position for 11 months (see Table A-1 and A-7) resigning in May of 1980 to manage Carter's re-election effort (Abernathy, Hill, and Williams, 1984; Anderson and Bauer, 1991; Greenstein, 1988; Hess, 2002; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kessel, 2001; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Pfiffner, 1994; Tenpas and Dickinson, 1997; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

Jack Watson

Jack Watson was another of President Carter's Georgia intimates and Washington *outsider*. He headed up the transition team after Carter won the presidency in 1976, and then served as coordinator of intergovernmental affairs and cabinet secretary. Unlike Jordan, Watson had strong management and organizational skills and coordination within the WHO improved after he became COS, as did coordination with Congress and the

cabinet. He performed the role of *honest broker* well; making sure Carter had properly staffed-out options before decisions were made. Watson was COS for only the last 8 months of the Carter presidency; and, therefore, did not have much of an opportunity to reverse the damage to the administration caused by poor management and coordination (Abernathy, Hill, and Williams, 1984; Burke, 2000a; Greenstein, 1988; Hess, 2002; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kessel, 2001; Nelson, 1989; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994; Sullivan, 2004; Thompson, 1992; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001). In referring to a president's legacy Watson said:

> The president starts creating his legacy on January 21 of his inauguration year. You can't duck. You can't hide. You can't pretend that the first year or two or three years of your administration didn't happen. You can't start doing things in the fourth year that somehow magically or artificially are building a legacy. You've been doing that the whole time (Sullivan, 2004, 87).

RONALD REAGAN

James Baker

Ronald Reagan and his transition team developed the White House organizational structure during the time between his election and inauguration – he wanted to hit the ground running. He planned to provide the overall policy direction and then leave the details and implementation to his staff. Reagan is considered to have had a passive management style leaving most policy details to his upper level staff "…Ronald Reagan was criticized for his attention to the big picture without sufficient attention to the details

of some of his more important policies" (Pfiffner, 2005, 225). President Reagan's organizational structure was a modified pyramid design, with elements of the spokes-of-the-wheel model at the highest level; a type of traditional hierarchical style, but with collegial formalism at the top. Reagan chose a three man team, commonly known as the "troika" which on paper would have roughly equal authority, but with different responsibilities, and equal access to the president. James Baker was to have the title Chief of Staff; Edwin Meese, Counselor to the President; and Michael Deaver, Deputy Chief of Staff. The three man team eventually became four with the addition of William Clark the National Security Advisor. However, James Baker quickly became the first among equals and the COS became dominant. Reagan ran for president as a Washington *outsider*, but in James Baker chose a skilled *insider* who understood the Congress and the media (see Table A-1 and A-7).

Baker brought with him other talented staff members who knew how to make the political system work. President Reagan commanded a better than 82 percent legislative success rate in the first year of his presidency. Much of Reagan's early legislative successes were largely due to the skill of Baker and his assistants. Baker played the role of a facilitator and the honest broker well, making sure President Reagan heard all of the relevant voices before making decisions. He did not attempt to restrict access to the president or information from reaching the president that he considered important to the decision-making process. He demonstrated strong organizational and management skills, without becoming domineering, and maintained good relations with Congress, the cabinet, and the media. Baker served as COS for 48 months – Reagan's entire first term. "Indeed, in the first term, the Reagan Administration succeeded rather brilliantly…"

(Nuestadt, 1999, 71). Many scholars, including Nuestadt, consider Reagan's first term a model for structural organization and management, and James Baker as one of the most skilled and effective chiefs of staff to have served (Anderson and Bauer, 1991; Buchanan, 1991; Burke, 2000a, 200b; Cohen, 2002; Cohen and Krause, 2000; Hess, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Levy, 1996; Neustadt, 1999; Norquist, 1993; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1999; Pika, 1988; Roberston, 1997; Sullivan, 2004; Tenpas and Dickinson, 1997; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

Donald Regan

The beginning of Reagan's second term was marked by James Baker and Donald Regan swapping jobs within the administration – James Baker became the Secretary of the Treasury and Donald Regan the COS. Regan, who came from the corporate world had limited Washington experience, immediately imposed a strict hierarchical organizational structure with all access and information and people flowing through him to the president. The only exception was the National Security Advisor who had direct access to the president. His motto was "let Reagan be Reagan" and shut out differing points of view before they could reach the president, in effect isolating President Reagan from his administration. While Baker saw the COS as a staff position and worked as a facilitator and a broker, Regan conducted himself as if he were the chief operating officer shaping every aspect of the WHO to his specification.

The collegial atmosphere that had been pervasive during the first term was altered to rigid formalism. "Whereas Baker had brought strong subordinates to work with him, Regan would brook no rivals for influence. The staffers he brought from his days at the

Treasury Department were known around the White House as "the Mice" because of their meek approach to their boss" (Pfiffner, 1993, 87). Baker attempted to stay out of public view as much as possible while Regan sought the limelight. Where Baker and his staff worked well with Congress, the cabinet, and the media, Regan was uncooperative and did not hide his disregard for influences outside of his control. When the Reykjavik Summit ended in what appeared to be failure Regan publicly attempted to shift the blame onto the president and to take the credit for any positive outcomes. "Some of us are like a shovel brigade that follow [sic] a parade down Main Street cleaning up. We took Reykjavick and turned what was a really sour situation into something that turned out pretty well" (Pfiffner, 1993, 89). Regan's tenure was marked by mistakes, miscalculations, and ultimately failure.

In September 1986 the Iran-Contra scandal broke and threatened to bring down the Reagan presidency. The President, on November 26, 1986 announced the creation of a three-member committee, known as the Tower Commission, to look into the details surrounding Iran-Contra. While Regan was never implicated directly in any part of the scandal, it was felt that his management style, and isolation of President Reagan had led to the environment which allowed the events to occur – pressure was building for his resignation. The Tower Commission issued its report on February 26, 1987 and it laid much of the blame at Donald Regan's feet.

> The Tower Board that investigated the Iran-Contra scandal did not accept Regan's denials. Although it did not conclude that Regan participated in the scandal or the cover-up, it did hold him responsible for allowing it to happen on his watch. In citing the "failure of responsibility" the Board

> pointed out the ultimate responsibility for the White House staff system belongs to the President, but that Regan was partially responsible for the disaster. "More than almost any Chief of Staff in recent memory, he asserted personal control over the White House staff and sought to extend his control to the National Security Advisor. He was personally active in national security affairs and attended almost all of the relevant meetings regarding the Iran initiative… He must bear primary responsibility for the chaos that descended upon the White House when such disclosure did occur" (Pfiffner, 1993, 90).

Regan had few supporters in Congress, among the members of the cabinet, within the media, or in the White House, even alienating the president's closest confidant his wife, Nancy Reagan. Donald Regan was forced to offer his resignation on February 27, 1987 after serving for 25 months as COS (Anderson, 1988; Annis, 1995: Burke, 2000a; Busby, 1999; Cohen, 2002; Greenstein, 1988; Henderson, 1988; Hess, 2002; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kessel, 2001; Levy, 1996; Nelson, 1989; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994; Reagan, 1990, 2007; Regan, 1988; Robertson, 1997; Strober and Strober, 2003).

Howard Baker

Howard Baker's role as COS will be considered in the Chapter five.

Kenneth Duberstein

Kenneth Duberstein assumed the position of COS upon Howard Baker's resignation in July 1988. He was perfectly suited for the job, having served as Howard Baker's deputy COS, where he ran the day to day management of the WHO. Duberstein

maintained the more open organizational and management structure which Baker had established, and is considered to have done an excellent job. David Cohen (2002) indicates those working in the White House at the time gave Duberstein high marks in his administrative, advisory, and guardian effectiveness, key criteria for a COS. Duberstein had been Reagan's congressional liaison before he became COS and worked well with members of Congress and the cabinet. He quotes the advice he was given by a Democrat congressman: "Duberstein, you're smarter than 95 percent of the SOBs up here. You know it and we know it. But what you have to remember is we're elected and you ain't" (Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2003, 135). Duberstein served as COS during the last 6 months of the Reagan presidency and is credited for overseeing an efficient close-out of the administration, and helping with a smooth transition into the Bush administration (Burke, 2000a, 2000b; Cohen 2002; Cohen and Krause, 2000; Hess, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1994; Reagan, 1990, 2007; Robertson, 1997; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2003).

GEORGE H. BUSH

John Sununu

John Sununu was chosen to be COS because he had the reputation of being a strong, no-nonsense administrator, and had helped George Bush secure the Republican nomination for president. He had served as governor of New Hampshire but had little Washington experience. In many of the key roles of the COS he performed well; he was a strong organizer and managed the WHO effectively; he actively supported the president's policies; he relished playing the role of the *heavy* which allowed President

Bush to maintain his *nice guy* image. However, he had an abrasive personal style that was intimidating to the White House staff. Sununu was combative in his dealings with Congress; to the point of threatening members of Congress with electoral retribution if they failed to support the president's agenda (see Table A-8). His conduct at the 1990 Budget Summit was so extreme that Senator Robert Byrd scolded him.

> I have had thirty years in the U.S. Senate, and I have participated in many such summits, and I have never in my life observed such outrageous conduct as that displayed by the representatives of the president of the United States. Your conduct is arrogant. It is rude. It is intolerable (Pfiffner, 1993, 94).

His harsh personality won him no friends in the cabinet or with the media. Sununu eventually alienated everyone except the president, and calls for his resignation came from every corner.

His organizational skills did bring order and discipline to the WHO and to the policy process. He was a very *hands-on* administrator when it came to policy development immersing himself in every detail – especially domestic policy. However, he went far beyond his role as an *honest broker* in ensuring issues were properly staffed-out and options identified. Sununu not only provided his personal advice, but became involved to the point of becoming a policy advocate attempting to create and steer much of the administration's domestic agenda, and he often tried to intimidate anyone who offered opinions which disagreed with his own. When stories began to be leaked to the media concerning his use of government transportation for personal use President Bush was forced to come to his defense – a situation in which a president should never be

placed. Stories of his use of government military aircraft for family ski trips and the use of government limousines to attend private auctions continued even after he was publicly chastised by the president. Sununu's final error was to publicly place blame on the president. He told the media that remarks made by President Bush about concerns over interest rates being charged by credit card companies was not in the speech he had approved. The president had ad-libbed the comments. Whether or not the statement was in the text of the speech, embarrassing the president is unacceptable behavior for a COS and Sununu was forced to resign in December 1991 after serving as COS for 34 months (Anderson and Bauer, 1991; Burke, 2000a, 2000b; Campbell and Rockman, 1991; Cohen, 1997, 2002; Crane and Moritz, 1990; Hess, 2002; Hill and Williams, 1994; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Levy, 1996; Norquist, 1993; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994; Sullivan, 2004).

Samuel Skinner

Before becoming COS Samuel Skinner had been Bush's secretary of transportation where he developed the President's National Transportation Policy, and had coordinated the government's clean-up effort of the Exxon Valdez oil spill. He had strong management and organizational skills, but had limited *insider* Washington experience. He came into the White House during an election year with polls showing the president behind – where the emphasis was on reorganizing the campaign rather than the WHO. Skinner recalls about Bush "He needed to make a change. He wanted to make it quickly. We were at 40 percent in the polls and we were ten months away from

an election. So I basically took the deck of cards and the hand that was dealt to me and worked with it" (Sullivan, 2004, 50).

Upon assuming the COS position Skinner ordered a management study of the WHO; however, the study caused the staff to become apprehensive about their job security and it turned out to be counterproductive. He eventually kept most of the existing staff – replacing some senior members with people he had worked with previously. He reorganized policy development procedures, streamlining the process as established by the Sununu WHO. David Cohen (2002) gives Skinner and overall below average grade in the key areas of administrative, advisory, and guardian effectiveness. In August of 1992 with the campaign in trouble President Bush asked James Baker to step in as COS – Samuel Skinner served little more than nine months as COS (Burke, 2000a, 2000b; Cohen, 2002; Hess, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Levy, 1996; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994; Sullivan, 2004; Tenpas and Dickinson; 1997).

James Baker

James Baker served very successfully as Ronald Reagan's COS and reluctantly agreed to assume the duties for his long-time friend George Bush. He demonstrated the same talents and skills as Bush's COS as he had in the Reagan administration. Baker stepped into the White House just two months before the election, which limited the scope of his reorganization attempts. In the five months he served as COS, he brought order and discipline to a White House in disarray, and helped ensure a smooth transition to the Clinton administration. For a more complete discussion of his talents and abilities see his heading under the Reagan presidency (Burke, 2000a, 2000b; Cohen, 2002; Hess,

2002; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Levy, 1996; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994; Sullivan, 2004).

WILLIAM CLINTON

Mack McLarty

A life-long friend of President Clinton – also from Hope, Arkansas – Mack McLarty was a successful business leader and was active in Arkansas politics. However, his political experience in Arkansas did little to prepare him for Washington politics or for the management and organizational demands placed upon the COS. The Clinton transition team did not finish staffing the WHO until a week before the president's inauguration which left McLarty no time to organize and congeal the staff into a unified and effective force. In addition he was given little input in the personnel selection process. Because of the delays in staffing the office, the Clinton administration got off to a slow and uneven start, and remained disorganized throughout the administration's first year.

McLarty's inability to bring order and discipline to the White House resulted in a chaotic policy development process, with meetings often lasting into the wee hours of the morning but producing little in the way of clear policy direction. As a result Clinton's legislative agenda suffered. A White House staffer during the time observed "McLarty is smart, he's decent, he runs a nice meeting, but beyond that he has no strategic or political sense. He can't seem to control Clinton – get him to make a decision, end meetings, not keep people waiting" (Burke, 2000b, 341).

McLarty did not perform the duty of *gatekeeper;* he was unable or unwilling to control the access of people reaching the president. Leon Panetta says of McLarty's tenure "as far as I know, anybody who walked down the hall, walked in" (Burke, 2000b, 337). In the way of building bridges and maintaining legislative relations, the White House was slow to respond to inquiries or requests made by members of Congress. This also hampered the Clinton agenda – especially during the first year of the presidency. In an effort to improve the situation McLarty brought in David Gergen who had worked in the Nixon, Ford, and Reagan White Houses. However, the problems continued and Gergen was unable to mesh well with the existing staff – with open hostility between him and George Stephanopoulos, another of Clinton's senior aides. By the summer of 1994 McLarty had served as COS for 17 months, (see Table A-1 and A-7), and some of Clinton's senior aides were advising the president that the lack of order and discipline within the White House was harming his presidency and McLarty needed to be replaced. In June President Clinton asked Leon Panetta to assume the role of COS (Burke, 2000a, 2000b; Herrnson and Hill, 1999; Hess, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Levy, 1996; Maltese, 2000; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1994; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott and Hult, 2003; Warshaw, 2004; Weatherford and McDonnell, 1996).

Leon Panetta

A consummate Washington *insider,* Leon Panetta had worked in the Nixon administration, been active in California state politics, served in the Congress from 1977 – 1993, and was President Clinton's Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) from January 1993 through June of 1994 when he was approached about

accepting the post of COS. At first he resisted, arguing that he was needed as director of OMB; but the president insisted, "Look, Leon, you can be the greatest director of OMB in the history of this country but, if the White House isn't working, nobody's going to remember you" (Sullivan, 2004, 52). Upon assuming the position of COS Panetta immediately set about reorganizing the WHO and installing order and discipline to the organization. Speaking about the need for the COS to understand the way Washington works he has said.

> You really need to have somebody in that position who has some experience in Washington. It's just absolutely essential. The president can have somebody close to him, but it better be somebody who has some experience with what Washington is about, because that person has to make sure that the president isn't making any obvious mistakes (Patterson, 2000, 349).

Panetta worked to establish effective relations between the White House, Congress, the cabinet, and the media, and took firm control of the policy-development process. Nothing was allowed to be presented to the president until it had been fully staffed-out and reviewed by him. Panetta took his role as *gatekeeper* seriously, demanding all information and people reaching the president be filtered through him. He also greatly restricted the number of senior staff with direct access to the president. He insisted on complete control over all personnel matters, including hiring and firing of the staff. By the end of Clinton's first term the White House was running smoothly. Panetta, having served as COS for 30 months, announced he would leave the post at the end of the

president's first term (Burke, 2000a, 2000b; Campbell and Rockman, 2000; Felzenberg, 2000; Herrnson and Hill, 1999; Hess, 2002; Jones, 1999; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Levy, 1996; Maltese, 2000; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1994; Sullivan, 2004; Warshaw, 2004; Wetherford and McDonnel, 1996).

Erskine Bowles

Erskine Bowles' came from the business world; however, before becoming COS he previously served as Clinton's director of the Small Business Administration from 1993 – 1994, and as deputy chief of staff for Leon Panetta during 1994 – 1995. The experience prior to assuming the COS position greatly helped to prepare him for the demands of the job.

> …I had had the experience of working for Leon for two years. So I knew the rhythm of a White House and I knew how it operated. I had also had the experience of operating another federal agency outside the White House so I had that perspective I think, which helps you a great deal in knowing how to manage within this environment (Sullivan, 2004, 53).

Bowles followed the lead of Panetta and continued to move the White House organization toward a more formalistic structural approach. He worked to develop a professional environment within the White House, and further imposed order and discipline on an often unruly White House staff. Because of his management skills the WHO continued to improve in its effectiveness. He described his efforts and abilities as "…I am a doer; I can get things done. I am a negotiator; I can take tough positions and say no" (Patterson, 2000, 352). Upon accepting the position, Bowles insisted on

bringing in his own experienced supporting staff. He took personal responsibility for overseeing President Clinton's schedule, and personally handled much of the liaison duties between the White House and Congress – especially issues dealing with budget matters. While not being directly involved in managing the defense for the Monica Lewinsky scandal or the following impeachment, he sought to keep the White House staff focused on the president's agenda; although that proved to be impossible as one member of the staff explained: "There's only so much air in the room, and it's been sucked up by this" (Burke, 2000a, 201). Bowles had made his intentions clear early-on, he did not plan to stay on long-term as the COS, so after serving for approximately 23 months he left the Clinton White House to return to the private sector (August and Gorman, 1995; Burke, 2000a; Hess, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Patterson, 2000; Sullivan, 2004; Warshaw, 2004; York, 1997).

John Podesta

A Washington *insider,* John Podesta had extensive government experience both in the legislative and executive branches of government before coming to the Clinton White House as deputy chief of staff under Erskine Bowles. In addition he had been president of Podesta Associates, Inc. a Washington-based government relations and lobbying firm. He continued to demand organizational discipline from the White House staff, and established daily morning meetings with all senior White House staff and the national security adviser in order to ensure everyone was on the same page and working in tandem. Podesta took strict control over all access to the president, allowing only one exception – the national security adviser had direct access to Clinton. He also immersed

himself in the details of the policy development process – deciding when and how an issue would be presented to the president.

Podesta advised the president and helped to provide damage control during the impeachment process. During the proceedings he implemented regular breakfasts at the White House for the cabinet secretaries in an effort to keep them in-line, and supporting the president. He attempted to keep the president's agenda moving forward; however, the White House was overwhelmed by the impeachment defense which overshadowed all other priorities. He served as Clinton's COS until the end of the president's second term – approximately 26 months. Podesta as well and Leon Panetta and Erskine Bowles are considered to have served President Clinton well, bringing order to undisciplined staff and president (Burke, 2000a, 2000b; Hess, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Patterson, 2000; Sullivan, 2004; Warshaw, 2004).

GEORGE W. BUSH

Andrew Card

Andrew Card, another seasoned Washington *insider*, got his start in the political arena as a Massachusetts state legislator from 1975 – 1983. He then served in various positions in the Ronald Reagan and George H. Bush administrations, and was John Sununu's deputy chief of staff. Because of this experience, Card understood White House operations well. Even though the presidential election of 2000 was not finally decided until mid-December, Card had the WHO up and running by the time Bush took office. Card demonstrated strong managerial and organizational skills in the original development and the daily operations of the WHO. He chose to incorporate two deputy

chiefs of staff into his organizational structure, one to manage policy development and one to oversee White House operations. Subject to the president's approval Card made almost all of the personnel decisions for the WHO. While closely controlling access to the president, he assured senior staff and cabinet members their views would be carefully considered and that their ability to see the president when needed would not be hindered. Card explains the COS's *gatekeeping* function is critical because.

> …there are an infinite number of great ideas in Washington, and nearly an infinite number of people willing to give those ideas to the president, so what you have to do is decide what the president needs to have and then find a way to fit it into a day in such a way that he has an ability to make a sound decision (Sullivan, 2004, 147).

After the terrorist attacks of 9-11 and the subsequent U.S. military action, Card sought to keep the WHO focused on the president's domestic agenda as well as devoting time and energy to the foreign affairs crisis. Card estimated he spent roughly 30% of his time on White House/Congress relations; however, relations were often strained. Many in the Congress complained the White House had a strong executive – cooperative legislature philosophy guiding the relationship. Card attempted to strengthen connections between the administration and the various interest groups who supported the president's agenda in an effort to encourage them to work together. Like Leon Panetta and John Podesta during the Clinton administration, Card made himself available to appear on the Sunday television talk shows in order to advance the relationship between the White House and the media. On April 14, 2006 it was announced that Card was leaving the

Bush White House after having served as COS for 63 months (see Table A-1 and A-7) – one of the longest tenures of any chief of staff (Burke, 2000a, 2000b, 2002; Crotty, 2003; Hess, 2002; Kumar, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott and Hult, 2003).

Joshua Bolten

At this writing, Joshua Bolten is currently serving as White House chief of staff for President George W. Bush. He has considerable Washington experience serving as White House liaison to Congress, and in various other positions in the George H. Bush administration. Prior to becoming COS, he served as deputy chief of staff in charge of policy under Andrew Card from 2001 – 2003, and director of the Office of Management and Budget from 2003 – 2006. Bolten is well known and respected by many on Capitol Hill; his non-confrontational manner is less likely to offend members of Congress and cabinet secretaries. To improve cooperation between the White House and Congress Bolten has instituted Luncheons at the White House for the congressional leadership. At this point in time, it appears Bolten will be viewed as a fairly successful COS (Crawford, 2006; Feldmann, 2006; Hess, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Nather, 2006).

Characteristics of the Chief of Staff

Looking at the White House chiefs of staff in the aggregate, certain characteristics emerge (see Table A-8). These characteristics can be identified as key components in the success of individual chiefs of staff or as identifiable components in the failure of others. The chiefs of staff who are considered to have had a high degree of success are Donald

Rumsfeld, Richard Cheney, James Baker, Howard Baker, Leon Panetta, and John Podesta, while Sherman Adams, H.R. Haldeman, Donald Regan, and John Sununu are deemed to have been failures as chiefs of staff.

LENGTH OF SERVICE

The average tenure in the office of White House chief of staff is 26.2 months; the number excludes John Steelman's service to President Truman – Steelman is technically not in the official list of chiefs of staff as the position was not created until the Eisenhower administration. The average tenure of chiefs of staff with the highest degree of success is 25 months, while least successful average 44.5 months in the office. Months of service is of limited value in determining the likelihood of success or failure in that one of the most successful COSs, James Baker, served for 48 months, and one of the least, Donald Regan, served for 25 months.

COS AS INSIDER/OUTSIDER

Twelve chiefs of staff have had considerable experience in the operations of the Washington political environment *(insiders)*, while 10 have had limited or no experience *(outsiders).* Interestingly, experience in state or local politics does not seem to equip a person with the tools necessary to excel as a COS. The six best chiefs of staff were all Washington *insiders*; of the four worst all were *outsiders* except Sherman Adams who had Washington experience.

ISOLATION OF THE PRESIDENT

The chief of staff's *gatekeeping* function is an important aspect in preventing the president from becoming overwhelmed with information. However, access to the president cannot be controlled to the point the president is not properly informed or connected to his staff. The president became isolated from his administration during the tenure of only two chiefs of staff – H.R. Haldeman/Nixon and Donald Regan/Reagan. In both cases the results were disasters for the president – Watergate and Iran Contra – and both chiefs of staff are ranked within the failure category.

COS RELATIONS WITH CONGRESS, CABINET, AND MEDIA

The majority (16) of the chiefs of staff developed and maintained an effective working relationship with three critical elements in any president's success – Congress, the cabinet secretaries, and the media. Five alienated these important elements because of rude, abrasive, or disrespectful attitudes and personalities. Of the five all four of the chiefs of staff who are considered failures are included, with Mack McLarty being the fifth.

COS RELATIONS WITH WHITE HOUSE STAFF AND OTHERS

An atmosphere which is collegial, unifying, and productive is crucial for the success of the WHO, and therefore, the presidency. Seventeen chiefs of staff developed and encouraged to some degree a positive working atmosphere within the White House and with departments directly affiliated with the WHO, such as the cabinet as well as other departments and agencies. The four chiefs of staff with the least amount of success tended to be too controlling and even domineering in their relationships with the White

House staff, the cabinet, and others. They were often curt, demeaning, and at times even abusive in their associations with the White House staff and other key personnel.

The six chiefs of staff with the highest degree of success tended to have a considerable amount of Washington experience; protected the president, but ensured he was properly informed; did not allow the president to become isolated; built strong effective connections between the White House and Congress, the cabinet, and the media; and while maintaining order and discipline fostered a collegial atmosphere within the White House staff and between the departments. The four least successful chiefs of staff failed in each of these key areas.

Conclusion

The modern presidency cannot function without a well staffed and properly organized White House Office, and at the center of the WHO is the chief of staff. Much of the success or failure of any modern presidency can be attributed to the success or failure of the COS. The demands and expectations placed upon the COS are exceeded only by those placed upon the president. We have looked at the office of White House chief of staff; its characteristics; the role of the COS; possible pitfalls; and the individuals who have served in the office. Now let us narrow our focus to a closer consideration of Howard H. Baker, and his tenure as White House chief of staff during the Reagan presidency.

CHAPTER 5.

HOWARD BAKER AND THE REAGAN PRESIDENCY

I never forget that Ronald Reagan is President. My job is to serve him in whatever capacity I can
-- Howard H. Baker, Jr.

At the beginning of President Reagan's second term an unusual event occurred; James Baker the president's chief of staff and Donald Regan his Secretary of the Treasury decided to switch jobs. They presented the president with the proposal and he agreed to allow the change of positions. The decision turned out to be devastating for the Reagan presidency. Reagan's *hands-off* management style which emphasized his establishing broad policy direction and then leaving the details of implementation up to his staff had worked well during his first term. James Baker had proven to be a strong and competent chief of staff who understood Washington and knew how to maneuver the president's agenda through its perilous waters. Along with James Baker most of the president's senior staff are considered to have been talented and knowledgeable.

Before coming to the Department of the Treasury, Donald Regan had been a successful Wall Street executive, and by most accounts had managed Treasury well. However, he had limited experience in governmental policy development, and even less experience in Washington politics. His management techniques and personal style were ill suited for the job of COS, and he ultimately alienated everyone he had to work with on a regular basis. Regan's demand for absolute control of all access to the president of both

information and people eventually isolated the president to the point he became disengaged from his administration. It also encouraged independent spheres of power to operate outside of monitored and supervised channels. The result of these weaknesses combined to force the resignation of Regan as COS and nearly caused the collapse of the Reagan presidency (Anderson, 1988; Annis, 1995: Burke, 2000a; Busby, 1999; Cohen, 2002; Greenstein, 1988; Henderson, 1988; Hess, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Levy, 1996; Nelson, 1989; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994; Reagan, 1990, 2007; Regan, 1988; Robertson, 1997; Strober and Strober, 2003).

Iran-Contra and a Call from the Oval Office

In 1979 two separate and unrelated revolutions occurred, that were troubling to U.S. national security interests. In Nicaragua the regime of General Anastasio Somoza Debayle was toppled by the Sandinistas; a political and military force with strong communist leanings, and in Iran the pro-U.S. government of Shah Mohammad Riza Pahlavi was overthrown by Islamic fundamentalists. These two events would ultimately be drawn together by U.S. intervention and the result would be a crisis for the Reagan presidency. The Iran-Contra Affair is a murky and complicated scandal which occurred during the early months of Reagan's second term as president. It would be impossible to give a full accounting of the affair within this manuscript; as several books have been published which concentrate solely on the affair and its implications. A brief overview is provided in order to better understand the environment surrounding the White House as Howard Baker assumed the role of COS.

NICARAGUA

The Reagan administration's foreign policy actively supported anti-communist resistance movements. As a cornerstone of this policy, the Reagan Doctrine called for a strategy of containment and destabilization of communist regimes in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In the late fall and winter of 1981 the U.S. government began providing the Nicaraguan Contras – a military group that forcefully opposed the Sandinista regime – with arms, food, and clothing. Many members of Congress were publicly opposed to this support, fearing it could lead to the United States becoming entangled in a protracted Vietnam style war. In 1982 Congress passed legislation limiting aid to the Contras and forbidding any aid to be used in any attempt to topple the Sandinista government. In the spring of 1984 it was discovered the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had a role in the mining of Nicaraguan harbors without notifying Congress. In response Congress passed the Boland Amendment as part of the 1985 omnibus appropriations bill. The amendment cut off all funds for the support of the Contra movement. The president signed the legislation, but still strongly supported the Contras cause, and asked members of the National Security Council (NSC) to find ways to maintain financial support for the Contras. Throughout 1984 and 1985, the NSC staff secretly raised money for the Contras from other countries and from sources outside of government, even though members of the NSC testified before Congress that no such support was being solicited (Busby, 1999; Conley, 2007; Culvahouse, Memos, February 28, 1987; Culvahouse, Notes, March 9, 1987; Duberstein, Memos, May 5, 1987, May 21, 1987, June 2, 1987, June 17, 1987, July 9, 1987, July 15, 1987, December 16, 1987; Johnson, 1991; Jonathan, Scott, and

Hunter, 1987; Ledeen, 1988; Paolucci, 1991; Scott, 1996; Stevens, 1990; U.S. Congress, H. Report No. 100-433/S Report No. 100-216, 1987; Walsh, 1994; Wroe, 1991).

IRAN

In the summer of 1985 at the height of the Iraq – Iran war, Israel quietly approached the United States with a proposal to sell weapons and parts to Iran in an effort to improve relations with the Iranian government, and in exchange for Iran's help in securing the release of American hostages being held in Lebanon by the Hezbollah terrorist organization. It was against stated U.S. foreign policy to sell arms to Iran as was negotiating with terrorist organizations, but the initial sale was consummated, with the help of Israel during the early fall of 1985. Ultimately the goals of the plan were never achieved; the Iranian government remained avidly anti-American, and Iran demonstrated little influence in securing the release of the American hostages. However, by December 1985 members of the NSC's staff had devised an arrangement to continue to sell weapons and parts to Iran. The excess proceeds from the sale would then be funneled covertly to the Nicaraguan Contras and their effort to overthrow the Sandinista government. The elaborate plan collapsed when it became public in the fall of 1986. First, on October 5, 1986 a C-123K American cargo plane carrying arms and other supplies for the Contras was shot down over Nicaragua, and one of its American crew members, Eugene Hasenfus, was taken captive. Hasenfus told his captures he worked for the CIA. Then on November 3, 1986 an article appeared in a Lebanese publication exposing and detailing the American *arms for hostages* deal with Iran (Busby, 1999; Conley, 2007; Culvahouse, Memos, February 28, 1987; Culvahouse, Notes, March 9, 1987; Duberstein, Memos,

May 5, 1987, May 21, 1987, June 2, 1987, June 17, 1987, July 9, 1987, July 15, 1987, December 16, 1987; Johnson, 1991; Jonathan, Scott, and Hunter, 1987; Ledeen, 1988; Paolucci, 1991; Scott, 1996; Stevens, 1990; U.S. Congress, H. Report No. 100-433/S Report No. 100-216, 1987; Walsh, 1994; Wroe, 1991).

On November 25, 1986 under rapidly increasing pressure from Congress and the media, President Reagan announced the creation of a Presidential Commission to investigate the Iran-Contra matter. The Tower Commission, named after its chairman former Senator John Tower, began its investigation on December 1, 1986 and issued its report on February 26, 1987. The Tower Commission did not find evidence that suggested the president had knowledge of the extent of the covert operation or its cover-up. It condemned the actions of the NSC and strongly criticized White House management and operational structure for creating an environment which allowed the events to occur – laying much of the blame at the feet of White House chief of staff Donald Regan. On Thursday, February 26 Vice President Bush had a meeting with Regan and later told the president that Regan planned to announce his resignation on Monday, March 2. However, news of his pending resignation were leaked to the press which infuriated Regan, and on Friday, February 27, 1987 Regan wrote a one line resignation letter, and walked out of the White House – leaving the WHO in confusion and chaos. In October 1986 just before the Iran-Contra affair became public, President Reagan enjoyed a 63% job approval rating according to national polls (see Table A-2); in December the number stood at 47%, and by February 1987 it had fallen to 40% approval (Anderson, 1988; Annis, 1995; Burke, 2000a; Busby, 1999; Cohen, 2002; Culvahouse, Memos, February 28, 1987; Culvahouse, Notes, March 9, 1987; Duberstein, Memos,

May 5, 1987, May 21, 1987, June 2, 1987, June 17, 1987, July 9, 1987, July 15, 1987, December 16, 1987; Greenstein, 1988; Henderson, 1988; Hess, 2002; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kessel, 2001; Levy, 1996; Nelson, 1989; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994; Reagan, 1990, 2007; Regan, 1988; Robertson, 1997; Strober and Strober, 2003).

Against this backdrop and as these events were unfolding, Howard Baker received a phone call from President Reagan. Several of Reagan's closest advisors had convinced him that Baker would be the ideal choice to replace Donald Regan as COS. On Thursday, February 26, 1987 Baker was in Florida vacationing and considering a possible bid for the presidency in 1988 when President Reagan called and asked him to accept the position of White House chief of staff. Baker tentatively accepted and agreed to fly to Washington the next morning. President Reagan would later write that God had answered a prayer in Howard Baker assuming the duties of COS. After meeting with the president on Friday morning, February 27, Baker agreed to accept the position of White House chief of staff with one condition; he be allowed to bring in his own people to fill the senior staff positions. He immediately ordered aides Thomas Griscom and James Cannon to interview the current staff and ascertain the situation. They found the WHO staff demoralized and the organizational structure in disarray. After completing his initial review of the circumstances surrounding the Iran-Contra affair, Baker felt President Reagan's impeachment was a distinct possibility. Even though the president's survival seemed questionable and the job ahead daunting, Baker placed his own reputation and political capital on the line and began the process of repairing the damage and restoring the credibility of the Reagan administration (Anderson, 1988; Annis, 1995; Eisenhower,

1987; Henderson, 1988; Hess, 2002; Kirschten, 1987, 1988; Reagan, 1990, 2007; Regan, 1988; Robertson, 1997; Strober and Strober, 2003).

In remarks presented to the Regional Press Luncheon on June 8, 1988 Baker spoke of the three main objectives he shared with President Reagan when he agreed to accept the position of COS.

> The first was I wanted to see that he got the best deal that he could get on the unfolding and continuing examination of the Iran-Contra affair. I wanted to see that he's well lawyered and I wanted to see that the presentation of his side of the case was done in a skillful and professional and workmanlike way, and I wanted him to come out of the other side as having been vindicated on his representation that he didn't know anything about this until he was told later, and that he had taken corrective action to keep it from happening again.
>
> The second objective I told him that I had in mind for him was to see that there was not a repetition of what happened to President Nixon during the Watergate affair… the president of the United States was virtually isolated and immobilized. And I wanted to see that the President was not immobilized in this case – that he continued to function effectively as the Chief Magistrate of this nation – that he could go forward with his program and his agenda. And I think we did that. I think it was an active agenda on a broad front.
>
> And the third thing I told the President was that I'd like to help him accomplish, if possible, is to see that he didn't miss any foreign policy

opportunities, and I was thinking particularly of arms control at the time (Baker, Remarks, June 8, 1988).

Howard H. Baker, Jr.

Howard Baker, Jr. was born on November 15, 1925 in Huntsville, Tennessee to Howard and Dora Baker. Howard, Sr. was a successful attorney, businessman, and member of Congress – serving in the House of Representatives for 13 years. Howard, Jr. attended the McCallie School, a prestigious private college preparatory institution located in Chattanooga. Upon graduation in 1943 he enlisted in the Navy's officer training program, and trained at a Navy facility located on the campus of the University of the South in Sewannee, Tennessee. While in the program he studied electrical engineering at Sewannee and at Tulane University in New Orleans. After Baker completed his military service he enrolled at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville where he earned law a degree in 1949. In his senior year at UT he was elected the university's student body president (Annis, 1995; Eisenhower, 1987; Howard H. Baker Jr., 1925-, 2008).

In 1950 Baker managed his father's successful campaign for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. During his father's first term in office, Howard met Joy Dirksen, the daughter of Illinois Senator Everett Dirksen. Howard and Joy began dating and were married in December, 1951. They returned to Huntsville, where Baker continued to practice law at a firm established by his grandfather. In 1964 Baker ran, in a special election, for the unexpired term of the late Senator Estes Kefauver. He narrowly lost the election to Ross Bass the Democrat candidate. Baker ran again for the seat in the 1966 race for a full six year term, and won with 56 percent of the popular vote, becoming

the first popularly elected Republican Senator ever elected in Tennessee. During his first term in the Senate he demonstrated an ability to effectively work with his colleagues to move legislation through the body. He helped pass revenue sharing legislation, played a major role in having Tennessee chosen for the world's first nuclear breeder reactor power plant, and participated in drafting the Clean Air Act. He was narrowly defeated twice in efforts to become the Senate Minority Leader (Annis, 1995; Cannon, 1988; Eisenhower, 1987; Howard H. Baker Jr., 1925-, 2008; Kirschten, 1987, 1988; Levy, 1996; Nelson, 1989; Reagan, 1990, 2007).

Baker won re-election to the Senate in 1972, and again in 1978. He was elected Senate Minority Leader in 1977 and became the majority leader in 1980 – an office he held until he retired from the Senate in 1985. Baker briefly entered the presidential primary contest in 1980, but dropped out after losing to George H. Bush in Iowa and Ronald Reagan in New Hampshire. His leadership role in the Senate had not allowed him to put the necessary time and energy into those early states or to effectively campaign on a national scale. In his position as majority leader, he is credited for guiding much of the Reagan agenda through the Congress during the president's first term. During his time in the Senate he became known as the *great conciliator* because of his ability to bring both Republicans and Democrats together to pass important legislation. It is said that a reporter once told a Democrat senator that a plurality of the senators from his party would secretly vote for Howard Baker if he chose to run for president. The senator responded to the reporter telling him he was wrong; Baker would win a majority. Baker retired from the Senate in January, 1985 in order to spend more time with his ailing wife and to consider a possible run for the presidency in 1988. Senator Baker left

Washington highly regarded by both Republicans and Democrats in the Congress, and respected by the media (Annis, 1995; Cannon, 1988; Cohen, 2002: Eisenhower, 1987; Howard H. Baker Jr., 1925-, 2008; Kirschten, 1987, 1988; Levy, 1996; Nelson, 1989; Reagan, 1990, 2007).

When Baker returned to Washington as President Reagan's White House chief of staff he did so with years of experience in the national political arena. He had learned to cultivate relationships and had the ability to engender the trust and respect of political allies and adversaries alike. His diplomatic style and skill at consensus building had often allowed him to bring opposing sides together creating an environment where compromise could be reached. He knew how Washington worked and how to work Washington. These *insider* qualifications would prove to be invaluable as he set out to repair the strained relations which existed between the White House and Congress and the media (Annis, 1995; Cannon, 1988; Cohen, 2002; Cohen and Krause, 2000; Eisenhower, 1987; Henderson, 1988; Hess, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Kirschten, 1987, 1988; Levy, 1996; Nelson, 1989; Pfiffner, 1996; Reagan, 1990, 2007).

Howard Baker as White House COS

Most presidential scholars place Howard Baker among the most competent and effective White House chiefs of staff to have served the presidency. He is credited for establishing a more positive working relationships with the Congress, the cabinet, and media – relationships which were strained largely as a result of the abrasive personal style of the previous COS, Donald Regan. Baker did much to restore the credibility of the Reagan presidency, and to repair the damage caused by the Iran-Contra scandal. He

also played a major role in the negotiations and ratification process for the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) which was signed by President Reagan on December 8, 1987 and ratified by the senate on May 27, 1988. President Reagan wrote of his chief of staff in his autobiography "Howard Baker went on to become an outstanding chief of staff, a perfect man for the job – smart, fair, personable, savvy about Washington, a decent man" (Reagan, 1990, 540). We will now consider how Howard Baker approached the various key functions in the role of White House chief of staff as established in chapter four.

MANAGER/ADMINISTATOR

Staff Selection

A key function of the COS is to identify and attract the best possible talent to serve in the WHO. Coming in with a new presidency, the COS normally has considerable input into White House staff selection from top to bottom. Baker, joining the administration half-way through the president's second term inherited a staff that had been assembled by his predecessors. However, one of the pre-conditions in accepting the COS position was that Baker would be allowed to replace the WHO senior staff with skilled professionals of his choice. It would be very difficult, if not impossible, for a COS coming in mid-way through an administration to replace the entire staff (Rabkin, 1993; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001). Baker says of that process:

> I brought in essentially all of the senior staff. In doing that, I let go some very, very good people. One of the pleasures in my life, in looking back on it, is those that I let go, as far as I know, bear no hostility toward me for

> doing it. They seem to recognize that at that moment a new chief of staff needed to have his own people, and I did that. I think it was absolutely essential in my case…
>
> The one thing you can't do is overlay and double that staff. If anything, you need to reduce the size of that size, the West Wing staff, and make sure that it's responsive and it has a clear understanding of what its responsibilities are, to whom it reports and that you can have a coherent meeting at eight o'clock in the morning and get some idea of what the staff is doing and what issues are that have to be presented to the president and what the danger signals are that we have not yet recognized. You can't do that with a big group (Sullivan, 2004, 58).

Thomas Griscom, one of the first persons Baker tapped to bring with him, commented: "While you serve at the pleasure of the president, a chief of staff (for Reagan) has a lot of autonomy. Therefore Senator Baker needed people that he knew, who knew how he worked, and that he trusted" (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 14, 2008).

Martin Anderson (1988) states that Howard Baker "was a political heavyweight in Washington." Baker hit the ground running bringing with him associates who were experienced Washington insiders. "The line-up may be new, but the players are not. In taking over as White House chief of staff, Howard H. Baker Jr. recruited a team of top staffers familiar with his ways as well as with President Reagan's. None is a newcomer to the Washington political scene" (Kitschten, 1987, 1333). Baker's new team consisted of people he knew and in whom he had confidence.

Thomas Griscom reluctantly accepted the position of assistant to the president for communications and planning, leaving his post as president of a successful advertising and public affairs company. Griscom says his long standing relationship with Senator Baker was the factor that most influenced his decision to join the new White House team. He describes their initial meetings.

> The first conversation was to get together with a small group of people who worked with Senator Baker over the years and put a series of questions on the table. The questions addressed points that needed to be covered, such as lines of authority. Ability to hire and fire staff, the health of the President since he had been out of public view for a number of weeks. Most important was to know exactly what the President expected, wanted and how Senator Baker fit into those plans. We did a quick political assessment because we would be coming into a White House at a low point in terms of public opinion and relations with Congress (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 14, 2008).

Griscom had been one of Howard Bakers closest aides, having served as his press secretary during Baker's tenure in the Senate. J. Lee Annis (1995) describes Griscom as Howard Baker's "alter ego" and a man with a "rare understanding of the media."

Kenneth Duberstein was offered and accepted the position as Baker's deputy chief of staff. Duberstein was a Capitol Hill veteran, and was familiar with the Reagan presidency. He had experience in the White House legislative affairs office during the first three years of the Reagan administration, and served as director of the congressional liaison operation during 1982 and 1983. In 1983 he left the White House to become vice-

president of Timmons and Co., a private Washington based consulting and lobbying firm. President Reagan wrote in his diary: "This A. M. we agreed on Ken Duberstein to be Howard's deputy. It's great having him back on board" (Reagan, 2007, 482). Duberstein brought back to the White House much needed Washington *insider* experience and a proven ability to work with Congress (Annis, 1995; Hess, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Kitschen, 1987; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Levy, 1996; Reagan, 2007).

Arthur Culvahouse agreed to come onboard as counsel to the president. Culvahouse had been Baker's chief legislative assistant during Baker's years in the Senate. Baker had handpicked Culvahouse to represent and legally protect the president during the ongoing Iran-Contra controversy, and Culvahouse took his duties very seriously.

> You're the last and in some cases the only protector of the president's constitutional privileges. Almost everyone else is willing to give those away in part inch by inch and bit by bit in order to win the issue of the day, to achieve compromise on today's thorny issue. The council tries to guard against any erosion of presidential authority (Kumar and Sullivan, 2003, 76).

Culvahouse graduated from the University of Tennessee in 1970, and the New York University Law School in 1973. He had worked for Senator Baker while the senator was the ranking Republican on the Senate committee investigating the Watergate scandal, which provided him with valuable insight in representing President Reagan during the Iran-Contra congressional investigation, and in negotiating with the Tower Commission. He advised the president to cooperate with investigations, while at the same time sought

to limit their reach (Annis, 1995; Kirschten, 1987; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Levy, 1996; Reagan, 2007).

Dan Crippen, who left a position at Merrill Lynch as a budget specialist to come to the White House had previously served Howard Baker as his economic policy advisor while Baker was in the Senate. Crippen had a Ph.D. in economics and Baker called on Crippen to help him with economic policy (Annis, 1995; Kirschten, 1987).

> Howard Baker acknowledged that at first he did not understand many of the technical terms contained in reports he was receiving from OMB. He sought help from Dan Crippen… "You have to come down here and… be my interpreter," Baker implored. "You've got to tell me what this means." With Crippen's help, he reached a necessary threshold of understanding and thereafter was able to deal with OMB without difficulty (Kumar and Sullivan, 2003, 78).

The new assistant to the president for domestic affairs was T. Kenneth Cribb. He became the president's senior advisor on all domestic matters. Cribb earned his law degree from the University of Virginia Law School, and had previously worked for Edwin Meese at the Justice Department. He was highly regarded by the president's conservative supporters, and was considered an excellent choice by Baker to demonstrate he intended to support and maintain President Reagan's ideological agenda (Annis, 1995; Kirschten, 1987; Reagn, 2007).

Baker recruited Rhett Dawson to be the new assistant to the president for operations, responsible for White House administration and management. Dawson had

previous Washington experience. In 1985 he was appointed director for a presidential commission – the Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management. Dawson also served as staff director for the President's Special Review Board (the Tower Commission) investigating the Iran-Contra affair, and as the staff director and chief counsel for the Senate Armed Services Committee (Kirschten, 1987; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003). One of the responsibilities of the office was to verify for accuracy and policy consistency any speeches the president was about to deliver.

> So, if the president was going to make a speech, … you wanted to fact-check it. You wanted to make sure it didn't take you in a new course on policy without thinking about that and identifying it. You wanted to make sure it was accurate before the president uttered it because the person who hands the president the speech actually has to know its right and then you have to vouch for it (Kumar and Sullivan, 2003, 146-146).

Patrick Butler, another Baker protégé, was tapped to be an editorial consultant. He began his Washington career in 1969 working for the Appalachian Regional Commission. A University of Tennessee graduate and ex-Chattanooga newspaper reporter he served as Senator Baker's special assistant while Baker was the Senate Majority Leader. During 1978-1980 Butler was a speech writer for President Gerald Ford, and had worked in Baker's 1980 short-lived presidential campaign (Annis, 1995; Busby, 1999; Cannon, 1988; Kitschen, 1987; Sullivan, 2004).

Identifying and recruiting highly qualified and talented persons to fill senior posts in the WHO was Baker's initial goal. Howard Baker replaced key senior staff positions

with people he knew and with whom he could work effectively. He brought with him people who understood and had working experience in the political process at the national level. Like Baker they were Washington *insiders,* which is critically important to any administration if it wants to advance its agenda in a complex and often hostile environment (Annis, 1995; Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Hess, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Kirschten, 1987; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1999; Rabkin, 1993; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

White House Managerial and Operational Structure

Immediately upon taking his post Baker restructured the WHO to a more simple and open structure similar to that utilized during the Reagan administration's first term. He established a more collegial atmosphere within the White House where team work was emphasized. He understood Reagan's lack of interest in detail, but insisted on keeping him in the loop.

> You have to understand the President's style and habits. Where I believe things went wrong was the Regan statement to let the President be himself. This was a man who as an actor, had a director and a producer, people who offered direction, focus. When those are removed, the President is placed in a strange, new world. We built a staff that understood the President's style and the style of the chief of staff (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 14, 2008).

Instead of following Donald Regan's "*let Reagan be Reagan"* philosophy, Baker's position was "*give Reagan reality*." He worked to keep the president engaged and

informed, insisting issues be fully staffed out so as to give Reagan a fuller understanding of the issues and viable policy options (Annis, 1995; Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Hess, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

David Cohen's (2002) study of White House chiefs of staff places Baker's administrative effectiveness among the highest of the chiefs of staff considered. One Reagan White House official stated: "the Baker White House was remarkably well-balanced and talented. With only a few exceptions, the senior staff worked together to provide the best advice and then decision-making execution…" (Cohen, 2002, 475). In a speech delivered at the Republican National Committee Luncheon on March 9, 1987, Baker laid out his organizational changes and the direction President Reagan's agenda would take over the remaining 22 months of the administration. The White House planned to emphasis an "active and engaged president with a central core of conviction, who is on the job" (Baker, Remarks, March 9, 1987; Baker, Memos, March 2, 1987). Tom Griscom remembers that in the initial WHO meetings Baker clearly presented the new organization structure and details were hammered out. "Duties and responsibilities are sorted out; reporting lines are known" (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 14, 2008).

Baker's organizational restructuring of the WHO, and strong supporting cast, allowed him to concentrate on major policy issues and leave the day to day operations to others. [That arrangement leaves Baker, who allowed that "my highest and best use would not be to take care of administrative detail," free to spend most of his time in direct

consultation with the president and other key advisers, including national security affairs assistant Frank C. Carlucci III] (Kitschten, 1987, 1335).

Comprehensive Control of the WHO

Howard Baker accepted President Reagan's offer to be his chief of staff on Friday, February 27, 1987, and planned to assume his new position on Monday, March 2. However, Donald Regan's abrupt resignation on Friday evening forced Baker into immediate action to control the building chaos within the WHO. Baker recalls: "About two hours later, I got a call from Dennis Thomas who was deputy to Don Regan. He said, "You can't wait until Monday… Nobody's in charge and nobody is doing anything. Nobody knows what to do. And you can't wait until Monday. You have to come down now" (Sullivan, 2004, 49). Baker and a few of his close associates went into action.

> We went down to the White House and set in motion a temporary organization. It was both a daunting experience and a frightening experience in a way to come into the White House cold and have virtually no staff but, more important, not even to have an organizational chart, not to have an agenda, not to have a schedule for the president for the next week. So, when we got there our first job was to figure out what happens next… my real experience as chief of staff did not begin for a few days after that when we finally figured out what goes on at the White House, who does what, who was going to stay, who was going to be replaced, the allocation of responsibilities and duties… (Sullivan, 2004, 49).

Baker's management style allowed senior staff flexibility to do their jobs without feeling they were consistently under a microscope, which had been the case in the Donald Reagan WHO. However, one of Baker's cardinal rules was there were to be no surprises; the decision-making process was to be thoroughly staffed out with all options and possible problems identified in advance of any major discussion or presentation – especially where the president was involved. When asked how Baker maintained operational control of the WHO Tom Griscom responded.

> Through daily staff meetings with key personnel. Through managing the paper flow, through conversations with the First Lady and other key Reaganites (i.e., Ed Meese), and through conversations with key friends outside of the White House. His management style is somewhat hands-off similar to President Reagan. He will select issues that are important and manage those directly. He selects staff, gives them latitude to operate with an understanding to not surprise him with the unknown (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 14, 2008).

John Tuck, an aide to Baker while he was in the Senate, was already working at the White House when Baker arrived as COS, and was selected to become Baker's executive assistant. Tuck describes Baker's taking control of the WHO upon assuming the COS position.

> He picked his own team, as you well know, except for Marlin [Fitzwater] who stayed, who was there before. Everybody else changed over and it was just understood that when Senator Baker became chief of staff that it

> was going to be a Baker team… [This permitted] a strong chief of staff system where the decisions and the decision making process and the people and the access to the President of papers and people was controlled by one person (Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001, 470).

Howard Baker felt in order to be an effective COS, and to be as much help, protection, and support to President Reagan as he possibly could would require he have a close and trusted relationship with the president. He needed to have full knowledge of everything associated with the president and his presidency – to basically become the president's alter ego. Baker explained his philosophy: "The function of the chief of staff is to make sure that you know not only what the president may think but what the president has said" (Sullivan, 2004, 54). Another key role for the COS is to control the policy development process in order to ensure it is orderly and productive. Tom Griscom describes how Baker managed this critical aspect of his job.

> [He] put in place check points to assess the decision process and vetting of decisions. The staff secretary function served as a traffic cop to make sure that there was full review, including by the chief of staff, before a recommendation went in to the Oval Office. This goes back to Senator Baker's rule of no surprises (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 14, 2008).

To ensure the WHO was capable of providing the president with the best possible information and advice, Baker and much of his senior staff acted as generalists

maintaining a broad understanding of the issues while other staff served as specialists giving expert consideration to the intricate workings of a particular policy or issue. Griscom explains the system.

> You need both. There are those of us who can be experts on any topic for 30 seconds and that is needed. These people tend to be broader, more strategic thinkers. Those who really work the details make sure that the pieces fit, the politics are correct, and an expected outcome can be met (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 14, 2008).

There is a general consensus among presidential scholars that Howard Baker maintained control of White House operations in an exemplarily manner. He was able to instill order, discipline, and structure within the WHO while instituting a collegial working atmosphere. Baker was a strong COS, but not abusive or overbearing in his leadership and management style. His direction kept the WHO focused and productive during the turbulent period of the Iran-Contra investigations. Baker established a cordial and professional relationship with President Reagan, which earned him the respect and trust of the president which is vital if the COS is to be effective (Anderson, 1988; Annis, 1995; Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Cohen and Krause, 2000; Eisenhower, 1987; Hess, 2002; Pfiffner, 1994, 1996, 1999; Robertson, 1997; Reagan, 1990, 2007).

The President's Schedule

The chief of staff is responsible for overseeing the president's schedule; organizing and maintaining the short and long range rooster for all of the president's meetings, appearances, events, and speeches, as well as making sure the complex

schedules fit the president's personal work habits and leaves personal time for him to rest and recharge (Baker, Memos – Schedules, March 2, 1987; Baker, Schedules, March 9, 1987; Baker, Schedules, May 11, 1987; Reagan, Schedules, May 11, 1987; Reagan, Schedules, December 17, 1987). Baker understood the importance of developing and executing an active calendar for the president and was greatly disturbed when on his first day as COS he could not find a schedule for the president. "The president cannot sit there and not have a schedule. So my first instruction to this small group that I had was build me a schedule for the next week for the president. They did that" (Sullivan, 2004, 49-50). During the development phase of the schedule, Baker would make recommendations to the president concerning possible events – which might be advantageous to accept and which it might be best to decline.

Baker began each morning with an operations meeting which involved the senior staff at 8 o'clock. The meetings were most often conducted in the Roosevelt Room. As part of that meeting, the president's schedule for the day was presented by Fred Ryan, a Baker aide, and each item thoroughly discussed. Baker would also prepare notes to discuss with the president as they might pertain to the various items on the president's schedule. These notes were often revised during this initial morning meeting (Baker, Schedules, March 2, 1987, May 11, 1987, June 28, 1988; Baker, Notes, March 2, 1987, May 11, 1987, June 20, 1987). Baker's daily schedule for the president was categorized by time, event, and location. The president's official day usually started at 9 o'clock at which time he and Baker would meet and discuss the day.

> He briefs the president on what has been discussed at the preceding meetings plus any other matters he wants to call to the Chief Executive's

> attention. In turn the president instructs the chief of staff what he wants to have done and what issues he wants to have emphasized. That meeting, in Howard Baker's words, is "really the focal point of the administration" (Kumar and Sullivan, 2003, 79).

Baker segmented the president's schedule into various time periods, depending on the amount of time required for each event. The president's day ended at different times, depending on the number of events scheduled. Baker usually scheduled a few minutes of *down-time* for the president during the late afternoon (Reagan, schedule, May 11, 1987, December 17, 1987). In the case of the summit meeting with the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, President Reagan's three day schedule was quite exact and detailed. In addition to making sure President Reagan was properly coached and prepared, Baker provided the president with possible talking points for the meetings (Reagan, Schedules, December 7-9, 1987).

The Gatekeeper

The president can quickly become overwhelmed by the volume of information and people flooding into him from all points within and without the government. If the president tries micro-managing his administration or be too intimately involved in every aspect of his government, the demand placed upon him may result in ineffectual leadership, and a lack of time and energy necessary to advance the administration's major policy and agenda initiatives. It is the responsibility of the COS to control access to the president in such a way as to prevent this flood from reaching the president. David Eisenhower (1987) says of Howard Baker "He runs the White House, coordinating its

daily operations, managing access to the President, the President's time and the flow of decisions from the White House to the executive departments." Instead of a flood, Baker sought to establish an orderly flow of information and people, so that issues were never presented to the president until they were fully staffed out and ready for President Reagan's attention. Therefore, Baker acted as the gatekeeper to the Oval Office; a filter to let in those who *needed* to meet with the president and to restrain others until the time the issue merited the president's attention (Hart, 2001; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1999; Robertson, 1997; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

Baker describes this gatekeeping role and how it functioned with President Reagan's cabinet secretaries.

> Well, the control, of course, was the gatekeeper function. You never say this out loud and you never publish it as policy but, except for the secretary of defense and the secretary of state, they all had to come through the chief of staff to set up their appointments, which was a major bruise on some egos. But, it was absolutely essential to do it that way. Once again, even in my time, when George Schultz was secretary of state and Cap Weinberger was secretary of defense, I used to sit in with them. It wasn't all together because I wanted to make sure I knew what was going to happen, but I might have to referee, I might have to separate them at some point.
>
> But the gatekeeper function extends to the cabinet level ranks as well and is not meant to be a diminution of their importance because they

> are singly and together extraordinarily important. But the president only has so much time, he can only do so many things at once and somebody needs to regulate that for him (Sullivan, 2004, 63-64).

One exception to Baker's control of access to the president was the National Security Council (NSC). He did not demand the NSC schedule its appointments with the president through the office of the chief of staff; however, he did insist on being kept in the loop and informed. He clarifies his position:

> I never asked the NSC to report through me. What I did was require that the NSC keep me involved. I never tried to intervene between the president and his national security advisor. If a chief of staff is to function as a chief of staff it's important, I think it's absolutely essential, that he or she be aware of what's going on in that first, the national security side as well as the domestic side (Sullivan, 2004, 61).

It is impossible for the COS to maintain absolute control over all access points to the president; therefore, it is important that the president and the COS have an agreement that no decision of any magnitude is made without the chief of staff's knowledge. "…the *Oh, by the way* phenomenon. Let me tell you, that is the biggest threat" (Sullivan, 2004, 54). Baker did a good job of guarding against these *end*-runs and keeping them to a minimum, however, this was a problem for his predecessor Donald Reagan. Baker was ever watchful and responded quickly when necessary. Tom Griscom talks about Donald Regan's difficulty concerning this problem.

> You will never shut off all of the access points. In the [Donald] Regan staff operation there were a number of times that staff went around Regan and slipped something directly into the President. That was a clear sign that clouds were forming on the horizon but they were missed for a number of months (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 14, 2008).

Baker emphasized the importance of the entire staff understanding and adhering to the concept that the COS was the ultimate authority with regard to the flow of information and people reaching the president.

> At nine o'clock in the morning, Kenny Duberstein and I would have a meeting with the president on domestic issues. At nine-thirty, Frank Carlucci and Colin Powell would come in and the four of us would remain. But it was vitally important, in my view, that the chief of staff know exactly what the president was faced with, what decisions he had made. So I think the point… was vitally important. That is the only real change I made because, after that, everybody understood that the chief of staff in my time was going to be the custodian of the president's papers and his person. I don't really characterize that as a gatekeeper but they weren't going in there unless I was along or Ken Duberstein was along so that we could know exactly what had happened and the president would never be caught in the crossfire (Sullivan, 2004, 54).

Relations with Congress, the Cabinet, the Media, and Concerned Interests

Howard Baker was able to translate his years of experience in the United States Senate and with Washington political dynamics into a well organized and effective White House operation. Baker's experience as an *insider* equipped him with the tools necessary to understand, communicate, and collaborate with the Congress, cabinet, media, and the various interest groups – components of governance the presidency coordinates with on a daily basis. This enabled him to present the president's positions and agenda in terms that were more readily acceptable than the confrontational approach his predecessor had taken. His natural ability as a conciliator and his skill at negotiating served the president well during the turbulent months of the Iran-Contra affair (Annis, 1995; Burke, 2000a; Hess, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Pfiffner, 1996; Robertson, 1997). David Eisenhower (1987) speaks to Baker's abilities while in the senate.

> Like Republican Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg of Michigan during the Truman era, Baker initially achieved statesmanship as a Republican leader in a Democratic Congress. But when, after Vandenberg's death, the Republicans finally elected a President as well as majorities in both houses of Congress, they devoted the bulk of Eisenhower's first two years to settling old scores among themselves and pursuing vendettas against New Dealers. Baker, unlike Republicans of that era, made a smooth transition from the "loyal opposition" to effective majority leadership in 1981.

Thomas Griscom points out that Baker's predecessor Donald Regan's coarse management style alienated relations between the White House and the other important components of government and the media. "Congress including the Republicans felt

neglected. Coming on the heels of the 1986 elections and the loss of the Senate to the Democrats, there was even more strain." Griscom says Baker soothed the hard feelings and began to mend the rift that existed.

> Don Regan was gruff and that is not a characteristic ever applied to Senator Baker… Senator Baker also benefitted from the relations he built on the Hill and some news organizations shifted their Capitol Hill reporters and correspondents to the White House due to those relationships (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 14, 2008).

The new COS set out immediately to re-establish a more positive and professional working relationship with Congress, and was met with a favorable response by many lawmakers. Senator Warren Rudman said of Baker: "[He] has a combination of intellect, substantive knowledge, compassion, humanity, humor and innate street smarts that I've never seen combined in anyone else" (Kitschten, 1987, 1337). Baker instituted a policy which required immediate attention to any inquiry from a member of Congress. Phone calls were promptly returned. "Phone calls to Howard get returned" explained House Republican Policy Committee chairman Richard Cheney. "Nobody uses him as the focal point for cloakroom gripes" (Annis, 1995, 200-201). As chief of staff he took the lead in maintaining White House interactions with Congress. He regularly invited members of the House and Senate to the White House for luncheons in order to keep them updated on administration policies. (Annis, 1995; Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Hess, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001). Baker gave personal attention to rebuilding congressional confidence in the White House.

His daily phone log for June 23, 1987 indicates that on that date alone he returned eleven phone calls to members of the Congress (Baker, schedule – phone log, June 23, 1987; Baker, schedule – phone log. July 29, 1987). Baker stayed in contact with political leaders at the state level as well as members of Congress in an effort to keep them informed and engaged in advancing the president's agenda (Baker, Correspondence – Paul Henry, March 25, 1987; Baker, Correspondence – Phil Gramm, April 2, 1987; Baker, Correspondence – Ernest Courtermarsh, September 16, 1987).

Baker's appointment as COS was met with approval by many within the media. His dealings with the media as a United State's Senator had demonstrated his credibility and earned him their respect. Newspapers representing every area of the country ran editorials heralding President Reagan's choice of his new chief of staff. Many of the papers were not particularly supportive of the Reagan administration, portraying Baker as spending his own political capital coming to the rescue of a damaged and failed administration. Papers such as the Baltimore Sun, the Chicago Tribune, the Portland Oregonian, the Houston Chronicle, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Orlando Sentinel, the Miami Herald, and The San Diego Union while reserving final judgment on the Reagan presidency still overwhelming supported Howard Baker in his new position as COS (Baker, Media – Baltimore Sun, May 5, 1987; Baker, Media – Chicago Tribune, March 4, 1987; Baker, Media – Portland Oregonian, March 2, 1987; Baker, Media – Houston Chronicle, March 8, 1987; Baker, Media – Cleveland Plain Dealer, February, 28, 1987; Baker, Media – Orlando Sentinel, February, 28, 1987; Baker, Media – Miami Herald, March 4, 1987; Baker, Media – The San Diego Union, February 28, 1987). Marianne Means of the Hearst Newspapers wrote Baker supporting his appointment saying

"Congratulations on your appointment. The President could not possibly have picked a better man" (Baker, Correspondence – Marianne Means, March 2, 1987). William Gorog, President of the Magazine Publishers Association, expresses confidence and approval in Baker's selection.

> I am ecstatic about the fact that you have accepted the responsibility for the Chief of Staff assignment. I had almost given up hope of any progress for Republicans in the next two years, but your appointment puts a completely different complexion on the situation. I now feel that we can restore the agenda and move forward for the balance of this Presidency.
>
> Your appointment met with universal approval in our industry and I want you to know that I will personally make myself available to assist you in any way possible (Baker, Correspondence – William Gorog, March 3, 1987).

Immediately upon assuming the role of COS Baker made himself available to the news media. He regularly accepted invitations to appear on television talk shows such as Meet *the Press* and *Face the Nation* in order to present the administration's positions on various issues and policies (Baker, Media – television requests, May 4, 1987). Concerned interests was another area Baker spent considerable time shoring up support for the president's agenda. As much as his busy schedule would permit he made himself available to speak to many of these groups, such as the *American Farm Bureau Federation* (Baker, Correspondence – Farm Bureau, January 11, 1988). Baker agreed to address the *Citizens for America* – a political special interest group which supported

much of the Reagan agenda. Gerald Carmen, chairman of the group, wrote Baker praising him and thanking him for his efforts.

> It's great to see you heading the President's White House team. If everyone's reaction was so positive at just the mention of your name, wait until they see you at work!
>
> The President and the country are well served by your unselfish sense of patriotism. We all need you.
>
> Jack Hume tells me that you have agreed to open our morning briefing prior to the Citizens For America's Founders Event at the White House on April 22, 1987. Wonderful (Baker, Correspondence – Citizens for America, March 5, 1987)!

Baker placed an emphasis on the White House maintaining a strong relationship with the Republican Party's organization both at the national and state and local levels to further strengthen Reagan's presidency. The *Republican Club of Massachusetts* voicing their support for Baker and the president and from the *Cook County Republicans* thanking him for agreeing to speak at their Lincoln Day Dinner are examples of his efforts (Baker, Correspondence – Massachusetts, March, 2, 1987; Baker, Correspondence – Cook County, January 23, 1988). Lastly, Baker did not forget to keep in close contact with one of the president's key influential constituencies – Nancy Reagan, the president's wife. Unlike Donald Regan who argued with and alienated Mrs. Reagan (Anderson, 1988; Annis, 1995: Burke, 2000a) Baker regularly kept her updated as to the president's travel schedule and speaking engagements (Baker, Schedules – Mrs. Reagan, March 25, 1987).

ADVISER

Champion of the President's Agenda

The White House chief of staff, in order to effectively serve the president, must be able to support and advance the president's agenda – he must take the president's positions and policies as his own. This concept might have presented a concern for Howard Baker in that he is considered to be a practical, consensus-building moderate within the Republican Party, while Ronald Reagan embraced a more conservative ideology. If there was any conflict between the president's positions and his own, they were never expressed, and Baker's loyalty to the president and the advancement of his agenda were beyond any question. Often the COS is required to function as a negotiator for the administration. In these cases it is imperative that actors involved understand and have confidence that the COS speaks for the president. John Tuck says of Howard Baker in this regard that he: "became in fact the congressional affairs guy as well as the chief of staff because members trusted him and knew what he said would be the policy of the administration" (Kumar and Sullivan, 2003, 132). There was never any question publicly or privately that Baker supported and advanced President Reagan's agenda (Anderson, 1988; Annis, 1995; Cohen, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

Baker preformed this role flawlessly when considering the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) between the United States and the Soviet Union, that was signed in December 1987 and ratified by the senate in May of 1988. Baker championed

the president's cause and used his considerable negotiating skills throughout the ratification process to see it to fruition.

> Baker's strengths as a "staff man" were well demonstrated in the days preceding the Moscow summit. Operating mostly behind the scenes and in company with Senate leaders from both sides of the aisle, the helped head off attempts to derail ratification of the INF treaty.
>
> As the Senate INF deliberations came down to the wire, he spent many hours working the phones or, on Capitol Hill, conferring with Majority Leader Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., and Minority Leader Robert Dole, R-Kan.
>
> Along with White House counsel Arthur B. Culvahouse Jr., Baker was at the Capitol until 11 P. M. on May 25, hammering out acceptable language for a Senate-attached condition to the treaty that bars future reinterpretation of the pact without Senate approval. After all of the posturing and suspense had ended, the Senate voted, 93-5, on May 27 to approve Reagan's arms pact with the Soviets.
>
> "When I got on that plane with the treaty in hand," Baker said, "the first thing I felt was a flooding sense of relief" (Kirschten, 1988, 1560-1561).

During the spring of 1987, the Congress was attempting to use the debate on the federal budget to force President Reagan into a position where he would have to accept some form of tax increase. They insisted it was necessary for the president to become

personally engaged in the process. Baker responded by holding to the president's position; making the following points.

1) It may be possible to imagine a compromise that, in the abstract, is appealing to many of the players, including the President.
2) However, the Congress is engaged in its usual exercise of producing a budget resolution that is not signed by the President – is not enforceable by law.
3) Every time the President has engaged in negotiations in the past, the result, the agreement, has not come to pass.
4) The current clamor from Congress for the President to become "engaged" is a thin disguise for saying that the President has to embrace taxes from the start. The President has a position – he submitted a budget as required by law.
5) It is conceivable that, in your mind's eye, this negotiated solution could include some revenues (there are significant revenues in the President's budget), but if Congress wants new or expanded taxes, let the Congress embrace them.
6) This three-tiered budget process, in effect since 1974, is not producing a result. And it does not have a mechanism to enforce a result (reconciliation is only a partial answer) – we need to invent one.
7) We are not going to do something just for the sake of doing it. If we do something, we're going to do something significant (Baker, Memos – Budget, May 1, 1987).

Thomas Griscom describes the Reagan administration's model which Howard Baker faithfully carried out.

> Someone may be charged with representing the President and his point of view, but only the President is able to make that definitive statement. For President Reagan, he had a set of convictions and the details he left to staff to hammer out (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 14, 2008).

Advising the President

The chief of staff usually becomes one of the president's closest advisers because of the trust and confidence which is developed between the two, and because of the sheer amount of time they spend together. On a typical day, Howard Baker typically spent three to four hours with President Reagan (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 14, 2008). Baker took his role as an *honest broker* seriously making sure the president heard all relative voices on an issue. He managed to successfully walk the fine line between giving the president his honest advice and becoming a policy advocate on issues where he had a strong opinion (Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

> Baker has maintained coordination between the White House staff and the Cabinet departments, but he has not attempted to control events. Unlike Don Regan, he tries to present the President with options without forcing

> his own opinion on him; he has shown a willingness to "let it happen…" (Eisenhower, 1987, 38).

Thomas Griscom explains Baker's approach to advising the president.

> He would not shut out other points of view, knowing that if someone wanted to persist, they would try to find a backdoor into the office. Senator Baker from his years in Congress understood the way to build consensus for making decisions (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 14, 2008).

In accordance with Baker's *no surprises* policy,

he sought to ensure all issues were fully developed and staffed out and details agreed upon before they reached the president's desk. He describes the difficulty in maintaining this approach.

> Well, that's exactly the level of detail where it occurs, in the staffing of the memo that's going to the President, the decision memo with the options describing – that's where all the fights occur – describing what the background is, describing the discussion, describing the options… We tried not to let that spill up to the President but sometimes the memos were so controversial… we just couldn't forge consensus about what this paper would look like (Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001, 476).

Howard Baker believes that just being a good listener goes a long way in preparing the COS to be an honest broker of ideas and options. "There wasn't a day went by when in a senior staff meeting somebody didn't point out something that I didn't know about and

was not sensitive to. It was an early warning system that worked very well" (Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001, 480). In an effort to provide the president with the best possible advice Baker relied on talent not only within the White House and the broader government agencies but he sought out sources from outside the normal government pools.

> When I was chief of staff and on several occasions, I brought in people who were totally out of the government. Some had experience in government and some did not. We'd run them through a system and pick up a lot of new perspective not infrequently.
>
> By the way, in that category, I might say that when we were preparing Reagan for the Moscow summit, we had all the usual presentations from within the administration, from state, from defense, from the Central Intelligence Agency, from the National Security Council, and we had a team of four others who were from the university setting. At the end, I said "Mr. President, how would you feel if I were to ask former President Nixon to come down and brief you on arms control?" He thought for a minute and said, "I think that's a good idea." Some of you will recall that after Nixon left – one of the amazing things about Nixon to me is that his ego survived to the point where he could remain expert on many matters, particularly foreign policy and arms control. I invited him down, and he briefed President Reagan for two hours and twenty minutes without a note. That was the best presentation on that subject I ever heard. But the country is populated by experts who are outside of and largely unknown to

> White House apparatus. I don't know any way to formalize that but… I think it's terribly important that chiefs of staff, the whole structure of government, legislature and executive, for that matter, keep an eye on the fact that they are not the exclusive possessors of all this. There are lots of resources out there that would be eager to help (Sullivan, 2004, 66-67).

President Reagan relied heavily on Howard Baker's advice (Reagan, 1990) and usually followed the WHO's recommendations. However, there were occasions when the president chose not to act in accordance with Baker's advice, and Baker respected and supported the president's position. President Reagan writes in his diary "Howard and Ken are opposed to my talking about the Persian Gulf on Saturday. I'm still not convinced" (Reagan, 2007, 508). After the White House was forced to withdraw the nomination of Robert Bork for the Supreme Court, Baker recommended nominating Anthony Kennedy, but others successfully persuaded the president to nominate Douglas Ginsburg whose name later had to be withdrawn after it was disclosed Ginsburg had smoked marijuana. "The president would have been spared the embarrassment had he accepted Baker's recommendation and named Anthony M. Kennedy, who was subsequently nominated and easily confirmed" (Cannon, 1987).

President Reagan's decision to veto a 1987 highways appropriation bill is another example of Baker's willingness to support the president's decisions even when he had advised against them. Baker advised Reagan not to veto the bill because there were not enough votes in Congress to sustain the veto. President Reagan decided to veto the bill and then to launch an effort on Capitol Hill to sustain his veto. Baker worked tirelessly in

an attempt to garner the necessary votes – even to the point of agreeing to let the president travel to the Hill to talk with senators. In the end, Baker's reading of the mood of Congress was correct and the veto was overridden (Annis, 1995; Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Pfiffner,1996, 1999; Reagan 1990; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

Howard Baker's calm consensus building approach to advising the president served Reagan well during the chaotic period surrounding Baker's tenure as COS. Baker played the role of *honest broker* well ensuring the president had fully staffed out advice and options with which to make important decisions. He was able to give the president his best opinion on matters without becoming a policy advocate. He did not attempt to exclude voices that differed from his point of view. Finally, Baker fully supported the president's decisions even when he personally had advised against them.

GUARDIAN

Protect the President Interests

The White House chief of staff becomes, of necessity, one of the president's closest advisers and confidants. He learns the president's style, strengths, and weaknesses and constantly guards against the president being placed in an environment where potential political adversaries might be able to *corner* him or cast him in an embarrassing or negative light – especially where the media is involved (Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001). David B. Cohen in his 2002 study ranks Howard Baker as one of the

two most effective chiefs of staff in regard to performing the role of guardian of the president's interests. Thomas Griscom explains how the guardian role was managed in the Baker White House.

> To address those situations, you try to manage contacts through appointments and access at public events. Staff serves as a conduit to field initial inquiries and either answer or prepare a briefing paper if the President needs to respond… The handling of Iran-Contra was a strategy that was designed to keep the issue out of the White House and away from the President. Once it was determined that the President was not aware of the diversion of funds, then the strategy was to keep the hearings focused on the Hill (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 22, 2008).

Baker had each component of an event researched as to its desirability, and acceptability; then a senior White House staffer would sign off on that component. The events leading up to and surrounding the INF summit meeting were handled with exactly this approach (Baker, Memos – Events, November 5, 1987).

Howard Baker realized that the COS needed to protect the president from his friends as well as his adversaries. Often the president's friends will attempt to use their close relationship to gain excessive access to the president or to have the president approve some request before it has been fully staffed-out. Baker diplomatically, but forcefully, restricted access to the president in order to protect the president's limited time and to guard against the *Oh by the way* phenomenon which Baker saw as potentially very damaging to any presidency (Annis, 1995; Cohen, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003;

Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001). Thomas Griscom discusses one aspect of this problem.

> Friends can get you in more trouble than someone who is not. These are relationships that go back years; people who believe through a campaign contribution or prior business/professional connection [they should] have access. The typical call is one that says I can call the President or First Lady directly as a veiled threat that if you do not do it, I can go straight to the top – some can. There are bankshots from outside the White House from Cabinet officers and others who often have closer ties to the President and are able to slide requests around the White House staff. There is no way to "control" friend's access – that is up to the President. Politicians in general have a tough time saying no; that is the role of staff. A relationship has to be built to know when the President, in this case, really wants something done and when he is looking for staff to save him from the request (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 22, 2008).

The COS needs to build a relationship with the president which will allow him to speak frankly, and to protect the president from himself when necessary as was the case with H. R. Haldeman, Richard Nixon's chief of staff (Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001). President Reagan's management style was a hands off approach. He established the direction he wanted a policy to take and then relied on staff to work out the details. Donald Regan, Baker's predecessor, had

allowed and even encouraged Reagan's delegating style to the point that President Reagan had become isolated and disengaged from his administration which facilitated the Iran-Contra affair. Baker, while fully understanding his staff position, worked to mitigate the problems of President Reagan's management style by keeping the president informed and engaged in policy development and implementation (Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001). Baker's efforts to protect the president from himself did not always meet with success. Thomas Griscom provides insight.

> Keep in mind that the President was elected and the staff was not. Staff serves at the pleasure of the President. You give the President your best advice and counsel but in the end, he decides. For example, Reagan knew that it was not in his best interest to take shouted questions from the media, he would state he would not do so, and then he would do it. When such a session would end, he would look, with that twinkle in his eyes, and say that he did not want to be rude (Thomas Griscom, personal communication, February, 22, 2008).

Playing the Heavy

The chief of staff is expected to handle disciplinary issues within the White House staff and often is the person who is responsible for saying *no* to requests coming to the president. The COS is the deliverer of bad news, which allows the president to remain *presidential* and above the fray. Baker's warm and collegial approach as COS did not

prevent him from playing the *heavy* when necessary, as with his firing of the existing White House senior staff when he assumed the chief of staff position and replacing them with handpicked personnel (Annis, 1995; Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Pfiffner, 1994, 1996, 1999; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001). Baker says when firings are necessary they should be done as quickly and completely as possible. "If you cut the dog's tail off, cut it all off at once" (Kumar and Sullivan, 2003, 116).

President Reagan writes in his daily diary instances of Howard Baker playing the role of the heavy. "We have a problem with George Alan – Chief of our Physical Fitness Commission. He is also Chairman of a Foundation and there is a conflict. Howard is going to tell him to choose 1 or the other" (Reagan, 2007, 512). "… Howard said Jim Miller had gone to the hill to propose some tax increase we might go for. Howard had him in and told him from now on Jim Baker would deal with Congress on budget affairs" (Reagan, 2007, 535). "Howard B. is going to talk to Gary Bauer – word has it he's been leaking to the press" (Reagan, 2007, 546).

Conclusion

Howard Baker came to the White House during a period of unprecedented turmoil and confusion in the Reagan Presidency. The Iran-Contra affair had rocked the administration to its foundation and fears of the president's resignation or impeachment seemed justified. The aftermath of the scandal and the abrupt resignation of Donald Regan as COS had left the WHO demoralized and directionless. Baker and his hand-picked team entered the White House and began a concentrated and skilled effort to

implement changes which were aimed at restoring the administration's credibility and to demonstrate a willingness to correct problem areas and to strike a more conciliatory tone with the Congress, media, and other groups. In the relatively short time – 17 months – that Howard Baker was White House chief of staff, the administration's overall position was vastly improved. It had successfully weathered the Iran-Contra affair and the ensuing investigations, and the president's approval ratings were rising (see Table A-2). The working relationship between the White House and Congress was much improved; and the president's agenda was back on track, as demonstrated by the ratification of the INF treaty. Looking at the key components in the role of White House chief of staff as identified in chapter four and comparing them with Howard Baker's tenure we find that in these critical areas Baker developed and implemented policies and procedures to restructure WHO operations which were effective and organizationally and managerially sound.

CHAPTER 6.

CONCLUSIONS

> *"Howard is generally pleased. He had very few goals when he came in here. One was to help the President maintain calm, stability, and order during the Iran-Contra investigation. The others were to get a budget agreement and to have a successful summit. I'd guess that he ought to be satisfied."*
>
> -- A Baker lieutenant (Kirschten, 1988, 1561).

The presidency will never be the same. Time and providence have forever altered the office. From the time of its inception and for the next 150 years the presidency consisted of the man elected and a small cadre of support staff and advisors. The president relied heavily on his cabinet for advice and direction, and because the national government was small there was little need for a powerful chief executive. The Great Depression, World War II, America's ascendency, and the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt converged to provide an atmosphere which enabled the modern presidency to be born. The Brownlow committee report which Congress passed, to a large extent, in 1939 restructured the presidency, creating the Executive Office of the President (EOP), which would become the genesis of a presidency which would quickly increase in size, influence, and power (Burke, 2000a; Cohen and Krause, 2000; Dickinson, 2005; Krause and Cohen, 2000; Marcy, 1945; Pika and Maltese, 2004; Pfiffner, 1994; Ragsdale and Theis, 1997).

The federal bureaucracy has grown from a few thousand to nearly three million employees today (Patterson, 2008); the EOP from a little more than two hundred under FDR to more than 1, 600 during the Clinton administration; and the WHO, which directly supports the president, increased from fewer than 50 under FDR to more than 450 during the Clinton presidency (see Table A-5). As the size, influence, and power of the presidency grew, so did the demands and expectations placed upon the president. In addition modern presidents have centralized and consolidated most policy development and decision-making processes within the WHO and away from the executive departments and agencies which further increases the need for a large and talented White House staff. The president simply can no longer effectively organize and manage the office alone (Burke, 2000a, 2006; Cornin, 1975; Greenstein, 1982; Hart, 1987a; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Patterson, 1988; Pfiffner, 1999; Sander, 1989; Smith, 1988).

The modern presidency has emerged as the dominant force in American government and politics; and the president, as its head, is expected to manage not only the executive branch but the nation flawlessly. To have any hope of effective leadership the president must choose an organizational approach which will allow him advance his agenda while not overwhelming him in the day to day detail of government. The consensus among presidential scholars is that some adaptation of the formalistic or pyramid approach to White House organization best suits the modern presidency. All presidents since John Kennedy have ultimately chosen some version of this hierarchical model, with its emphasis on a top-down command structure, and highly organized and specialized White House staff (Burke, 2004; George, 1980; Greenstein, 2003; Hess, 2002; Hult, 2003; Johnson, 1974; Moens, 2004; Neustadt, 1990; Stevens, 1190).

At the center and a key component of the formalistic model to White House organization is the position of chief of staff. Therefore, the president's choice of the person to fill this position is critical to the efficient and effective operation of the WHO, which in-turn has a direct impact on the president's ability to advance his domestic and foreign policy agenda. The COS performs three main functions or roles within the WHO. First, he assumes the role of manager; directing, administrating, and coordinating every aspect of WHO operations; from staff selection, to policy development, to controlling access to the president, to building and maintaining relationships with Congress, the media, and other critical groups.

Next, the COS acts as one of the president's closest advisers. He strives to become an alter ego to the president, championing the administration's agenda and negotiating in the place of the president when appropriate. The COS also endeavors to provide the president with all relevant information in order to ensure the best possible options in the decision-making process. Finally, the COS takes on the role of guardian; protecting the president from political adversaries, friends, and himself when necessary. In addition he is often called on to play the *heavy*; disciplining the staff, delivering bad news, and being the person who says *no* to law makers and cabinet officers which permits the president to maintain a more amiable relationship with his constituency (Hess, 2002; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kessel, 2001; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1999; Robertson, 1997; Stevens, 1990; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

Howard Baker and the Characteristics of the COS

Howard Baker assumed the position of COS at the end of February, 1987 and served until July of 1988 when he resigned due to his wife's failing health. His 17 month tenure was shorter than the average period of time in the position, which is 26 months (see Table A-8). He came to the office as an accomplished Washington *insider* with vast experience in national politics and governance. Of the 22 persons who have served as COS, twelve are classified as Washington *insiders,* (see Table A-8) and all six of the chiefs of staff who are commonly agreed to have had a high degree of effectiveness and success are included in this group (Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Cheney, James Baker, Howard Baker, Leon Panetta, and John Podesta). Baker balanced the role of *gatekeeper* well; controlling the flow of information and people reaching the president, while at the same time managing to keep a president who was not interested in detail informed and engaged with the process of governance.

Baker established and maintained an amiable and effective working relationship with Congress, the cabinet, the media, as well as other important interest groups which has been the case with the majority of the chiefs of staff. He was able to champion the president's cause without alienating Congress, the cabinet, or the media as the four failed chiefs of staff had done (see Table A-8). Lastly, Baker provided strong personal leadership and control within the WHO; however, he did so without becoming domineering or abusive, as was the situation with the four failed chiefs of staff (see Table A-8). He created a relaxed and collegial atmosphere within the White House and at the same time maintained a highly organized and professional staff environment. Baker was able to successfully fulfill the complex role of COS while avoiding the pitfalls which are

common to less effective chiefs of staff (Annis, 1995; Anderson, 1988; Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Cohen and Krause, 2000; Eisenhower, 1987; Hess, 2002; Kirschten, 1987, 1988; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Milkis and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 1989; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999; Reagan, 1990, 2007; Robertson, 1997;Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

Howard Baker's Impact on the Reagan Presidency

The beginning of President Reagan's second term was marked with a change in the position of White House chief of staff which proved to be disastrous, and culminated with the forced resignation of Donald Regan as COS. Regan's confrontational and uncooperative style had alienated Congress, the cabinet, and the media, and his domineering and abusive treatment of the WHO staff created an atmosphere of fear and discouraged most independent or creative thought. Rather than compensating for President Reagan's lack of interest in detail management style, he allowed the president to become so isolated as to become disengaged from his administration, which ultimately created the environment that allowed the Iran-Contra debacle (Anderson, 1988; Annis, 1995: Burke, 2000a; Busby, 1999; Cohen, 2002; Greenstein, 1988; Henderson, 1988; Hess, 2002; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kessel, 2001; Levy, 1996; Nelson, 1989; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994; Reagan, 1990, 2007; Regan, 1988; Robertson, 1997; Strober and Strober, 2003).

Upon assuming the role of White House chief of staff Baker found the WHO staff demoralized and the entire operational structure in disarray, and immediately set about making the necessary corrections. He replaced most of the senior staff with proven talent

that he knew and trusted – people who had experience in working within the Washington political environment. Baker reestablished a more open and efficient organizational structure similar to that which had operated during the first Reagan term. His management style was organized and professional while fostering a more low key and collegial working atmosphere which encouraged individual initiative. The results were almost immediate; the WHO staff was reenergized and moved from a defensive *bunker* mentality to a more positive and aggressive action oriented posture capable of addressing the serious problems confronting the administration (Annis, 1995: Burke, 2000a; Busby, 1999; Cohen, 2002; Hess, 2002; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Kessel, 2001; Levy, 1996; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994; Reagan, 1990, 2007; Robertson, 1997; Strober and Strober, 2003).

Baker wasted no time in mitigating the damaged relationships between the White House and Congress and the media – the White House switched from an adversarial attitude to a more conciliatory and cooperative approach. His selection of Kenneth Duberstein to be deputy chief of staff further signaled the White House's desire to mend its relationship Congress and the media. Duberstein had served as the White House legislative liaison during Reagan's first term and was well liked and respected on the Hill and in the media. Baker utilized his years of experience and the admiration and respect he had accumulated during his time in Congress to its full advantage for the president. "after 18 years as a Senator, he found it fascinating to be looking at the levers of power that can be utilized on the President's behalf… [He] has thrived at his assignment of operating those levers" (Kirschten, 1988, 1561). His respected and trusted position proved to be invaluable in restoring a more amiable relationship with Congress and the media, which was especially important as the Iran-Contra investigations proceeded

(Annis, 1995; Baker, Media – Baltimore Sun, May 5, 1987; Baker, Media – Chicago Tribune, March 4, 1987; Baker, Media – Houston Chronicle, March 8, 1987; Baker, Media – Cleveland Plain Dealer, February, 28, 1987; Baker, Media – Orlando Sentinel, February, 28, 1987; Baker, Media – Miami Herald, March 4, 1987; Baker, Media – The San Diego Union, February 28, 1987; Burke, 2000a; Busby, 1999; Eisenhower, 1987; Hess, 2002; Kirschten, 1987; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994, 1996; Reagan, 1990, 2007; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

One of the Reagan administration's greatest assets was the president himself – his likable personality and strong communication skills. During Donald Regan's tenure as COS, the president had been disengaged and seemed distant and unsure of details in initial testimony concerning the Iran-Contra affair. Baker's philosophy was *give Reagan reality,* insisting the president stay informed and engaged in the administration's policy and decision-making processes. He made sure the president was informed and prepared before he spoke which resulted in a greater sense of confidence and leadership coming from the president's presentations. This helped dispel allegations that the president was slipping mentally and was not really in charge of his administration (Annis, 1995; Burke, 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Hess, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Kirschten, 1988; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001).

Howard Baker's approach in dealing with the Iran-Contra investigations may have had the greatest impact on the Reagan presidency – and may in fact have saved it. As soon as Baker assumed the COS position he advised the president to switch tactics with regard to the investigations. The administration stopped *stonewalling* and began cooperating with the congressional investigations – opening as many of the

administration's files as possible, while not permitting unnecessary *fishing expeditions*. At the advice of Baker President Reagan publically admitted that mistakes were made. His administration had in fact traded weapons for hostages which was against U.S. foreign policy, and it had illegally diverted funds to support the Nicaraguan Contras. This public admission did much to defuse the mounting pressure on the Reagan presidency. Also Baker's decision to bring Rhett Dawson into the WHO as an assistant to the president was valuable. Dawson had served as the staff director for the Tower Commission's initial investigation into Iran-Contra and provided additional insight. By the summer of 1987, President Reagan's job approval ratings had risen to 53/40 approval/disapproval (see Table A-2); and most serious consideration of a possible impeachment of the president had passed (Annis, 1995; Burke, Busby, 1999; 2000a; Cohen, 2002; Culvahouse, Memos, February 28, 1987; Culvahouse, Notes, March 9, 1987; Duberstein, Memos, May 5, 1987, May 21, 1987, June 2, 1987, June 17, 1987, July 9, 1987, July 15, 1987, December 16, 1987; Greenstein, 1988; Henderson, 1988; Hess, 2002; Kessel, 2001; Kirschten, 1988; Kumar and Sullivan, 2003; Levy, 1996; Pfiffner, 1993, 1994; Reagan, 1990, 2007; Regan, 1988; Robertson, 1997; Strober and Strober, 2003; Sullivan, 2004; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001; Walsh, 1994).

As Baker's operational changes within the WHO and the White House's improved relationship with the Congress began to take effect and the dust surrounding Iran-Contra began to settle and fade, the administration's agenda slowly began to move forward again. Although Reagan's first choice for a seat on the Supreme Court, Robert Bork, was not confirmed, the administration was able to get Anthony Kennedy, who was ideologically acceptable to President Reagan, confirmed to the court. Baker had

originally recommended Kennedy for the post instead of Douglas Ginsburg whose name was withdrawn after revelations of his smoking marijuana surfaced. Baker's impact on the Reagan presidency was strongly felt in the ratification of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF); he points most proudly to the INF treaty, which was ratified by the senate in 1988, as demonstration of the Reagan administration's ability to successfully see a key piece of the president's agenda through to completion. Baker worked tirelessly with the senate to ensure ratification, getting the final pieces of the treaty into acceptable language after the president had already left for the signing ceremony in Moscow (Annis, 1995; Conley, 2007; Eisenhower, 1987; Kirschten, 1987, 1988, Leavy 1996; Nelson, 1989; Pika and Maltese, 2004; Reagan, 1990, 2007; Strober and Strober, 1998, 2003).

Unquestionably the Reagan presidency was in serious trouble when Howard Baker agreed to step in as COS, and presidential scholars overwhelming name Baker as one of the most effective and successful White House chiefs of staff to have served in that office. Baker's impact on the Reagan presidency was immediate and substantial, with many crediting him with rescuing the administration from potential ruin. His leadership helped the administration to successfully weather the Iran-Contra affair and to eventually restore much of its credibility and influence. As one measure of the successful turnaround of the administration, President Reagan ended his presidency with an approval rating of 63% the highest of any exiting president (see Table A-2).

Lessons Learned

The presidency is an exceptional office in that it is built around one person – the president – and that person changes every four to eight years. In large measure, the modern presidency has been institutionalized which both empowers and constrains the president's available options. While much of the modern presidency has been institutionalized the White House Office (WHO) has not been – and probably cannot be – fully institutionalized because of the human element – the president. Every person who serves is unique with varying degrees of talent, skill, and ability, and each brings to the office a different set of strengths and weaknesses. However, this study has identified certain key components which appear to be common in the successful operation of a modern presidency. With this in mind a succinct list of the study's findings are summarized and presented below.

- Presidential performance – in part – depends on the organizational and managerial structure established and maintained within the WHO.
- Some adaptation of the formalistic or hierarchical organizational model seems to best fit the modern presidency.
- In order to be effective the president must have a well organized and talented staff to support him.
- A White House chief of staff is a critically important component to the modern presidency, and will directly affect the presidents overall performance.
- The research suggests the most important qualification in selecting the COS is a working knowledge and experience of Washington politics and governance.

- The COS needs to modify and adjust WHO's organizational structure to complement and compensate for the unique strengths and weaknesses of the president.
- The COS should work closely with the president to attract the best possible talent to serve in the WHO.
- The COS must have comprehensive control of the WHO for the purpose of imposing discipline and order to the policy and decision-making process.
- The COS must act as a *gatekeeper* or *filter* controlling the access and flow of information and persons reaching the president.
- One of the most important aspects of the COS is the bridge building role – developing and maintaining effective and cooperative relationships with Congress, the cabinet, the media, and other interest groups.
- The COS must ensure the president hears all relevant voices in the policy and decision-making process – always acting as an *honest broker.*
- The COS should strive to protect the president from political adversaries, friends, and should be capable of tempering the president if necessary.
- A well qualified COS is critical to the president, however, a COS who has a domineering and abrasive style will almost certainly create problems for the president and his administration.

Future Research

The power, prestige, and influence of the modern presidency has been largely institutionalized within the American government, and there is little expectation it is likely to shrink substantially in size or importance in the foreseeable future. The White House Office (WHO) and the chief of staff, as its head, is at the very core of the modern presidency, and has a direct impact on its ultimate success or failure. Therefore, continued research into this aspect of the modern presidency is vital. One of the difficulties in studying the presidency is that it is built around a single person. Each president is unique and will not fit neatly into an established mold or model. This must be considered when contemplating any approach to the study. There is fairly broad agreement that the formalistic or hierarchical approach to organizing the modern presidency best suits it needs and complexity. However, within this model further research is required to determine which variations and adaptations work best, and to establish if certain variations mesh better with the personalities, strengths, and weaknesses of individual presidents.

Additional research considering the COS and his role in – and impact on – the modern presidency is necessary. Further study into the three main areas of the COS's responsibilities – Management/Administrator, Adviser, and Guardian – is needed in order to determine if a comprehensive but flexible *gamebook* could be developed for incoming administrations. This basic *how-to* organizational and managerial plan would be useable regardless of ideology or political party, and would help the new administration come into office firing on all cylinders – not wasting valuable time and energy reinventing the wheel. A permanent career staff for the WHO is not practical, therefore, this approach

would help to provide the needed institutional memory which is lacking to some degree within operational structure of the executive branch of government. These are but a few suggestions as to the direction research into this fascinating and critically important facet of the modern presidency could progress, as we move toward a fuller, richer, and more complete understanding of the American presidency.

Emerging from this study we find that scholarly literature on this subject is somewhat limited. Hopefully, continued research into this area of the presidency will provide a deeper and more exhaustive body of resources. The information that is available is helpful in understanding the construction of the WHO and its most important member, the chief of staff; and the critical role both play in the effective operation of the White House and the modern presidency. A limiting factor in this study was the inability to secure greater participation from senior White House staff during Howard Baker's tenure as COS. Additional time and the necessary resources should be allocated in future studies in order to provide greater input from first-hand sources within the White House Office.

An additional limitation to the study was the information available in Howard Baker's papers archived at the Baker Center for Public Policy, and materials researched at the Reagan Presidential Library. While there was an abundance of materials, little of it dealt with White House organization or management in a substantive manner. The information that was usable for this study tended to be of a supporting nature, rather than providing new information. This may be a common problem created by an unwillingness of public individuals to put significant and possibly sensitive information in writing due

to a lack of confidence in keeping the information confidential during the time of its importance.

The Man and the Moment

Howard Baker came to the White House during the Reagan presidency's darkest hours. The administration had been rocked by the Iran-Contra affair, and political pundits were openly questioning if the Reagan presidency could survive. The White House staff had been demoralized by the scandal and by the previous chief of staff's domineering management style. Capitol Hill and the media had been alienated by the administration's adversarial and uncooperative attitude – there were few places the administration could look to for support.

Baker stepped into the role of White House chief of staff; rolled up his sleeves and went to work; translating his years of experience and the trust and respect he had earned during his time in the senate into an effort to restore and revitalize the Reagan presidency. He and his staff made changes in White House organizational structure which returned order and direction to the operations and reenergized the WHO. He moved immediately to repair the strained relationships which existed between the White House and the Congress. Seeking to improve relations with the media he made himself and others within the White House, more available for interviews and appearances. The White House made a concentrated effort to cooperate with the Iran-Contra investigation providing as much pertinent information as possible, thereby, diffusing a tense confrontational situation. Most importantly Baker brought one of the administration's

greatest assets – President Reagan – back into the mix, making sure he was informed and engaged with the details of his administration.

Within four months – the summer of 1987 – the Reagan presidency had turned the corner. The Iran-Contra investigation was moving toward an acceptable conclusion, relations with Congress and the media were much improved, and President Reagan's approval numbers were moving in the right direction (see Table A-2). There was a renewed sense of purpose within the WHO as it prepared for the arms reduction summit with the Soviet Union. The rejection of Robert Bork as nominee for the open Supreme Court seat was disappointing for the administration, but it was able to see Anthony Kennedy confirmed with a 97-0 vote in the senate. Baker considers the successful ratification of the INF treaty the crown of the administration's achievements during his tenure, and fought relentlessly to see it to fruition. President Reagan ended his term of office with a 63% approval rating – the highest of any exiting president which, at least in part, evidences the effectiveness and impact of Baker's tenure as COS (see Table A-2). At a time of turmoil and confusion within the Reagan presidency it is hard to imagine a person better equipped and personally suited to the task of assuming the role of White House chief of staff than Howard H. Baker, Jr.

This study strongly supports the thesis that the White House chief of staff is a critically important component within the modern presidency and has a direct impact on the president and the potential effectiveness of his administration. Howard Baker's tenure as COS – coming after the failed tenure of Donald Regan – clearly demonstrates the dramatic effect chiefs of staff can produce within a presidency. In Baker's case the

impact was both substantial and positive in the rescue and rehabilitation of the Reagan presidency.

> *"How far we had come since those first early days when I came to the White House" He noted that he and his associates have experienced "some days that have been a lot better than others" but that all in all "the whole thing has been worth it."*
>
> -- Howard H. Baker, Jr. (Kirschten, 1988, 1561).

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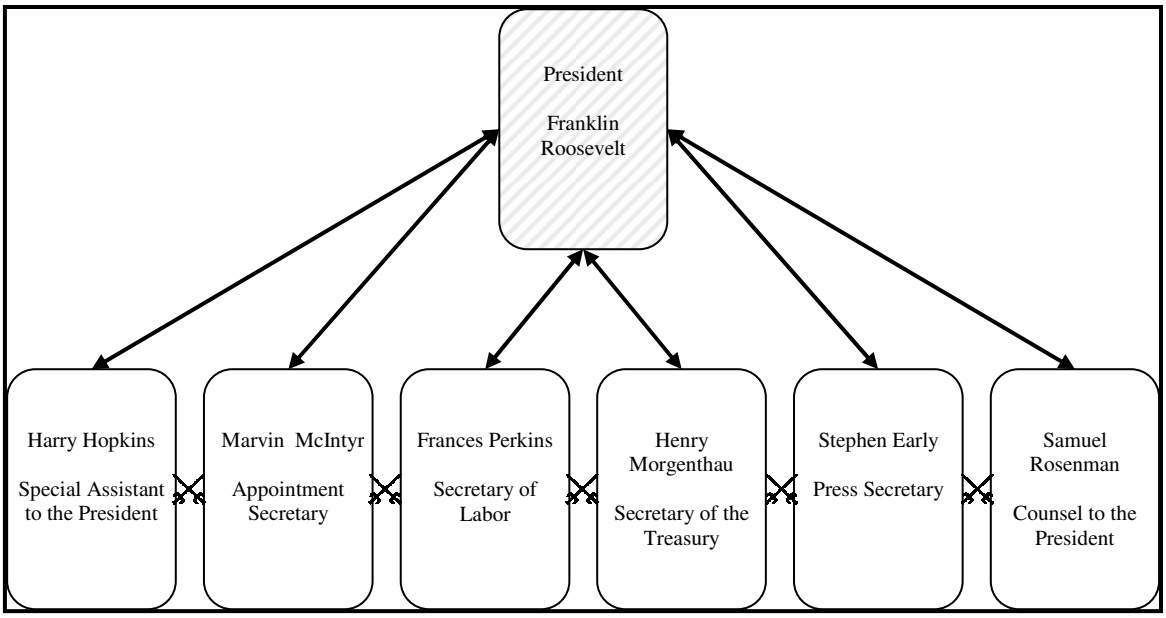
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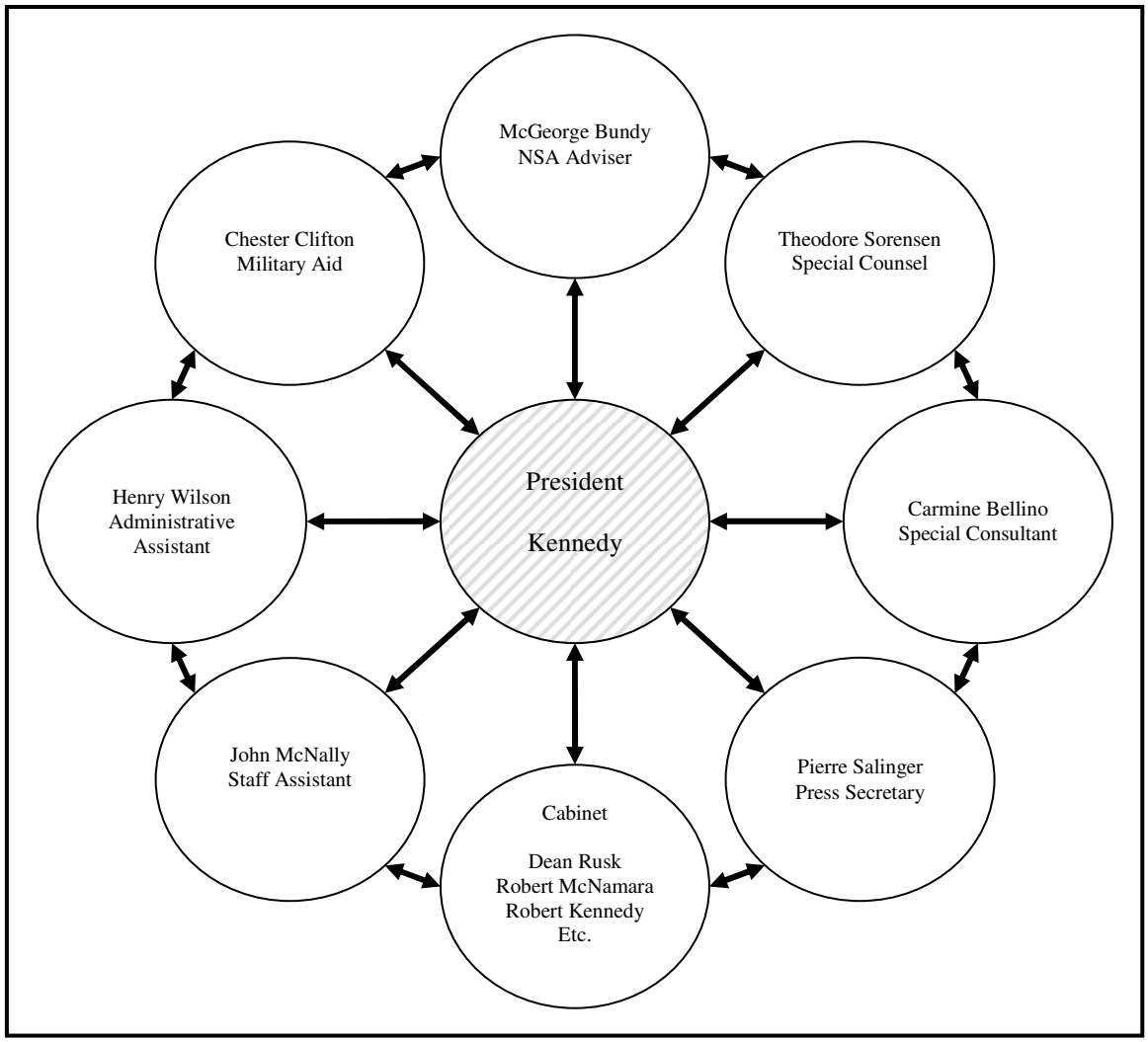
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APPENDIX



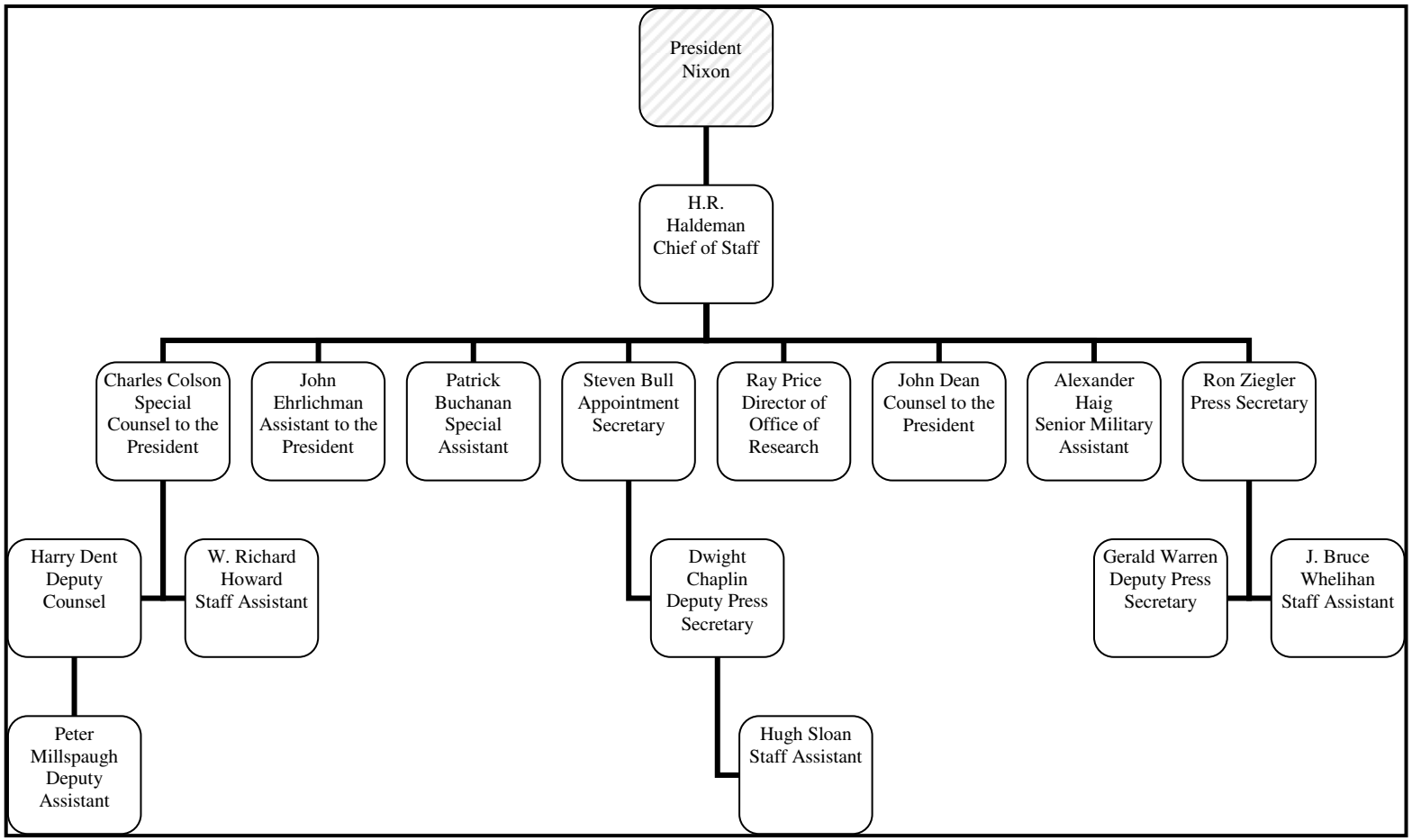
Example of Competitive Model of White House organizational structure for the Franklin Roosevelt presidency. For illustration purposes only, and does not represent the entire organization. Crossed swords illustrate adversarial (competitive) nature of relationships between staff.

Figure A-1: Competitive Model of White House Organizational Structure



Example of Collegial Model of White House organizational structure for the Kennedy presidency. For illustration purposes only, and does not represent the entire organizational structure.

Figure A-2: Collegial Model of White House Organizational Structure (Spokes-of-the-Wheel)



Information gathered from the Nixon Library website. Example of Hierarchical Model of White House organizational structure for the Nixon presidency. For illustration purposes only, and does not represent the entire organizational structure.

Figure A-3: Formalistic or Hierarchical Model of White House Organizational Structure (Pyramid)

Thesis

The performance of the White House chief of staff is a critical component of success in the modern presidency

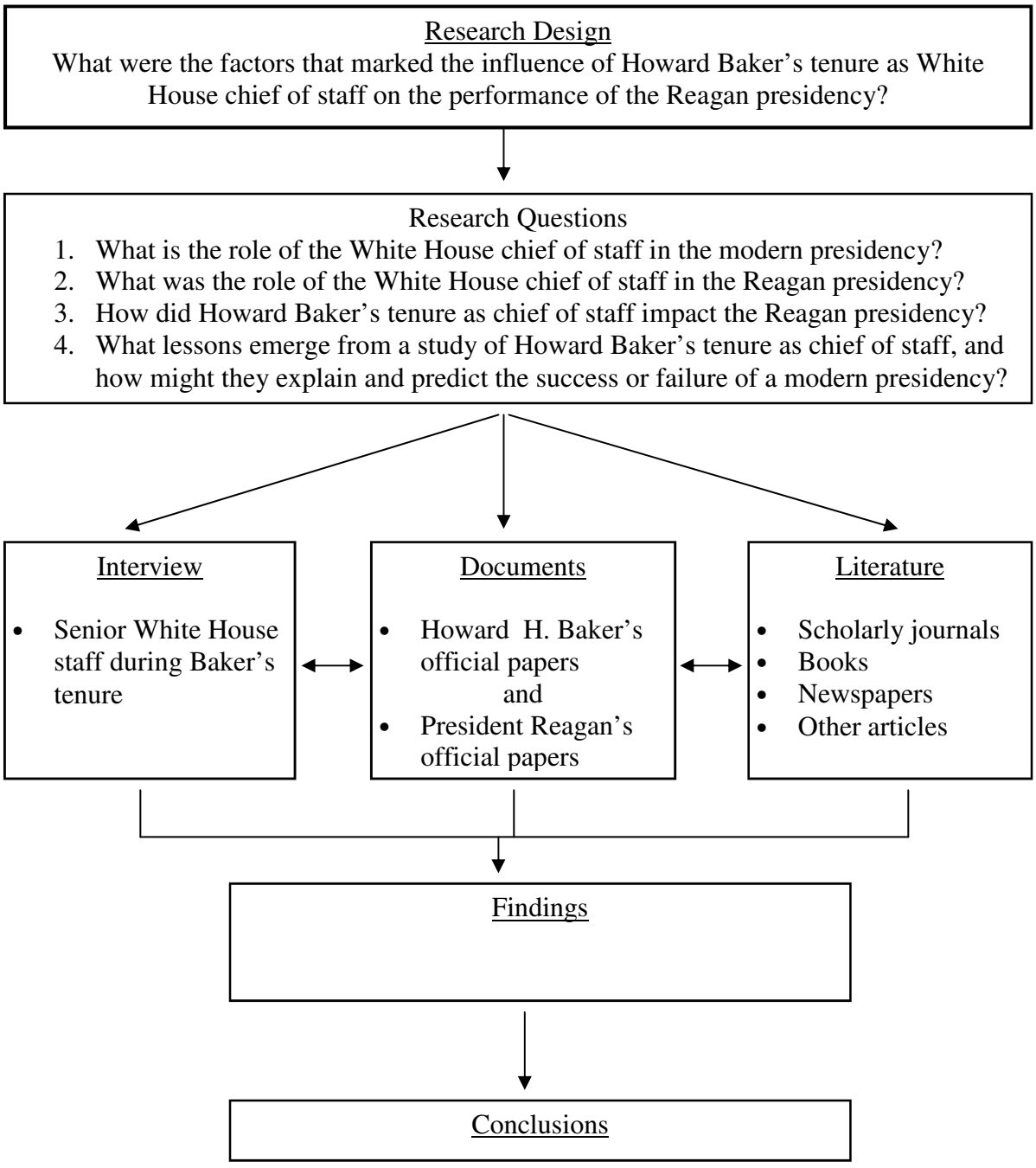
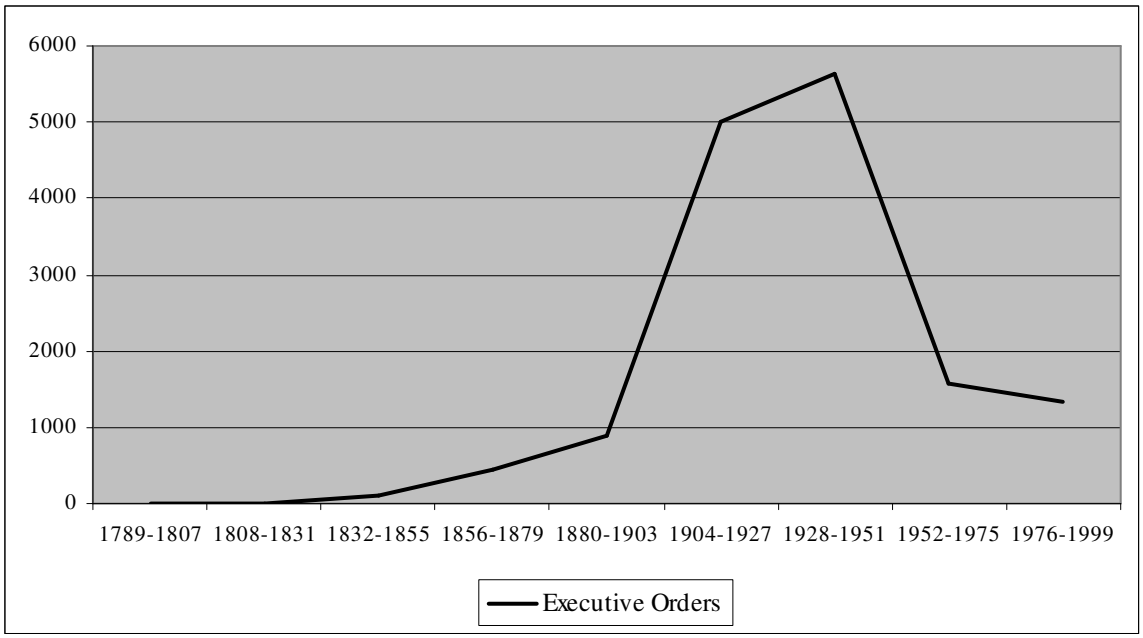


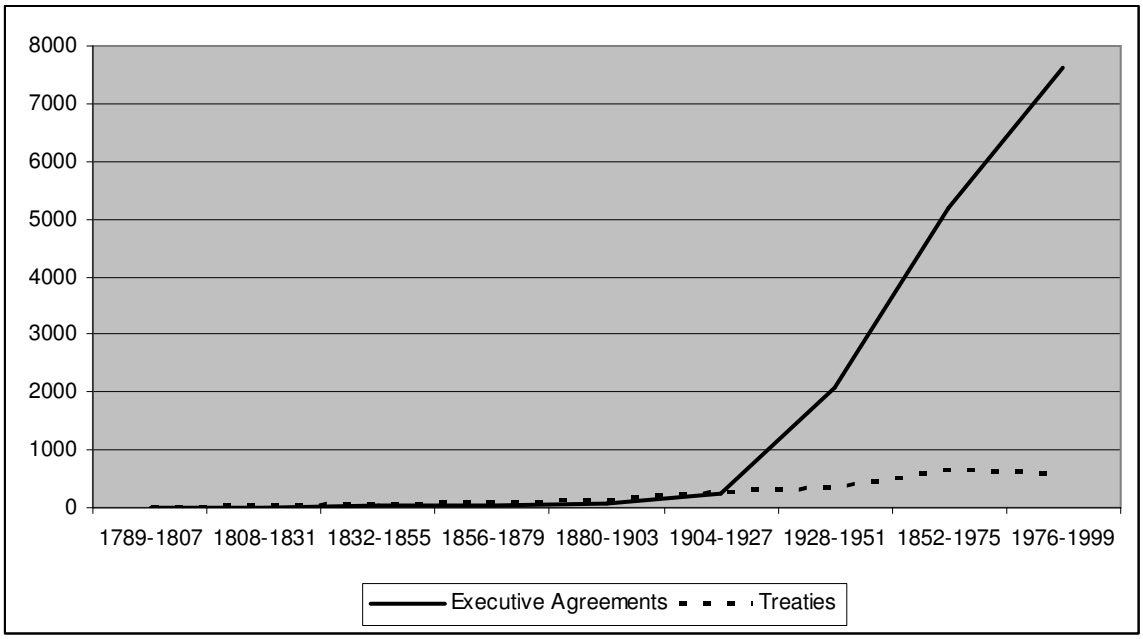
Figure A-4: Research Design



Source: Figure created using data from Table A-2 Executive Orders by President 1789 – September 2001.

Data illustrated in figure were broken down into 24 year segments beginning with President Clinton's second term and moving backward. (for individual presidents see Table A-3) Figure ends with President Clinton's second term because at the time of this research President G.W. Bush administration is ongoing.

Figure A-5: Executive Orders by Period



Source: Figure created using data from Table A-4 Executive Agreements by President 1789 – 2002.

Data illustrated in figure were broken down into 24 year segments beginning with President Clinton's second term and moving backward. (for individual presidents see Table A-4) Figure ends with President Clinton's second term because at the time of this research President G.W. Bush administration is ongoing.

Figure A-6: Executive Agreements by Period

Table A-1: White House Chiefs of Staff

Chief of Staff	President	Years
John Steelman*	Harry Truman	1946-1952
Sherman Adams*	Dwight Eisenhower	1953-1958
Wilton Persons*		1958-1961
No COS	John F. Kennedy	1961-1963
W. Marvin Watson	Lyndon Johnson	1963-1968
H. R. Haldeman	Richard Nixon	1969-1973
Alexander Haig		1973-1974
Donald Rumsfeld*	Gerald Ford	1974-1975
Richard Cheney*		1975-1977
No COS	Jimmy Carter	1977-1979
Hamilton Jordan*		1979-1980
Jack Watson		1980-1981
James Baker	Ronald Reagan	1981-1985
Donald Regan		1985-1987
Howard Baker		1987-1988
Kenneth Duberstein		1988-1989
John Sununu	George H. W. Bush	1989-1991
Samuel Skinner		1991-1992
James Baker		1992-1993
Mack McLarty	William Clinton	1993-1994
Leon Panetta		1994-1997
Erskine Bowles		1997-1998
John Podesta		1998-2001
Andrew Card	George W. Bush	2001-2006
Joshua Bolten		2006-present

Source: Lyn Ragsdale, *Vital Statistics on the Presidency: Washington to Clinton* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1998) updated by author.

* These aides did not have the title Chief of Staff but fulfilled the function. Hamilton Jordan did receive the title during his second year of service.

Table A-2: President Reagan's Second Term Approval Ratings

Date	Approval %	Disapproval %	No Opinion %
January 25, 1985	64	28	8
March 8, 1985	56	37	7
June 7, 1985	58	32	10
October 11, 1985	63	29	8
January 10, 1986	64	27	9
March 7, 1986	63	26	11
June 9, 1986	64	26	10
October 24, 1986	63	29	8
December 4, 1986	47	44	9
February 27, 1987	40	53	7
March 5, 1987	46	46	8
April 10, 1987	48	43	9
June 8, 1987	53	40	7
July 10, 1987	49	43	8
August 24, 1987	49	42	9
December 4, 1987	49	41	10
January 22, 1988	49	40	11
March 9, 1988	51	37	11
April 8, 1988	59	39	11
May 13, 1988	48	43	9
June 10, 1988	51	39	10
July 15, 1988	54	36	10
August 19, 1988	53	37	10
September 25, 1988	54	37	9
October 21, 1988	51	38	11
November 11, 1988	57	35	8
December 27, 1988	63	29	8

Source: Lyn Ragsdale, *Vital Statistics on the Presidency: Washington to Clinton* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1998).

Table A-3: Executive Orders by President 1789 – September 2001

President	Years in Office	Number of Executive Orders	Average Per Year
Washington	8.00	8	1.00
Adams	4.00	1	0.25
Jefferson	8.00	4	0.50
Madison	8.00	1	0.13
Monroe	8.00	1	0.13
J. Q. Adams	4.00	3	0.75
Jackson	8.00	12	1.50
Van Buren	4.00	10	2.50
W. Harrison	0.08	0	0.00
Tyler	3.92	17	4.25
Polk	4.00	18	4.50
Taylor	1.25	5	4.00
Fillmore	2.75	12	4.36
Pierce	4.00	35	8.75
Buchanan	4.00	16	4.00
Lincoln	4.00	48	12.00
A. Johnson	4.00	79	19.75
Grant	8.00	217	27.13
Hayes	4.00	92	23.00
Garfield	0.50	6	12.00
Arthur	3.50	96	29.54
Cleveland #1	4.00	113	28.25
B. Harrison	4.00	143	35.75
Cleveland #2	4.00	140	35.00
McKinely	4.75	185	38.95
T. Roosevelt	7.25	1081	149.10
Taft	4.00	724	181.00
Wilson	8.00	1803	225.38
Harding	2.60	522	200.77
Coolidge	5.40	1203	222.78
Hoover	4.00	968	242.00
F. Roosevelt	12.33	3522	285.64
Truman	7.67	897	116.95
Eisenhower	8.00	478	59.75
Kennedy	2.92	228	76.00
L. Johnson	5.08	316	63.20
Nixon	5.60	355	63.39
Ford	2.40	152	63.33
Carter	4.00	311	77.75
Reagan	8.00	409	51.13
G. Bush	4.00	165	41.25
Clinton	8.00	364	45.50
G. W. Bush*	0.75	30	40.00
Total		14790	

Source: Created using data from Gary King and Lyn Ragsdale, *The Elusive Executive: Discovering Statistical Patterns in the Presidency* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly,1998). Calculations from Reagan through G.W. Bush by author.

Table A-4: Executive Agreements and Treaties by President 1789 – 2002

President	Total of all Agreements & Treaties	Executive Agreements	Treaties	Ratio Agreements/ Treaties
Washington	6	1	5	0.3
Adams	4	0	4	0
Jefferson	6	0	6	0
Madison	3	0	3	0
Monroe	10	1	9	0.1
J. Q. Adams	14	2	12	0.2
Jackson	16	0	16	0
Van Buren	11	2	9	0.2
W. Harrison	1	0	1	0
Tyler	11	1	10	0.1
Polk	21	5	16	0.3
Taylor	7	3	4	0.8
Fillmore	13	4	9	0.4
Pierce	32	12	20	0.6
Buchanan	24	8	16	0.5
Lincoln	25	2	22	0.1
A. Johnson	26	0	26	0
Grant	43	11	32	0.3
Hayes	19	5	14	0.4
Garfield	3	1	2	0.5
Arthur	33	11	22	0.5
Cleveland #1	30	11	19	0.6
B. Harrison	27	11	16	0.7
Cleveland #2	17	6	11	0.5
McKinely	53	27	26	1
T. Roosevelt	164	57	107	0.5
Taft	45	17	28	0.6
Wilson	122	54	68	0.8
Harding	59	31	28	1.1
Coolidge	232	120	112	1.1
Hoover	158	105	53	2
F. Roosevelt	693	574	119	4.8
Truman	1,551	1,406	145	9.7
Eisenhower	1,920	1,705	215	7.9
Kennedy	831	763	68	11.2
L. Johnson	1,112	1,008	104	9.7
Nixon	1,296	1,116	180	6.2
Ford	776	677	99	6.8
Carter	1,169	1,021	148	6.9
Reagan	2,965	2,840	125	22.7
G. Bush	1,417	1,350	67	20.1
Clinton	2,257	2,048	209	9.8
G. W. Bush*	283	262	21	12.5
Total	17,505	15,278	2,226	6.9

Sources: Created using data from Lyn Ragsdale, *The Elusive Executive: Vital Statistics on the Presidency.* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly,1998) and Harold G. Stanley and Richard G. Niemi, *Vital Statistics on American Politics 2003 -2004.* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 2005).

Note: President F. Roosevelt's shortened 4th term is included in President Truman's 1st term.

* Includes Executive Agreements and treaties through 2002 of G. W. Bush administration.

Table A-5: EOP and WHO Budgeted Outlays and Staff Size

President	Years	Average EOP Outlays	Average Staff Size	Average WHO Outlays	Average Staff Size
Franklin Roosevelt	1933 – 1940	953,000	237	277,000	47
Franklin Roosevelt*	1941 – 1944	1,164,232,000	121,318	390,000	51
Roosevelt/Truman*	1945	2,672,974,000	174,138	473,000	61
Harry Truman*	1946 – 1952	88,902,000	23,871	1,294,000	222
Dwight Eisenhower	1953 – 1960	29,221,000	1,793	2,831,000	352
John Kennedy	1961 – 1963	40,383,000	2,058	3,854,000	422
Lyndon Johnson	1964 – 1968	26,120,000	3,839	3,872,000	304
Richard Nixon	1969 – 1973	43,524,000	5,142	8,455,000	491
Nixon/Ford	1974	66,064,000	5,751	11,280,000	583
Gerald Ford	1975 – 1976	86,024,000	1,905	15,792,000	583
Jimmy Carter	1977 – 1980	80,733,000	1,758	17,309,000	412
Ronald Reagan	1981 – 1988	103,640,000	1,591	21,953,000	371
George H. W. Bush	1989 – 1992	164,966,000	1,727	31,033,000	380
William Clinton	1993 - 1998	216,838,000	1,602	40,937,000	463

Source: Lyn Ragsdale, *Vital Statistics on the Presidency: Washington to Clinton* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1998) compiled by author.

EOP: Executive Office of the President, WHO: White House Office.
EOP totals include WHO totals.
Dollar totals are in 1998 dollars.
President Johnson's totals include November and December, 1963.
*Totals take into account World War II and its wind-down.

Table A-6: Common Elements of the Executive Office of the President

Office	Date Created	President
The White House Office	1939	Franklin Roosevelt
The Office of Management and Budget	1939	Franklin Roosevelt
The Office of the Vice President*	1939	Franklin Roosevelt
The Council of Economic Advisers	1946	Harry Truman
The National Security Council	1947	Harry Truman
The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative	1963	John Kennedy
The Council on Environmental Quality	1969	Richard Nixon
The Office of Policy Development	1970	Richard Nixon
The Office of Science and Technology Policy	1976	Gerald Ford
The Office of Administration	1977	Jimmy Carter
The Office of National Drug Control Policy	1989	George H.W. Bush
The National Economic Council	1993	William Clinton

Sources: John P. Burke, *The Institutional Presidency: Organizing and Managing the White House from FDR to Clinton.* 2nd ed. (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2000) and Stephen L. Robertson, "Executive Office of the President: White House Office. in *Cabinets and Counselors: The President and the Executive Branch.* 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1997).

* The Office of the Vice President was greatly expanded during the 1960's
Note: The Office of Management and Budget was originally named the Bureau of the Budget and was transferred from the Department of the Treasury to the EOP by the Reorganization Act of 1939.
Note: The Office of Policy Development has evolved over time, and had many titles. It was fully developed by the Nixon Presidency.

Table A-7: White House Organizational Approaches Strengths and Weaknesses

Approach	Strengths	Weaknesses
Competitive	President stays in mainstream of information Produces creative solutions Open to ideas from outside Fairly quick ability to respond	Demanding of president's time and energy Weak organizational structure President acts as own chief of staff Information flow can overwhelm the president Emphasis on doable solutions Adversarial decision-making Hostility among staff Staff can become self-interested Staff are generalists Requires president to have strong interpersonal skills
Collegial	President stays in mainstream of information Flexible organizational structure Team approach to decision-making Open to ideas from outside Quick ability to respond Emphasis on both doable & optimal solutions	Demanding of president's time and energy President acts as own chief of staff Information flow can overwhelm the president Risk of *group-think* Risk of *oh by the way* decisions Staff are generalists Requires president to have strong interpersonal skills
Formalistic	Less demanding of president's time and energy President has a chief of staff Clear lines of authority and jurisdiction Orderly decision-making process President free to focus on major policy initiatives Emphasis on optimal solutions Policy options well researched Staff are specialists Power and influence centered in the White House	President can become isolated Slow ability to respond Chief of staff can become too controlling Closed to ideas from outside Potential risk for *group-think* Information can become distorted

Sources: Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decsionmaking in Foreign Policy* . (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), Richard T. Johnson, *Managing the White House.* (New York: Harper & Row,1974), and Joesph A. Pika, "Management Style and the Organizational Matrix. *Administration and Society* 20 (1): 3-27.

Table A-8: Characteristics of White House Chiefs of Staff

President	Chief of Staff	Months as COS	COS Insider/ Outsider	President becomes Isolated	COS Alienates Congress Cabinet and/or Media	COS Domineering to Staff Cabinet Others
Harry Truman	John Steelman*	82	Insider	No	No	No
Dwight Eisenhower	Sherman Adams*	68	Insider	No	Yes	Yes
	Wilton Persons*	28	Outsider	No	No	No
John Kennedy	No COS	-	-	-	-	-
Lyndon Johnson	W. Marvin Watson	38	Outsider	No	No	No
Richard Nixon	H. R. Haldeman	51	Outsider	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Alexander Haig	15	Outsider	No	No	No
Gerald Ford	Donald Rumsfeld*	15	Insider	No	No	No
	Richard Cheney*	14	Insider	No	No	No
Jimmy Carter	No COS	-	-	-	-	-
	Hamilton Jordan*	11	Outsider	No	Yes	No
	Jack Watson	8	Outsider	No	No	No
Ronald Reagan	James Baker	48	Insider	No	No	No
	Donald Regan	25	Outsider	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Howard Baker	17	Insider	No	No	No
	Kenneth Duberstein	6	Insider	No	No	No
George H. W. Bush	John Sununu	34	Outsider	No	Yes	Yes
	Samuel Skinner	9	Outsider	No	No	No
	James Baker	5	Insider	No	No	No
William Clinton	Mack McLarty	17	Outsider	No	Yes	No
	Leon Panetta	30	Insider	No	No	No
	Erskine Bowles	23	Insider	No	No	No
	John Podesta	26	Insider	No	No	No
George W. Bush	Andrew Card	63	Insider	No	No	No
	Joshua Bolten	-	Insider	-	-	-

John Steelman is technically not included in the official list of chiefs of staff because the COS position was not created until the Eisenhower presidency.

COS Insider/Outsider refers to Washington experience *(insider)* or lack of experience *(outsider)*

* These presidential aides did not have the title Chief of Staff but fulfilled the function. Hamilton Jordan did receive the title during his second year of service.

Joshua Bolten is currently in on-going service as chief of staff.

VITA

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