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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

STRATEGIC EVALUATION MEMORANDUM #1

TO: Edwin Meese

FROM: Richard S. Beal

SUBJECT: Summary of Cabinet Council Activities
March 6 - July 7, 1981

DATE: July 16, 1981

Introduction

This memorandum summarizes Cabinet Council activities from March 6, 1981 - the date the first Cabinet Council meeting was held - through July 7, 1981. It is based on a review of the agenda and minutes of Cabinet Council meetings as well as attendance at some of those meetings. The National Security Council was not included in the scope of this review.

The purpose of this first memorandum on Cabinet Councils is to describe the actions and decisions of the five domestic Cabinet Councils during the past four months. Later reviews and memoranda will assess the function and use of Cabinet Councils generally, and their role in Administration decision making in particular.

The highlights of the review are presented below. The table shown on page 3 contains summary data on each Cabinet Council including: number of meetings, agenda topics, and types of action taken on individual agenda items. Also listed below are a set of questions which could be used to guide future reviews and evaluations. Charts containing detailed data on the activities of each Cabinet Council begin on page 6. An overview of the methodology used to prepare the charts and short definitions of the chart headings are provided on page 5.

Highlights

1. As of July 7, the five domestic Cabinet Councils have met 55 times and covered 58 different topics.
2. Combined, the five domestic Cabinet Councils met 11 times in March, 11 times in April, 15 times in May, and 15 times in June.
3. Of the 13 domestic policy topics assigned a High or Medium priority in Phases I and II of the President's Strategic Plan, eight have been covered at least once in a Cabinet Council meeting. They include:
 - Budget Policy
 - Tax Policy
 - Monetary Policy
 - Regulatory Policy
 - Free Trade Policy
 - Social Security Financing
 - Clean Air
 - Farm Price Supports

4. Of the 55 Cabinet Council meetings, the President attended 5 and the Vice President attended 19 meetings.
5. Five Presidential policies have been established either at a Cabinet Council meeting or shortly thereafter, as follows:
 - Youth Differential Minimum Wage (Economic Affairs)
 - Ottawa Summit: East-West Trade (Commerce and Trade)
 - Trade Relations: Mexico (Commerce and Trade)
 - Shoe Import Restrictions (Commerce and Trade)
 - Social Security (Human Resources)
6. As to the disposition of agenda items, in about one-third of the cases Cabinet Councils directed further study. In about one-fourth of the cases, the Councils reviewed and discussed the item but took no further action. Decisions of a strategy or policy nature occurred in about one-third of the cases. This means that two-thirds of the time, items were simply reviewed and discussed, directed for further study, or postponed.
7. Following are brief summaries of each Cabinet Council:

Economic Affairs: Met 30 times, which is more than the other four Councils combined. It has handled 27 (47%) of the total topics covered by all Councils. Measured in terms of how frequently a topic appears on meeting agendas, its principal discussions have centered on:

- Thrift Industry (10 meetings)
- Budget Reduction (6 meetings)
- Polish Debt (5 meetings)
- Economic Outlook (5 meetings)

Commerce and Trade: Met 7 times and handled 8 topics. Enterprise Zones has been an agenda item 3 times.

Human Resources: Met 3 times, once to organize, once to act on social security proposals, and once to review the ACTION proposal on Vietnam Veterans. The Secretariat to this Council meets more often.

Natural Resources and Environment: Met 12 times, handling 15 different topics. Major discussions have been on:

- Clean Air Act (7 meetings)
- Oil Exploration/Outer Continental Shelf (4 meetings)
- Natural Gas Decontrol (4 meetings)

Food and Agriculture: Met 3 times to cover 6 topics. Its last meeting was on May 20.

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SUMMARY DATA ON CABINET COUNCIL ACTIVITY

July 15, 1981

Cabinet Council	(Percentages Vertically)		(Percentages Horizontally)							Total* Dispositions
	Times Met	Agenda* Topics	Reviewed/ Discussed	Directed Further Study	Decided			Postponed/ Did Not Discuss		
					Strategy	Council Policy	Presidential Policy			
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS	30 55%	27 47%	23 31%	29 39%	7 9%	11 15%	1 1%	4 5%	75 100%	
COMMERCE & TRADE	7 13%	8 14%	---	5 42%	3 25%	1 8%	3 25%	---	12 100%	
HUMAN RESOURCES	3 5%	2 3%	---	---	---	1 50%	1 50%	---	2 100%	
NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT	12 22%	15 26%	9 25%	13 36%	6 17%	5 14%	---	3 8%	36 100%	
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE	3 5%	6 10%	4 50%	---	---	3 38%	---	1 13%	8 101%	
	55 100%	58 100%	36 27%	47 35%	16 12%	21 16%	5 4%	8 6%	133 100%	

* Numbers under "Total Dispositions" may exceed those under "Agenda Topics" due to coverage of a single topic in more than one meeting.

Preliminary Questions for Further Analysis

Many questions could be posed on the basis of the summary data contained in the table and in the detailed charts at the end of this memoranda. Following are examples:

1. Are some Councils "overworked" while others are under-utilized?
2. Does the number of topics handled (58) represent a "reasonable" workload?
3. How much time and money does it cost to maintain the Cabinet Council structure? What are the results and benefits of the structure? Do they outweigh the costs?
4. Can the time required for handling a specific agenda item or topic be predicted? If so, would this be of any value?
5. What is the relationship between the quality, format, and style of background materials prepared for Council meetings, and the results of those meetings?
6. What impact does attendance have on the results of Cabinet Council meetings? Whose attendance?
7. Will Councils be able to manage or oversee the implementation of policies? Should they? Or is their main utility in studying, developing, and establishing policy?

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SUMMARIES OF CABINET COUNCIL ACTIVITY
Methodology

Attached are summaries of Cabinet Council activities between March 6 and July 7, 1981. The activities of Cabinet Councils were analyzed by reviewing and comparing the agenda and minutes of each Cabinet Council meeting. This enabled us to determine:

- If the Cabinet Councils were able to meet their agenda goals,
- which agenda topics received the greater consideration by the Councils over time,
- the subsequent action(s) on each agenda topic, and
- which agenda topics were not considered.

From this data, we were able to determine the agenda items which received the greatest attention by the Councils. This provided a measurement point to determine whether the Councils were addressing policy areas contained in the Strategic Plan. Information from Secretariat or work group meetings was not considered in preparing these summaries.

The attached charts list the agenda topics for each Cabinet Council and the specific Council meeting dates to which the topics correspond. The dates are displayed under a series of columns which indicate the type of action taken by the Council in that meeting.

Six possible types of Council action are shown on the charts. Brief descriptions of each follow:

1. Reviewed/Discussed: The Council reviewed or discussed the topic, but took no further action.
2. Directed Further Study: The Council directed formation of a work group or task force, or assigned further study to an individual or an organization.
3. Strategy: The Council formulated a plan or strategy to move the topic closer to development or approval as a policy.
4. Council Policy: The Council officially adopted a position or policy statement on the subject, or on a significant element or part of the subject.
5. Presidential Policy: The President approved a policy on the agenda topic at the Council meeting or shortly thereafter.
6. Postponed/Did Not Discuss: The topic was on the meeting agenda, but was not discussed due to time constraints or other reasons.

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SUMMARY OF CABINET COUNCIL ACTIVITY: ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

July 15, 1981

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Agenda Topic	Reviewed/ Discussed	Directed Further Study	Decided			Postponed/ Did Not Discuss
			Strategy	Council Policy	Presidential Policy	
Economic Outlook (Review)	3/6 3/23 5/12 6/16	4/7				
Budget Reduction*	3/6 5/7 6/18	4/24 5/12		5/22		
President's Canada Trip: Economic Issues		3/6 3/9	3/9			
Thrift Industry	3/18 6/4	3/26 5/7 6/30 7/7	4/9	5/29	3/6 3/9	
Polish Debt		5/26	3/18 3/23	4/24 5/29	3/9	
Youth Differential Minimum Wage	3/18	3/20			3/23	
Tax Program*	3/23 7/7	3/20 4/24				
Cost of Living Adjustments		3/26 6/10			3/20	
Coal Miner's Strike	3/23					
Targeted Jobs Tax Credit		3/26	3/31			
Conrail	3/31	3/26				
Strategic Petroleum Reserve		4/28		3/31 5/5 5/22		
Northeast Rail Service		4/7				
IRS Federal Debt Collection	5/14	4/16				

SUMMARY OF CABINET COUNCIL ACTIVITY: ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

July 15, 1981

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Agenda Topic	Reviewed/ Discussed	Directed Further Study	Decided		Postponed/ Did Not Discuss
			Strategy	Council Policy	
Tax Refund Offset			4/16		
Federal Credit Applicants			4/16		
Defaulted Federal Loans				4/16	
Monetary Policy*		4/30			
Developments in Financial Markets	5/26 6/16 7/7	4/30			
Accelerated Cost Recovery	5/14	5/5		6/2	
Exchange Rate Intervention	5/5				
Ottawa Economic Summit	5/26	6/23 6/25		6/30	
Savings Rate	6/30	6/2 7/7			
Regulatory Relief*		6/4			
Davis-Bacon				6/18	
Air Controller's Negotiations	6/18				
Longshoremen's Compens- ation Act		7/7			

Meeting Dates (Number of attendees in parentheses)

March 6, 1981 (19)
 March 9, 1981 (22)
 March 18, 1981 (16)
 March 20, 1981 (16)
 March 23, 1981 (28) (President and Vice President attended)
 March 26, 1981 (16) (Vice President attended)
 March 31, 1981 (22)

SUMMARY OF CABINET COUNCIL ACTIVITY: ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

July 15, 1981

Page 3 of 3

Meeting Dates (Continued)

April 7, 1981 (17)
April 9, 1981 (21) (Vice President attended)
April 16, 1981 (20)
April 24, 1981 (22)
April 28, 1981 (23)
April 30, 1981 (21) (Vice President attended)
May 5, 1981 (26)
May 7, 1981 (19)
May 12, 1981 (26) (Vice President attended)
May 14, 1981 **
May 22, 1981 (24)
May 26, 1981 (22)
May 29, 1981 (25) (Vice President attended)
June 2, 1981 (22) (Vice President attended)
June 4, 1981 (22) (Vice President attended)
June 10, 1981 (19) (Vice President attended)
June 16, 1981 (20)
June 18, 1981 (24)
June 23, 1981 (24) (Vice President attended)
June 25, 1981 (21)
June 30, 1981 (23)
July 7, 1981 (25) (Vice President attended)
July 9, 1981 **

* Presidential Priority in Strategic Plan

** No meeting minutes received

SUMMARY OF CABINET COUNCIL ACTIVITY: COMMERCE AND TRADE

July 15, 1981

Agenda Topic	Reviewed/ Discussed	Directed Further Study	Decided			Postponed Did Not Discuss
			Strategy	Council Policy	Presidential Policy	
Enterprise Zones*		3/19	4/2 5/6			
Exports to Eastern Bloc		3/19	4/2			
Coal Export Policy		4/15		5/6		
Ottawa Summit		4/15				
Ottawa Summit: East-West Trade					5/20	
Trade Relations-Mexico					5/29	
U.S. Trade Policy		5/20				
Shoe Import Restrictions					6/23	

Meeting Dates (Number of attendees in parentheses)

March 19, 1981 (21)
April 2, 1981 (19)
April 15, 1981 (24) (Vice President attended)
May 6, 1981 (23) (Vice President attended)
May 20, 1981 (35) (President and Vice President attended)
May 29, 1981 (25) (President and Vice President attended)
June 23, 1981 (26) (President and Vice President attended)

* Presidential Priority in Strategic Plan

SUMMARY OF CABINET COUNCIL ACTIVITY: HUMAN RESOURCES

July 15, 1981

Page 1 of 1

Agenda Topic.	Reviewed/ Discussed	Directed Further Study	Decided		Postponed Did Not Discuss
			Council Policy	Presidential Policy	
Social Security*				5/11	
Vietnam Veterans			6/9		

Meeting Dates (Number of attendees in parentheses)

March 16, 1981 (13) (organizational meeting)
May 11, 1981 (23) (President and Vice President attended) **
June 9, 1981 (16) (Vice President attended)

* Presidential Priority in Strategic Plan
** No meeting minutes received

SUMMARY OF CABINET COUNCIL ACTIVITY: NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

July 15, 1981

Page 1 of 2

Agenda Topic	Reviewed/ Discussed	Directed Further Study	Decided		Postponed Did Not Discuss
			Strategy	Council Policy	
Clean Air Act*	5/13 5/28 6/10	3/13	4/22 6/16 6/19		
Water Policy	4/29				3/13
Strategic Minerals		5/13			3/13
Energy Development	7/1				3/13
Oil Exploration/Outer Continental Shelf	5/13 5/28			4/3 6/8	
Fuel Use Act		6/8		4/22	
Petroleum Allocation & Price Controls		5/13 5/28	6/19		
Strategic Petroleum Reserve		5/13			
Natural Gas Decontrol*	5/28	4/29 6/8		4/22	
Animal Damage (Predator) Control		5/13			
National Parks	5/13				
Oil Lease Revenues		5/13			
Nuclear Power				6/8	
Power Marketing Organizations		5/28 6/24			
Alaskan Gas Transport Act		5/28	6/24 7/1		

SUMMARY OF CABINET COUNCIL ACTIVITY: NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

July 15, 1981

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Meeting Dates (Number of attendees in parentheses)

March 13, 1981	(12)	
April 3, 1981	(17)	(Vice President attended)
April 22, 1981	(24)	(Vice President attended)
April 29, 1981		
May 13, 1981		
May 28, 1981	(24)	
June 8, 1981	(24)	
June 10, 1981	(25)	
June 16, 1981	(26)	
June 19, 1981	(30)	
June 24, 1981	(21)	
July 1, 1981	**	

* Presidential Priority in Strategic Plan

** No meeting minutes received

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SUMMARY OF CABINET COUNCIL ACTIVITY: FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

July 15, 1981

Page 1 of 1

Agenda Topic	Reviewed/ Discussed	Directed Further Study	Decided		Postponed Did Not Discuss
			Strategy	Council Policy	
Farm Bill*	3/16 5/5				
Dairy Price Support*				3/16	
Commodity Loans	3/16				
Grain Embargo*	3/16				
Humanitarian Wheat Reserve				5/5	
International Wheat Reserves				5/20	5/5

Meeting Dates (Number of attendees in parentheses)

March 16, 1981 (15)
May 5, 1981 (11)
May 20, 1981 (10)

* Presidential Priority in Strategic Plan