

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR DON REGAN

FROM: BUD MCFARLANE *rem*

SUBJECT: Advice to the President

2/25/93

I want to raise a matter which seems to me of considerable importance concerning how the President receives advice from his Cabinet and White House staff. There are many models for providing advice to the President and we should pursue the one which the President prefers. The experience of the first term suggests that the President looks to his Cabinet Officers as the primary source of policy advice. On a given issue that advice often involves the views of more than one Cabinet Officer and consequently once recommendations are received within the White House, they must be faithfully integrated into a single presentation of the issue. In national security affairs, the responsibility for presenting comprehensive policy recommendations has rested with the NSC staff. We have made it our practice to include the views of others on the White House staff in our submission to the President. These include the views of those responsible for the budget, for legislative affairs and for political and public affairs. But the process is oriented toward order through the submission of a single document as opposed to multiple proposals which then must be integrated by the President.

It may be that I am wrong and that the President would prefer to receive the direct views of individual Cabinet and White House Senior Staff Officers. If that is the case, then that is how we should proceed. My own experience, however, is with the single integrated approach and consequently if the President prefers another course he would be better served by another National Security Advisor.

As you know, we are entering a period in which the President will deal with a number of issues of great complexity and over which there is a rich diversity of opinion within the Administration -- arms control and other East-West issues are salient cases in point. In order to reach decisions, the President deserves to receive the views of his Cabinet Officers and Senior Advisors in their respective domains. I stress the matter of "respective domains" for it seems to me inappropriate for example, for a White House staff officer to be offering advice beyond his area

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of assigned responsibility. But here again, the President's view should govern.

Let me be clear. I am making two points. First, that Cabinet Officers within the national security community should feel free to offer whatever advice they believe appropriate and expect that it will be faithfully transmitted by the NSC staff to the President. Second, that White House staff principals should also feel free to submit to me their recommendations, not on the policy content but on how alternative decisions will be received in their respective domains -- legislative, political and so forth. All of these views would then be faithfully submitted to the President in a single -- indeed the only -- written presentation to the President. I would very much appreciate your confirming to me which of the above or other alternative approaches the President prefers.

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