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MR

OLC 78-0951
6 March 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Liaison Staff
Coordination & Review Staff

FROM: [redacted]
Acting Legislative Counsel

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SUBJECT: Coordination & Review Staff Support to Liaison Staff

1. As I have mentioned at a previous meeting held to discuss this subject, I have decided that we need to free more time of our Liaison Staff officers in order that they be able to spend more time in contact with the committees we deal with. Essentially, Liaison Staff is our fire brigade and there's a definite need to make sure we have contact with the staffs of our committees in order to demonstrate our support to those committees, as well as to derive information which will be helpful to us in servicing their needs. If our Liaison Staff officers are to be on the Hill a large part of the time, obviously, they will be unable to work on the matters which require their presence in the office. In order to alleviate this problem, I have decided that the C&R Staff will support the Liaison Staff in preparing responses to matters which cannot be handled within a short period of time. Set forth below is an outline of procedures which I feel we should follow to accomplish this.

2. All requests for material, briefings, documents, studies, etc., from committees and Members of Congress, except for those committees which have a special charter for investigation (House Assassinations, Fraser Subcommittee, etc.) will come initially through Liaison Staff. Upon receipt of the request, the appropriate Liaison Staff officer will take the following steps:

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Liaison Staff:

a. Determine whether the request is clear and if not will clarify and refine the request with the appropriate committees, etc.

b. Determine whether the matter can be handled within a short period of time, usually one working day.

c. If the matter can be handled in a short period of time, he will take appropriate steps to ensure the preparation of a response.

d. If the material cannot be handled in a short period of time, he will forward the material to the Chief, C&R Staff, supplementing the request with the following:

(1) the background of the request, if any (committee objectives, etc.);

(2) why the specific request was made;

(3) any guidance as to the form of the response as well as the substance of the response;

(4) any guidance on where to look for the information and with whom the matter should be coordinated; and

(5) whether the response should come back through Liaison Staff prior to being forwarded to me (in most cases, it should go back through Liaison Staff for information).

e. Determine whether an oral interim should be accomplished, and if so, do it.

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C&R Staff: When C&R Staff receives a request for support from Liaison Staff, the appropriate C&R officer should do the following:

a. Clarify any ambiguities with the appropriate Liaison Staff officer.

b. Determine whether a written interim response is necessary, and if so, prepare the interim. The interim response should contain the following:

(1) A reference to incoming correspondence.

(2) A partial, substantive response, if possible (for example, when someone writes in concerned about a particular activity, you may wish to say that we appreciate his concern, etc., etc.).

(3) A reference should be made to contact with a staff member, as appropriate.

(4) In most cases, it should contain an estimated completion date.

If the interim contains a partial response, it should go back through Liaison Staff on its way to me. Otherwise, it can come directly to me with a copy to Liaison Staff.

c. Formulate the response.

(1) Request information needed to prepare the response from the appropriate components. In most cases, the request for information should be in writing in order to provide an appropriate audit trace.

(2) If the above mentioned components raise problems which need clarification, notify the appropriate Liaison Staff officer, who will contact the committee, etc., for necessary clarification.

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(3) Draft the response and forward to me via Liaison Staff (in some few cases it may be okay to forward directly to me with a copy to Liaison Staff, but this should be done in coordination with Liaison Staff). (Also, remember that Registry should be in the loop in both interim and final responses in order that [redacted] can maintain her tickler system.)

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3. The above procedures, while designed essentially to free more time of the Liaison Staff officers, are also designed to ensure the timeliness of responses. Cooperation between both staffs is essential.

4. I am sure adjustments in these procedures will come about as a result of our working with it and through teamwork working out improvements. Let's start now. If we wait for perfection before we proceed, we'll never take the first step forward.

5. Finally, all Liaison Staff secretaries should be instructed on what matters they can handle without involving a staff officer and they should be given direction on how to respond. What this means is, to the extent possible, the secretaries should handle as many matters as they can. [redacted]

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Distribution:

1 - Each Add'e
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OLC:[redacted]:ndl (6 March 1978)

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