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White House Statement on the Administration's Revised Travel Policy

May 9, 1991

The President has directed the adoption of a new White House Policy on the use of military aircraft by the Chief of Staff and National Security Adviser, based upon the recommendations of Counsel to the President C. Boyden Gray. The new policy is designed to avoid any questions about their use of military aircraft.

- The President believes that the national security-related reasons behind the former policy remain sound and make commercial air travel an unacceptable alternative for the Chief of Staff and National Security Adviser in many instances.
- Nonetheless, to ensure that military aircraft are used only when necessary, the new policy will require the White House Counsel's Office to review on a case-by-case basis all requests for travel on military aircraft.
- In the case of official travel, use of military aircraft will be authorized where security, communications, or scheduling needs require the use of military aircraft.
- In the case of personal travel, the President has decided that not only must there be a determination that security, communications, or scheduling needs require use of military aircraft but also that there is an immediate and compelling need for personal travel. The policy would permit, for example, travel on military aircraft to attend to the serious illness of a close relative when security, communications, or scheduling needs would prevent travel on commercial aircraft.
- To avoid the appearance that taxpayer dollars are being used to subsidize political travel, the President has decided to prohibit political travel on military aircraft by the Chief of Staff and National Security Adviser unless the official purpose for travel is predominant or the President approves the travel.
- For mixed official and political travel or mixed official and personal travel, the policy allows the use of military aircraft for predominantly official travel if security, communications, or scheduling needs require the use of military aircraft. To ensure that there is no question about the official purpose behind any trip, the Counsel's Office will be required to make a determination that a trip is predominantly official before the trip will be treated as official.
- The current reimbursement policy for all nonofficial travel is being retained. The Chief of Staff and National Security Adviser will be required to reimburse the Government at commercial coach rates plus one dollar any time that they travel on military aircraft for personal or political reasons. Where the Chief of Staff or National Security Adviser take an official trip and also engage in an incidental political activity on the trip, some part of commercial coach fare will be charged to the sponsor of the political event.
- The new policy does not apply to those members of the Cabinet (including specifically the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the Attorney General) who, pursuant to longstanding policies, regularly use Government aircraft for official and unofficial travel. The responsibilities of these Cabinet members are such that they require instantaneous secure communications capability with the White House, their Departments, other Agencies, and the Congress. In an emergency, they must also be able to return to Washington, or to proceed to other destinations, on an expedited basis. These Cabinet members also have a heightened need for security because the nature of their official duties and their public visibility substantially increase the likelihood of threats to their personal safety.