Until just a few days before the conference, Clark Clifford expected to attend; he would, of course, have been a prime contributor to the discussion of the White House staff's work in the early period of the Truman administration. Quite unexpectedly, however, he was asked by President Carter to undertake a special diplomatic mission abroad—a request he could neither decline nor postpone.

The principal discussants, therefore, in the second segment of the conference were—again in alphabetical order—Donald Dawson, William J. Hopkins, E. A. Locke, Jr., Philleo Nash, and Robert C. Turner. All but Mr. Locke are also represented in this section by written statements prepared in response to the conference organizers' call.

William J. Hopkins looks back over a lifetime of service in the White House. He succeeded to the position of executive clerk in 1943; in 1949 his title was changed to senior executive clerk, and in 1966 President Johnson designated him executive assistant to the president, a position he retained during the Nixon administration until his retirement in 1971. In his statement Mr. Hopkins stresses the importance to the effective functioning of the White House of the morning staff conference, which he describes in some detail. He also underscores the importance of President Truman's personal work habits and of his trust in people.

Donald S. Dawson served from 1947 to 1953 as administrative assistant to the president, his special assignment being personnel matters. His essay describes the scope of these responsibilities and the manner in which he interacted with the president. Mr. Dawson is now a practicing attorney in Washington, D.C.

Philleo Nash's statement recounts his particular duties which related to minority groups. Although his relationship to the president was rarely direct—for much of the time David Niles was Nash's immediate superior—Mr. Nash supplies insights about Mr. Truman's attitude and actions on minority problems. Mr. Nash later served as lieutenant governor of Wis-
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cousin and as U.S. commissioner of Indian affairs. An anthropologist by training, he is now on the faculty of American University.

Robert C. Turner, who until his death in December 1978 was distinguished professor of business economics and public policy at Indiana University (where he also served as vice-chancellor), had two opportunities to learn about White House operations. He served as an assistant to John Steelman from 1946 to 1948 and, four years later, as a member of the Council of Economic Advisers. In between, he was a frequent White House consultant. From this vantage point, he discusses the staff's functioning, with special emphasis on Steelman's role and the importance of the speech-writing process. One question that emerges here is whether there was a chief of staff in the Truman White House, a matter which recurs—and more than once—in the discussion.

Edwin A. Locke, Jr., after an assignment in postwar China, was special assistant to the president in 1946 and 1947. His duties involved liaison and "trouble shooting," some of which he describes in the course of the discussion. Mr. Locke is now the president and chief executive officer of the American Paper Institute.
As one who was privileged to work in the White House Office during President Truman's administration, I want to devote my comments to his outstanding strengths as an administrator and as a human being. In my nearly forty years of White House experience no one set a comparable tone. His leadership produced efficient and effective operations with less confusion, fewer false starts, less overlapping, and other demoralizing procedures. President Truman was a man of compassion. He liked people, he trusted people, and in turn he engendered a feeling of unqualified loyalty and devotion among his staff.

To my mind, President Truman's most effective tool in interoffice administration was his morning staff conference. I have often wondered why political scientists studying the presidency have not placed more emphasis on the effectiveness of this device. Keeping in mind that each president must operate in a manner with which he feels comfortable, to my knowledge no other president has used this system. The opportunities this device presents for coordination and the development of good staff relations are without limit. While it is true that the staffs of other presidents have held regular staff conferences, they have not been presided over by the president himself and therein lies their defect.

President Truman convened the staff conference each morning at the same hour in the Oval Office. He sat at his desk and the staff sat in chairs and on a sofa in a semicircle around the desk. Just prior to the conference each morning he completed his dictation to his personal secretary. In keeping with his consideration for others, after some months of holding the meeting at earlier hours, the time was changed, as I recall, to 9:30 A.M. to accommodate those members of the staff who found it hard to make the earlier time. The conferences lasted for approximately one half hour and were carried on in a relaxed atmosphere. Customarily each one was attended by the dozen or so top staff members housed in the West and East wings. The president gave everyone in attendance
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an opportunity to bring up matters of concern in their particular fields of operation. The press secretary would discuss his dealings with the press. The appointments secretary would run over the schedule and possibly make recommendations and secure commitments for future appointments. The staff member involved in presidential personnel matters would cover this area and might make recommendations and receive commitments for pursuing a particular course of action in recruitment. The staff official concerned with labor-management relations might have ready for consideration and signature by the president a proposed Executive Order. Those engaged in the preparation of presidential speeches or messages would have topics for discussion, since policy decisions were so closely entwined with speech preparation. Each participant was encouraged to express his views, whether or not the specific matter under discussion was in his specialty. And during all this the president would interject his thoughts, his directives, and his philosophy.

The president maintained two desk files. The one on his left, with tabs for each of those attending the daily conference, was his receptacle for accumulating documents that he wished to hand out to the staff at the morning conference. These ordinarily covered a great panorama of presidential activity—letters to be answered, personnel recommendations, suggestions for public appearances, proposals for speech subjects, ideas that needed study and consideration by the staff or by the appropriate department or agency. It was a simple way for the president to turn assignments over to his staff and to help dispose of his mountain of paper work. It was an excellent opportunity for the staff to absorb in some depth the president's philosophy, his concern for all citizens, his desire for staff cohesiveness, and his general attitude toward the presidency and its relations with the other branches of government. Receiving guidance and instructions as a group directly from the president each morning made it possible for each participant to know more of what was going on and tended to encourage good feelings among the individual members of the staff.

Of course, on many issues and on many occasions the president had to see particular staff members on a one-to-one basis and for a more protracted time on complex matters of policy, speech preparation, and the like, but the work accomplished in the morning staff meeting was a great timesaver for the president as well as for members of the staff. It gave the staff a feeling of being on the team. It acquainted each member with the type of material and the type of assignments the president was passing along to his fellow staffers. It fostered cohesion and cooperation rather than competition and combativeness. It helped decrease dupli-
cation of effort, the confusion, and the lack of direction that results from working at cross purposes.

The executive clerk, first Judge [Maurice] Latta and later myself, was privileged to attend the morning staff conference. It helped us tremendously in keeping track of documents, in establishing better relationships with members of the staff, and in absorbing the basic philosophy of the president and the staff and allowed us to provide better guidance to the civil service personnel, whose job it was to serve the president and the members of his staff loyally and to the best of their abilities.

The flow of paper in the White House office under President Truman was probably the best I have experienced, and that was due principally to his working habits and his trust in people. Except for those documents that a member of the staff felt ought to be discussed with the president personally, a great percentage of the documents ready for signature were carried in to the president by the executive clerk. This encompassed a wide range of documents—enrolled bills, Executive Orders, proclamations, executive clemency cases, treaties, directives to the departments and agencies, nominations, commissions, messages to the Congress, and so on. These documents constituted the signature folder. In addition, the executive clerk brought the president the reading folder. This contained primarily gleanings from the mail—letters from members of the cabinet, the Congress, state and local officials, important personages, and the general public. These folders were delivered to the president routinely twice a day, in the morning and right after lunch. Customarily he would dispose of the material for signature in my presence, so that it could be processed immediately. This system made it easy to keep track of documents and to answer with dispatch queries from responsible officials in the departments and agencies as to the status of documents in which they had a legitimate interest. An inability to respond promptly and in an informative way to such queries is the surest way I know to engender in the departments and agencies the feeling that the president's office is inefficient, and such a feeling can only be harmful to the president.

The material in the president's reading folder customarily reappeared the next morning in the form of dictation to his personal secretary or in the material the president distributed from his desk file to the staff at the morning conference. Thus, it was relatively easy to know the status of documents without an elaborate and wasteful system of coordination. It was not always thus in other administrations. Undue delays in acting on documents when all the necessary preliminary work has been completed can lead to all kinds of complications. Pressures build from the departments and agencies when time is of the essence, and press leaks
frequently occur when action is not taken on a timely basis. Such problems were held to a minimum by President Truman's orderly way of handling office procedure.

Having worked under seven administrations, I must admit that memory is a fallible thing; and as I try to recall the happenings of forty years in the West Wing, many events of various administrations tend to blend and merge together. But some things about President Truman do stand out.

I remember President Truman as a decisive man. He could make an important decision and get a good night's sleep without rehashing it and being overtaken by doubts. In fact this quality was so well recognized, even by the opposition, that very early in the Eisenhower administration the staff was urged to be decisive.

I remember President Truman as a man who was gentle and kind and considerate of his staff. In spite of his press image as a profane man in the “Give 'em Hell Harry" style, I never heard him utter an unkind word to or about any member of his staff. In other times, this too was unusual.

I remember President Truman as a thoughtful man. For example, in his desk he kept cloth swabs to wipe off the pens used at signing ceremonies before the pens were handed to recipients, thus avoiding any possible ink stains on clothing.

I remember President Truman as a punctual man. You could set your watch by his coming and going. When he went to lunch, if he left word that he would return at 2:00 P.M., he was back without fail, not at 2:05, not at 1:55, but at 2:00 P.M.

I remember President Truman as a man who could not be influenced by pressure groups. Once, walking through the office, he spied a collection of pressure mail, letters numbering in the thousands, on a subject of current interest. When told what they were, he said, "You can light a match to that so far as I am concerned."

I remember President Truman as a man with a great knowledge of history and a keen sense of history as it related to the country and to the presidency. He was probably the most avid student of history ever to occupy the office. With this knowledge he consistently analyzed current problems in their historical sense, bearing in mind how other leaders had responded through the ages. On more than one occasion I heard him say, in effect, that if there was a clean break with all that had gone before, we would have chaos. This sense of history was one of his great strengths and provided unusual insight in handling many of the problems he faced.

I remember President Truman as a man who insisted on having all
the facts before making a decision. This was evident on many occasions—for example, in the steps he took in governmental reorganization to assure that he was aware of all facets of a problem. Speaking of his staff in *Mr. President*, Mr. Truman said:

To make sure I get the facts I need, I had to reorganize the office and staff of the President. A staff has been set up in the White House which consists of the press secretary, the assistant to the President, the secretary who makes appointments, the legal counselor, the personal executive, the correspondence secretary and the aides representing the three defense services. The staff reports to me every morning and gets its instructions for the day.

He went on to say that he set up his cabinet on the same basis that his staff was set up and that his purpose in setting up the Central Intelligence Agency was to get the facts he needed on a coordinated basis.

I remember President Truman as a diligent man. To the best of my recollection in all his years in office, with the exception of a few days he spent at Walter Reed Hospital during the final year, he was at his desk in the Oval Office every working day that he was in Washington, morning and afternoon. I know of no comparable record.

I remember President Truman as a discerning man. While he liked people and trusted most of them, he had disdain for those who developed “Potomac fever” and for the “cookie pushers” and some of the “striped-pants boys.”

I remember President Truman as a sentimental man. After the Blair House shooting incident, the president received more than seven thousand letters expressing regret over the incident and gratitude that he was unharmed. A great many of these letters were from ordinary people in Puerto Rico. President Truman insisted that a word of thanks be sent in response to each one, and he signed each of these more than seven thousand letters of acknowledgment personally.

I remember President Truman as a good judge of people. In my view his presidential appointees throughout the government, including his White House staff, were at least equal to the best in our times.

I remember President Truman as one who supported his staff. During the 1953 transition, the gentleman who was designated as office manager of the White House for the incoming administration was making certain demands on some of the Truman staff that might be considered premature. President Truman happened to see him one day at the receptionist’s desk in the West Wing and said, in effect, “I hear you have been pushing some of my people around. I don’t like it!” With that, the president turned on his heels and walked away. Things were on a better footing after that.
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I remember President Truman as a man who carefully guarded the constitutional prerogatives of the presidency. By his use of the veto he insured, on several occasions, that such powers were not eroded by legislative action.

In his recent book Stephen Hess intimates that during the Truman administration the White House staff first began to interpose itself between the members of the cabinet and the president. If such was the case, it was not evident to me, for I heard the contrary philosophy expounded throughout the office on many occasions. Likewise, I would take issue with Hess's premise that there may have been more dissension among the Truman staff than among the staffs of other modern presidents. That was not my impression. By and large I remember it as a cohesive staff whose loyalty to the president was the glue that held the team together.

My first boss in the White House, an astute observer whose service there began in 1909, used to say that what any president needed on his staff were generalists with political instinct of the highest order. In large measure, I believe that President Truman's top staff met that criterion.

The human instincts of the president, coupled with the qualities of his staff, combined to make the Truman years pleasant for me.