

White House

C O P Y

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

Finished Feb. 1941

At the National Defense Conference, the President will appoint a committee to study the organization of the War Relocation Authority. The committee will report to the President on the progress being made in regard to National Defense and the manner of expanding the same.

March 6, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF WAR
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
HON. WILLIAM S. KNUDSEN
HON. SIDNEY HILLMAN

The enclosed "Confidential Memorandum" was sent to me by a trustworthy public servant of high character who had an active part in the Congressional investigation of the World War twenty years ago.

I wish the four of you who constitute the OPM would talk this subject over, confidentially, and let me have your conclusions as to whether I should set up some very small organization to prepare any and all data which may be called for in the future.

F. D. R.

/s/ FDR

RECEIVED IN FILED

Room 2055

205 JAN 1944

NOTE 1. File (See Nav)

Up File (See Nav) A8-3

Doc. File (See Nav)

Copy File (See Nav)

File (See Nav)

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 803073

A8-3

C O P Y

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

March 4, 1941

As the National Defense Program progresses we can expect that both Houses of Congress either through their Regular Committees or through Select Committees will inquire into the progress being made in regard to National Defense and the manner of expending funds in connection therewith.

At this time it would appear to be in the Administration's interest to have the manner and method of presenting information to these Committees worked out in advance so that the facts may be promptly and accurately presented in a logical and business like way. Several Departments and Agencies will no doubt be involved and called upon to present witnesses before the Committees. These Agencies undoubtedly have sufficient facts to answer any question that may be raised by the Committees, but the manner in which such facts are presented is of vital importance.

It is generally known before Committee inquiry is initiated which fields are to be covered, and therefore data can be prepared in advance of hearings for presentation to the Committee or Committees. The sequence in which such information is presented for each Department or Agency is of importance. The manner in which it is presented is of greater importance. When all facts are available and well presented, in most instances, a complete answer is made and the correct conclusions drawn. When only a partial story is told, or the facts are not well or logically presented, it frequently results in a conclusion being reached not entirely in keeping with the facts and one not actually justified by them.

It is therefore suggested that in each Agency, if such steps have not already been undertaken, some one person capable of making a good witness before a Committee, be put in charge of gathering and coordinating necessary information and making preliminary plans for its presentation to a Committee, and also regulating the order in which witnesses should appear for the purpose of presenting pertinent and necessary facts.

It is also suggested that if agreeable to the Committee or Committees, and it is generally their desire, some one be appointed who can assist the Committee in obtaining the necessary witnesses or information which the Committee desires on any particular subject; in other words, some one to act as a liaison officer between the Committees and the several Agencies that may be scheduled to appear before them.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority WWD 803073

Experience has shown that when action as outlined above is taken, the proceedings progress in a logical order, the facts are fully and carefully presented, and the Committee gets a correct picture or whatever situation is being looked into. Likewise, whatever publicity follows is generally of a favorable nature because a complete story is told, rather than part of one, and the correct picture when fairly presented to the press, enables the proper impression to be made at the outset.

Whenever investigations are started, necessarily, unless some procedure as outlined above is followed, suggestions will come to the Committee from many sources, friendly and unfriendly. People who know only a little about a particular matter will be called to testify and tell only a partial story. The first impression, because of lack of full information, may not be good, and like all first impressions may be lasting and detrimental to good work being done by some agency in connection with the National Defense Program.

To summarize:

1. Have facts prepared now.
2. Maintain control by having some one see that witnesses knowing the facts and able to present them are prepared beforehand.
3. Agree to assist a Committee or Committees in securing accurate information.

* * * * *