



Center for the Study of the Presidency

**Study Group on Presidential Science and Technology
Personnel and Advisory Assets**

**PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP TO ENSURE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
IN THE SERVICE OF NATIONAL NEEDS:**

A Report to the 2008 Candidates

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Center for the Study of the Presidency

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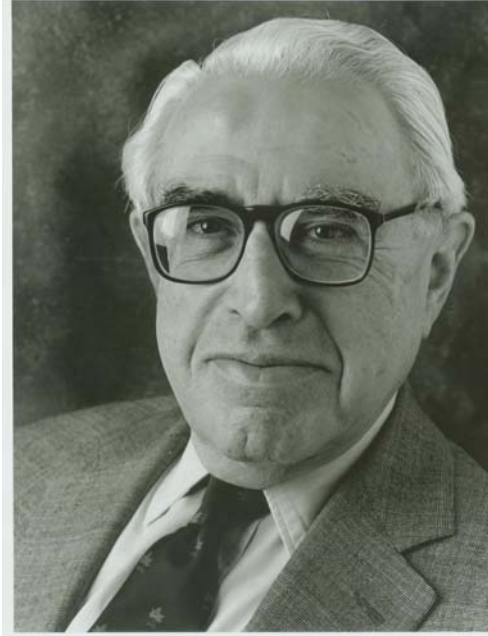
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Dedication to William T. Golden 1909 - 2007

William T. Golden was the foremost leader of U.S. science policy in the 20th century and well into the 21st century. Among his many contributions to American science in over 50 years of service to the nation, was his report to President Harry S. Truman that led to the establishment of the position of Science Adviser to the President and the President's Science Advisory Committee, and his service as Presidential adviser on the initial program for the National Science Foundation. Decades later he was the force behind the creation of the position of Science Adviser to the Secretary of State. Over the decades Golden also was influential in international science policy. In 1990 instituted the Carnegie Group, a twice-yearly gathering of the G-8 science ministers and advisers for broad informal discussions.

Golden served as co-chair, with Nobel laureate microbiologist Dr. Joshua Lederberg, of the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology and Government, a major policy effort that addressed requirements for science and technology expertise throughout federal and state government. Golden also served numerous organizations, universities and government entities as a trustee, officer or board member, including the Carnegie Institution of Science, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Museum of Natural History, the Mount Sinai Medical Center and the New York Academy of Sciences.

Golden was a rare individual of imagination, keen insight and devotion to the public good. He is remembered as a wise counselor, a generous benefactor, and a loyal friend by all those who had the privilege of knowing him. With great affection and gratitude for his devotion to American science and good governance, we dedicate this effort to him and express appreciation to the Golden Family Foundation for its support.

Preface

Presidential Legacies and Lessons

Our great Presidents of the past have provided policy and institutional legacies that are the foundation of today's national science, technology and educational efforts.

President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 signed legislation creating the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to engage the nation's scientists and engineers in the service of the Federal government. The Academies – as the NAS, the National Academy of Engineering, the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council are now known – each year engage thousands of scientists, engineers and health professionals who serve pro bono to advise the government. Lincoln also signed the 1862 Morrill Act mandating the establishment of our great land grant universities to provide education for the “industrial class” in science, mechanical arts and military tactics.

In 1944 President Franklin D. Roosevelt tasked Vannevar Bush, director of the wartime Office of Scientific Research and Development, to advise on how the scientific resources devoted to war “should be used in the days of peace ahead for the improvement of the national health, the creation of new enterprises bringing new jobs, and the betterment of the national standard of living.” Dr. Bush's landmark report, *Science – The Endless Frontier*, led to the establishment of the National Science Foundation and influenced the course of national science policy to this day.

President Truman – in response to report recommendations by William T. Golden, a Wall Street Banker who became the foremost leader of U.S. science policy in the 20th century and well into the 21st century – established the position of Science Adviser to the President and a council of scientific advisers. President Dwight D. Eisenhower formalized both in 1957 shortly after the Soviet Union challenged US scientific dominance by launching Sputnik I. President Eisenhower had a grand strategic vision of how to approach national security and global challenges that integrated all elements of national power. He had experienced the power of military technology in winning World War II and, as President, he made sure his Presidential planning and organization had the scientific and technological assets to manage Cold War problems.

President Kennedy stunned the world when he announced that the US would commit itself to landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth before the end of the decade. With that announcement, President Kennedy initiated a great national project that renewed the excitement of peoples everywhere for discovery, invention and innovation.

These are just a few examples of Presidential initiatives by leaders who have understood the power of science and technology to achieving national goals and made sure that they had, within the White House, relevant expertise and advisory structures.

The individual who assumes the office of the Presidency in January 2009 has the opportunity to build on the early legacies of our great Presidents, legacies that have expanded educational opportunities, transformed governance, and ensured the strengthening of science and technology in support of the country's economic prosperity, national security, and general well-being.

The great challenges of the 21st century – globalization, international economic and trade relations, energy, environment, proliferation, health – are infused with science and technology. Accordingly, our capacity to comprehend these challenges and to manage them will require world class science and technology capabilities from the White House to the school house. The next President must work to assure these essential national strengths.

David M. Abshire
President
Center for the Study of the Presidency

Executive Summary

MEMORANDUM TO THE 2008 CANDIDATES

SUBJECT: Presidential Personnel and Advisory Requirements for Science and Technology

The next President will confront major policy challenges that have essential ingredients of science and technology – the renewal of prosperity for Americans in a changed world, environmental protection, climate change, food and water scarcity, energy, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The success of the Presidency will likely be determined by his effectiveness in dealing with these great challenges and others yet over the horizon. Now well into the 21st century, science and technology are embedded in every aspect of modern life. Accordingly, cohesive and informed policies and effective policy implementation for these and other complex problems will require marshalling the best science and technology capabilities within the Federal government and throughout the nation.

Both Presidential candidates should begin relevant planning even prior to the election. During the transition and immediately upon taking office the new President should act –

- To ensure scientific and technological expertise among the President's immediate circle of advisers and throughout the Executive Office of the President (EOP);
- To draw on the insights and foresight of non-governmental leaders who are on the frontlines of research, innovation and global advanced technology to help inform White House policies on issues with science and technology elements;
- To strengthen science and technology capabilities throughout all Federal entities and to urge their unity of purpose and agility of action in bringing science and technology to national needs; and
- To convey to the public the message that the nation's science and technology enterprise can help meet 21st century challenges and build a stronger, healthier and more prosperous future.

To enable success in doing so, we recommend the following actions:

1. Assistant to the President for Science and Technology (APST)

Early appointment of the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology will signal to the federal government, the country, and the international community that the new President recognizes the importance of science and technology to informed and effective governance.

The APST should be a close adviser to the President in order to provide assessments on issues bearing on national security, the economy, environment, health, foreign policy and other areas. The APST should be and should be seen as a central member of the President's team.

The APST profile ideally should include –

- Solid science or engineering credentials,

- High standing in the professional community,
- Managerial experience, and
- Experience with national government, ideally with both the executive and the legislative branches.

Although the APST should be an individual with outstanding science and technology credentials, his/her role is to serve as a policy adviser to the President, not as a “special pleader” for science.

Candidates for the position of APST should be identified in the summer prior to the election, in the same time frame as candidates for other senior White House appointments and should be appointed immediately after the Presidential inauguration. Such an early appointment is critical –

- To ensure that science and technology are an integral part of the White House team and strategy from the outset;
- To provide White House colleagues with insight and guidance on science and technology-related elements of immediate policy challenges,
- To provide a source of guidance on matters related to science and technology in the federal budget;
- To oversee and drive the selection of capable, well-qualified science and technology leaders in the departments and agencies; and
- To ensure the swift mobilization of Executive Branch science and technology resources prior to the confirmation of top Presidential appointees in science and technology.

As a member of the President’s circle of advisers in a position with broad policy responsibility, the APST should attend Cabinet meetings and National Security Council meetings dealing with significant science and technology-related issues. Because of the close ties between science and technology and the economy and future prosperity of the nation, the APST should develop close working ties with the Council of Economic Advisers.

2. Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)

OSTP was established by legislation (Public Law 94-822). It is a part of the Executive Office of the President and is intended to serve as the primary source of support and coordination for Presidential initiatives in which science and technology are key components.

Rapid Senate confirmation of the APST as the Director of OSTP should be sought in the early days of the Administration. The OSTP Director should work closely with other White House senior staff to ensure that OSTP resources are deployed to support work throughout the White House and the EOP.

In appointing the four OSTP Associate Directors, the OSTP Director should collaborate with the National Security Advisor, the Homeland Security Advisor, the Domestic Policy Advisor and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to secure shared appointments between OSTP and their respective offices.

Effective working ties between OSTP and the Congress are essential. In fact Congress could benefit from assessments and advice like those provided by OSTP for the Executive Branch. The President

could offer to collaborate with the Congress to establish a new “Congressional Office of Science and Technology Policy” that would provide the Congress with science and technology advisory assets comparable to those in the White House. Such an office would facilitate common understandings of the scientific and technological underpinnings for policy.

3. National Science and Technology Council (NSTC)

The NSTC is a Cabinet-level body created by Executive Order and chaired by the President. It is the primary instrument to coordinate the agency policies, programs and budgets that bear on science and technology.

The President should renew the 1993 Executive Order or issue a new NSTC Executive Order that defines the NSTC mandate in a manner appropriate to the Administration’s organization. Strong Presidential affirmation of the importance of the NSTC would ensure that the participating agencies commit senior personnel and budgets to the NSTC process.

4. President’s Council of Advisers on Science and Technology (PCAST)

PCAST is a multidisciplinary advisory body comprised of senior leaders from the private sector, universities, and other non-governmental entities. PCAST provides assessments of current issues and insight on transformational technologies and trends that may require White House attention.

The President should define the mandate of the PCAST to encompass broad, cross-cutting issues in order to reflect the profound impact of science and technology on the economy, health, environment, energy, national security and defense. The mandate should explicitly include national and homeland security issues, including military technology.

PCAST’s insights and expertise also are important on issues for which the private sector has a dominant role, such as the revitalization of the American economy through innovation.

The sweeping mandate for PCAST will require a breadth of expertise among the members, as well as an operational approach that includes issue-focused committees with a mix of PCAST members and non-PCAST specialists. Because PCAST should be a source of insights that is independent of the government, it should be chaired by one of its members.

5. White House Staff

In addition to the APST and related entities (OSTP, PCAST), there are other White House bodies that must manage science- and technology-related issues and responsibilities. These include the Office of Management Budget, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Council of Economic Advisers, the Office of National AIDS Policy, the Office for Health Policy, and the Office of the US Trade Representative.

Appointments and staffing throughout White House offices should include individuals with science and engineering training.

To ensure the integration of science and technology expertise throughout the White House and the Executive Office of the President, the APST should collaborate with colleagues heading these other White House and EOP entities and encourage collaboration at the staff level on projects with key science and technology components.

6. The Presidential Appointments Process

One of the obvious failures of government is a broken appointments process that has persisted through Administrations of both parties. This year, however, presents an extraordinary opportunity to improve the Presidential appointment process. For the first time in history, the nominees of the Republican and Democratic Parties are both members of the Senate. Both have called for “change” and both are devoted to improving the performance of the Federal government.

We urge a joint proposal to Congress in the fall of 2008 to call for reforms in the nomination, review and confirmation process for Presidential appointments. A joint effort by the two Presidential candidates perhaps could persuade the Congress finally to act before the end of the present Session, at least on consensus items.

7. Presidential Appointments in Science and Technology

The selection of appropriate individuals for Presidential appointment is essential to the success of the incoming President. It may prove difficult to find such individuals for positions requiring skills in science and technology because the pool is small and government employment may not be attractive to many. Each Presidential nominee should establish a prestigious, committed, small advisory team charged with identifying worthy candidates for each for the top science and technology-related positions.

The identification of potential candidates should begin early in the fall, even prior to the election. Candidates should be given clear guidance on what is required to meet all disclosure, financial, and political requirements for the position or positions under consideration.

After the election, a clear statement by the President-elect regarding the importance of science and technology to the Nation’s economic prosperity, national security and general well being and a Presidential commitment to fact-based decision-making will facilitate recruitment of outstanding candidates and will establish important ground rules for governance.

Early nomination and fast-track confirmation of the President’s team of top science and technology appointees are important to set the tone for the administration and to have strong leadership in place from the outset.

* * *

Science and technology play a central role in our society. They enable us to understand the challenges we confront and to develop solutions to overcome them. They are the principal tools by which we can leave a better world for our children. White House leadership is essential in their application. Our recommendations are intended to enable the incoming President to marshal and utilize essential science and technology assets to address the major policy challenges of our times.

Presidential Leadership to Ensure Science and Technology In the Service of National Needs

Introduction

History's judgment about the new President will likely be determined by his wisdom and skill in confronting pressing challenges with substantial science and technology content. Examples of such challenges include:

- Reestablishing America's innovative capacity – harnessing our scientific and technological capabilities to strengthen the economy and maintain US prosperity in an increasingly competitive world;
- Reversing the environmental degradation and climate change that demand that we alter our behavior in radical ways today so that future generations may thrive tomorrow;
- Responding to the crises in the lives of the poor and technologically disadvantaged for whom food and water scarcity, disease, and lack of educational opportunities seem immutable and whose predicament threatens many countries' political stability;
- Meeting the world's energy demands in a way that enables economic growth, sustains the planet, and assures energy security;
- Addressing security threats, including the spread of nuclear weapons and materials, the lowering of technical barriers to the development or acquisition of bioweapons, the possibility of a global infectious disease pandemic, and vulnerability to cyber attack; and
- Preserving our national security through the application of technology in weapons and intelligence in ways that preserve global peace.

In short, the capacity to understand and respond to the great challenges of our time requires the sensitive and careful application of science and technology.

At the same time, the creative application of the nation's scientific and technical skills can bring a message of hope and continuity. The journey of exploration, discovery, and invention that is characteristic of our science and technology enterprise is not only fundamental to our economic prosperity, security, health and general well-being, but also is part of our national identity.

Children's imaginations are fired by stories of the Lewis and Clark expedition sent out by President Jefferson to explore our vast continent and prepare the way for settlement, and of the Apollo program launched by President Kennedy to inspire the nation and to convey abroad a clear message of American capability.

The Nation's record of scientific and technological achievements over the last half century has made real Winston Churchill's prophesy that "the empires of the future are the empires of the mind."¹

Our military dominance, economic vitality and global reputation as an innovative powerhouse are built in large measure on a foundation of creative, imaginative and useful science and technology. Now well into the 21st century, science and technology are embedded in every aspect of modern life as shown by the pervasive changes brought about by advances, for example, in computing and communication technology. Science and technology have fundamentally changed the way we work and play.

A President who inspires the American people with his vision of our nation's great talent – *the capacity to imagine, to discover, to invent* – can help us overcome our many challenges and build a stronger, healthier and more prosperous future. A President who champions this vision will shape a Presidency of historic consequence.

Such achievements require, first and foremost, a President who recognizes the fundamental role that science and technology play in the modern world and who is able to communicate that understanding and its implications. The new President's message should be that there is changed leadership in Washington and that he intends to make Washington as savvy about science and technology as the challenges and opportunities of the times demand.

In order to achieve this aim, the new President must act swiftly to assure the capacity in the Executive Office of the President and throughout the government to apply science and technology in pursuit of national goals.

This report is intended to provide the new President with the means to achieve this vision.

Key White House Science and Technology Advisory Assets

Key White House science and technology advisory entities and organizational structures are in place, but require strong Presidential affirmation of their importance. Early action, beginning in the transition, is needed to ensure a science and technology-informed and effective Presidency from the outset of the administration.

1. Assistant to the President for Science and Technology

In order to develop effective policy, the President needs a trusted adviser who can provide balanced, informed assessments of the scientific and technological components of a full range of policy and political issues. This need reflects the reality that science and technology are pervasive elements of policy relating to national security, the economy, health, environment, energy, foreign policy and many other areas of Presidential interest.

¹ [Sir Winston Churchill](#), British politician (1874 - 1965). Speech at Harvard University, September 6, 1943.

The position of Assistant to the President for Science and Technology (APST), a Presidential appointee not requiring Senate confirmation, was created to serve this need. An early appointment to this position is essential. Indeed, the early appointment of a highly qualified APST will signal to the federal government, the country, and the international community that the President recognizes the importance of science and technology to informed and effective governance.

During the transition and in the early days of the administration, the APST can assist in vetting candidates for critical top Presidential science and technology appointments throughout the executive branch. He or she also can help ensure that sound science and technology policy judgments are incorporated into the development of the federal budget, a process that will require the President's attention immediately upon assuming office. Equally crucial the APST can help meet the need from the outset for senior staff in the White House with scientific and technical expertise to ensure the capability to respond to various potential crises, such as a terrorist incident.

The APST can serve an important role in mobilizing the scientific and technological resources of the federal government in the service of the new President's overarching strategic plan. This function is particularly important in the early days of a new administration because there will be inevitable period of delay in the confirmation of senior Presidential appointees, including those in science and technology. Thus, some capability in these areas in the White House is necessary to help manage the science and technology components of early Presidential initiatives.

Over the longer term, the APST can help to nurture relationships that are important to the President. The formation of effective working relationships with the Congress will be a priority for the new President and the APST can help ensure that there is a common understanding of the scientific and technical foundations for government policy.

Because of the pervasive impacts of science and technology, the APST can help establish fruitful relationships with stakeholders outside the Federal government – state governments, universities, the National Academies and other non-governmental bodies, and the business community.

Moreover, because US capabilities in science and technology are universally respected around the globe, science and technology can be a valuable tool in international relations. As the senior scientist in the US Federal government, the APST serves as a counterpart to Ministerial-level leaders in other governments and, through these relationships, can advance US interests.

Recommendations

In the summer prior to the election, the Presidential candidates and their respective transition teams should identify candidates for the position of APST at the same time as they are identifying candidates for other senior White House appointments.²

² The term "Assistant to the President" historically has a special meaning. The designation indicates a policy-level position and a member of the President's inner circle of advisers. Others of equivalent rank include the Assistant the President for National Security Affairs, the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and others.

The profile of the APST should include:

- Solid science or engineering credentials,
- High standing in the professional community,
- Managerial experience, and
- Experience with national government, ideally with both the executive and the legislative branches.

Most important, however, is the APST's relationship with the President. The APST should be someone in whom the President can have confidence and who is a trusted and valued confidant. He or she should be an individual who serves as a policy adviser to the President, not as a "special pleader" for science.

Immediately after inauguration the President should appoint the APST as a key member of the White House team. Such an early appointment is critical –

- To ensure that science and technology are an integral part of the White House team and strategy from the outset;
- To provide White House colleagues with insight and guidance on science and technology-related elements of immediate policy challenges;
- To provide a source of guidance on matters related to science and technology in the federal budget;
- To oversee and drive the selection of capable, well-qualified science and technology leaders in the departments and agencies; and
- To ensure the swift mobilization of Executive Branch science and technology resources prior to the confirmation of top Presidential appointees in science and technology.

As a member of the President's circle of advisers in a position with broad policy responsibility, the APST should attend Cabinet meetings and National Security Council meetings dealing with significant science- and technology-related issues.

2. Office of Science and Technology Policy

On May 11, 1976, President Gerald R. Ford signed Public Law 94-282, the National Science and Technology Policy, Organization, and Priorities Act. The Act established the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) in the Executive Office of the President, designated the responsibilities of

the Director, and provided for four Associate Directors.³ The APST customarily has served as OSTP Director.⁴

OSTP is the primary source of support for White House initiatives for which science and technology are key components; it serves as the operational hub for the President's science and technology initiatives. OSTP also carries responsibility for support of the President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology and the National Science and Technology Council. (Both are discussed below.)

In effect, OSTP is the entity that supports and manages senior collaborative networks on key science and technology issues on behalf of the President – networks throughout the Executive Office of the President, among the federal agencies, with state counterparts, between the federal government and the academic and private sector communities, and between the White House and the leadership of other countries.

Recommendations

The new President should appoint the APST to be Director of OSTP soon after the APST's appointment to the White House staff and should urge the Senate to confirm the APST swiftly as OSTP Director.⁵

The OSTP Director should work closely with other White House senior staff to ensure that OSTP resources are deployed to support work throughout the White House. In appointing the four OSTP Associate Directors, the OSTP Director should collaborate with the National Security Advisor, the Homeland Security Advisor, and the Domestic Policy Advisor, and Director of the Office of Management and Budget to secure shared appointments with OSTP and their respective offices. The latter relationship is particularly significant because of the importance of assistance to OMB on science- and technology-related issues as they arise in the budgets of departments and agencies.

It is also crucial to foster effective ties with the Congress and to facilitate a common understanding of the scientific and technical underpinnings of federal policy. Congress now lacks sophisticated advisory assets in science and technology. A Presidential offer to work with the Congress to craft a new "Congressional Office of Science and Technology Policy" could be one component in rebuilding an important collaborative tie. Such an office could provide the Congress with science and technology advisory assets comparable to those in the White House structure.

³ OSTP's continuing mission is set out in the National Science and Technology Policy, Organization, and Priorities Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-282). Appendix I is a copy of the Act.

⁴ Some President's, however, have chosen not to appoint an Assistant to the President for Science and Technology. The role of science and technology in the White House and the influence of the OSTP Director has waxed and waned in parallel with the Presidents' scientific and technological interest and understanding.

⁵ A recent report by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars includes a detailed set of recommendations for OSTP. That report is *OSTP 2.0 Critical Upgrade – Enhanced Capacity for White House Science and Technology Policy Making: Recommendations for the Next President*, by Bond, Jennifer Sue; Schaeffer, Mark; Rejeski, David; Nichols, Rodney W.; Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, June 2008.

3. The National Science and Technology Council

The General Accountability Office (GAO) in its 2005 report, *21st Century Challenges: Reexamining the Base of the Federal Government*, outlined problems in developing the governmental capacity to meet the challenges of the 21st century.⁶ Topping the list was the “stovepiping” of federal agencies and programs – the inability to integrate the contributions of individual agencies’ policies, programs and budgets to serve overarching strategic objectives. The GAO offered the example of the myriad of federal food safety programs managed across several federal agencies that need to be linked to each other to promote the safety and integrity of the nation’s food supply, but which in fact operate independently of each other.

The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), a Cabinet-level body created by Executive Order and chaired by the President, can provide the kind of networking of the agencies that is required to manage such problems. Its membership is comprised of the Vice President, the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, Cabinet Secretaries and Agency Heads with significant science and technology responsibilities, and other White House officials.

A current example reveals the importance of the NSTC’s coordination function. The new President will inevitably want to take actions to maintain the country’s endangered capacity for innovation – the capabilities throughout the economy to generate, adopt, and put to use new knowledge and to do so in a globally competitive context. The President might choose to reaffirm support for the America Competes Act of 2007 or to pursue a broader set of initiatives. Regardless of the actions that are taken, they will be addressed to multiple Federal agencies and probably will require the balancing of competing interests. As a result, the capacity of the NSTC to coordinate a plan across agencies will be essential.

The recommendations of the National Academies in *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future*⁷ spanned the human, financial, and knowledge capital that is necessary to spur innovation and create high-quality jobs. To achieve these objectives, the report recommended several actions, policies, and budgets that would affect multiple agencies and departments, as well as the states and private sector.⁸

Implementing the report’s recommendations has proved difficult for many reasons, including conflicts among agencies whose mandates lead to competing policies and programs. An example is the conflict between national security-generated policies, which serve largely to constrain international trade, and economic strategies to expand trade opportunities, which largely demand openness to the global research and development enterprise and to global markets. As a result, very little has been accomplished to implement the report’s recommendations despite the widespread acknowledgment of their validity.

⁶ The United States Government Accountability Office, *21st Century Challenges: Reexamining the Base of the Federal Government*, GAO-05-325SP, 2005.

⁷ The National Academies, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future*, The National Academies Press, Washington, D.C. 2007.

⁸ The recommendations included upgrading of K-12 science and mathematics education; increasing federal investment in long-term research across agencies; recruiting, educating and training students from within the United States and around the world; investing in manufacturing and marketing; and transforming the environment for innovation by modernizing the patent system, realigning tax policies, and ensuring affordable broadband access.

Any effective Presidential strategy to strengthen the country's innovative capacity and competitiveness in high-tech trade – strengths necessary to prosper in the 21st century – will be of such breadth and complexity as to require an organizational means to resolve conflicts among agencies and to mobilize and coordinate the policies, programs and budgets across the diverse entities that comprise the Federal enterprise. The NSTC is intended to serve that role.⁹ It is important to ensure its bureaucratic effectiveness.

NSTC's capacity to mobilize executive branch agencies – most of which have strong agency loyalties and cultures resistant to outside direction – depends on a strong Presidential mandate, a clear agenda, and excellent analytical support. The seniority of NSTC participation from the agencies is influenced by Presidential interest and accordingly has varied from administration to administration.¹⁰

Recommendations

The National Science and Technology Council is an essential mechanism to mobilize the agencies –

- To develop and implement comprehensive strategies,
- To construct associated budgets,
- To coordinate and to track implementation of policies and programs, and
- To define roles in the many policy areas with overlapping responsibilities.

A strengthened NSTC would encourage a governmental unity of purpose, agility in response, and creativity of thought in meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

To reinvigorate the NSTC, the President should renew the 1993 Executive Order or issue a new NSTC Executive Order that defines the NSTC mandate in a manner appropriate to the administration's organization. Strong Presidential affirmation of the importance of science and technology in the service of national needs and of the NSTC structure and processes is required to ensure that the member agencies commit senior personnel and budgets to the NSTC process.

4. President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology

Many frontier technologies are emerging outside the government's range of vision or sphere of influence. The United States remains a global leader in science and technology, but our dominance is challenged. For example, Japan is a global leader in nanotechnology research and development; China dominates in many areas of advanced technology manufacture and design; France is a leader in nuclear power and particle physics; and the U.K leads in stem cell research and other areas of advanced biotechnology. Accordingly, new transformational technologies that could impact US national security or economic interests may be developed or commercialized first outside the United States.

⁹ The NSTC operates under the authority of a November 23, 1993 Executive Order, that was issued by President Clinton and that continued unchanged under President Bush. Appendix II sets out that Executive Order.

¹⁰ In this connection, it is worth noting that under President George H.W. Bush, meetings of the entity that was the predecessor to the NSTC, the Federal Coordinating Council for Science and Technology, could be attended only by the senior members. Working-level standing committees spanned the entire spectrum of science and technology issues and ad hoc panels were convened on specific problems as they arose. Bromley, D. Allen, *The President's Scientists: Reminiscences of a White House Science Advisor*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994, page 63.

Drivers of these changes include large multinational firms undertaking research and development activities abroad, small and medium-size advanced technology enterprises intent on securing global markets, extensive global scientific and engineering networks enabled through the Internet, and the national policies of governments abroad pursuing technology-intensive economic and security strategies.

Just as there are transformational technologies, there also are transformational trends in the technology enterprise. China and India's impressive scientific and technological advancement and the concomitant stagnation of the US educational system and innovation infrastructure are prime examples. Other examples are the acceleration of the pace of innovation driven by global research teams and the acceleration of technology penetration, as exemplified by the rapid global adoption of cell phones. These developments, too, may impact US national security and economic interests.

In order to guide federal policy, foresight regarding the risks and benefits of new discoveries and technological developments also is of critical importance. Nanotechnology, sensors, genomics, synthetic biology, neuroscience, new food and drugs, and clinical research all are examples of frontier technologies that may have socially important applications or, alternatively, adverse uses and unforeseen hazards. Political leaders must decide whether policy actions are required in the face of such developments and, if so, which policy instruments are desirable and appropriate.

As a result, the President and the White House staff need a flexible and responsive means of tapping into the academic and private-sector communities that are on the front lines of global research, innovation and commercialization enterprises. Such an entity is needed both to address major current issues as they arise and to provide advance warning regarding transformational technologies and trends that may require White House attention.

The President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology (PCAST), with a membership comprising senior leaders from the academic and private sector communities, was created fifty years ago to meet this need. A strong PCAST brings important non-governmental expertise and perspective to White House decision-making.

Over the decades the role and influence of PCAST has changed from administration to administration. In the Cold War period, PCAST was critical in counseling Presidents on military and space issues. President Nixon abolished PCAST when some members voiced criticism publicly of his plan to develop a supersonic transport (SST) aircraft.

PCAST was reestablished in 1990 by President George H.W. Bush and provided counsel on a broad range of issues. In that Administration, all PCAST members held Presidential appointments under executive order and held general waivers from the President of conflict-of-interest rules on the grounds that their advice to the President was of such value that he was prepared to waive these restrictions, recognizing that each member had provided full disclosure prior to appointment. In order to reinforce the importance of PCAST, President George H.W. Bush hosted its first meeting at Camp David. Subsequently President George H.W. Bush participated in many of the meetings, usually whenever he was in Washington.¹¹

¹¹ Bromley, page 92.

PCAST continued in an influential advisory role throughout the administration of President Clinton during which the PCAST chairman was a high-tech leader who met frequently with the President. In recent years, however, PCAST's role has been relegated to consideration of a more narrow set of issues associated primarily with the education and research enterprise and to oversight of such focused programs as the National Nanotechnology Initiative, a responsibility that might best be assigned to an agency.

Recommendations

The President should define the mandate of PCAST to encompass broad, cross-cutting Executive Office issues, reflecting the sweeping role of science and technology on the economy, health, environment, energy, national security and defense. Insights from PCAST can be particularly important on issues for which the non-governmental sectors, including both business and the academic world, have a dominant role.¹²

The mandate should explicitly include national and homeland security issues, including military technology. This is particularly important in light of heightened security threats and the centrality of technology in national and homeland security strategies. Some PCAST members, if not all, should hold Top Secret security clearances.

A broad mandate for PCAST will require a collective breadth of expertise, an operational method that includes issue-focused committees with a mix of PCAST members and non-PCAST specialists, and substantial staff support. The Defense Science Board may serve as a useful operational model.

Ensuring a Science and Technology-Enhanced White House

In addition to the APST and related entities, there are other entities in the White House and the Executive Office of the President that are pervaded by science- and technology-related issues and responsibilities –

- The Office of Management and Budget, the largest office within the Executive Office of the President, presides over the budget process and advises the White House on federal policy, management, legislative, regulatory and budgetary issues affecting all science and technology-related issues.
- The National Security Council has traditionally confronted challenges relating to military readiness, intelligence and foreign policy with high science and technology content. National security concerns now also encompass climate change and energy, natural resources and environmental issues.
- The Homeland Security Council must confront issues associated with weapons of mass destruction as well as natural disasters, infectious diseases, bioterrorism and cyber warfare.

¹² Some of the membership should be drawn from small- and medium-sized companies. Over 90 percent of American companies have less than 100 employees and many are prominent innovators in emerging technology sectors. For example of the 1200 nanotechnology firms in the US, over 80 percent have less than 10 employees.

- The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) oversees the development of environmental policy, coordinates interagency implementation of environmental programs, and mediates key policy disagreements among Federal, state, tribal, local government and private citizens.
- The Council of Economic Advisors' broad mandate to address economic challenges includes implementing the American Competitiveness Initiative designed to strengthen the country's innovation capacity.
- The Office of National AIDS Policy and the Office for Health Policy direct initiatives concerned with domestic and international health challenges.
- The Office of the US Trade Representative provides policy leadership and negotiating expertise in areas including agriculture, intellectual property, environment and natural resources, telecommunications and manufacturing and industrial affairs.

Science and technology expertise is an essential asset for informed and effective operation of all these offices.

Recommendations

To ensure the integration of science and technology expertise throughout the White House and the Executive Office of the President, the APST should collaborate with colleagues heading other White House and EOP entities to consider how science and technology affect broad US security, economic, health, sustainability, foreign policy and other interests.

Working relationships should be developed and facilitated through joint appointments of the four OSTP Associate Directors, who in turn would facilitate relationships with PCAST and NSTC networks through OSTP.

Equally important, appointments and staffing throughout White House offices should include individuals with science and engineering training.

A Paradigm Change in Presidential Appointments

The Council for Excellence in Government has stated that “the country’s continued well-being and progress, and perhaps its survival, depend substantially on strong federal management by qualified people.”¹³ There is no doubt that the next President needs world-class public servants for the formulation and execution of public policy in all areas, including those permeated by science and technology. Finding and recruiting individuals to serve in important policy positions is always difficult. But the challenge for science and technology positions is especially demanding because the pool is small and many such individuals may not value a government appointment.

¹³ Trattner, John H., *The Prune Book: The 60 Toughest Science and Technology Jobs in Washington*; The Council for Excellence in Government, Sponsored by the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology, and Government; Madison Books; Lanham, New York, London, 1992.

An added burden is an appointment process that has become increasingly protracted and intrusive in recent years. There is a pressing need to reform and to accelerate the appointment process for all Presidential appointments in order to avoid discouraging the most qualified individuals, including those for senior science and technology positions.

The 2001 report of the Brookings Institution's Presidential Appointee Initiative report, *To Form a Government: A Bipartisan Plan to Improve the Presidential Appointments Process*, colorfully described the process as "nasty and brutish without being short" and thus likely to discourage talented individuals from accepting the call to public service. The report outlined a number of excellent recommendations for improving the system for nominating and confirming presidential appointees:¹⁴

- Create a permanent Office of Presidential Personnel in the Executive Office of the President;
- Simplify and standardize the information-gathering forms used in the presidential appointments process, and develop and maintain online, interactive access to all such forms and questionnaires for persons going through the appointments process;
- Reduce the number of positions requiring FBI full-field investigations;
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the ethics requirements imposed on political appointees, with the goal of striking a balance between concerns for the integrity of those who serve and the need to eliminate intrusive or complex disclosure requirements;
- Ensure annual changes in executive-level salaries equal to changes in the Consumer Price Index;
- Reduce the number of positions requiring Senate confirmation;
- Limit the imposition of "holds" by all Senators to a total of no more than 14 days;
- Require Senate confirmation votes within 45 days after receipt of a nomination;
- Allow nominations to be reported out of their respective Senate committee without a hearing upon the concurrence of a majority of committee members of each party;
- Reduce the number and layers of political appointees by one-third; and
- Grant the president renewed executive reorganization authority to de-layer senior management levels of all executive departments and agencies.

¹⁴ Reports by The National Academies and the 9-11 Commission also have urged an overhaul of the appointment process.

The Brookings recommendations are as valid today as they were in 2001; little has changed.¹⁵ Although the Congress has considered various proposals for reform and passed bills through committee, none has achieved final passage or signature by the President. Accordingly, without new urgent action by the Congress and the White House, appointments by the new President are in danger once again of being snared in a bureaucratic and political morass that potentially will delay senior Executive Branch leadership in science and technology and all other policy arenas and put the country at risk.

Recommendations

This year presents an extraordinary opportunity to improve the Presidential appointment process. For the first time in history the nominees of the Republican and Democratic Parties both are members of the Senate. Both have called for “change” and both are devoted to improving the performance of the Federal government.

We urge a joint proposal to Congress by the candidates in the fall of 2008 calling for reforms in the nomination, review and confirmation process for Presidential appointments. Perhaps a joint effort by the two Presidential candidates could persuade the Congress and the White House finally to act in this Session.

Ensuring a Strong Executive Branch Science and Technology Team

In light of the centrality of science and technology to the missions of many agencies, science and engineering training is valuable preparation for such Cabinet and Cabinet-level posts as the Secretaries of Energy, Health and Human Services, Agriculture and Interior, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency – all jobs with high scientific content.

In addition, in order to assure a qualified leadership team from the very outset of the administration, early “fast track” appointment is essential for a minimum number of sub-Cabinet Presidential science and technology appointments.

These include:

Department of Agriculture

- Under Secretary for Food Safety

Department of Commerce

- Under Secretary for Industry and Security

Department of Defense

- Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics
- Director, Defense Research and Engineering

¹⁵ Affirmed in private correspondence with Paul C. Light, now Paulette Goddard Professor of Public Service at the Robert Wagner School of Public Service, New York University. Dr. Light was Senior Adviser to the 2001 Brookings study, serving at that time as Brookings Institution’s Vice President and Director of Governmental Studies.

Department of Energy

- Under Secretary for Science
- Under Secretary of Energy and Environment
- Under Secretary for Nuclear Security/National Nuclear Security

Department of Health and Human Services

- Assistant Secretary for Health, Office of Public Health Science and Surgeon General
- Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration
- Director, National Institutes of Health

Department of Homeland Security

- Under Secretary for Science and Technology

Department of Interior

- Director, US Geological Survey

Environmental Protection Agency

- Assistant Administrator for Research and Development

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

- Administrator

The criteria for selection of candidates for such positions should include science and technology training and sophistication in the scientific and technical issues that they will confront.¹⁶

Recommendations

By mid summer of 2008 the Presidential candidates will have initiated efforts to identify choices for senior White House and Cabinet positions. In this context the candidates should establish a prestigious, committed, small advisory team charged with identifying worthy candidates for each of the top 50 or so science and technology-related positions.

Scrutiny of candidates should begin early in the fall even prior to the election. Candidates should be given clear guidance on what is required to meet all disclosure, financial, and political requirements for the position or positions under consideration.

A clear statement by the President-elect regarding the importance of science and technology to the nation's economic prosperity, national security and general health and well being and a commitment to

¹⁶ A fuller list is included in a forthcoming report on this subject that is being prepared by the National Academies. There are several positions that are essential to governmental decision-making relating to science and technology – *e.g.*, the Director of the National Science Foundation, the National Science Board, the Commissioners of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Science Advisor to the Secretary of State – that are term appointments. These positions deserve close attention when vacancies occur.

fact-based decision-making in federal policy will facilitate recruitment of outstanding candidates to the administration and establish important ground rules for governance.

The President's choices for the top-tier Presidential science and technology appointments should be announced in the same time frame as other equivalent positions in the agencies.

Early appointment and fast track confirmation of the President's team of top science and technology appointees are important to set the tone for the administration and to have in place strong leadership from the outset. Indeed, the recruitment of strong and capable people is essential if the President is to achieve his objectives.

* * *

Our Nation confronts many difficult challenges, nearly all of which have substantial scientific and technical content. But we have the opportunity to overcome these challenges and to build a future of increased opportunities for people around the globe. In order achieve this vision, however, the new President must establish the means to reinvigorate the government's capability to integrate scientific and technical input in the development and execution of national policy. This is an essential step in enabling a Presidency of historic impact and influence.

Appendix I

National Science and Technology Policy, Organization, and Priorities Act Public Law 94-282, Signed by the President Ford on May 11, 1976

Title I: National Science Engineering, and Technology Policy and Priorities

Declares it to be the national policy that the Federal investment in science and technology must be addressed to the priority needs of the Nation, including: (1) promoting conservation and efficient utilization of natural and human resources; (2) protecting the oceans and coastal zones; (3) strengthening the economy and promoting full employment; (4) assuring adequate supplies of food, materials, and energy; (5) improving the quality of health care; and (6) improving the nation's housing, transportation, and communication systems.

Declares that the United States shall adhere to a national policy for science and technology which includes the following principles: (1) the continuing development and implementation of a national strategy for determining and achieving the appropriate scope, level, direction, and extent of scientific and technological efforts based upon a continuous appraisal of the role of science and technology in achieving goals and formulating policies of the United States; (2) the enlistment of science and technology to foster a healthy economy in which the directions of growth and innovation are compatible with the prudent and frugal use of resources and with the preservation of a benign environment; and (3) the development and maintenance of a solid base for science and technology in the United States.

States the declaration of Congress that the Federal Government should maintain central policy-planning elements in the executive branch in mobilizing resources for essential science and technology programs, in securing appropriate funding for those programs, and to review systematically Federal science policy and programs and to recommend legislative amendments when needed.

States that, in order to expedite and facilitate the implementation of the policy enunciated in this Act, the following coordinate procedures are of paramount importance: (1) Federal procurement policy should encourage the use of science and technology to foster frugal use of materials, energy, and appropriated funds; to assure quality environment; and to enhance product performance; (2) explicit criteria, including cost-effectiveness principles where feasible, should be developed to identify the kinds of science and technology programs that are appropriate for Federal funding support and to determine the extent of such support; and (3) Federal promotion of science and technology should maximize quality of research, stability of scientific and technological institutions, and, for urgent tasks, timeliness of results.

Title II: Office of Science and Technology Policy

Presidential Science and Technology Advisory Organization Act - Establishes in the Executive Office of the President the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Provides for the appointment of a Director, four Associate Directors, and other personnel.

Specifies the functions of the Office, including to: (1) advise the President of scientific and technological considerations involved in areas of national concern; (2) evaluate the scale, quality, and effectiveness of the Federal effort in science and technology and advise on appropriate actions; (3) advise the President on scientific and technological considerations with regard to Federal budgets; and (4) assist the President in providing general leadership and coordination of the research and development programs of the Federal Government.

States that the Office shall serve as a source of scientific, engineering, and technological analysis and judgment for the President with respect to major policies, plans, and programs of the Federal Government.

Requires the Director to establish an Intergovernmental Science, Engineering, and Technology Advisory Panel to identify and define civilian problems at State, regional, and local levels which science, engineering, and technology may assist in resolving or ameliorating.

States that the Office shall prepare and annually update a five-year forecast which shall identify and describe situations and conditions which warrant special attention, involving current and emerging problems of national significance that are identified through scientific research, or in which scientific or technical considerations are of major significance.

Requires the Director to: (1) serve as Chairman of the Federal Coordinating Council for Science, Engineering, and Technology established under title IV; (2) serve as a member of the Domestic Council; and (3) at the request of the National Security Council advise the Council in such matters concerning science and technology as relate to national security.

Directs the President to transmit an annual Science, Engineering, and Technology Report to the Congress, which shall be prepared by the Office.

Title III: President's Committee on Science and Technology

Requires the President to establish a President's Committee on Science and Technology.

Requires the Committee to survey, examine, and analyze the overall context of the Federal science, engineering, and technology effort including missions, goals, personnel, funding, organization, facilities, and activities; and to submit a report of its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the President within two years of its activation.

Requires the President to transmit the report to Congress.

Terminates the Committee 90 days after submission of its report to the President.

Title IV: Federal Coordinating Council for Science, Engineering, and Technology

Establishes the Federal Coordinating Council for Science, Engineering, and Technology, to be chaired by the Director, and to consider problems and developments in the fields of science, engineering, and technology and related activities affecting more than one Federal agency, and to recommend policies designed to provide more effective planning and administration of Federal scientific, engineering, and technological programs.

Title V: General Provisions

Authorizes appropriations to carry out titles II and III of this Act through fiscal year 1977

Appendix II

National Science and Technology Council Executive Order 12881 Signed by President Clinton on November 23, 1993

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the law of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment. There is established the National Science and Technology Council ("the Council").

Section 2. Membership. The Council shall comprise the:

- (a) President, who shall serve as Chairman of the Council;
- (b) Vice President;
- (c) Secretary of Commerce;
- (d) Secretary of Defense;
- (e) Secretary of Energy;
- (f) Secretary of Health and Human Services;
- (g) Secretary of State;
- (h) Secretary of the Interior;
- (i) Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration;
- (j) Director, National Science Foundation;
- (k) Director of the Office of Management and Budget;
- (l) Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency;
- (m) Assistant to the President for Science and Technology;
- (n) National Security Adviser;
- (o) Assistant to the President for Economic Policy;
- (p) Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy; and
- (q) Such other officials of executive departments and agencies as the President may, from time to time, designate.

Section 3. Meetings of the Council. The President or, upon his direction, the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology ("the Assistant"), may convene meetings of the Council. The President shall preside over the meetings of the Council, provided that in his absence the Vice President, and in his absence the Assistant, will preside.

Section 4. Functions.

- (a) The principal functions of the Council are, to the extent permitted by law:
 - 1. to coordinate the science and technology policy-making process;
 - 2. to ensure science and technology policy decisions and programs are consistent with the President's stated goals;
 - 3. to help integrate the President's science and technology policy agenda across the Federal Government;
 - 4. to ensure science and technology are considered in development and implementation of Federal policies and programs; and
 - 5. to further international cooperation in science and technology.

The Assistant may take such actions, including drafting a Charter, as may be necessary or appropriate to implement such functions.

(b) All executive department and agencies, whether or not represented on the Council, shall coordinate science and technology policy through the council and shall share information on research and development budget requests with the council.

(c) The Council shall develop for submission to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget recommendations on research and development budgets that reflect national goals. In addition, the Council shall

provide advice to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget concerning the agencies' research and development budget submissions.

(d) The Assistant will, when appropriate, work in conjunction with the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the National Security Adviser.

Section 5. Administration.

(a) The Council will oversee the duties of the Federal Coordinating Council for Science, Engineering, and Technology, the National Space Council, and the National Critical Materials Council.

(b) The Council may function through established or ad hoc committees, task forces, or interagency groups.

(c) To the extent practicable and permitted by law, executive departments and agencies shall make resources, including, but not limited to, personnel, office support, and printing, available to the Council as requested by the Assistant.

(d) All executive departments and agencies shall cooperate with the Council and provide such assistance, information, and advice to the Council as the Council may request, to the extent permitted by law.



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The Center for the Study of the Presidency (CSP), founded in 1965, is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that provides an institutional memory of and for the U.S. Presidency in a changing world. The Center is the only organization that systematically examines past success and failures of the Presidency and relates its findings to present challenges and opportunities. By highlighting past Presidential successes and failures, the Center seeks to offer wisdom to current and future Presidents, their staffs, Congress, and to students and journalists studying the Presidency. Today, both the Executive and Legislative Branches are high compartmentalized, and this is the enemy of strategic thinking, action, and the best use of resources. In addition, the nation is polarized even though public opinion polls show a desire to break these barriers and face our nation's real public policy issues. Lessons learned from past American experiences offer insights on how best to deal with these challenges. The Center organizes conferences, working groups, and publications to preserve the Presidential memory; examines current organizational problems through a historical lens; and nurtures future leaders.

Selected Publications: 1998-2008

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