

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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July 12, 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Authorities and Responsibilities of United States  
Chiefs of Mission

I am sending a letter of instruction to each of my Ambassadors and Chiefs of other U.S. Diplomatic Missions setting out their authorities and responsibilities. The text of the letter is attached.

I expect your support and cooperation in ensuring that the activities of your department or agency are conducted in accordance with the authorities and responsibilities of Chiefs of Mission, who serve as my personal representatives. Please circulate this memorandum and my letter to your staffs in the United States and abroad, and maintain it as part of the working files in all appropriate offices.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. Bush".

PRESIDENTIAL LETTER  
TO CHIEFS OF MISSION

Dear Mr./Madam Ambassador:

I send you my very best wishes and appreciation for your efforts as Chief of the United States Mission [in (full official name of country)/at (international organization)]. We are entering a new, exciting time of change in international relations. The postwar era is drawing to a close. As leader of the democracies, our Nation faces an historic opportunity to help shape a freer, more secure, and more prosperous world, in which our ideals and our way of life can truly flourish. As President, I intend to advance these objectives and United States interests around the globe, and I look to you, as my personal representative [in (country)/at (international organization)], as my partner in this task.

As my representative, you, along with the Secretary of State, share with me my constitutional responsibility for the conduct of our relations with (country)/(international organization). I charge you to exercise full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all Executive branch U.S. offices and personnel [in (country)/at (international organization)], except for personnel under the command of a United States area military commander, personnel under the authority of the Chief of another U.S. Mission (for example, one accredited to an international organization), or personnel detailed to duty on the staff of an international organization.

The Secretary of State is my principal foreign policy advisor. You will receive policy guidance and instructions from him or from me. Except in the most unusual circumstances, as I shall determine, messages on policy proposals and policy implementation will be sent to you through official Department of State channels. You will normally report through the Secretary. I want to emphasize that the Secretary of State has the responsibility not only for the activities of the Department of State and the Foreign Service, but also, to the fullest extent provided by law, for the overall coordination and supervision of United States Government activities abroad.

You are to provide strong program direction and leadership to all Executive branch agency activities to carry out United States foreign policy. It is also your responsibility to foster conditions in which our regional or worldwide activities can

achieve success. I have notified all heads of departments and agencies accordingly and instructed them to inform their personnel in the United States and abroad.

You should cooperate fully with personnel of the U.S. Legislative and Judicial branches [in (country)/at (international organization)] so that United States foreign policy goals are advanced, security is maintained, and Executive, Legislative, and Judicial responsibilities are carried out.

You should instruct all Executive branch personnel under your authority of their responsibility to keep you fully informed at all times of their current and planned activities, so that you can effectively carry out your responsibility for United States Government programs and operations. You have the right to see all communications to or from Mission elements, except those specifically exempted by law or Executive decision.

As Commander in Chief, I retain authority over United States Armed Forces. On my behalf you have responsibility for the direction, coordination, supervision, and safety, including security from terrorism, of all Department of Defense personnel on official duty [in (country)/at (international organization)], except those personnel under the command of a U.S. area military commander. You and such commanders must keep each other currently informed and cooperate on all matters of mutual interest. Any differences that cannot be resolved in the field should be reported by you to the Secretary of State; unified commanders should report to the Secretary of Defense.

I expect you to report with directness and candor. If there are policies or programs with which you or personnel under your authority disagree, the Secretary of State and I will always welcome the opportunity to consider alternative courses of action. Nevertheless, there can be only one United States policy, which I expect you and all members of your Mission to follow and articulate.

I am committed to a lean personnel profile overseas for reasons of foreign policy, security, and economy. Thus, it is my policy that overseas staffing be tied directly to the accomplishment of specific national goals, and reduced whenever and wherever possible. I therefore want you to assess regularly the staffing

levels and overall costs of every element of your Mission to make certain they are consistent with our overall efforts to reduce the official U.S. presence abroad. You may initiate changes when you believe the staffing of any agency is either inadequate or excessive to the performance of essential functions. Every agency under your authority, including the Department of State, must obtain your approval for any change in the size, composition, or mandate of its staff. You must make the hard choices, and I expect you to relate Mission resources directly to priority policy and program activities, genuine need, and safety. However, you should be aware that overall staff reductions notwithstanding, some diplomatic missions may, as the need arises, be asked to accept augmentation to meet new and pressing national security demands.

If an Agency head disagrees with you regarding staffing, he may inform the Secretary of State, to whom I have delegated responsibility for resolving such issues. In the event the Secretary of State is unable to resolve a dispute, the Secretary of State and the Agency head will present their respective views to me, through my Assistant for National Security Affairs, for decision. In such instances, both the Secretary of State and I will uphold the party arguing for the best use of increasingly scarce resources.

The protection of all United States Government personnel on official duty abroad and their accompanying dependents is a crucial responsibility in this dangerous time. You must always keep security in the forefront of your concerns. The security of your Mission is your direct, personal responsibility. I also expect you to support strongly counterintelligence and counterterrorism activities that enhance security both locally and in the broader international context.

I know you share my total commitment to fair and equitable treatment for all, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, or national origin. It is your duty to demonstrate our shared commitment to equal employment opportunity. I expect you to run your Mission in an atmosphere free of discrimination. From my own personal experience as an Ambassador, I know that there are many ways you can foster a positive climate in this important regard by your own emphasis and example.

I also expect the highest standards of professional and personal conduct from all United States Government personnel. Public service is a trust requiring government personnel to place public duties above private interests. Accordingly, they must abide by the highest ethical standards. To ensure that the American people retain complete confidence in the integrity of their government, government personnel must abide not only by the letter of regulations but also by the spirit of public service. You have the authority and my full support to ensure that ethical conduct is a hallmark of our presence overseas, both on and off the job.

I am sure you will represent the United States with imagination, energy, and skill. You have my full personal confidence and best wishes.

Sincerely,