THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 10, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

As an integral part of present steps to increase the effectiveness and economy of Federal agencies, I want coordination of government activities outside of Washington significantly strengthened. That is to include improvement of the management and direction of Federal offices throughout the country by the chief departmental officials in Washington, and provision for an inter-agency working group for closer coordination across department and agency lines in important centers of Federal activity outside of the National Capital area.

More than ninety percent of all Federal employees work outside of the Washington area. Decisions affecting the expenditure of tens of billions of dollars are made in the field. Federal programs have their impact on State and local governments largely through the actions of regional and local representatives of our departments and agencies. Most important, Federal officials outside of Washington provide the principal day-to-day contact of the Government with the citizens of this country and generally constitute the actual point of contact of Federal programs with the economy and other phases of our national life.

In the international assistance programs, previously separate U.S. efforts are being brought together in order to provide a common focus on the needs and problems of individual countries. Here at home we must similarly bring more closely together the many activities of the Federal Government in individual states and communities throughout the nation.

Although each Executive agency and its field organization have a special mission, there are many matters on which the work of the departments converge. Among them are management and budgetary procedures, personnel policies, recruitment efforts, office space uses, procurement activities, public information duties, and similar matters. There are opportunities to pool experience and resources, and to accomplish savings. In substantive programs, there are also opportunities for a more closely coordinated approach in many activities, as on economic problems, natural resources development, protection of equal rights, and urban development efforts.

As a first step in bringing Federal officials outside of Washington closer together, I have directed the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission to arrange for the establishment of a Board of Federal Executives in each of the Commission's administrative regions. Where associations of Federal regional officials exist in other regional centers they will be continued. Each Executive department and agency is directed to arrange for personal participation by the heads of its field offices and installations in the work of these Federal Executive Boards. These activities are not to require additional personnel but provide means for closer coordination of Federal activities at the regional level.

The cooperative activities of Federal Executive Boards must be undertaken primarily through the initiative of the heads of our field activities. The Chairman of the Civil Service Commission and the Director of the Bureau of the Budget will furnish the Boards from time to time with guides on official goals and objectives in the management field and will arrange for periodic briefings by national executives of the government. Each of the Boards will consider management matters and interdepartmental cooperation and establish liaison with State and local government officials in their regions. A clearinghouse will be provided in the office of the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission on problems and recommendations submitted by the regional Boards.

Following a reasonable period for evaluation of these initial steps, recommendations are to be prepared by the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission and the Director of the Bureau of the Budget for continuing improvement of the management and coordination of Federal activities.

Within each department, I want the chief officers of each agency, particularly the chief operating officials for administrative matters, to make a critical appraisal of pending field management procedures with the principal regional officers of that agency. The Director of the Bureau of the Budget shall provide guidance to department and agency heads on their internal appraisals of field management. Over all, new emphasis shall be placed on management skills in support of improved economy, efficiency, and the substantive effectiveness of the Executive Branch of the Government.