

WHITE HOUSE TRANSITION PROJECT

Interview of

Tim Horne

Conducted by

Martha Kumar

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AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. SAUNDERS: Good morning, everybody. ... My name is Ron Saunders, I chair the board of directors for the Public Manager, which is owned by the Association for Talent Development. We're your hosts for the Government Workforce conference. me.

So, let me introduce our first plenary session. They're going to talk about Presidential transition, and it is that time of year. I was actually talking to a reporter yesterday. This -- I've been through seven Presidential transitions as a member of the SES. What that means is that you're vulnerable. And I had a chance to see all sorts of different permutations on the theme. And it brings to mind for us public servants that famous quote from Yogi Berra, who said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it." And that's essentially how we have to treat transition. It doesn't matter who wins, our obligation is to serve the government of the day, and preparing for that is no small thing. The point of the conversation I had with the reporter yesterday was to contrast the early days, at least my early days of presidential transition, my first was Reagan to Bush, and how little structure, how little structure, how little corporate memory, how little systemic tools we had back then to ensure a smooth transition of power from one Administration to the next, and then contrast that with something that our next two speakers are going to talk about, the centerpiece of which is the Transition Act of 2015, and we have someone who's actually in charge of helping to implement. So, from 1988, to today, we have come a long way, but, frankly, transition is serious enough that it warrants it.

So, without further ado, let me introduce our two plenary speakers. First, Martha Kumar, who -- you can read her bio in the book, but I will tell you, when it comes to institutional memory, she's probably it when it comes to Presidential transition and other interesting things in the White House ...

And I will tell you, she's forgotten more than most of

us will ever know about transition. And the interesting thing is that, now, with the advent of the Transition Act and some of the things that Tim Horne, her colleague, will talk about, there really wasn't a way to catalogue and chronicle all of the comings and goings that occur during a transition, and Martha was basically. And hope I can use the word past tense, because I think as much as she's been at the centerpiece and has enjoyed it, the fact that we're bringing some structure to it, I think is useful.

But Martha is a fellow at the National Academy of Public Administration. I've had the opportunity to work with her on a number of projects, and I can tell you she is a gold mine and we're honored to have her here.

She's actually going to be interviewing Tim Horne, and Tim probably has one of the most important, but hopefully, I think, in his case, least visible jobs in Washington. He is a product of the Transition Act [Edward "Ted" Kaufman and Mike Leavitt Presidential Transitions Improvements Act of 2015]. He chairs the council of career executives who are going to coordinate and manage Presidential transition, and we're already in the throes of that transition. Tim's already stood up his group. And that fact that that group exists, I think, is remarkable. It's a credit to our system of government, and Tim is going to talk about some of the things that he's working on. And, again, I think Tim's goal in life is to stay invisible.

I think if he sees his name on the front page of the Washington Post, that will be a bit of a problem. So, we'll talk about how you're going to avoid all of that, Tim.

Please join me in welcoming our first two speakers, Martha Kumar and Tim Horne.

MS. KUMAR: Good morning.

MR. HORNE: Morning.

MS. KUMAR: It's a real pleasure for me to talk to the man and the myth who is at the center of

all of the transition action. He is on the White House Transition Coordinating Council and he co-chairs the Agency Transition Directors Council. And as much as he is in the center, coordinating all of the aspects of the federal government efforts on transition, he is a person who is giving everybody else the credit. But he deserves a great deal of credit for -- for a difficult job, coordinating the political parts of the government together with the career. And it is -- so far, it has gone very well.

And I'd like to say first that in the past, when we looked at transition, if you go back to the beginning of transition legislation in 1963, that the effort was to provide some resources and some funding, and that was about it. And gradually, particularly after September 11, there was much more of a sense that transitions were a time of vulnerability and that the government needed to do a lot more than just hand out money and put some limitations on how much private funding could come in. Instead, there had to be an effort of gathering information and doing it early, having timetables.

And so, in 2010, there was legislation passed that called for pre-election spending for candidates, and that would begin after the party nominating conventions. And then there would be transition funding separately for the election itself.

And, now that Act has come in to play in both the [Donald] Trump and [Hillary] Clinton operations started on August 1, and then there will be a separate transition operation after the election. And that is covered by the 2015 legislation.

Tim, can you explain your role in the transition and with all of the new legislation? Where do you come in on it?

MR. HORNE: Okay, thanks. First of all, thanks, everybody, for being here today. It's my pleasure to be up here. I also like this format. I spend a lot of time flipping PowerPoint slides and talking about the work that I'm doing, so it's kind of a nice change to be able to sit up here and Martha's

doing the heavy lifting and I'll just respond to what she asks.

So, my role. First of all, I'm a career senior executive. I work for the General Services Administration. My home base is actually in Denver. I'm the regional commissioner for the Public Building Service, which is the real property side of GSA. So, that's my job that I'll go back to when this over. I still am involved a little bit, but for the most part, I'd say it's about 80 percent of my time is spent as the Federal Transition Coordinator. And Martha referenced the -- and it's been mentioned a couple of times today, the legislation that was passed, and it was actually passed in 2016, but it was 2015 legislation, that the goal of that legislation is to really -- is to set up an infrastructure around Presidential transition. And as Martha said, it started in '63, it was kind of built.

And so, it calls out specifically the position of Federal Transition Coordinator, and it talks about it being a career person at the General Services Administration. And I'll tell you what the legislation says I'm responsible for, but I'll tell you what I'm really responsible for, and then the lens that I look at at everything. In fact, my decision to be here today, to speak to this group was based on what I see my role as, which is the transition period is 73 days, and so my job is to help whoever the President-elect is to squeeze every minute out of that 73 days. So, all of the advanced planning, all of the coordination, all of the facilitation, speaking to a group of HR professionals like we're doing today, -- everything I do is through that lens, helping the incoming administration squeeze every minute out of the 73 days.

So, that's sort of my mantra. What the legislation says is that there's really four responsibilities for the Federal Transition Coordinator.

The first one is to coordinate all of GSA's sort of logistical and support operations, the funding that goes into the transition, so that -- just sort of

overseeing all that GSA does in support of the transition, that's one.

The second one is to, -- Martha mentioned the Agency Transition Directors Council and White House Transition Coordinating Council, is to serve on those two councils and, specifically, to co-chair the Agency Transition Directors Council along with Andrew Mayock [Acting Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget] at OMB. And that's really about facilitation across the government, sharing best practices, talking about what's been done in the past, providing some guidance about -- about how things are going to go during the transition.

So, it's that inter-agency coordination role. So, it's overseeing GSA's activities, inter-agency coordination. It's serving as a liaison with the eligible candidates. So, one of the things that's important is that any information, any support that we provide to one candidate, that we provide it equally and fairly to both candidates. And that's -- that's why -- I mean, that's part of the reason that the position was set up. So, if there are -- if there are things that, let's say, OPM or the Department of Justice or the Department of Homeland Security need to do in support of eligible candidates, that -- I coordinate that on behalf of -- on behalf of the Administration.

And then, the final thing is to -- the final responsibility of the Federal Transition Coordinator is to ensure that other agencies meet their statutory requirements for supporting Presidential transition. So, for example, OPM has a requirement to provide some information to eligible candidates, the Department of Homeland Security has a requirement to provide a vulnerability assessment around the country's vulnerability in a sense through the transition period. NARA has some responsibilities.

So, what the legislation sort of said -- there's a lot of these activities happening and they're all -- they're all in support of Presidential transition, but not officially coordinated, and that's the final role of the Federal Transition Coordinator.

MS. KUMAR: When did you begin your work?

MR. HORNE: So, I started -- I worked on the -- in 2008, I worked -- my responsibility was to support the incoming Administration, so that's one piece of what GSA does. And so, I was involved in setting up the transition offices, getting everything ready for, whether it was the [Senator John] McCain or the Obama group. And then, took on this role in March of this year. A colleague had started it, Mary Gibert, who is now a regional commissioner for public buildings here in the National Capital region, started it and then moved on to that job, and then I was asked to step in.

So, she had set it up and got it started, and then I just -- I took over in March.

MS. KUMAR: There are two basic councils, the White House Transition Coordinating Council, and then the Agency Transition Directors Council. Can you tell us what the two councils do, how they work with one other, and about their meetings?

MR. HORNE: Okay, so first of all, it really all starts with the direction from the President via the White House Transition Coordinating Council. And one of the things that the President has emphasized repeatedly is that he very much appreciates the collaboration and the cooperation, the support from the outgoing Bush Administration in 2008 and wants to provide that same or better support to whoever the incoming -- to whoever the new President-elect is this time.

So, that direction has been made very clear, and so it starts with the White House Transition Coordinating Council, and that's really senior officials at the White House. The transition efforts are led by -- on the Administration's behalf by Anita Breckenridge, who's the Deputy Chief of Staff. at the White House. So, the White House Transition Coordinating Council is -- the legislation lays out who participates in that council, who's a member of that

council. And that's really about -- it's really about providing the high level direction, providing, sort of the vision for the overall transition. There's a requirement to do a continuity exercise, which will happen later this year. That was something that happened in 2008, was that, high level table top exercise, which I've heard Josh Bolten talk about how important that was for, maintaining the security accompanying posture of the government.

So, the White House Transition Coordinating Council provides that direction and sort of overall, "Here's how it's going to go." And then, the Agency Transition Directors Council is the group that really implements that guidance. The Agency Transition Directors Council is made up of senior career officials from every Cabinet level agency, so that's 95 percent of the government, basically, is represented on that -- on that council. And that group deals -- well, first of all, there's a series of requirements in the legislation. There's key dates that we're tracking through that group. So, for example, by September 15, all -- every agency needs to have a plan for -- to have for career -- critical career leaders who will be leaving at the end of the Administration. By September 15, there needs to be a plan in place for who's going to act in those critical positions. It's also -- there's -- we've spent some time talking about what briefing materials would look like for the incoming Administration. So, the idea is, and the term that we use is to be demand-driven. So, we want to make sure that whatever -- whatever materials are produced for the incoming Administration are very useful, something that they find helpful, not just something that takes up spaceman bookshelf -- we've all seen those huge briefing books, which actually are a requirement for the folks that take over. We still need to produce those materials in great detail for the people who end up taking over those jobs, but if you talk to folks that have been part of that agency review process on behalf of an office of the President-elect, what they'll tell you is that they don't have a lot of time to produce something. They don't get a lot of real

estate in the briefing materials, so they have to distill everything that goes on in a given agency down to a few pages. So, it's -- we're really trying to focus on hitting the highlights in terms of organizational structure, organizational challenges, that sort of thing. So, one of the things that the Agency Transition Directors Council has done is lay out a recommended table of contents for review materials.

MS. KUMAR: And how did you find out, for the people who were coming in who had been on the agency review team, say in 2008, and ended up coming in, how did you find out how they used the materials that they were given? Because it must be -- the determinations that you all have made that things need to be -- need to be brief and relevant to the questions that they're asking. Did you talk to people after 2008?

MR. HORNE: Well, and a lot of it is thanks to your good work and the materials that you've produce have been extremely helpful to us. But, yeah, we have -- so some of the folks that are actually -- that are working on the transition now were involved in the transition at the end of this Administration were also involved at the beginning of Administration.

So, people like Chris Lu, who's now at the Department of Labor, was the co-chair of the Obama -- or he was the executive director of the Obama-Biden transition project. And Chris has talked about lessons learned through that process, and sometimes briefing materials were better than others, depending on the agency.

We also -- Andrew Mayock, who I mentioned earlier, who is the co-chair of the Agency Transition Directors Council, served on an agency review team, and felt -- the real, key thing that people -- we've also -- we've also talked to people -- people like Clay Johnson who were involved in the Bush transition, both in and out. And the thing that is really driven home, time after time, is that -- it's just this intense but very short of period time that they have to produce of all of these materials. And so, that's -- that's what

really led to the idea that we want to make sure -- that's what's led to sort of this idea of two separate sets of briefing materials, one for the agency review team, which has a certain outcome in mind, and certain things that they need to accomplish, and then a much more comprehensive, detailed set of briefing materials for whomever takes over the job.

MS. KUMAR: If you look at it from the point of view of the agency and the goals that they're dealing with at this point, it seems that there are several things they have to deal with, and so, as an observer, comment on how they've been doing this. Number one, they have to finish the President's agenda. The President has a very active agenda, which involves a lot of agency rules and regulations that have been coming out -- they've been coming out up and until the weekend. And then, staff have to plan for the way out, for people who are going to be leaving. And then they also have to prepare a new team coming in, so there are really three things that are happening at the same time. And how, from your observations, how are they doing that?

MR. HORNE: Specifically, how are the agencies doing that?

MS. KUMAR: Yes.

MR. HORNE: Okay. I think there's a couple things, and one thing that's -- that's important, that I emphasize and I emphasize it repeatedly is that although my life, and I'm spending and a ton of time on Presidential transition, this -- the Administration is going to use every single day and sort of sprint to the finish to the end of this Administration. And there's -- even when we have a President-elect, there's only one President at a time. So, the President's agenda takes the priority up until the very last minute of the Administration, so that's -- I think that the vast majority of all of the effort, the energy, the resources of all of the agencies is still going into,

accomplishing their mission.

So, then you have -- so there were three things --

MS. KUMAR: Yes, the --

MR. HORNE: The agenda, planning for the outgoing --

MS. KUMAR: Preparing for the way out.

MR. HORNE: -- and planning for the incoming.

MS. KUMAR: Right, okay. So, those other two are related, they're distinct but related. And so, one of the things that the legislation requires is for every agency to name a transition director to coordinate transition activities across the organization.

So, what I have seen, and I can't -- I can't think of any case where it's separate and distinct at any of the agencies that I've -- that I'm aware of, is that the transition director tends to oversee both of those activities. And, in fact, we have talked about both activities at the Agency Transition Directors Council level. So, what the -- each agency, as I've mentioned, has already named a senior career person to oversee the transition. So, that's where a lot of the preparation, the idea that, "Let's start thinking about what the briefing materials should be," which -- those actually need to be done by November 1, is the deadline in the legislation.

So, there's -- and depending, if you look at a place like VA or Justice, EPA, Treasury, massive organizations with a lots of political appointees, the DOD, all of the big agencies, that's quite a job to coordinate that. So, oftentimes there's -- there's a transition director at each agency, but they have a staff supporting them, we've heard, down to the level of detail like, lessons learned from past transitions that the Cabinet -- the Cabinet -- the secretary -- there will be a lot of things that they want to do at the end. Some of it might be just things as small as

arranging time for them to thank the cafeteria staff and walk around and say goodbye to people or to write a letter to their -- to their successor. Those sort of things are all things that we have, a lot of really good institutional knowledge across the government. So, small details like that, all the way up to big things like preparing the briefing materials and deciding how the -- how the infrastructure of that -- of that process is going to happen are all things that are being coordinated at the transition director level at the agencies.

MS. KUMAR: For the people, the politicals, who are going to be leaving, what is the process, what are the restrictions for them in looking for jobs?

MR. HORNE: So, well, and that's --

MS. KUMAR: Because they must -- they know when they're going to be going.

MR. HORNE: Yeah, in fact, they're -- there's -- as everyone knows, there's lots of ethics restrictions for senior executives who are leaving the government for -- looking for work. First thing is they have to disclose if they're in conversations with somebody, they're -- it's interesting, there are issues like social media accounts, too, who owns the social media account when somebody leaves. Is it property of the agency? Is it the individual's? So, those are all the kind of things that need to be worked out along with the way, and I think that what -- although I haven't -- I haven't seen it because I'm separate from the political processes, that I'm sure that the White House, that Presidential Personnel, Office of Government Ethics, those sorts of organizations will be issuing guidance to political leaders who will be seeking employment.

MS. KUMAR:  
In looking at the legislation, at the 2010 and 2015 bills, what was the impetus for the legislation? Why

did they feel this legislation was needed?

MR. HORNE: You probably know the answer to that question better than I do, but --I'd like to hear your thoughts on that, too -- I mean, I think -- I think it was this idea that you would always hear the old saying, "So and so is already measuring the drapes at the White House." And, I know in 2008, when we were meeting with the Obama and McCain teams, both groups were very nervous about -- I shouldn't say nervous, but both groups wanted to keep a very low-key operation. So, there weren't any -- you didn't see, like you have this time, where a transition director was named formally. You didn't read very many articles about it.

The idea was to just keep it sort of low-key. And then, so, I think at the -- at the conclusion of the -- after the 2008 transition was over, people like Senator Kaufman and Senator Carper, started really paying attention to this and saying, " this is a massive undertaking, and 73 days just isn't enough time to take over, the most complex organization in the world." So, we really need to remove that sort of idea of being presumptuous if you're planning for a transition, and sort of create some formality around it. And to also, take all of the really good things that the Bush Administration did on the way out and formalize them and put some structure behind it.

And so, all of the -- many of the things that are happening now happened informally in 2008 just because there was a group of people, in my role, in other roles, that really cared about wanting to make sure that it worked.

So, I mean, I'm curious -- you, as a someone who's studied this and a scholar of this, I'm wondering what your thoughts are on what was behind it.

MS. KUMAR: Well, I think that you're absolutely right. The model that was established in 2008 worked so well that they wanted to accept that as a framework for transitions for the future. And I think the key in the 2008 transition was that in December of 2007, President Bush talked to his Chief of Staff, Josh Bolten, and said he wanted to have the best

transition and that he wanted -- he wanted him to lead it.

So, it started early, it had a clear designated -- had -- with authority to do it. And then, the 2010 legislation memorialized much of what they did by saying that the President may create a Transition Coordinating Council and an Agency Transition Directors Council.

But, President Obama was running for reelection, and no President running for reelection wants to set up councils saying that he's on his way out. So, nothing happened, and in the 2015 legislation, it says, "The President *shall*." None of this "may" stuff anymore, shall. And they gave timetables that they had to create the councils in six months before the election. So, on May 8 would have been the date, May 6, the President issued an executive order talking about and creating the two councils.

So, I think, September 11, though, for Bush, made a great deal of difference because in talking to Josh Bolten, he said, "With two wars, we have to have the best transition ever."

And so, I think it was a recognition that what actually -- what happened needed to be -- become memorialized.

In looking at the government funding, how much money is going to be spent and where does the money get spent?

MR. HORNE: So, there's -- there's -- the money's sort of divided into various pots, if you will. So, first of all, there's -- GSA got a separate appropriation for the pre-election support. We haven't talked a ton about what that means, but, basically, two days after the last major party nominating convention, GSA was required to provide support to all eligible -- or at least to offer support to all eligible candidates. So that's office space, computers, furniture, really setting up an office for an entity that one day doesn't exist - official eligible candidate - and then, the next day does after the nominating convention.

So, that appropriation was really driven by

the 2015 legislation, saying, "GSA, tell us how much you need to provide this support." And we asked for it and we got it, so that's the pre-election support.

So, what I like to say is, pre-election, GSA provides service, so we have people on site helping with IT and if the air conditioning's not working or that sort of thing, and space, the actual office space, and then stuff, so computers, furniture, that -- phones, all that sort of thing.

And then, post-election, we provide the same services, space, stuff, but we also provide money. And so, there's an appropriation of approximately \$6 million that is really the operating money for the office of the President-elect. Traditionally, most of that money has to fund salaries for the people that are working on the transition. Some of it goes to travel and other sort of, operating expenses, but the vast majority of it is to pay for salaries.

And then, so there's also -- we also get a million dollars for what's called appointee orientation, -- it's when the GSA administers a contract, manages the funds for a contract, that basically talks about -- it's onboarding, high level political appointees. There's some opportunity to talk in that about the priorities of the Administration, but a lot of it is Hatch Act kind of information, ethics kind of information, how to be a good government employee, those sorts of things. So, and that's been around since 200, we've done that.

And the idea, there, I mean, again, that's the -- the thinking behind it is to assist with the transition and provide government resources to make sure that people are -- when they're coming in the door, that everyone's on the same page and that they're set up to do the right thing.

So, that's their -- that's the real -- the two main sources or two main pots of money. We get direct appropriation pre-election and then we also get money to operate post-election.

MS. KUMAR: What happens with the -- when the President and Vice President leave? What kind of

resources are they provided?

MR. HORNE: So, the way that that works is, the six months -- it's sort of -- it's a mirror of the incoming Administration, the way it works. So there's a six-month period, from after the Inaugural to, July, where, for purposes of our support, we consider that to be the outgoing President, so we will say, "Outgoing President Obama."

So, and that six-month period is -- we provide resources to get them set up, to get them sort of transitioned out into whatever they're going to be doing, because the reality is, at, on -- the minute that the new President is sworn in, there's no place for the -- there's not a place for them to go anymore. So, that's the idea, is we will get -- we'll get the outgoing President set up. There's an appropriation set up to fund that.

And then, after six months, they become a former President for, in GSA's -- for GSA's purposes, and our support is provided via the -- our former Presidents program.

In terms of the Vice President, it's at the discretion of the President, how much -- how much of that appropriation goes to support the outgoing Vice President. And then, after six months, GSA no longer provides any support for a former Vice President.

MS. KUMAR: Well, one last question here, and that is with the candidate representatives who are in the office space in -- on Pennsylvania Avenue. What is that, since we all can't go in there, how is that office space set up and what kinds of things would they want to know?

Mr. HORNE: So, I mean it's -- while the work that's going on there is obviously very interesting, it's just -- it's a typical kind of open office space, they're set up -- we're set up to provide about a hundred spaces for each eligible candidate. We -- I'd go in there from time to time to meet with them, but really, once we turned over the keys, it's their space,

and we stay out of their way. They have important work to do. If you hear someone like Governor Mike Leavitt talk about what was done pre-elect in preparation for a potential Romney Administration, a lot of was really kind of setting up what their agency review process was going to look like, making recommendations on how to take campaign promises and turn them into policy, that sort of thing.

So, that's what -- while, I don't know exactly what each group is working on now, I have to assume that it's a very similar approach to what the Romney group did. Them being the first group to really officially plan pre-election as an eligible candidate, they actually literally wrote the book on what that looks like, and you've heard Governor Leavitt say, they did all this work all through the summer leading up to the election, and part of the reason they wrote the book is they had unexpected time on their hands, is the way that he talks about it.

So, at the conclusion of the -- after the election, they kind of said, "Well, why don't we take all of this work we did and everything that we set up and memorialize in it a book," and that's what they did. It's really interesting to take a look at that and to hear him talk about that.

In fact, the legislation is named after Governor Leavitt because of, his commitment in 2012, the things that he did, along with Senator Kaufman, who both recognized the need for this, as I say, infrastructure to be set up around transition.

MS. KUMAR: Very good. Thank you very much. Now, let's take some questions, a couple of questions?

MR. SAUNDERS: We have about ten minutes, I think.

MS. KUMAR: Yes?

QUESTION: Ann Durshaw, Federal Aviation Administration and on the board for the Public Manager. So, from an agency perspective, what do you

find are the most challenging aspects of preparing for transition? From your side, and then thinking in terms of internal in our agencies?

MR. HORNE: Well, I think there's a couple of things. I think, first of all, is -- it's a challenge to -- you have to prepare in advance, right? But you don't exactly know what they're going to ask for when agency review teams show up. So, I think that's tricky. You have to sort of -- you want it to -- again, we want it to be a demand-driven exercise. We want to provide materials that are useful, but we don't necessarily have clear indications from either group about exactly what they want. So, I think that's one tricky part. I think it's also just the mechanics of preparing for something to end, but still staying focused on the fact that we're still -- there are still priorities for this Administration, there are still things that need to be accomplished. So, and then, I also think, just and, everyone here knows this, it's just -- it's that whole idea of, that, new leadership coming in, potentially some anxiety in the workforce and what does that mean? Especially if it's an agency that has, that can be one of those political footballs, kind of back and forth, and, depending on who wins we go this way, and maybe if the other candidate wins, we go this way. And all those sorts of things are just -- I mean, so it really boils down to, I think, the biggest challenges around are the people, kind of managing that, and then also the day to day business and sort of jumping in and the need to prepare what -- needs to operate. Anything to follow?

MS. KUMAR: I think that's it. Trying to be aggressive in finishing off an agenda, and I think the political people are particularly going to be focused on that, while the career people are focusing on transition, that that's the way that it's been working out. But that's a tough thing to do, because you want to show you're very active, and by spending a lot of time on transition, you're reminding everybody you're on the way out, so that's not something in a way that

you want to be doing with an active agenda.

MR. SAUNDERS: Other questions?

(name inaudible 50:42): with government delivery. So, just picking up on that last point. I can imagine if you go from one Democratic Administration to another, that they can see continuity in their agenda, and so, like, soft-pedal a bit, in terms of the activity. So, some things might carry on.

But if there's a Republican Administration, now, will there be a flurry, a special or unique flurry of activities for -- to get those agenda items accomplished before a new party comes into place? Anything unique might happen there?

MS. KUMAR: Well, the Clinton Administration, they had -- they were doing, if you remember back, they were -- President Clinton was doing pardons up until about 10:30 [traditional time for the coffee in the Blue Room with the outgoing and incoming presidents, vice presidents, and their wives], they had to do the coffee, and I think he was doing them still at about that time. So, he was doing rules and regs[regulations]all the way up to the end. And so they were -- the Bush people were very mindful of that, and did not want to do that, because they felt that they had been burned by some of those -- those rules and that last action at the end.

So, one of the things that would happen is the President traditionally fires people, his political people, and Josh Bolten [Chief of Staff for President George W. Bush] wrote a memo, I think it was December 8 [December 1], in which he told everybody that their time was going to be up and that they needed to write a letter of resignation and, in fact, he included a letter that they could sign.

But everybody knew that they needed to leave, because it was a Democratic Administration. The problem that can come for a same-party transition is that people who are there think, "Well, I think I'd like to say, and that happened in the 1988 transition from Reagan to Bush, that people -- Reagan told people

their terms were ending, but they really didn't empty out the place. And so, people tried to stay. And one person was telling me, a White House official, that he was telling somebody they had to go, and they said, "Why don't you just let them find me?"

So, that became a difficult -- one Cabinet Secretary said he spent his first month firing people. And the problem is that if you just let everybody stay, then you become the third term of that President who left, and nobody wants to be that. So if you really want to start out, you need to have a fresh team, but emptying out the seats is something that really has to be thought of now, for example, if Hillary Clinton were to win.

MR. SAUNDERS: There are still fingernail scratches in certain desks in the Pentagon from the Reagan to Bush transition where the Reagan appointees said, "Not me. I'm not leaving. We're in for it." Any final questions? We'll get mikes for our next plenary sessions.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) National Archives and Records Administration. It seems like one of the toughest things that happens in transitions is getting the new political appointees, backed by the Senate, often, appointed. So that's obviously political, but does this Act, does your effort help that? Will we see in the next Administration, perhaps a smoother process to get people and political appointees into those position.

MR. HORNE: So, our work is not specifically focused on that, although, our -- my work is set up to help them get prepared and do as much, to provide support so they can prepare for things like that.

Now, if you talk to organizations like the Partnership for Public Service, they'll tell you -- they'll talk about the importance of setting a goal to get X number of folks confirmed by the Senate by Y date.

I know that there -- Martha, you probably know

better than I do, there was -- the number of Senate-confirmed positions has actually been reduced in the recent past [163], so that helps with that. But I think -- I'm going to let Martha answer the second half of that question, but I would say, aside from just trying to help them prepare and think every eventuality and encourage eligible candidates to focus, it's really -- that's in the good for government, kind of non-profit sector that's really focused on pushing that idea.

MS. KUMAR: Yeah, the goal -- the Partnership's goal, and the Obama Administration, actually, was not so far from it, was 400 people confirmed by the August Congressional recess. And -- getting the Cabinet secretaries through has usually been -- been fairly easy, although there have been -- there have been some high profile cases. In the Clinton Administration, the attorney general was a tough one to fill, if you remember. They had difficulty there, and this Administration, there was difficulty as well with [Tom] Daschle for Health and Human Services and Nancy Killefer for Chief Performance officer [Office of Management and Budget]. And I think there was a third.

But, generally, the process ran smoothly for Cabinet, and then for the top -- the top leadership under the Cabinet Secretary. Where the problems come, I think, is lower down, where the press is no longer watching, and then Senators see it as an opportunity, an appointment as an opportunity to get some things that they want themselves. And, so, that process is -- can you get a Senator who decides he wants a particular thing in his state, and he's going to hold up all of the nominations. And that happened.

So, it's -- the contention that exists generally between the political parties is certainly reflected in the confirmation process.

There was legislation that was the Presidential Appointment Efficiency and Streamlining Act of 2011, that reduced the number of boards and commissions, and then officials in departments that dealt -- they were Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Communications, they had been PAS [Presidential

Appointment Senate] positions requiring Senate confirmation. And those were reduced. So, you went from maybe 1300 down to maybe around 1100

So, you do have fewer positions, but I think it's an area that getting a lot more -- a lot more attention, and an effort is being made to do slates of candidates for positions in a department, so that you have not just the top leadership, but below that as well, all moving up at approximately similar times in an effort to fill up an agency. Because the Treasury had many vacant positions at the beginning of this Administration. As you remember, there was a financial -- there was a financial meltdown that really required those positions to be filled.

Mr. HORNE: Right, and Martha, and I think you're spot on. So many of us in this room are going to be affected by transition at a lower level. Sub-Cabinet level, potentially Presidential appointments that even require Senate confirmation and waiting until the new appointee arrives, where you may have somebody sitting in an active capacity for some months, that's going to be a challenge for us.

Listen, that was extremely enlightening, and Tim we're glad you're in place. And Martha, we're glad you're still, there too, so please join me in thanking our speakers.

We have about 15 or 20 minutes before the first breakout sessions begin, so please take the opportunity to get refreshments and meet our sponsors and thank you very much.

(End of interview.)

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