



THE WHITE HOUSE TRANSITION PROJECT
1997-2021



Kinder Institute on
Constitutional Democracy
University of Missouri

Smoothing the Peaceful Transfer of Democratic Power

REPORT 2021—10

WHITE HOUSE STAFF AND ORGANIZATION: TEN OBSERVATIONS

Martha Joynt Kumar, Director
White House Transition Project

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

THE WHITE HOUSE TRANSITION PROJECT. Begun in 1998, the White House Transition Project provides information about individual offices for staff coming into the White House to help streamline the process of transition from one administration to the next. A nonpartisan, nonprofit group, the WHTP brings together political science scholars who study the presidency and White House operations to write analytical pieces on relevant topics about presidential transitions, presidential appointments, and crisis management. Since its creation, it has participated in the 2001, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017, and now the 2021. WHTP coordinates with government agencies and other non-profit groups, e.g., the US National Archives or the Partnership for Public Service. It also consults with foreign governments and organizations interested in improving governmental transitions, worldwide. See the project at <http://whitehousetransitionproject.org>

The White House Transition Project produces a number of materials, including:

- **White House Office Essays:** Based on interviews with key personnel who have borne these unique responsibilities, including former White House Chiefs of Staff; Staff Secretaries; Counsels; Press Secretaries, etc. , WHTP produces briefing books for each of the critical White House offices. These briefs compile the best practices suggested by those who have carried out the duties of these office. With the permission of the interviewees, interviews are available on the National Archives website page dedicated to this project:
- **White House Organization Charts.** The charts cover administrations from Ronald Reagan to Barack Obama and help new White House staff understand what to expect when they arrive and how their offices changed over time or stayed the same.
- **Transition Essays.** These reports cover a number of topics suggested by White House staff, including analyses of the patterns of presidential appointments and the Senate confirmation process, White House and presidential working routine, and the patterns of presidential travel and crisis management. It also maintains ongoing reports on the patterns of interactions with reporters and the press in general as well as White House staffing.
- **International Component.** The WHTP consults with international governments and groups interested in transitions in their governments. In 2017 in conjunction with the Baker Institute, the WHTP hosted a conference with emerging Latin American leaders and in 2018 cosponsored a government transitions conference with the National Democratic Institute held in November 2018 in Montreal, Canada .

Earlier White House Transition Project funding has included grants from the Pew Charitable Trusts of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and The Moody Foundation of Galveston, Texas.

THE KINDER INSTITUTE ON CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY. A central element of the University of Missouri's main campus in Columbia, Missouri, the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy prepares students for lives of thoughtful and engaged citizenship by equipping them with knowledge of the ideas and events that have shaped our nation's history. See more information on the Institute at: <https://democracy.missouri.edu> .

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WHITE HOUSE STAFF AND ORGANIZATION: TEN OBSERVATIONS*

Martha Joynt Kumar, Director

White House Transition Project

The White House is the wheelhouse when it comes to presidential decision-making. People, policy, politics, and publicity all come together in the White House as a President establishes his leadership position and swiftly moves an agenda. It is for that reason presidents make early choices for key White House posts prior to choosing Cabinet members and their deputies. Departments and agency positions take time to fill and a President wants to proceed rapidly to take advantage of the good will that exists in the early days of an administration. In that effort, besides a President's time, the second most valuable resource a President has is his staff. The organization of White House staff offices as well as where and how a President distributes coveted top positions are key to understanding White House operations as well as the President and his priorities.

What follows are ten observations about White House staffing structures, staff members, and the impact of presidents on staff. Accompanying the staff discussion is a set of organization charts helpful to understanding the details of White House operations. Organization charts illustrate the staff choices presidents make. When Leon Panetta came into the Clinton White House as Chief of Staff, he saw a White House organization chart as a priority. "There was really no chain of command," he said. "There was no organizational chart that you could point to. As a matter of fact, I asked the question about getting an organizational chart and there was none to be found. So, first and foremost, was the development of kind of a basic organizational chart. ... How do I want to organize under the Chief of Staff. With deputies and then under them who should have responsibility. So, develop a real organizational chart as to who is responsible to who, and who supervises who, and to organize those responsibilities."¹

Because organization charts provide basic information, the White House Transition Project created overall staffing charts to see the staffing choices the last six presidents made. Because such charts did not exist, we created them from sources where we could find full listings of White

* Thanks to Terry Sullivan and Kathryn Dunn Tenpas for their helpful comments.

¹ Interview Leon Panetta, Martha Joynt Kumar, White House Interview Program, Monterey Bay, CA., May 4, 2000.
<https://www.archives.gov/files/presidential-libraries/research/transition-interviews/pdf/panetta.pdf>

House staff, including internal White House phone books, National Journal's *Capital Source*, and *The Federal Yellow Book*, which is now *Leadership Connect*. The Appendix has organization charts focusing on the overall White House staff operations of Presidents Trump (2017, 2019, 2020), Obama (2009, 2016), George W. Bush (2001, 2007), and Clinton (1993, 1996). There is one each for George H.W. Bush White House (1992) and President Reagan (1987). We also have charts for the individual offices we study, which are found on our website. [For a full set of charts, go to: <https://www.whitehousetransitionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/WHTP2021-100-White-House-Overall.zip>].

Together, the charts demonstrate two aspects of White House organization.² First, they illustrate the continuity of the White House offices under the six presidents and second, show how those presidents assigned their limited, but growing, number of commissioned staff, the highest ranking White House staff members. While there are at least 400 White House staff members, the leadership team is found among the commissioned staff. A President is limited by law and budget to 25 Assistants to the President, 25 Deputy Assistants to the President, and around 70 Special Assistants.³ How a President distributes staff among the offices reflects the chief executive's organizational choices and, by inference, decision-making structure. Staff organization tells us who has access to a President and which offices are key to a President. Was there, for example, a strong Chief of Staff with political, communications, and policy planning units close-by as was the case with Leon Panetta in President Clinton's White House in 1994-1996, or, as in 1993-1994, the President's choice to have many top advisers report directly to him? Such choices reflect important preferences about a President's decision-making process, a significant element in understanding White House operations.

² The White House Transition Project developed the organization based on White House phone books. Where we could locate them, we used internal White House phone books as the most complete source of White House information. The Obama White House no longer has internal phone books and we found only some years for the earlier administrations. Alternately as our next in priority, we used National Journal's *Capital Source*, which published White House phone book information focusing on top and midlevel staff and issues of the *Federal Yellow Book* where we could find them. *Capital Source* regularly published from 1985-2007. Information on organization and staffing in the Obama and Trump White Houses comes from the *Federal Yellow Book*, and its successor, *Leadership Connect*. Sources for each of our organization charts are listed in the lower right hand corner of the individual charts. The organization charts are also available on our website: whitehousetransitionproject.org.

³ The relevant laws for White House staffing are: 3 USC 105. Assistance and services for the President. The numbers and salaries of Assistants are tied to the Office of Personnel Management's Executive Level compensation. Executive Level II limits Assistants to the President to 25. Executive Level III has a maximum of 25 as well. Executive Level IV controls for Special Assistants and others covering a significant span of salaries and skills.

Other laws relevant for White House staff hiring are: 3 USC 108. Assistance and services for the President for emergency needs; 3 USC 106. Assistance and services for the Vice President; 3 USC 107. Domestic Policy Staff and Office of Administration Personnel. 3 USC 3109 Employment of experts and consultants. The text of the statutory provisions can be found at: uscode.house.gov. The text of the statutory provisions is available at uscode.house.gov.

The USC sections are referenced in the annual budget request in the Budget Appendix and the annual appropriations act which includes the EOP appropriation, currently the Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) Appropriations Act. Find the FY2017 Appendix at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Appendix>. The FY2017 text of the FSGG bill, as passed by the House, is available at Congress.gov by placing HR 5485 in the search box and then reviewing the EOP section.

THE WHITE HOUSE STRUCTURE

1. WHITE HOUSE OFFICE STRUCTURES RARELY CHANGE.

Staffing structures are more similar than they are different. Over the past fifty years, continuity characterizes White House operations. Offices develop constituencies and once established, it is difficult to eliminate them even though a President could legally get rid of every office along with the career people who come with many of them. Experience demonstrates they do not do so because most have constituencies that outlast an administration. With a staff member first assigned in 1929 to deal with the press, for example, the Press Secretary is the longest continuing White House staff operation. That continuity reflects the mutual need of presidents and the press, a kind of dependence that exists with other offices as well.

While White House offices are rarely eliminated, their reporting structure and duties can change depending in part on the nature of their constituencies and shifting presidential needs. Offices with specific, enduring constituencies, such as Legislative Affairs, have had similar organizational divisions, functions, and tasks across administrations. They have been divided into Senate operations and a similar stable of people shadowing the House of Representatives. Political Affairs, Communications, and Intergovernmental Affairs, however, have not had the same stability and have shifted back-and-forth from being independent offices to subunits within others. Communications is sometimes part of the Press Secretary's operation, at other times under the leadership of a Counselor, and also as a separate Office of Communications. Intergovernmental Affairs, such as under President Reagan, has been a separate office and at other times, the Obama years are a good example, part of a more comprehensive office. In this case, part of the Office of Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs. The director responsible for intergovernmental affairs was titled at the Deputy Assistant to the President level as was the staff member responsible for the public engagement portfolio.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL FLEXIBILITY: LAYERING IN NEW UNITS AND HIRING OUTSIDERS.

Rather than restructure White House operations, most presidents choose to layer new offices on to the existing White House framework. The greatest opportunity to make changes in White House organization comes in the early days, but the president and his staff rarely make major alterations to what they found when they came in. With a full policy agenda and pressure for a quick start, management structure is not a priority. Instead new offices find homes in existing ones. In the Obama White House, for example, staff added Digital Strategies into a previously existing White House communications structure rather than rethinking the whole communications foundation. Earlier, as television became a President's most important channel to the public, presidents added broadcast units under an Office of Media Affairs that sometimes is in an Office of Communications and at others under the Press Office.

Sometimes presidents get outside the traditional structure by adding consultants, committees, and councils to supplement the framework that preceded them. President Trump kept the basic offices and then created a bevy of White House councils to deal with specific issues. The American Innovation Council, the White House National Trade Council, the National Infrastructure Council, the Strategic Development Group, the American Technology Council, and the President's Advisory Commission on Election Integrity, are new groups the President added to the White House structure. While the Election Integrity one did not survive, the others have been less important than the White House senior staff member responsible for specific councils. The American Innovation Council, for example, is in Jared Kushner's portfolio. The

President also added on consultants not tied to specific White House offices, such as Carl Icahn, Rudy Giuliani, Corey Lewandowski, and Jason Miller.

Having people come into the White House as special assistants for the early months is helpful when a new President is proposing policy initiatives at a time when there are few Senate confirmed officials in a department. Sometimes referred to as czars, White House staff with policy portfolios that can cut across offices. With health care an early priority, President Clinton hired Ira Magaziner to handle the issue. Even later in an administration, presidents add on top-level staff for short periods, as Obama did in 2014 bringing in Ron Klain to serve as the point person handling the administration's response to the Ebola crisis. Clinton brought in Lloyd Cutler who served for five months as Counsel and, in 2020, Trump brought in his former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, Kevin Hassett, for three months for his advice and public presence explaining Trump's economic actions.

3. INTEGRATING THE VICE PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY INTO THE WEST WING.

Over the last fifty years, the staffs of the Vice President and First Lady, have gradually been integrated into West Wing operations and have become important sources of support for most recent presidents. The increase in commissioned staff assigned to the Vice President and First Lady speaks to the growing importance of the two positions as policy and campaign support operations for a President.

As have other Vice Presidents, Mike Pence quickly organized his office with reporting lines for an office structure that mirrors many of the West Wing office units. When he was Vice President, Joe Biden had units within his office for a national security adviser, communications, legislative and political affairs, domestic and economic policy, intergovernmental and public liaison, and an office for Dr. Jill Biden. In contrast to the those of the Vice President, operations for the first lady do not mirror West Wing operations. While the Vice President is a key administration figure from the beginning of the administration, the same is rarely true for the First Lady. Often she has to press to have her staff included in West Wing meetings and activities. It was not until Hillary Clinton was First Lady that her Chief of Staff held the rank of Assistant to the President. While in the George W. Bush White House her Chief did not rise to the Assistant level until his second term. In the Obama and Trump White Houses, however, the First Lady's Chief has consistently held the title of Assistant to the President.

First Lady Melania Trump who lived in New York for the first five months, was slow to organize her operation. In a break with the patterns of recent first ladies, at the four-year mark the office does not have the policy focus it earlier had. With a staff of less than a dozen, First Lady Melania Trump's office is about half of the size of the East Wing operation Michelle Obama had at the same time period.

4. PARTIES ORGANIZE DIFFERENTLY.

There are some partisan differences in how a White House is organized, particularly in the first year. Republicans are more likely to set up their White House with a hierarchical structure with clear lines of reporting. Democrats come in with a more horizontal White House staffing structure. They tighten up their ship a year or so in. The contrast is clear in a comparison of the Clinton 1993 chart with several senior people reporting directly to him and the one in 1996 where the Chief of Staff had all reporting to him. With an interest in gathering information from wherever he could, President Clinton set up a system that reflected his interest in hearing from everyone. After a year and a half of a system where many staff had walk in privileges, Clinton brought in Leon Panetta as Chief of Staff to establish a more disciplined system. The Trump

White House is an outlier in the Republican model as President Trump has allowed, and oft times encourages, his senior and sometimes deputy level staff to come in to the Oval Office without enforced access rules or even a guarantee that he would report his contacts to his chiefs of staff, especially his phone calls.

THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF

5. LEADERSHIP STAFF INTEGRATION.

Prior to the Trump White House, there was a noticeable increase in top level staff with a recent concentration in the office of the Chief of Staff and, secondarily, a loss of top status for a few traditionally important offices. In the Carter and Reagan White Houses, there were respectively a maximum of 11 and 15 Assistants to the President. There are now a maximum of 25 filled at any one time with seven assigned in the last year of the Obama administration to the Office of Chief of Staff. Having more than a quarter of the Assistants to the President assigned to the Chief's office means that other offices lose senior staff. Intergovernmental Affairs, for example, was not a top-level office in the Obama years nor was the Staff Secretary for part of that administration. In the Trump White House in the fourth year, both posts are at the Assistant to the President level. Generally, administrations have found that both offices are important for the management of decision-making and implementing policy at the ground level. While in the latter Obama years top level positions were concentrated near and around the Chief of Staff's office, the same was not true in the first six months of the Trump White House. Under Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, there were many staff entry points to the Oval Office with President Trump encouraging people to come in and Priebus having little control over who had access to the President.

6. STABILITY OF TOP LEADERSHIP.

While every president is going to make changes in his leadership staff, recent presidents have retained a significant number of their first year team into their fourth year. There is a natural staff attrition that takes place, but Trump's rate of staff replacement is so great that only six of the Assistant to the President staff hired in his first year in office remained in the summer of Year Four. Out of the six remaining 41 first year hires, two of them – Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner – are family members. There is little continuity in the Trump staff, which makes it difficult to have a consistent set of priorities and initiatives as well as a constant series of practices implementing their policies.

An unprecedented number of the top-level staff have cycled through the Trump White House. Seventy-seven individuals came in from January 20, 2017 to August 31, 2020. Three of them left only to return years later. In September and early October 2020, three additional Assistants came into the White House bringing to 80 the number of individuals appointed to the top position. Most of the six recent presidents had at least one-third of their first year staff remain midway in the fourth year. George H.W. Bush made a series of fourth-year August campaign-related appointments that dropped his numbers below 33%, but the other four presidents had a similar consistency in holding on to their leadership teams.

Table 1. Assistant to the President Titled Staff – Inauguration to August 31 Year Four

President	% and Number of Assistant Staff Appointed in Y1 Who Left White House by 8/31/Y4*	Total Number of Staff Members Hired in Y1 to Serve in Assistant Positions	Number of Assistants Named During Y2/Y3/Y4*	% of Assistants Hired in Y1, Y2, Y3 (not Y4) Left or Announced Leaving White House by 8/31/Y4		Number of Y1 Assistant Staff Remaining as of 8/31/Y4	Total Number of Appointments to Assistant to the President Positions**	Current Number of Assistants Serving on 8/31/Y4
Trump*	85 % / 35	41	16/12/11	73%	[50 of 69 hired]	6 (15%)	80**	26
Obama	64 % / 20	31	8/6/5	56%	[25 of 45 hired]	11 (36%)	50	25
G. W. Bush	55 % / 11	20	6/3/0	41%	[12 of 29 hired]	9 (45%)	29	17
Clinton	50 % / 13	26	9/7/0	40%	[17 of 42 hired]	13 (50%)	42	25
G.H.W. Bush	71 % / 12	17	2/6/8	48%	[12 of 25 hired]	5 (29%)	33	20
Reagan	63% / 12	19	3/8/0	47%	[14 of 30 hired]	7 (37%)	30	16

* Year One for President Trump runs from January 20, 2017 to January 20, 2018 and a comparable period for earlier administrations. Also note for comparisons, the end of Y4 goes to August 31 for all presidents.

** Marc Short, Marcia Lee Kelly, and Hope Hicks are counted twice in the number of Assistant appointments made as they all left the White House and later returned.

When turnover is viewed from the vantage point of positions in key White House offices, turnover in the Trump White House is even higher.⁴ No matter how one looks at the Trump White House, the turnover is unprecedented.

7. THREE TYPES OF WHITE HOUSE OFFICES.

A well-functioning White House has three types of offices requiring staff with particular experiences and expertise: policy, process, external relationships. First, presidents need substantive policy experts in the areas of foreign, domestic, economic, and national security policy and have the Domestic Policy Council, the National Economic Council, and the National Security Council to cover those issues. Second, just as important are the process offices – Staff Secretary, Office of Management and Administration, Presidential Personnel, Counsel – that work on staff structure, staffing positions, decision-making, and policy implementation. Management is central to achieving policy goals and that means having these offices as frontline operations staffed by people who have the appropriate knowledge and management experience. Third, several White House offices are based on relationships with institutions and individuals outside of the White House. Legislative Affairs, Public Liaison, Intergovernmental Affairs, and the Press Office are keys to a President's effectively using available resources, which works most effectively when the staff have credentials that include experience on the Hill, in lobbying operations, and working with news organizations. While presidents may have a different balance of where they concentrate their senior staff among these three types of offices, most often they learn the importance of each to the success of their policy and political goals.

8. A SUCCESSFUL WHITE HOUSE STAFF BLENDS FIVE TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE.

The most effective systems are those that blend five types of knowledge. Those are knowledge of: the President, the campaign, the rhythms of a White House, substantive policy expertise, and the Washington community, including Congress, the press, interest groups. That balance gives a President a decision-making system that reflects his interests, one that has a memory of what the campaign goals were, one that reflects a sense of how White Houses have most often operated, one that contains the substantive knowledge presidents need to develop and follow up on their policy goals, and one that incorporates a sense of the Washington world a President needs to work in in order to meet his policy needs.

As a business person with no experience in elective office, Trump brought people into the White House from his campaign, with few who had governing experience at the national, state, or local levels. There were some at the Assistant to the President level - Rob Porter, Steve Miller, Marc Short, John DeStefano - who worked for members of Congress, but most had no government experience where they could knowledgeably have a strong start with policy initiatives in place. While other presidents incorporated staff who previously worked for them, most had a head start in governing because the people they brought into the White House had worked in legislative and executive operations. President Obama brought in a government-tested staff from his Senate days, several of whom, Denis McDonough, Pete Rouse, Dan Pfeiffer, Phil Schilliro,

⁴ Kathryn Dunn Tenpas, the Brookings Institution political scientist writing on the presidency, tracks the turnover of 65 "A-Team" positions in the White House and the Executive Office of the President. As of October 7th, her tracker has a 91% turnover in the identified high-level Trump positions with Presidents Reagan through Obama at a significantly lower rate. Kathryn Dunn Tenpas, "Tracking Turnover in the Trump Administration," <https://www.brookings.edu/research/tracking-turnover-in-the-trump-administration/>. My tracker includes only Assistant to the President staff while the Tenpas tracker studies positions, which sometimes may be at the Deputy Assistant to the President level and at other times at the Assistant one.

had worked for Senator Tom Daschle when he was in the leadership. After his reelection loss, they migrated to Obama's Senate staff and then came into the White House respectively in the areas of foreign policy, management, communications, legislative liaison. They joined people Obama had brought on to his Senate staff, such as Chris Lu who served as his legislative assistant and later in the White House as Cabinet Secretary, and Representative Rahm Emanuel as Chief of Staff.

President George W. Bush hired staff who worked for him when he was governor of Texas. Clay Johnson, who handled personnel for Governor Bush, came with him to the White House as did his counsel, Alberto Gonzales, his Texas budget director Albert Hawkins, his political strategist, Karl Rove, and his communications person, Karen Hughes. He also brought in people with White House experience, such as his Chief of Staff, Andrew Card, Nick Calio as his liaison with Congress. There was a balance among both the Obama and Bush staff who knew their President, had experience on the campaign, time serving in a previous White House, in Congress and were familiar with the elements of the non-government Washington community – media, interest groups, the legal community, power players in both political parties - and had substantive knowledge and government experience in the key policy areas a President and his White House staff shape.

Having an experienced and balanced staff gave both President George W. Bush and Barack Obama good starts though both faced difficult situations when they came into office. Bush took office after having won fewer popular votes than Al Gore with the election outcome resting on a Supreme Court decision. For Obama, the nation was facing a financial collapse that required quick policy action. Yet both men were able to get fast starts that provided them with early policy victories. Bush opened his first week working with a bipartisan group of lawmakers on education reform. Each of his first weeks into the spring had a policy theme that was an administration priority, such as creating faith based offices, tax reform, military spending. For Obama, an early priority was the American Recovery Act, an economic stimulus bill that passed in February 2009 as well as early measures, including first week actions of executive orders on social issues and the President signing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Well organized White House operations were an important part of the good starts both presidents had for their administrations.

On the other hand, President Trump and his team got off to a rocky start the day after his inauguration. He gave a caustic speech to staff members of the Central Intelligence Agency followed by a hot-tempered speech by Press Secretary Sean Spicer criticizing White House reporters for not giving President Trump credit for having a larger crowd for his inauguration than Obama had in 2009. However, photos taken by the National Park Service from similar locations at the two inaugurations clearly showed a far larger crowd for President Obama. From their first day in office, neither the President nor his press secretary got off to a good start. In part that was due to not having an experienced staff with clear plans of what their agenda would be.

THE PRESIDENT

9. STAFF REFLECT A PRESIDENT: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.

White House staff most often mirror the strengths of a President and rarely fill in for the person's weaknesses. Presidents emphasize what they like and what they know. Building off his emphasis on communications, President Reagan had one of the strongest White House publicity operations in the modern presidency. President George H. W. Bush, who was particularly interested in foreign policy, but not communications, put a particular emphasis on redesigning a

National Security Council operation under National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, a model subsequently used by most administrations.

For President Trump, proven loyalty to him rather than a particular policy focus has been a key to hiring White House staff. Once hired, informal tests of loyalty continue throughout the tenure of White House staff members, including measuring their public and private comments regarding Trump and his actions. Reflecting a President can even involve his likes and dislikes as well as policies. White House staff don't want to show space between themselves and their President on choices important to him. When the Coronavirus-19 struck, President Trump made clear he did not like wearing a mask and made fun of others who did, especially former Vice President Biden. His staff took their cues from him and did not wear one. Few visitors wore masks or respected social distance in White House events. Chairs were placed close to one another in the Rose Garden event on September 26, 2020 when President Trump introduced his Supreme Court nominee, Amy Coney Barrett. When the President was hospitalized, and the First Lady and more than a dozen staff tested positive for the virus, staff began wearing masks.

White House staff structure also reflects what may be the weaknesses of presidents and the environment they are operating in. In the Trump presidency, the White House staff structure captured the all-call nature of the President's Oval Office style. Trump enjoys having multiple people in his office and on the phone as he wants to hear from many voices and to do so on his terms. The result was an early White House structure with multiple senior aides reporting to the President without first going through the Chief of Staff. To a lesser extent, the same pattern of multiple people dealing directly with the President was true in the early Clinton administration. But Clinton soon recognized the need to tighten access to the Oval Office and developed a hierarchy that was complete when Leon Panetta came in as Chief of Staff. For Trump, the same pattern of disarray has prevailed through four chiefs of staff.

Presidential words and actions can also upstage any well-laid organizational plans. Following President Trump's tepid response to the death of a counter demonstrator and the wounding of others in an August demonstration countering a nationalist and anti-Semitic rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, many business executives quickly resigned from several of the councils, including the Trade and Manufacturing and the Strategic Development Group ones. Carl Icahn, who was acting as an unpaid consultant on regulatory reform also resigned his position. President Trump derailed his own organizational plans.

10. PRESIDENTS USE THE RESOURCES AND STYLE THAT BROUGHT THEM.

Presidents bring in with them the emphasis and the tools that got them to the White House. President Obama's mastery of digital strategies resulted in that campaign operation coming into the White House. In his reelection campaign, President George W. Bush had a strong rapid response operation, which he brought into the White House for his second term. For President Trump, Twitter is an important aspect of how he communicates with his constituents. He used Twitter to establish a narrative for his campaign press coverage and, once he became President, he continued to tweet about his election victory, his critics, and his reaction to the cable television programs he watched in the morning. During a campaign with a set of attention-grabbing themes and operating with a slim budget, Donald Trump's tweets grabbed the attention of cable television news programs, so much so that there was little time to hear from his Republican competitors.

Once he got to the White House, the President continued his tweets, much to the consternation of many of his allies and to the delight of others. With a background and interest in television and publicity for himself and his ideas, Trump acted as his own communications director. His interest in developing and directing his communications worked during the

campaign, but proved difficult for creating a consistent presidential narrative where the President and his staff had a coordinated message to deliver to the public and to use to bring together executive branch agencies. On several important occasions, such as in a 2017 interview with NBC's Lester Holt where the President discussed why he fired FBI director James Comey, the President contradicted what the Press Secretary and other senior aides had said. In October 2020, when he was back at the White House following his hospitalization for Coronavirus-19, he tweeted that he was calling off economic stimulus negotiations between Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. By the end of the day, the S&P 500 slid downward by 1.4%. Then later in the week, he reversed course calling for a stimulus bill.

With many messages simultaneously coming out of the White House, a President who wants to direct his own communications, and, with a Gallup job approval rating that has not reached a 50% positive level in his four years in office, the Office of Communications has been under particular pressure for the whole four years. The administration has found it difficult to identify and then retain a Director of the Office of Communications. The position has had six announced directors: Jason Miller, Sean Spicer (twice), Michael Dubke, Anthony Scaramucci, and, on an interim basis, Hope Hicks. Similar positions but ones without clear supervision over a free-standing communications office, include Mercedes Schlapp, as Senior Advisor for Strategic Communications; Alyssa Farah, as Director of Strategic Communications; Bill Shine, Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications with Dan Scavino later holding that title; and Stephanie Grisham as Press Secretary and Communications Director. Additionally, Sarah Sanders and later Kayleigh McEnany held the Press Secretary position, which sometimes competed with others in the communications areas. With so many staff members involved in communications, message coordination was particularly difficult.

SUMMARY

White House staff are critical to the success a President has and, at the same time, reflect his strengths and weaknesses. The challenge for a President is to assemble a staff that will serve his policy and political interests as well as fill in for his weaknesses. Once he has that staff in place, it is important to establish order, have a clear direction on initiatives and priorities, and then have an effective coordination system between the President, White House officials, and the other power centers in Washington, including the congressional leadership, party members, and the bureaucracy. Not an easy recipe to follow.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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APPENDICES

Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

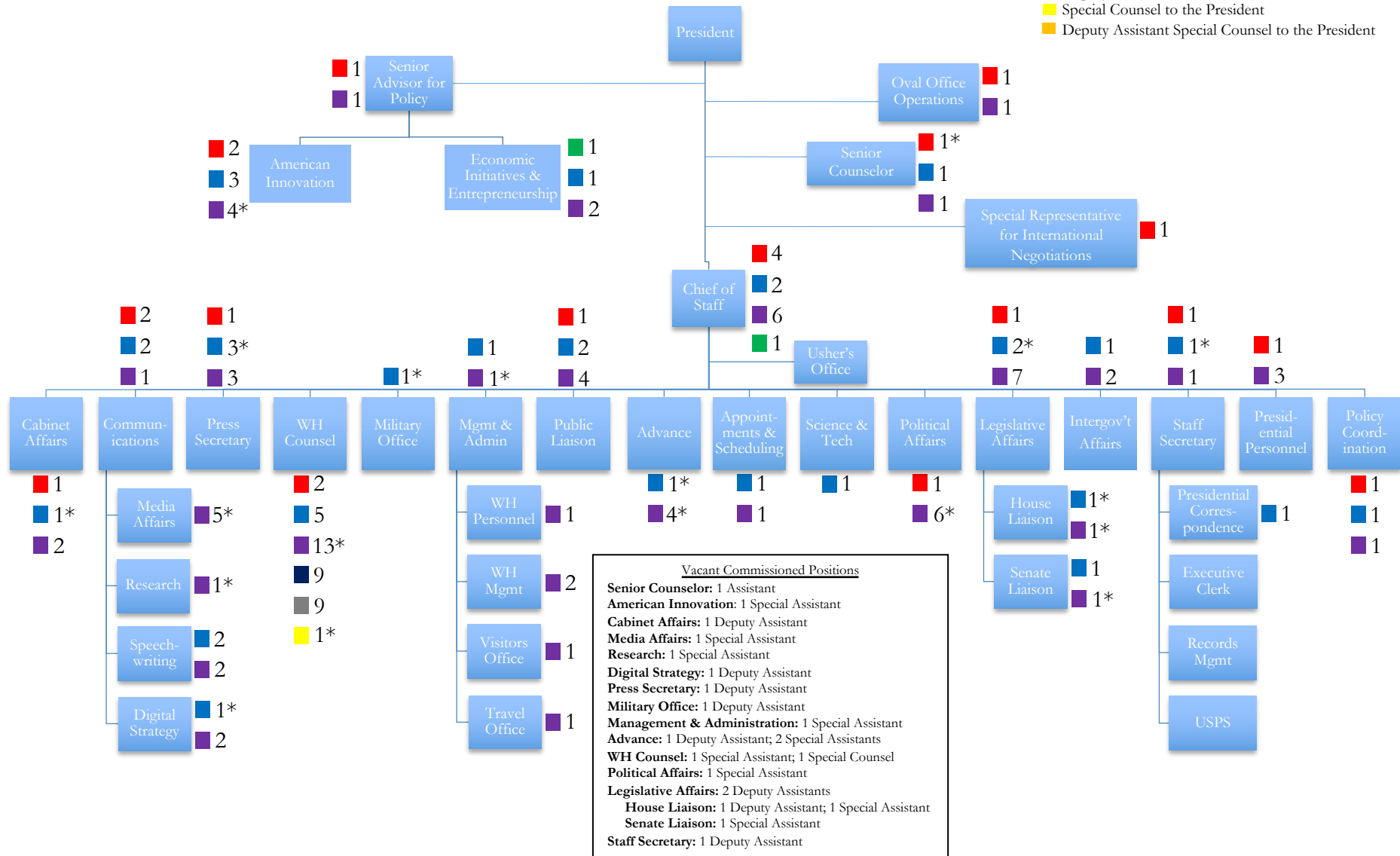
White House Office

Donald Trump

2020

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Advisor to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Associate Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Deputy Assistant Special Counsel to the President



Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

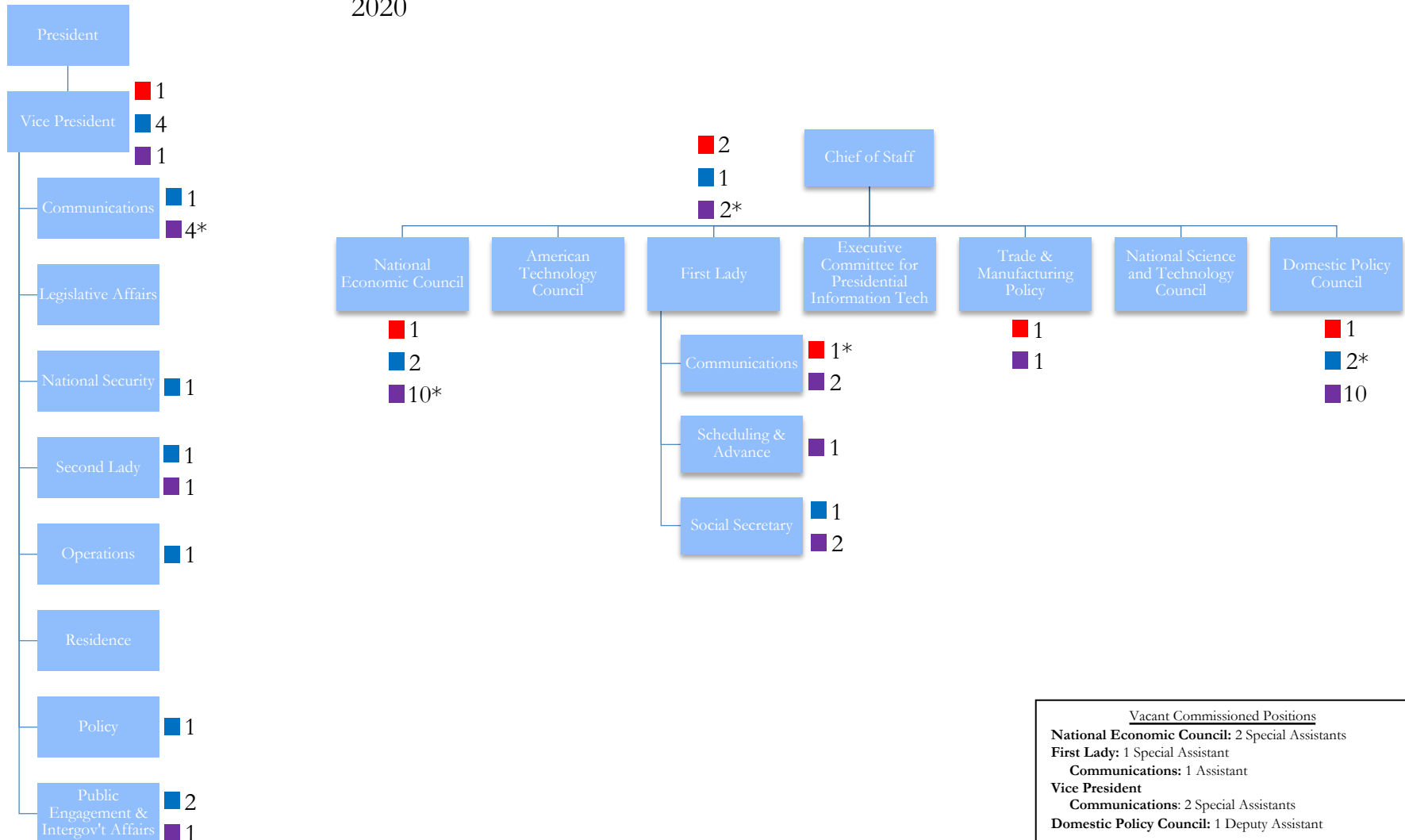
National Economic Council, American Technology Council, First Lady, Executive Committee for Presidential Information Technology, Vice President, National Science and Technology Council, & Domestic Policy Council

Donald Trump

2020

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Advisor to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Associate Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Deputy Assistant Special Counsel to the President
- * Vacant Position



Vacant Commissioned Positions

National Economic Council: 2 Special Assistants

First Lady: 1 Special Assistant

Communications: 1 Assistant

Vice President

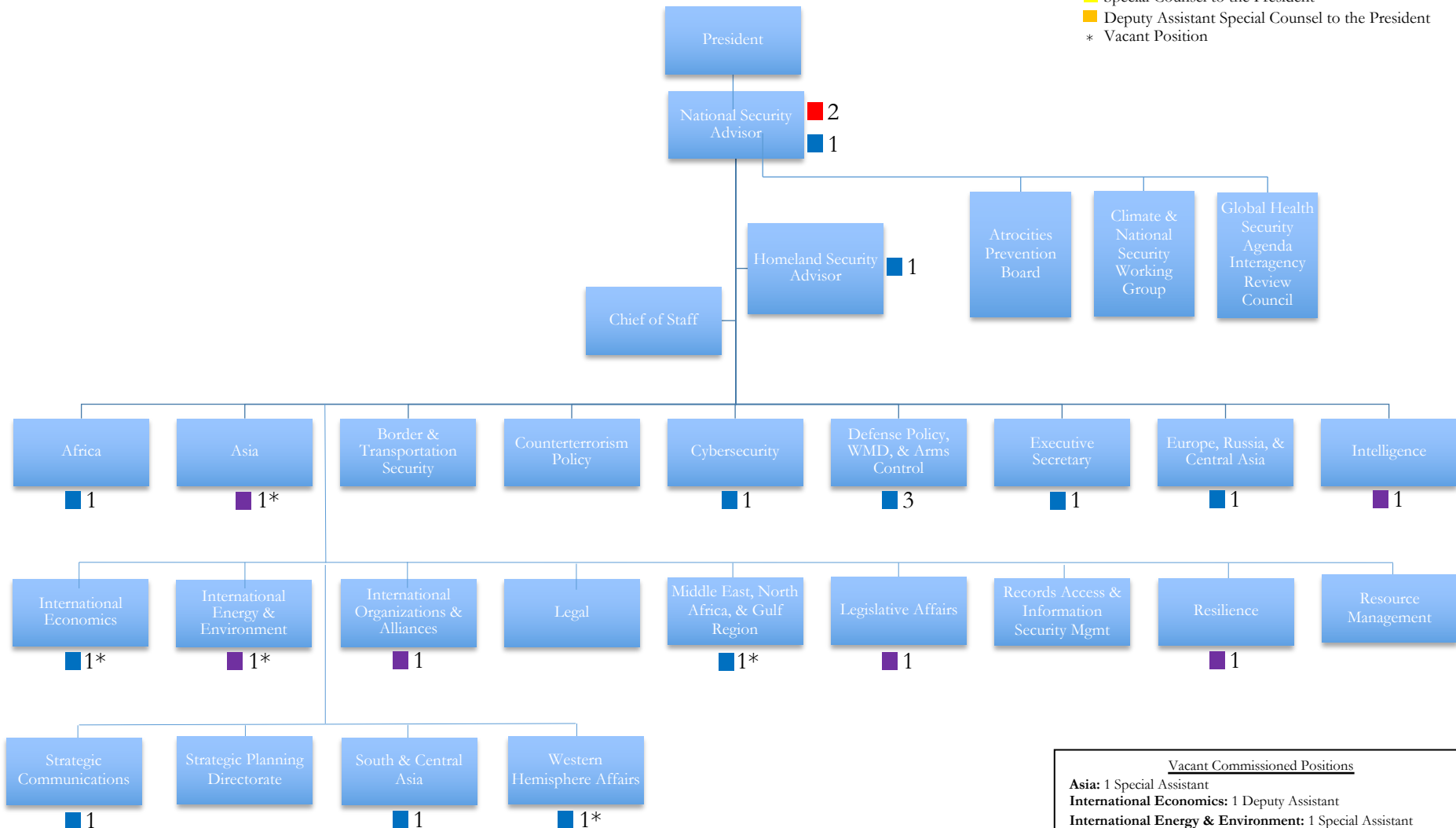
Communications: 2 Special Assistants

Domestic Policy Council: 1 Deputy Assistant

Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff
National Security Council
Donald Trump
2020

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Advisor to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Associate Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Deputy Assistant Special Counsel to the President
- * Vacant Position



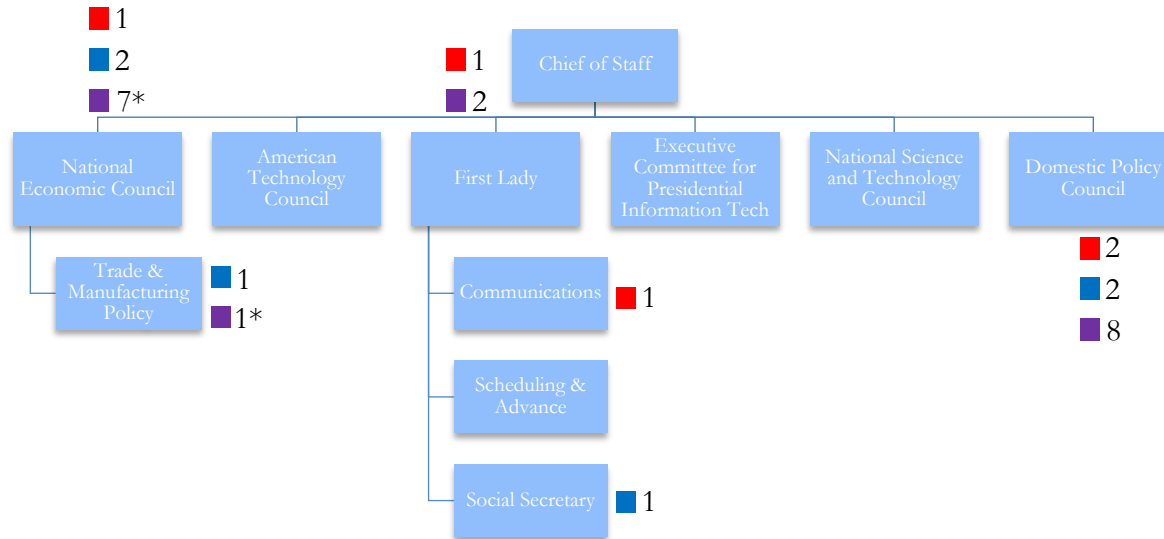
Vacant Commissioned Positions

Asia: 1 Special Assistant
International Economics: 1 Deputy Assistant
International Energy & Environment: 1 Special Assistant
Middle East, North Africa, & Gulf Region: 1 Deputy Assistant
Western Hemisphere: 1 Deputy Assistant

Key

-
- President**
- Senior Advisor for Policy** (Red 1, Purple 2)
 - American Innovation** (Red 1, Blue 2, Purple 2)
 - Economic Initiatives & Entrepreneurship** (Green 1, Blue 1, Purple 2)
 - Special Counsel** (Yellow 1, Orange 1)
 - Senior Counselor** (Red 2*, Blue 1, Purple 2)
 - Oval Office Operations** (Purple 2)
 - Chief of Staff** (Red 7, Blue 3, Purple 5)
 - Usher's Office** (Blue 1, Purple 1*)
- Offices and Positions:**
- Cabinet Affairs** (Red 1, Blue 2, Purple 1)
 - Communications** (Red 3*, Blue 2, Purple 1)
 - Media Affairs** (Purple 4)
 - Research** (Purple 1*)
 - Speechwriting** (Blue 2, Purple 3)
 - Digital Strategy** (Blue 1, Purple 1)
 - Press Secretary** (Red 1, Blue 1, Purple 3*)
 - WH Counsel** (Red 2, Blue 3, Purple 16, Dark Blue 8, Grey 10)
 - Military Office** (Blue 1, Purple 1)
 - Mgmt & Admin** (Blue 1, Purple 1*)
 - WH Personnel** (Purple 2)
 - WH Mgmt** (Purple 1)
 - Visitors Office** (Purple 1)
 - Public Liaison** (Blue 3*, Purple 1)
 - Advance** (Blue 1, Purple 3*)
 - Appointments & Scheduling** (Blue 1, Purple 1)
 - Science & Tech**
 - Political Affairs** (Blue 1, Purple 6*)
 - Legislative Affairs** (Red 1, Blue 1, Purple 7)
 - House Liaison** (Blue 1, Purple 2)
 - Senate Liaison** (Blue 1, Purple 2)
 - Intergov't Affairs** (Blue 1, Purple 2)
 - Staff Secretary** (Red 1, Blue 1, Purple 1)
 - Presidential Personnel** (Blue 1, Purple 6)
 - Presidential Correspondence** (Purple 1)
 - Executive Clerk**
 - Records Mgmt**
 - USPS**
- Vacant Commissioned Positions**
- Senior Counselor:** 1 Assistant
 - Communications:** 1 Assistant
 - Press Secretary:** 1 Special Assistant
 - Management & Administration:** 1 Special Assistant
 - Political Affairs:** 1 Special Assistant
 - Presidential Advance:** 1 Special Assistant
 - Public Liaison:** 1 Deputy Assistant

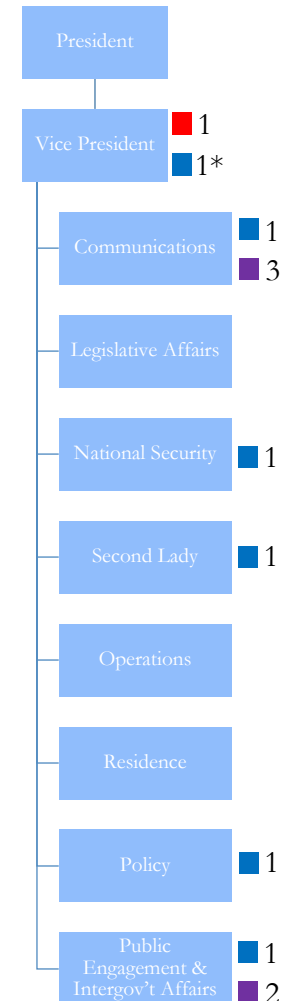
Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff
National Economic Council, American Technology Council, First Lady,
Executive Committee for Presidential Information Technology, Vice
President, National Science and Technology Council, & Domestic
Policy Council
Donald Trump
2019



Vacant Commissioned Positions
National Economic Council: 2 Special Assistants
Trade & Manufacturing Policy: 1 Special Assistant
Vice President: 1 Deputy Assistant

Key

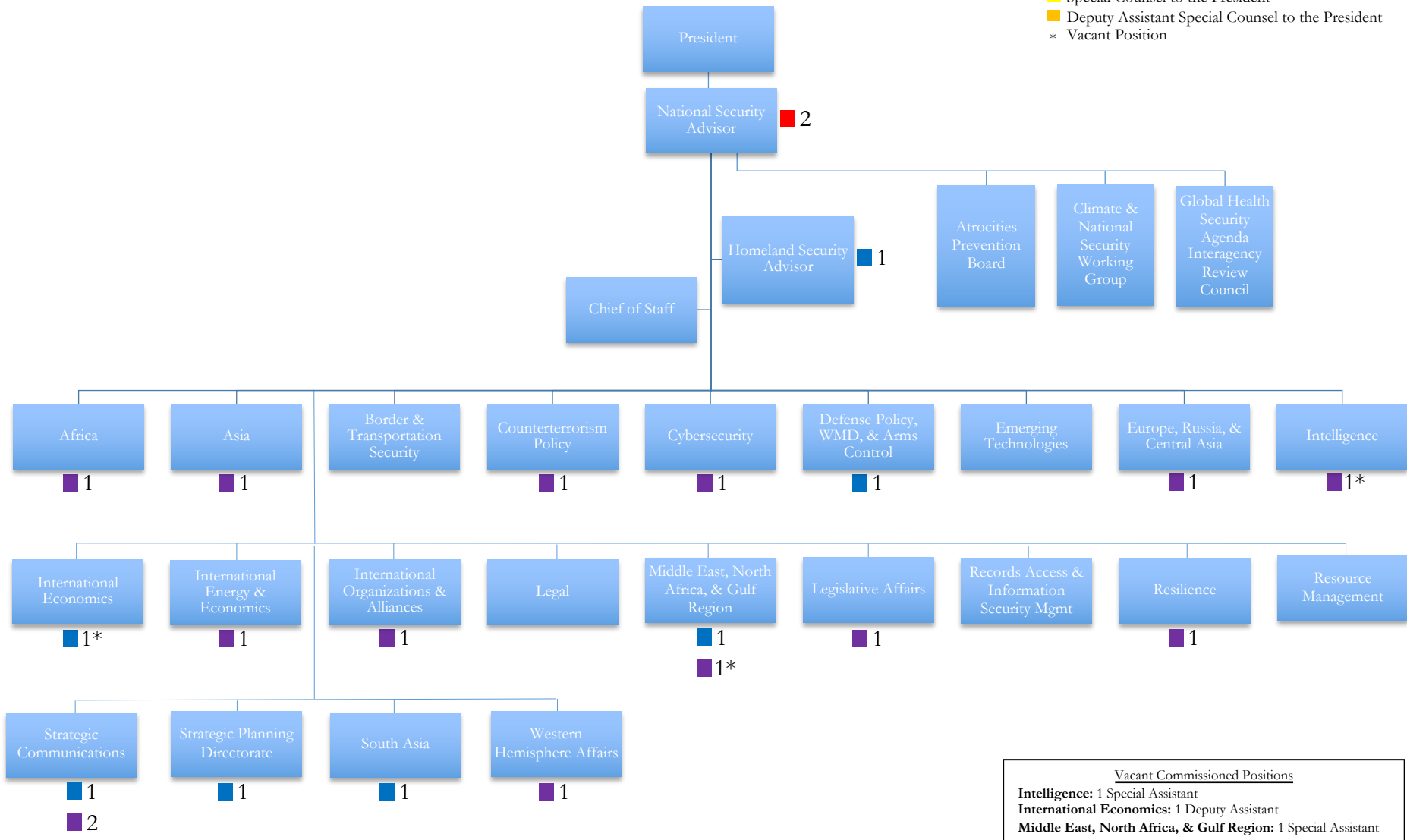
- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Advisor to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Associate Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Deputy Assistant Special Counsel to the President
- * Vacant Position



Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff
National Security Council
Donald Trump
2019

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Advisor to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Associate Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Deputy Assistant Special Counsel to the President
- * Vacant Position



Vacant Commissioned Positions

Intelligence: 1 Special Assistant
International Economics: 1 Deputy Assistant
Middle East, North Africa, & Gulf Region: 1 Special Assistant

Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

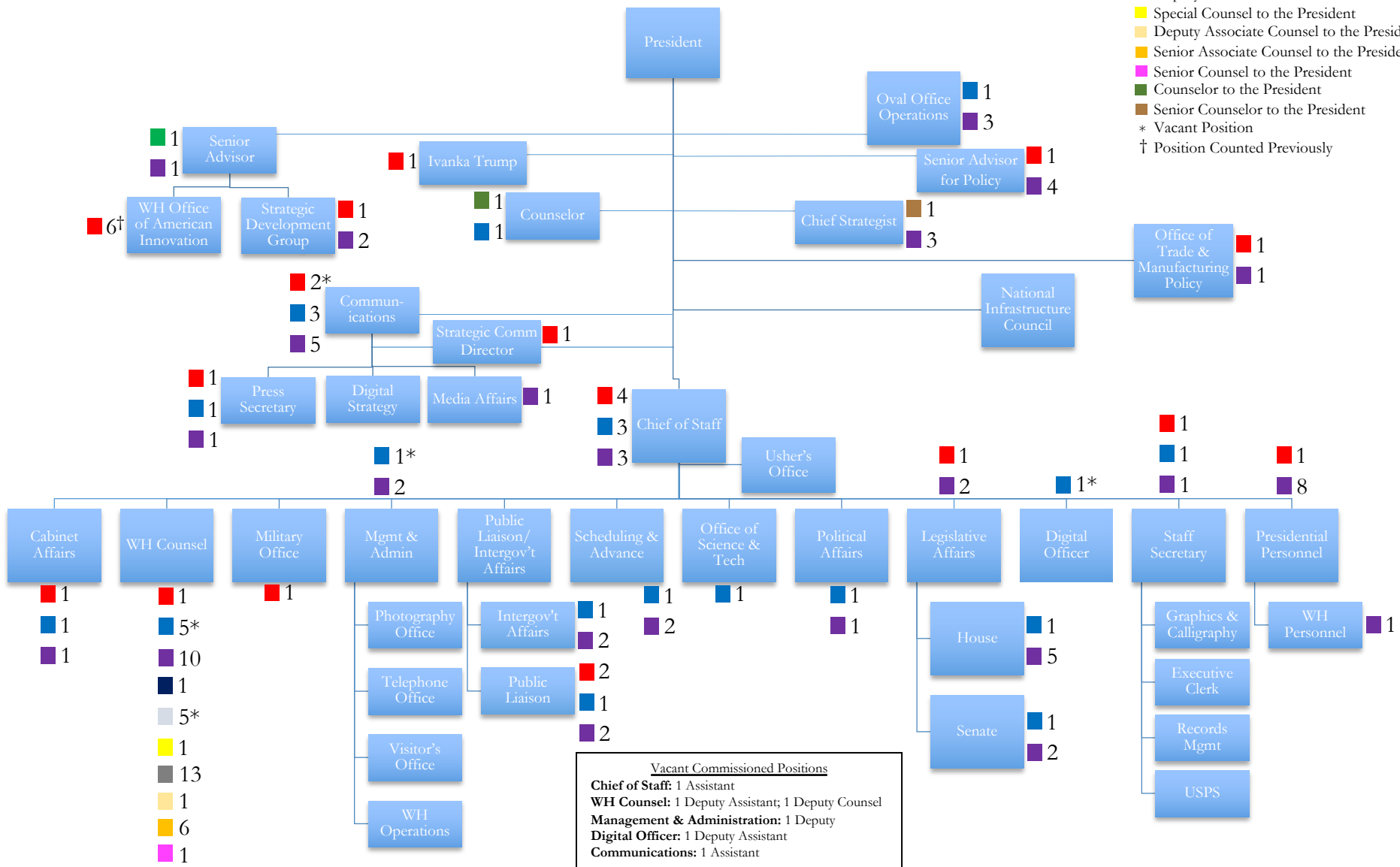
White House Office – July 27

Donald Trump

2017

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Senior Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Deputy Associate Counsel to the President
- Senior Associate Counsel to the President
- Senior Counsel to the President
- Counselor to the President
- Senior Counselor to the President
- * Vacant Position
- † Position Counted Previously

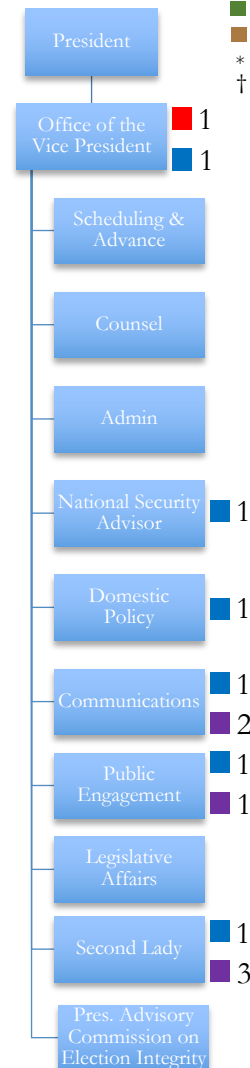
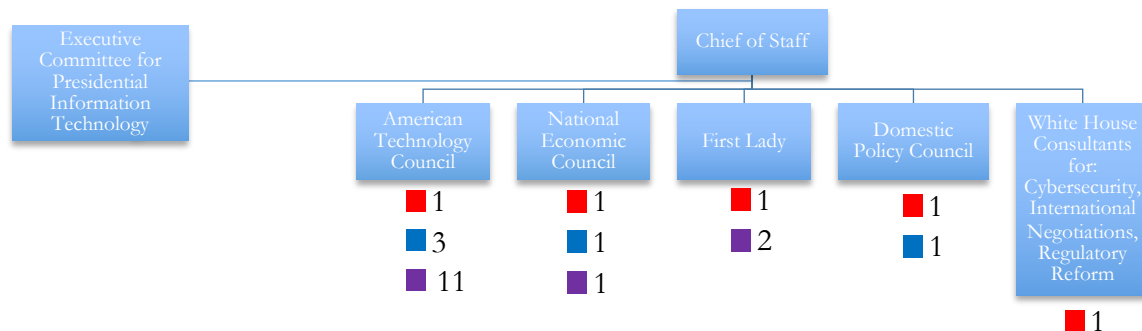


Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

Executive Committee for Presidential Information Technology,
American Technology Council, National Economic Council, Domestic
Policy Council, WH Consultants, WH Office of American Innovation,
& Vice President
Donald Trump
2017

Key

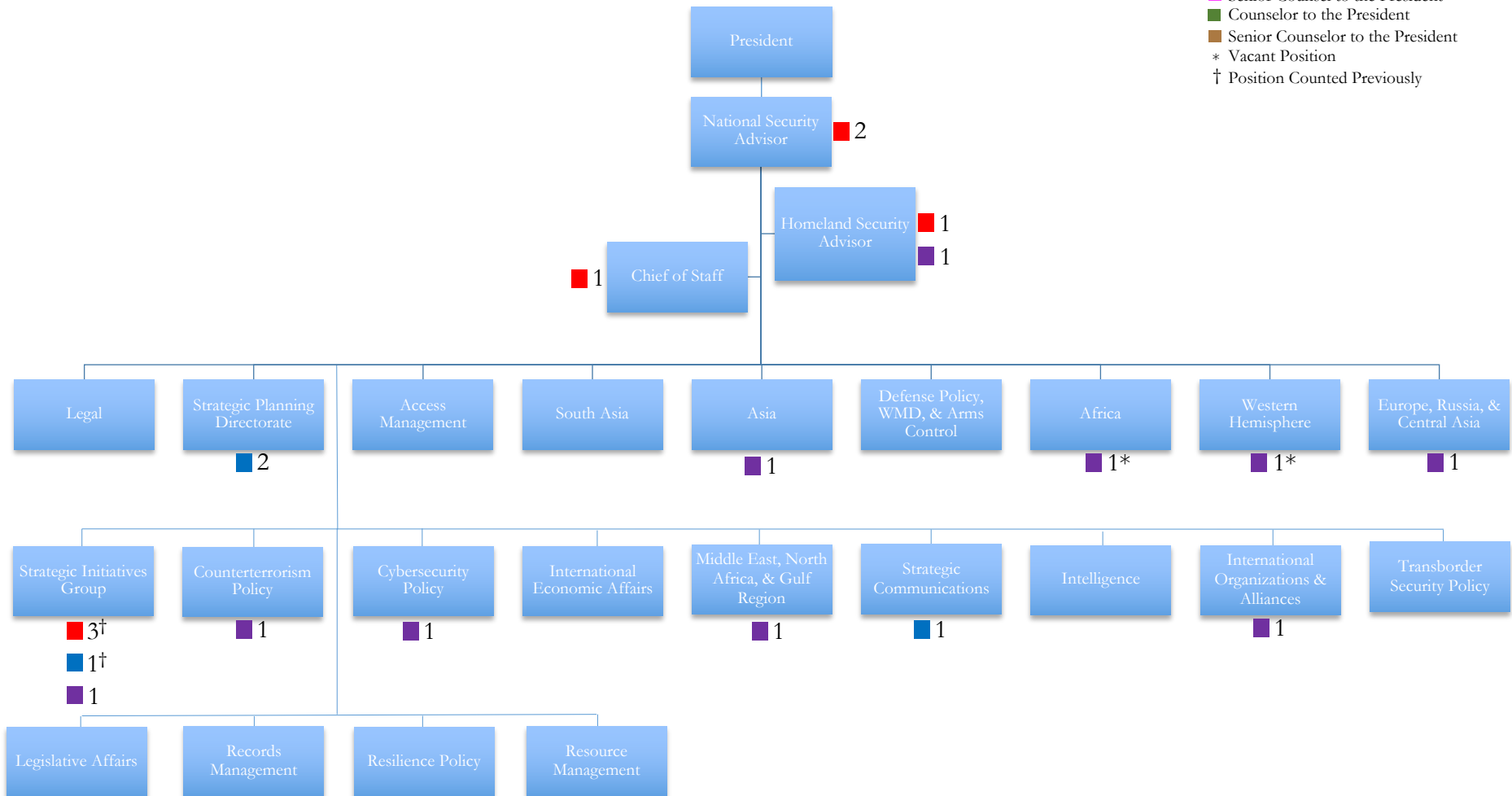
- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Senior Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Deputy Associate Counsel to the President
- Senior Associate Counsel to the President
- Senior Counsel to the President
- Counselor to the President
- Senior Counselor to the President
- * Vacant Position
- † Position Counted Previously



National Security Council
Donald Trump
2017

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Senior Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Deputy Associate Counsel to the President
- Senior Associate Counsel to the President
- Senior Counsel to the President
- Counselor to the President
- Senior Counselor to the President
- * Vacant Position
- † Position Counted Previously



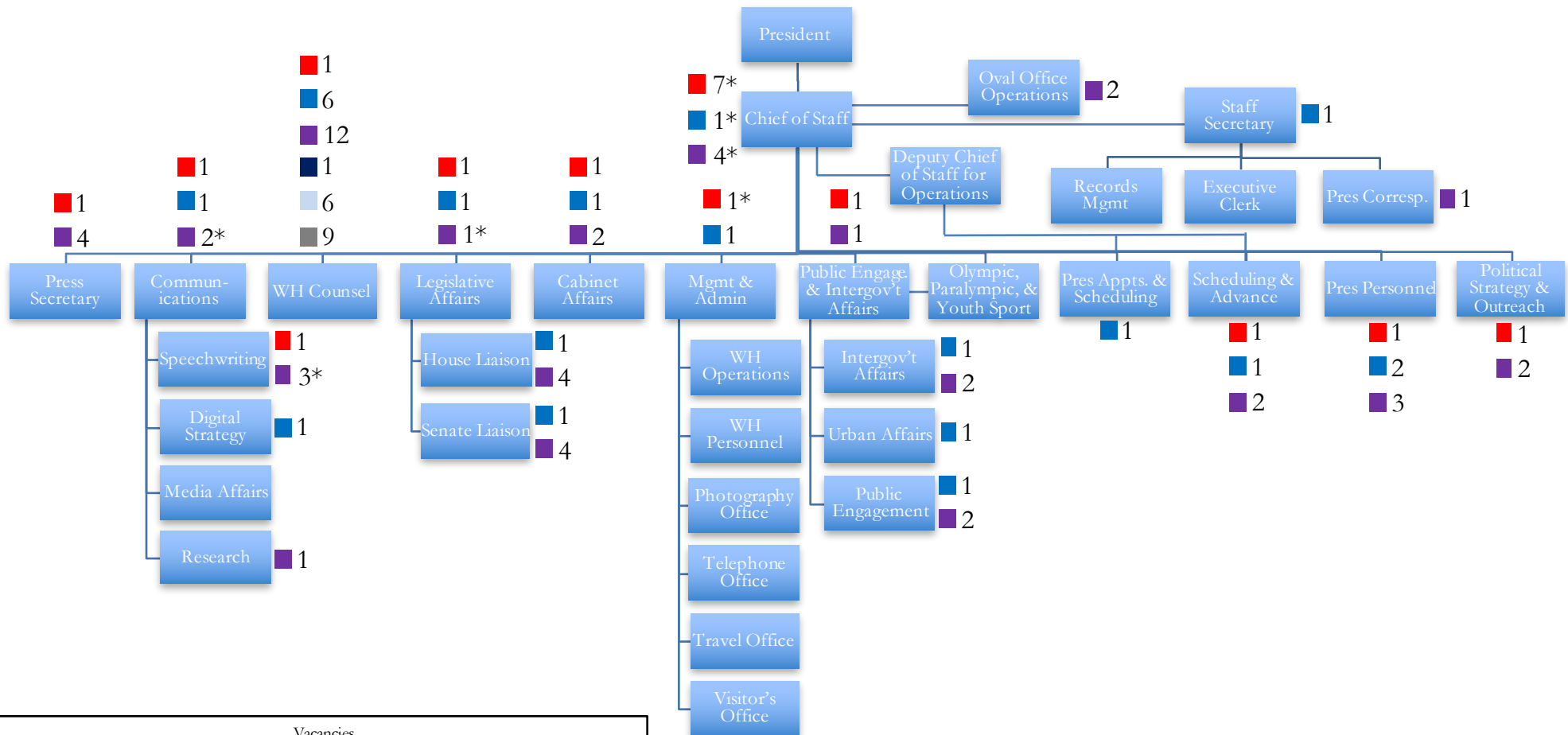
Vacant Commissioned Positions

Africa: 1 Special Assistant
Western Hemisphere: 1 Special Assistant

Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff White House Office Barack Obama 2016

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Senior Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Deputy Associate Counsel to the President
- Counselor to the President
- * Vacant Position



Vacancies

Chief of Staff: 3 Assistants; 1 Deputy; 2 Special Assistants

Communications: 1 Special Assistant

Communications – Speechwriting: 1 Special Assistant

White House Counsel: 2 Deputies; 2 Special Assistants; 2 Deputy Counsels; 2 Associate Counsels

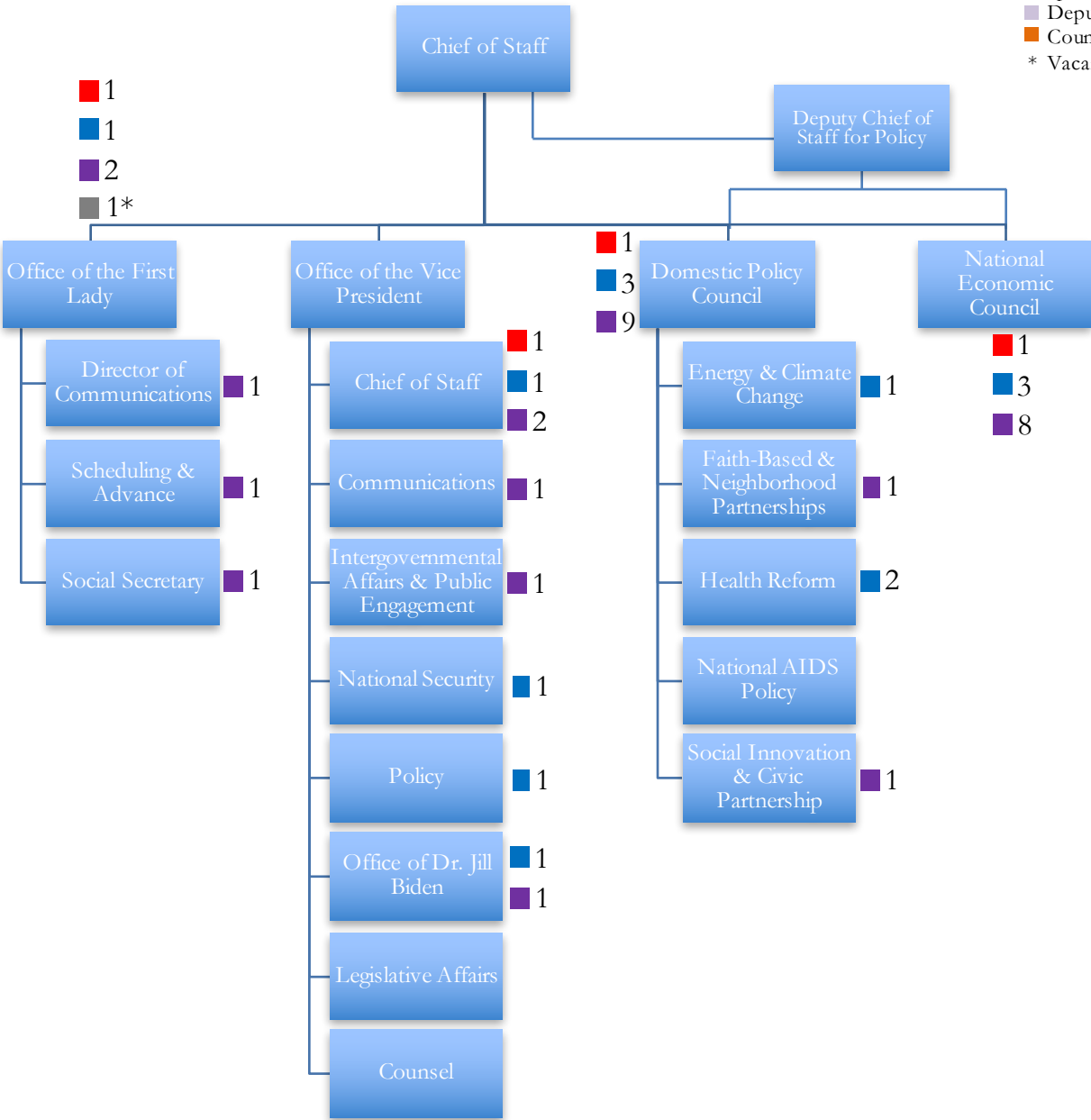
Legislative Affairs: 1 Special Assistant

Management & Administration: 1 Assistant

Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff
First Lady, Vice President, Domestic Policy Council, &
National Economic Council
Barack Obama
2016

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Senior Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Deputy Associate Counsel to the President
- Counselor to the President
- * Vacant Position



Vacancies
Office of the First Lady: 1 Associate Counsel

Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

National Security Council

Barack Obama

2016

Key

Assistant to the President

Deputy Assistant to the President

Special Assistant to the President

Senior Advisor to the President

Counsel to the President

Associate Counsel to the President

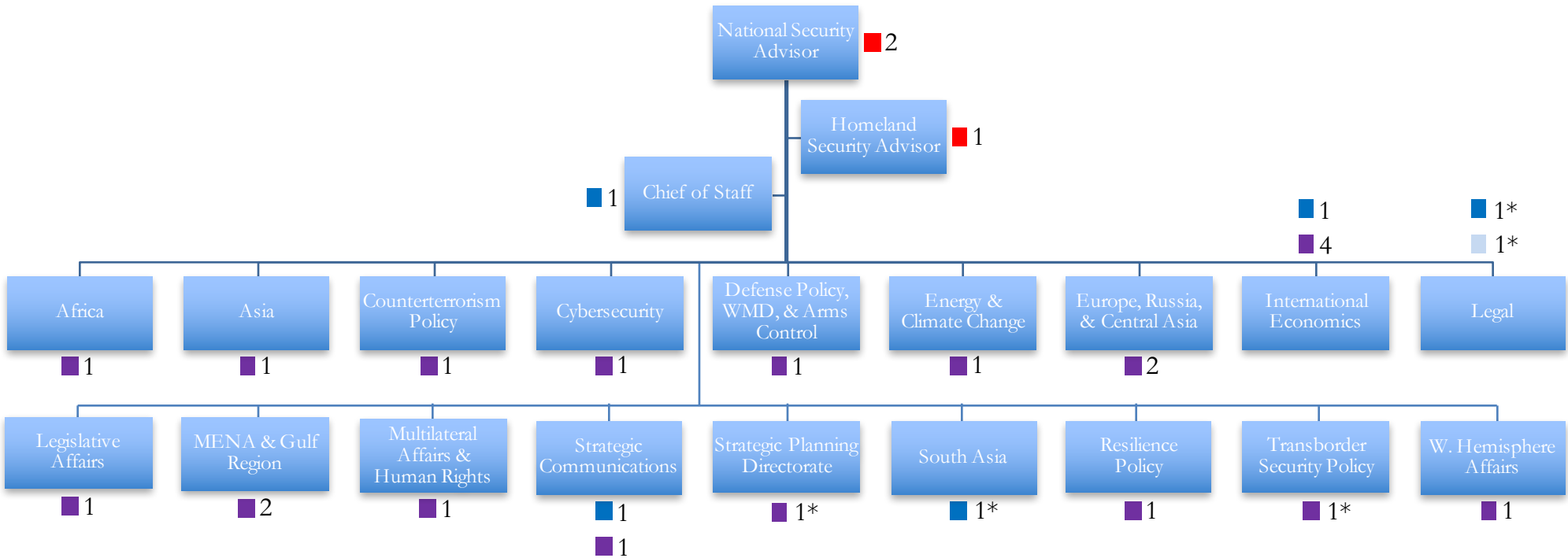
Deputy Counsel to the President

Special Counsel to the President

Deputy Associate Counsel to the President

Counselor to the President

* Vacant Position



Vacancies

Legal: 1 Deputy; 1 Associate Counsel

Strategic Planning Directorate: 1 Special Assistant

South Asia: 1 Deputy

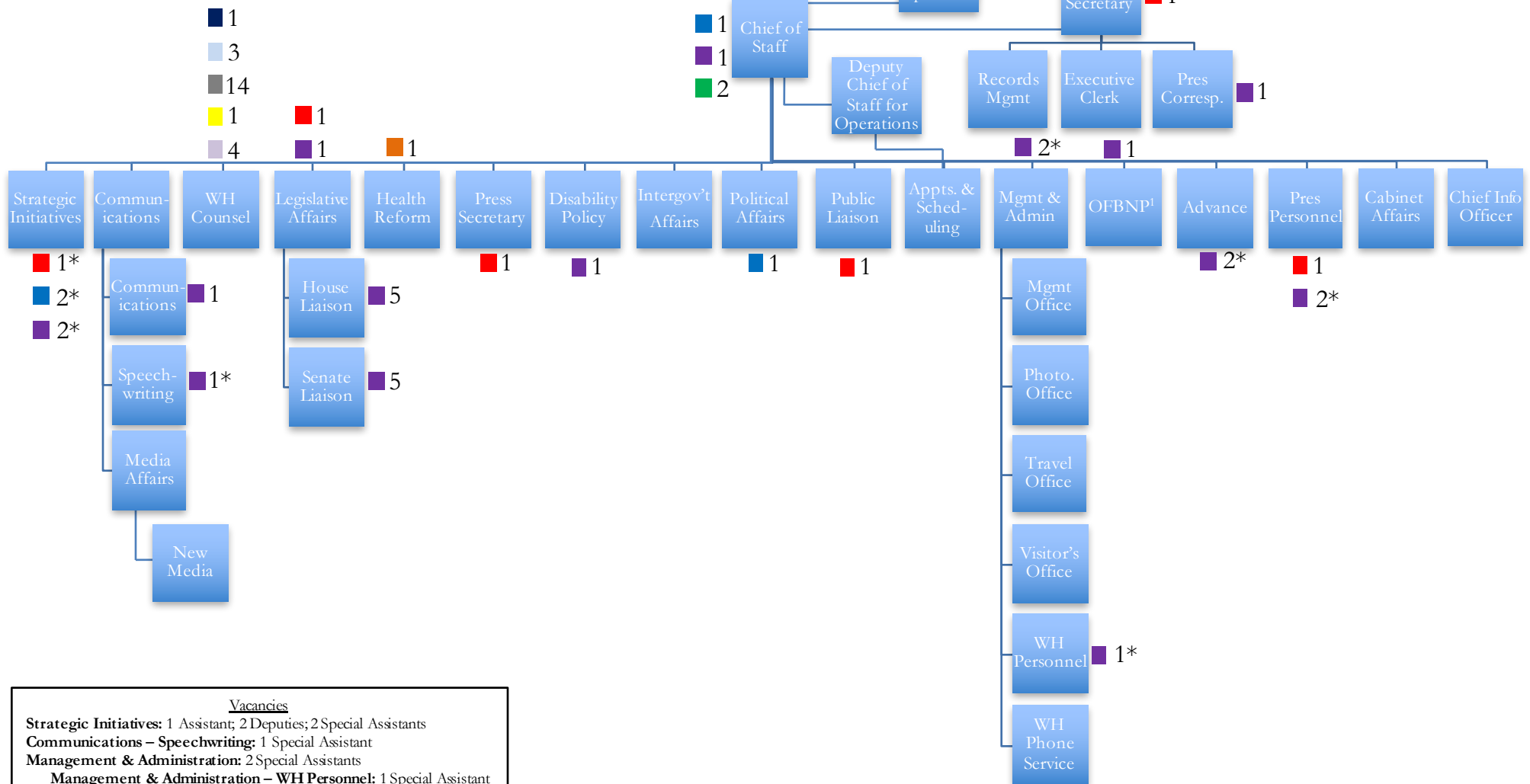
Transborder Security Policy: 1 Special Assistant

Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff White House Office Barack Obama

2009

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Senior Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Deputy Associate Counsel to the President
- Counselor to the President
- * Vacant Position



Vacancies

Strategic Initiatives: 1 Assistant; 2 Deputies; 2 Special Assistants
Communications – Speechwriting: 1 Special Assistant
Management & Administration: 2 Special Assistants
Management & Administration – WH Personnel: 1 Special Assistant
Presidential Personnel: 1 Special Assistant
Advance: 2 Special Assistant

Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

First Lady, Vice President, & Office of Admin

Barack Obama

2009

Key

Assistant to the President

Deputy Assistant to the President

Special Assistant to the President

Senior Advisor to the President

Counsel to the President

Associate Counsel to the President

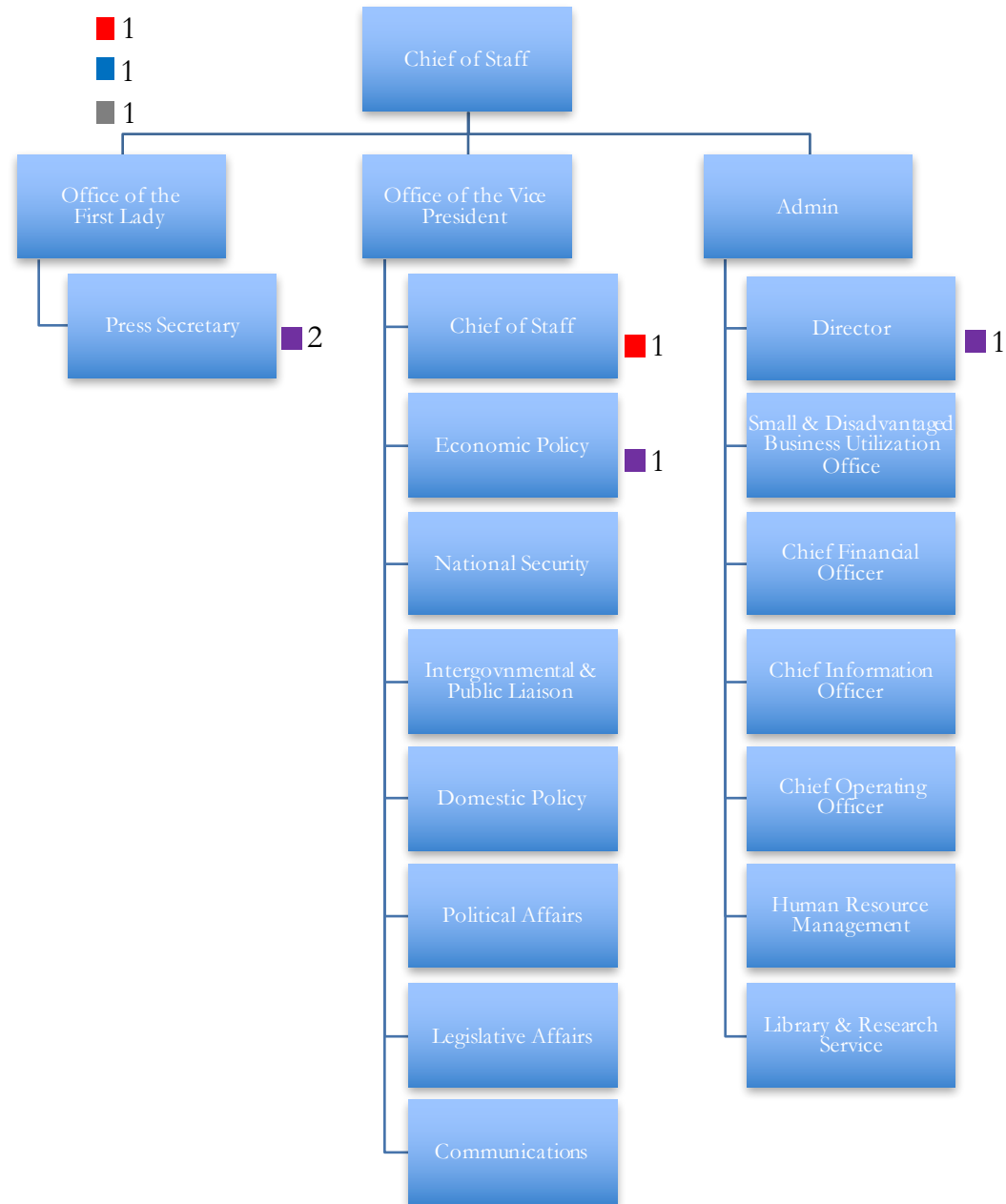
Deputy Counsel to the President

Special Counsel to the President

Deputy Associate Counsel to the President

Counselor to the President

* Vacant Position



Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

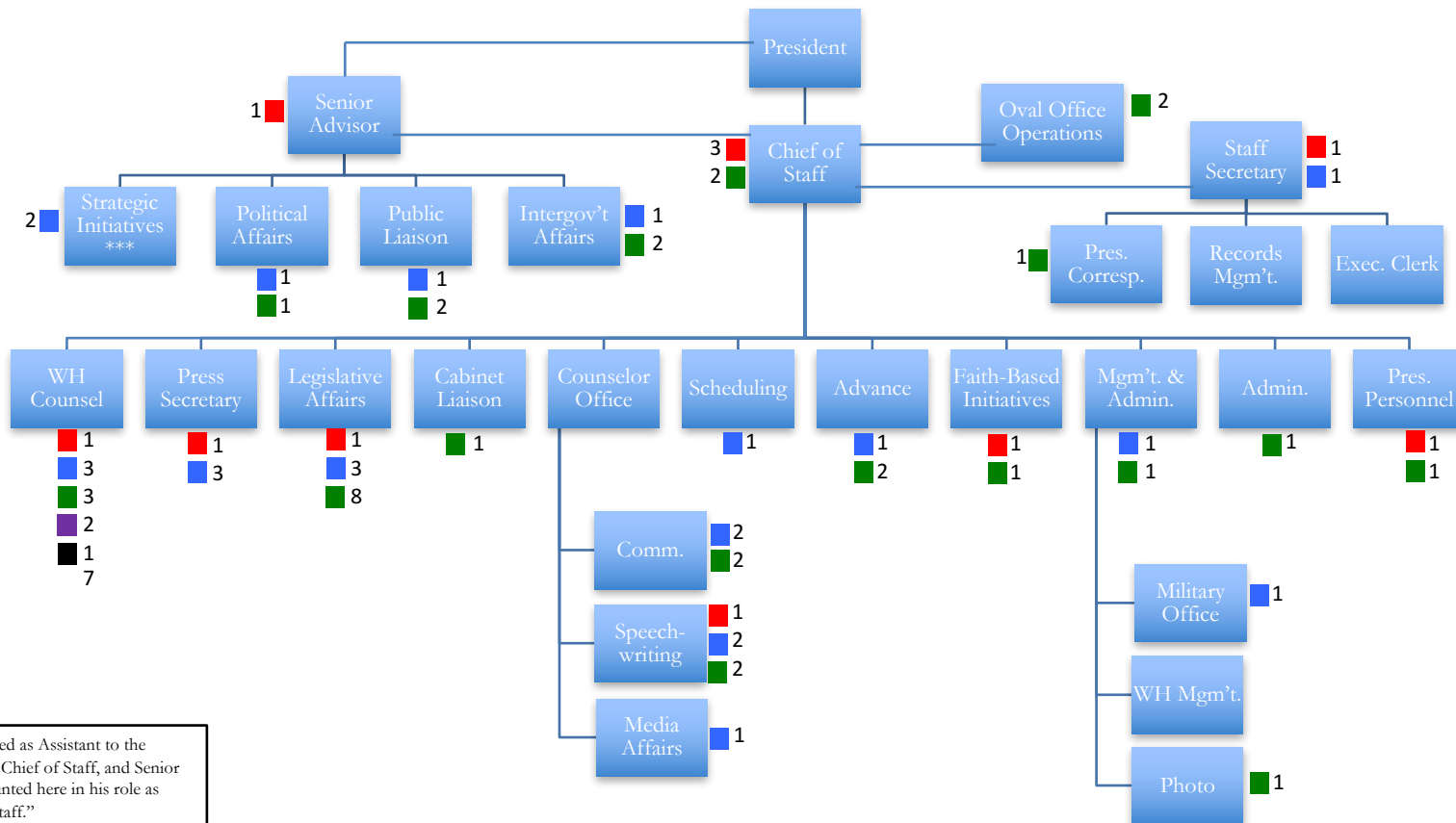
White House Office

George W. Bush

2007

Key

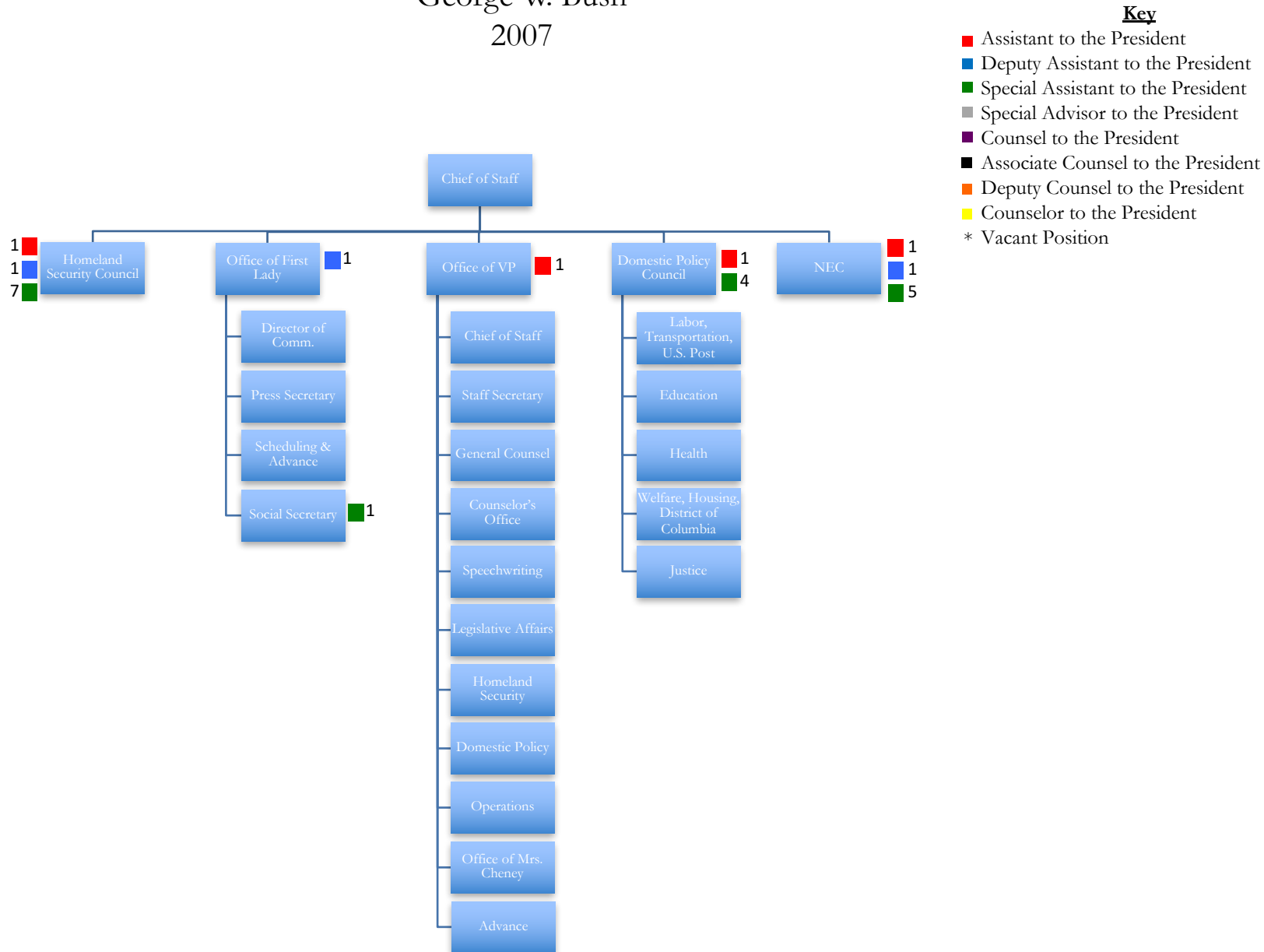
- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Special Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- Counselor to the President
- * Vacant Position



***Karl Rove served as Assistant to the President, Deputy Chief of Staff, and Senior Advisor. He is counted here in his role as Deputy Chief of Staff**

Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

First Lady, Vice President, Domestic Policy Council, National Economic Council, Homeland Security Council
George W. Bush
2007



Key

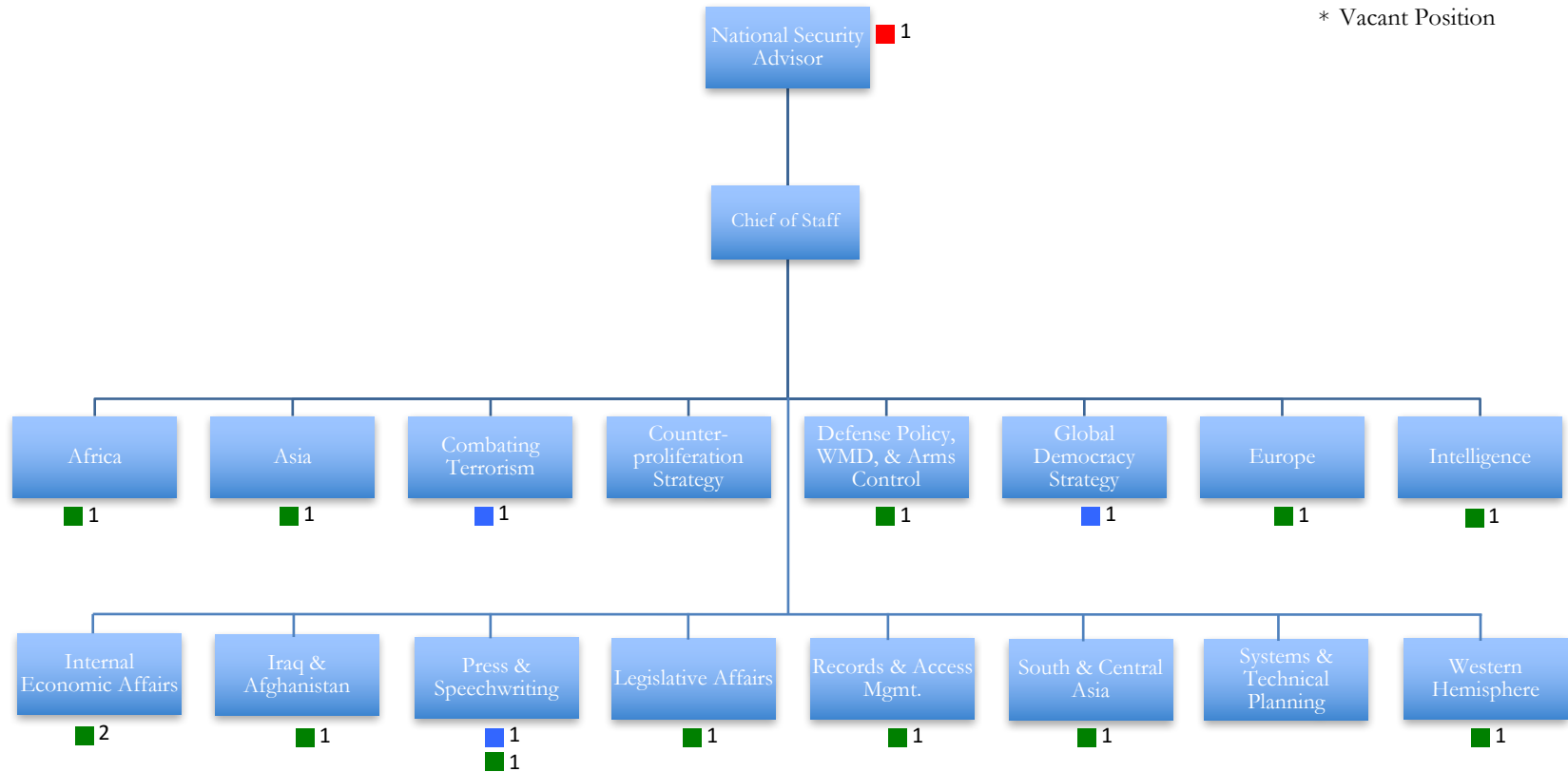
- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Special Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- Counselor to the President
- * Vacant Position

Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

National Security Council

George W. Bush

2007



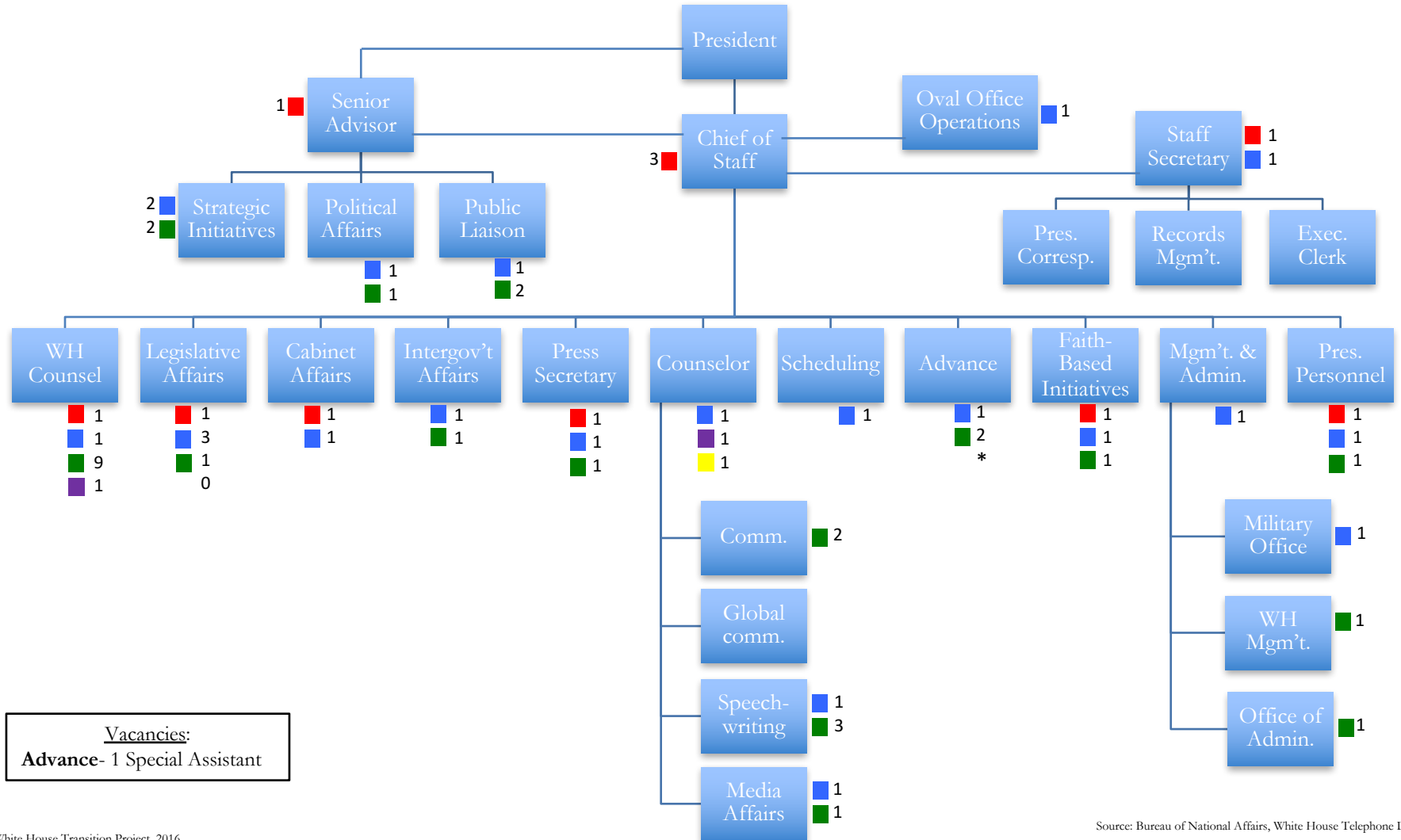
Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

White House Office

George W. Bush

2001

- Key**
- Assistant to the President
 - Deputy Assistant to the President
 - Special Assistant to the President
 - Special Advisor to the President
 - Counsel to the President
 - Associate Counsel to the President
 - Deputy Counsel to the President
 - Counselor to the President
 - * Vacant Position



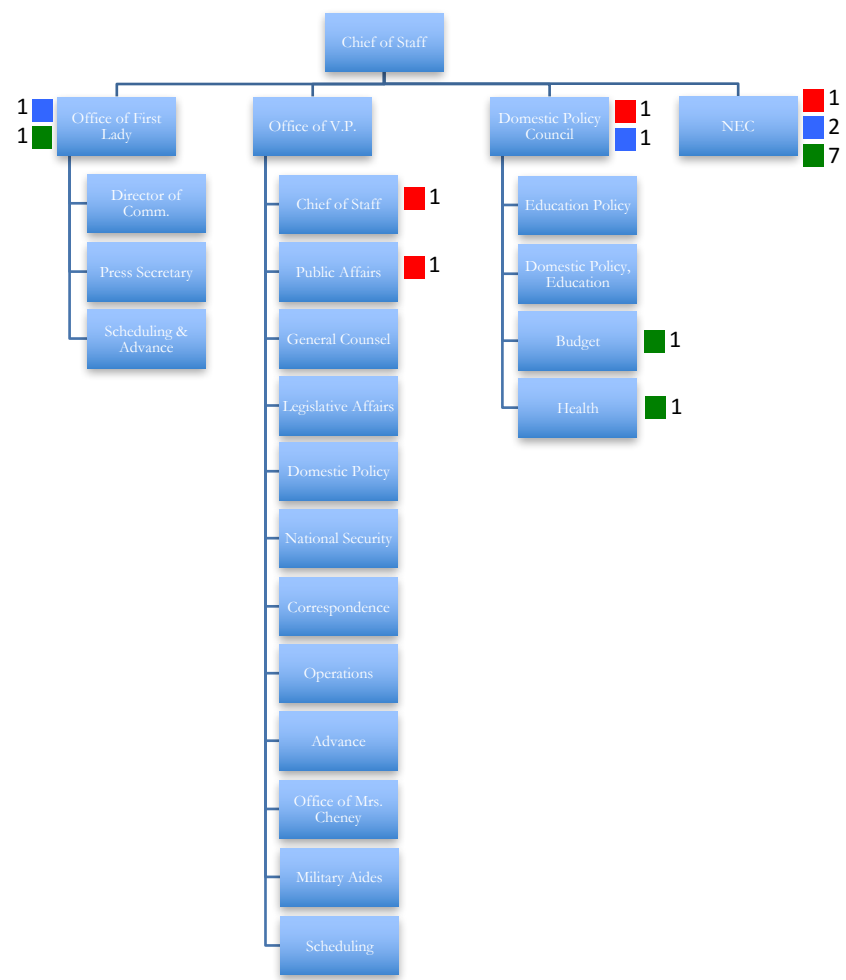
Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

First Lady, Vice President, Domestic Policy Council, National Economic Council

George W. Bush

2001

- Key**
- Assistant to the President
 - Deputy Assistant to the President
 - Special Assistant to the President
 - Special Advisor to the President
 - Counsel to the President
 - Associate Counsel to the President
 - Deputy Counsel to the President
 - Counselor to the President
 - * Vacant Position



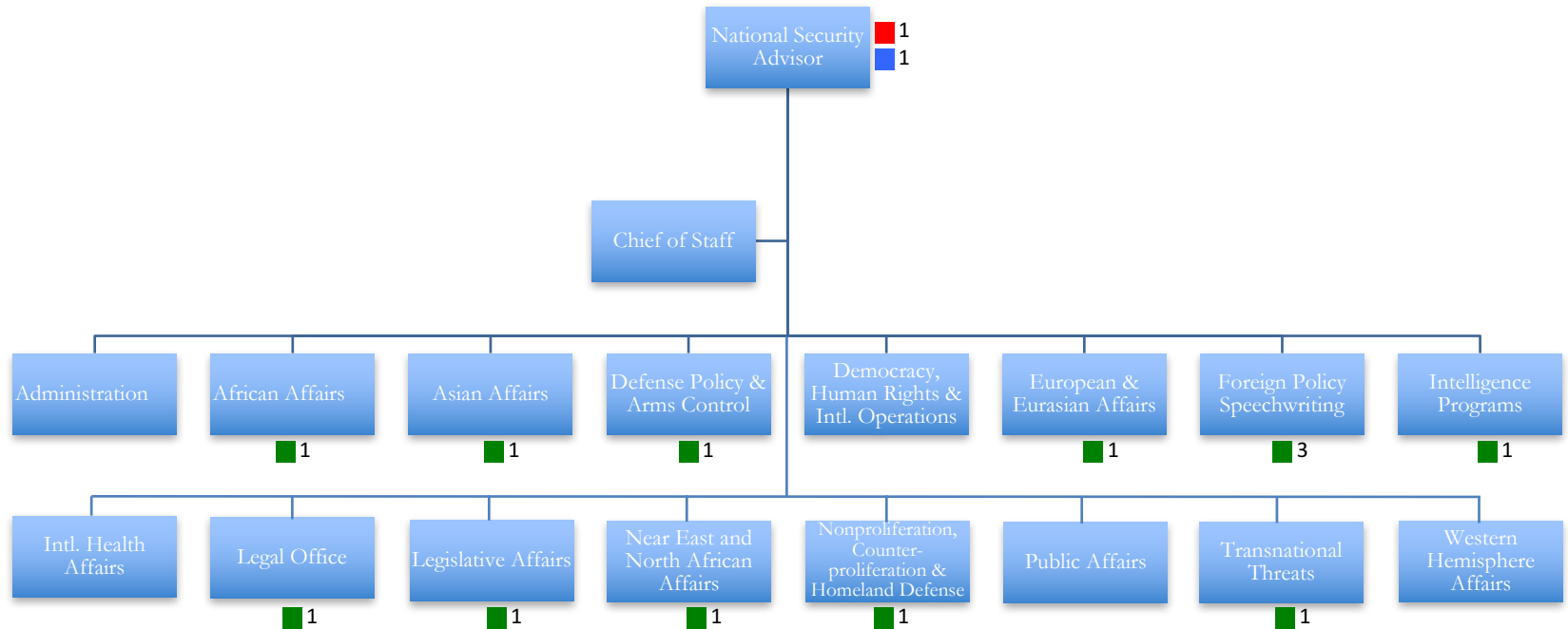
Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

National Security Council

George W. Bush

2001

- Key**
- Assistant to the President
 - Deputy Assistant to the President
 - Special Assistant to the President
 - Special Advisor to the President
 - Counsel to the President
 - Associate Counsel to the President
 - Deputy Counsel to the President
 - Counselor to the President
 - * Vacant Position



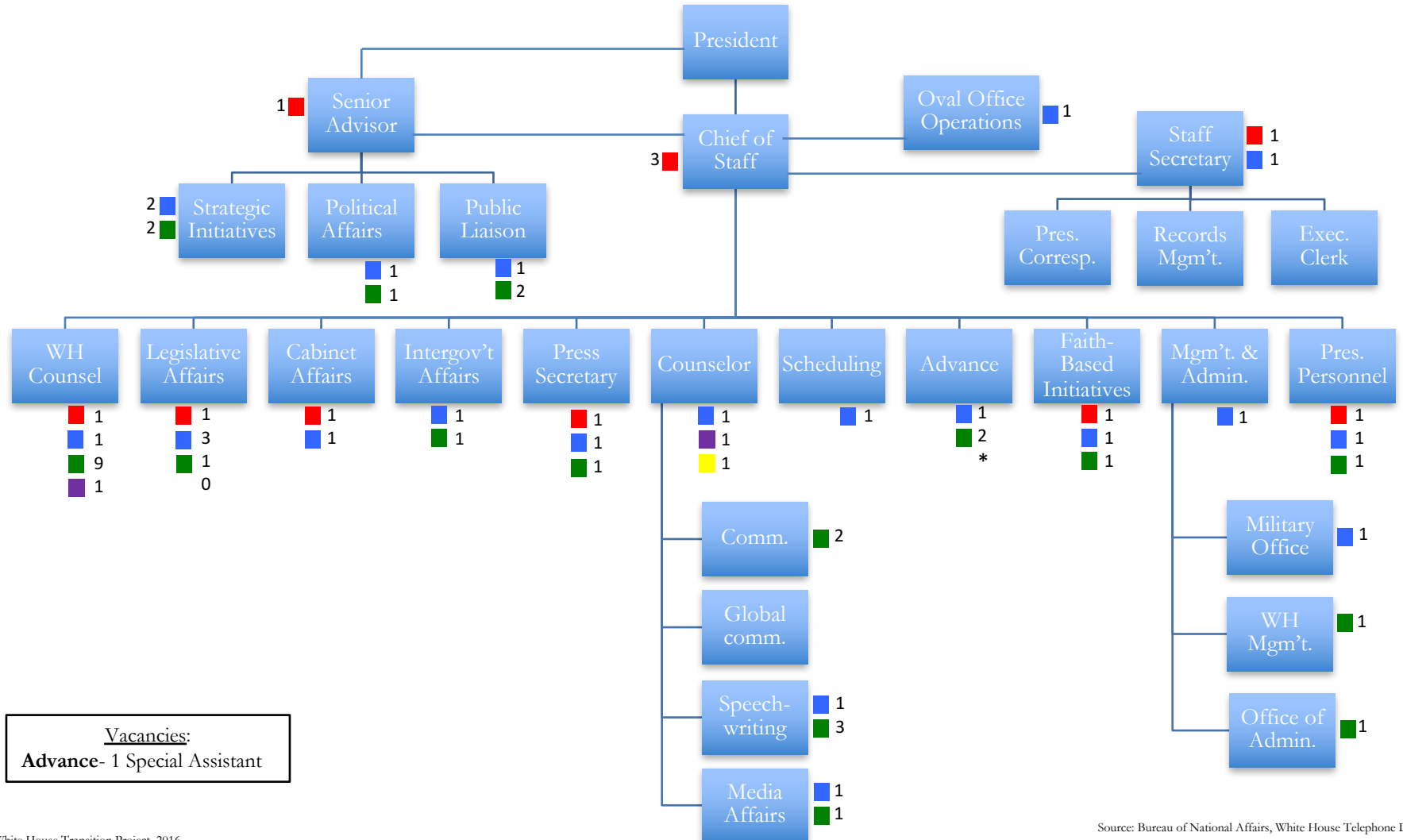
Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

White House Office

George W. Bush

2001

- Key**
- Assistant to the President
 - Deputy Assistant to the President
 - Special Assistant to the President
 - Special Advisor to the President
 - Counsel to the President
 - Associate Counsel to the President
 - Deputy Counsel to the President
 - Counselor to the President
 - * Vacant Position



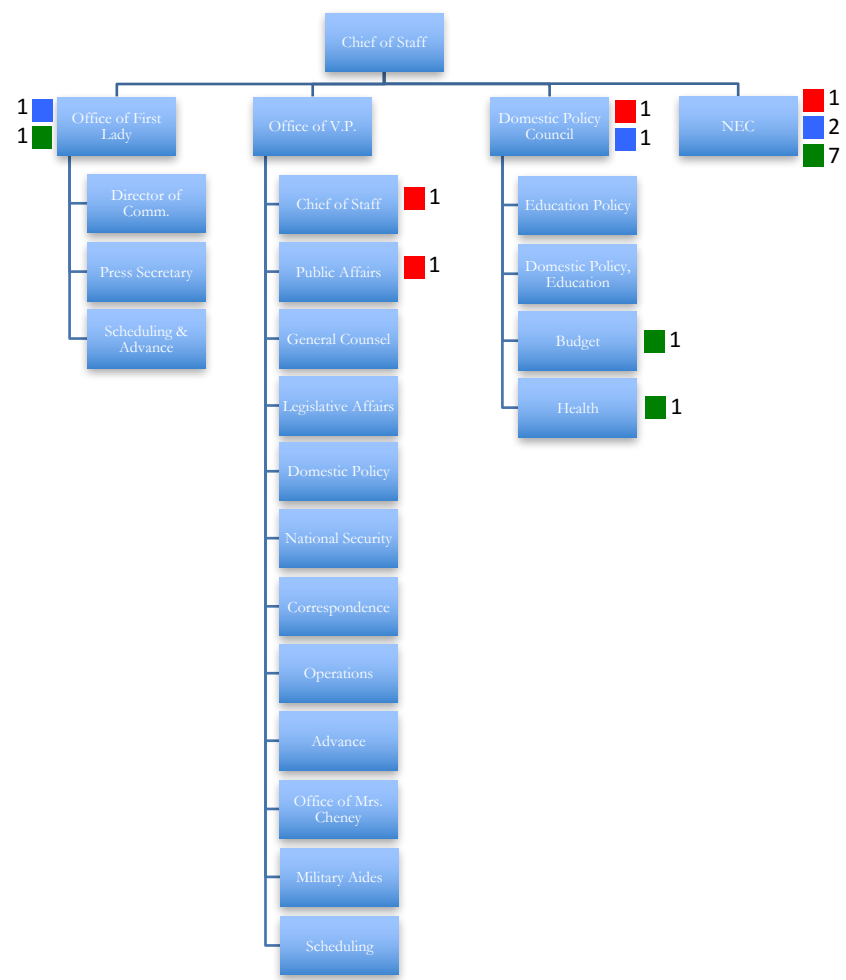
Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

First Lady, Vice President, Domestic Policy Council, National Economic Council

George W. Bush

2001

- Key**
- Assistant to the President
 - Deputy Assistant to the President
 - Special Assistant to the President
 - Special Advisor to the President
 - Counsel to the President
 - Associate Counsel to the President
 - Deputy Counsel to the President
 - Counselor to the President
 - * Vacant Position



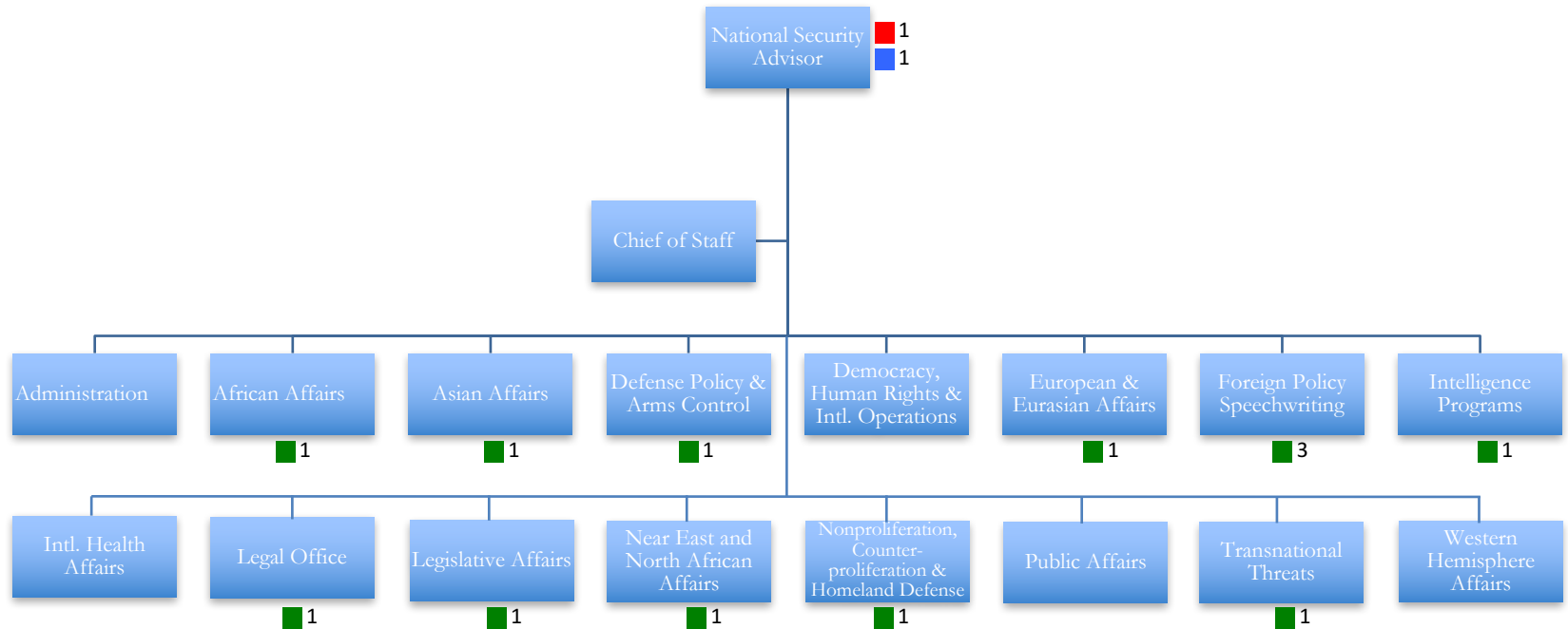
Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

National Security Council

George W. Bush

2001

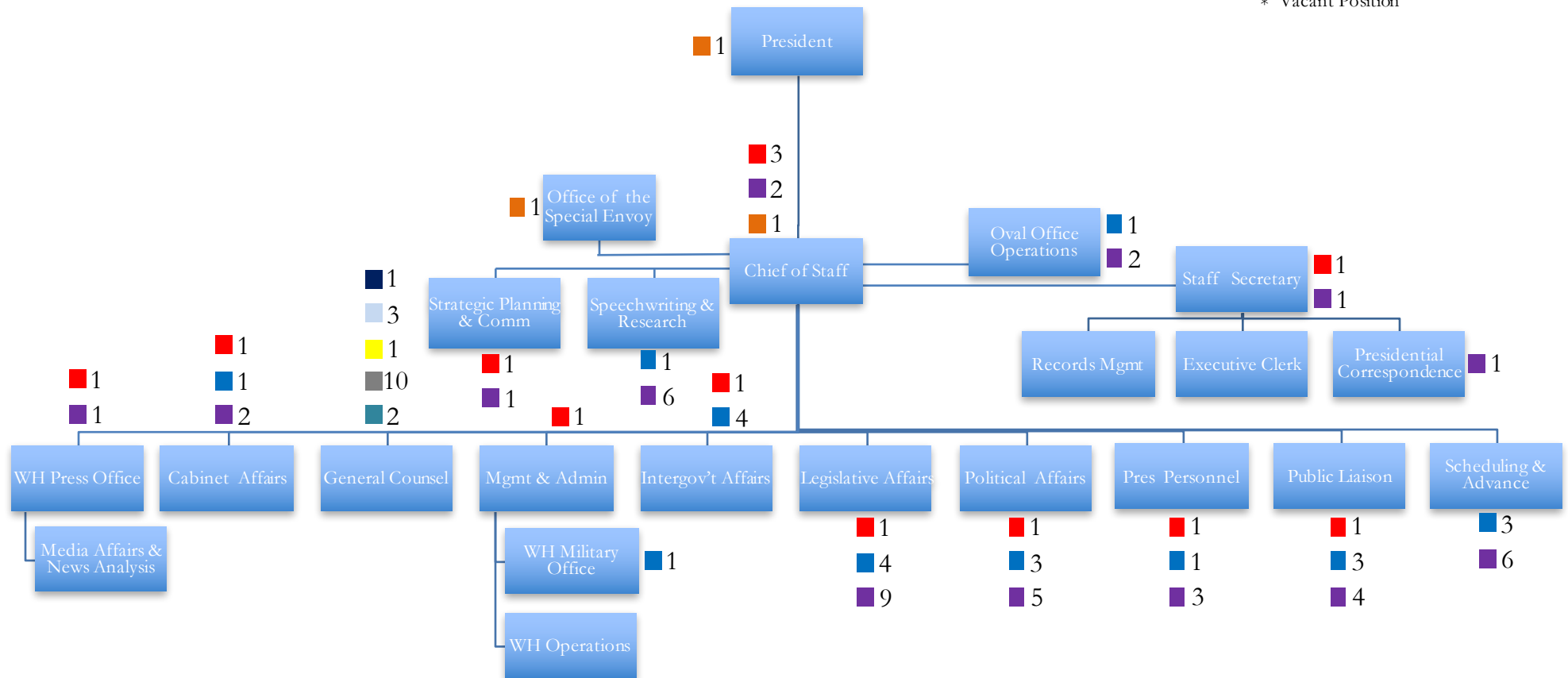
- Key**
- Assistant to the President
 - Deputy Assistant to the President
 - Special Assistant to the President
 - Special Advisor to the President
 - Counsel to the President
 - Associate Counsel to the President
 - Deputy Counsel to the President
 - Counselor to the President
 - * Vacant Position



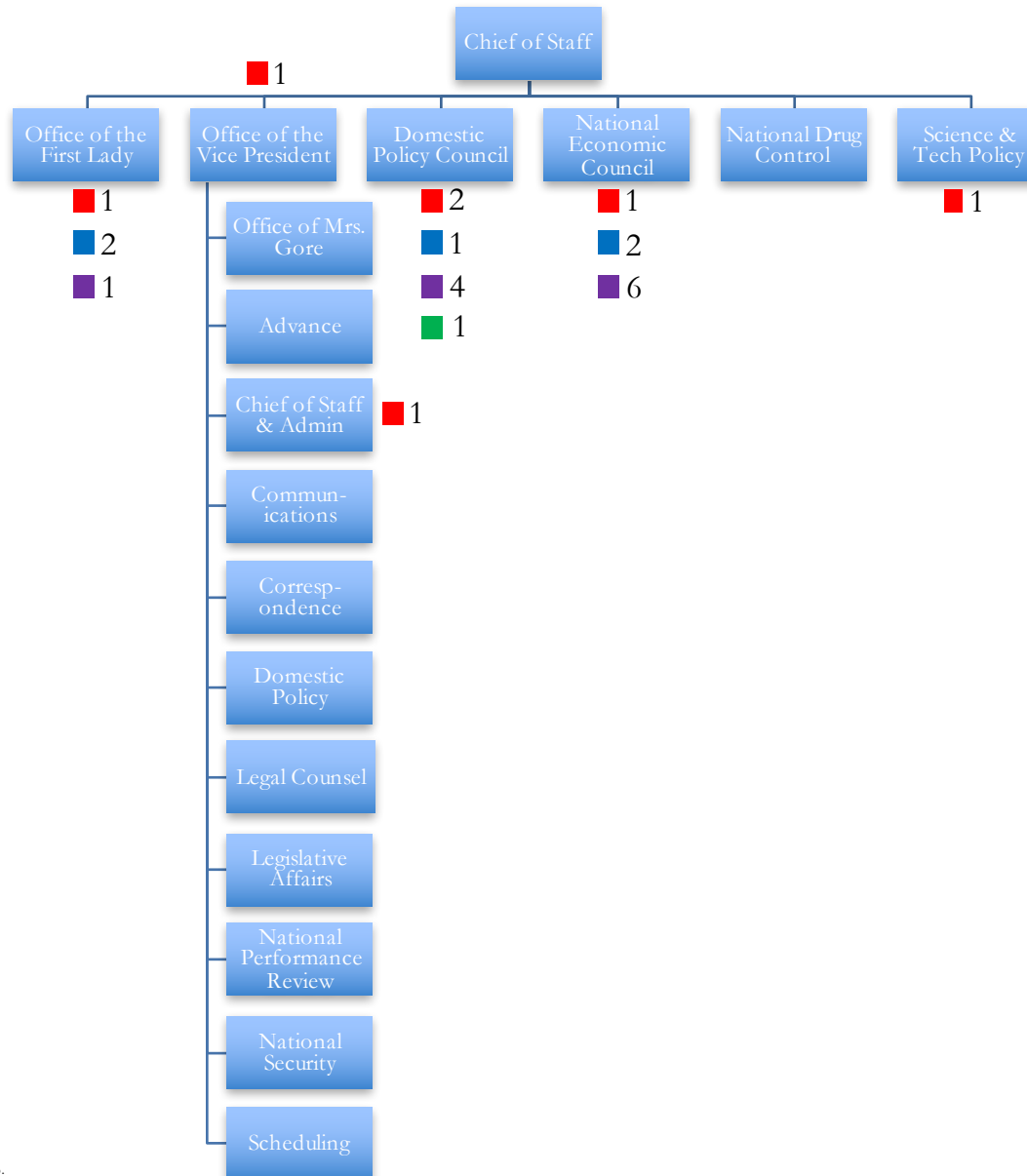
Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff White House Office Bill Clinton 1996

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Senior Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Special Associate Counsel to the President
- Senior Associate Counsel to the President
- Assistant Counsel to the President
- Counselor to the President
- * Vacant Position



Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff
 First Lady, Vice President, Domestic Policy
 Council, National Economic Council
 Bill Clinton
 1996



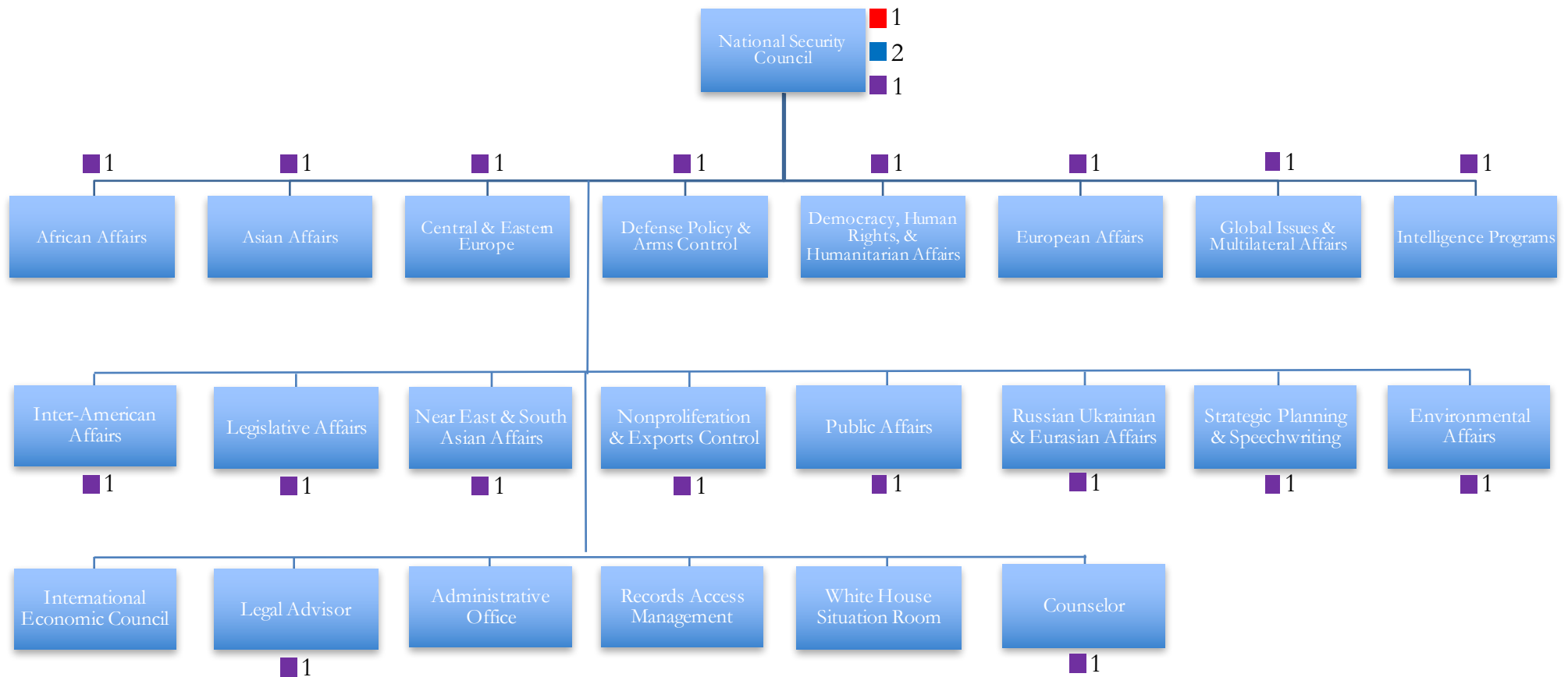
Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Senior Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Special Associate Counsel to the President
- Senior Associate Counsel to the President
- Assistant Counsel to the President
- Counselor to the President
- * Vacant Position

Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff
National Security Council
Bill Clinton
1996

Key

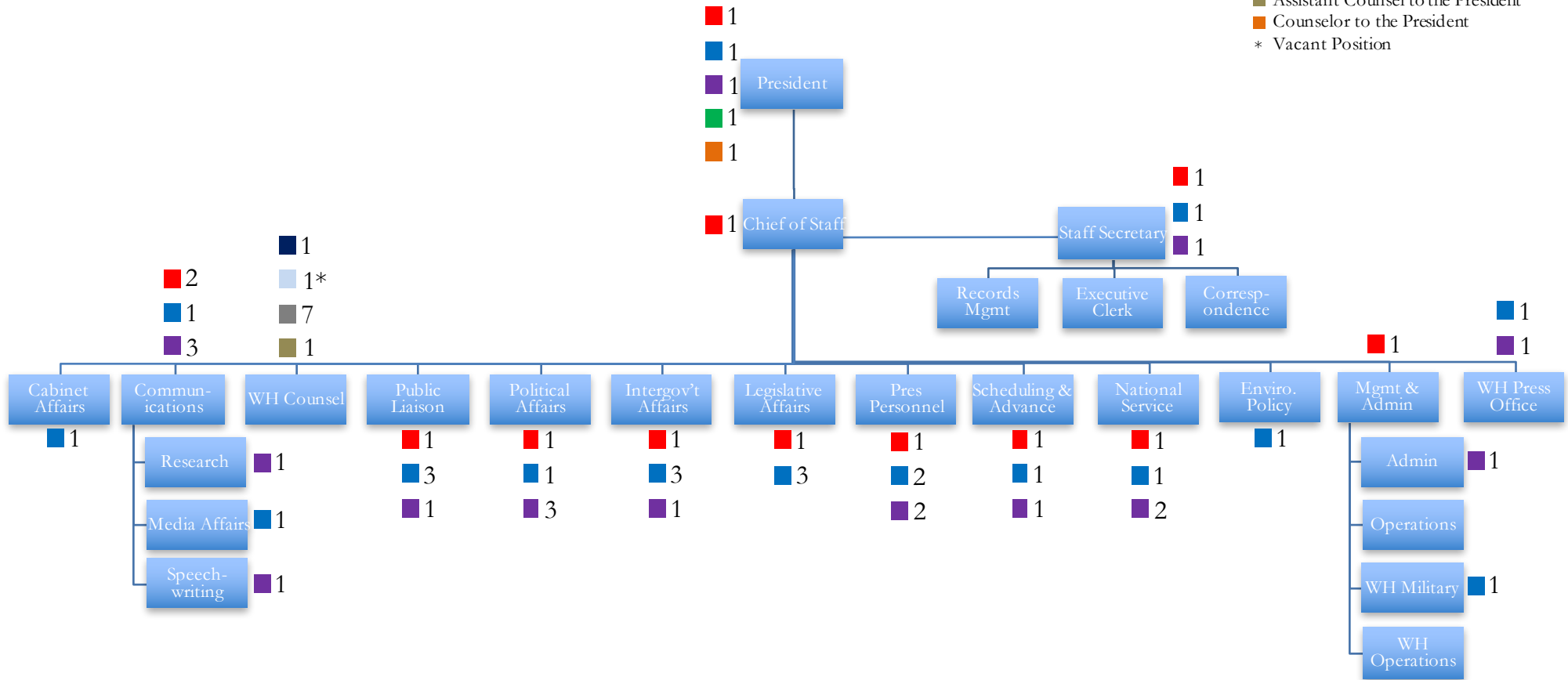
- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Senior Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Special Associate Counsel to the President
- Senior Associate Counsel to the President
- Assistant Counsel to the President
- Counselor to the President
- * Vacant Position



Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff White House Office Bill Clinton 1993

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Senior Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Special Associate Counsel to the President
- Senior Associate Counsel to the President
- Assistant Counsel to the President
- Counselor to the President
- * Vacant Position

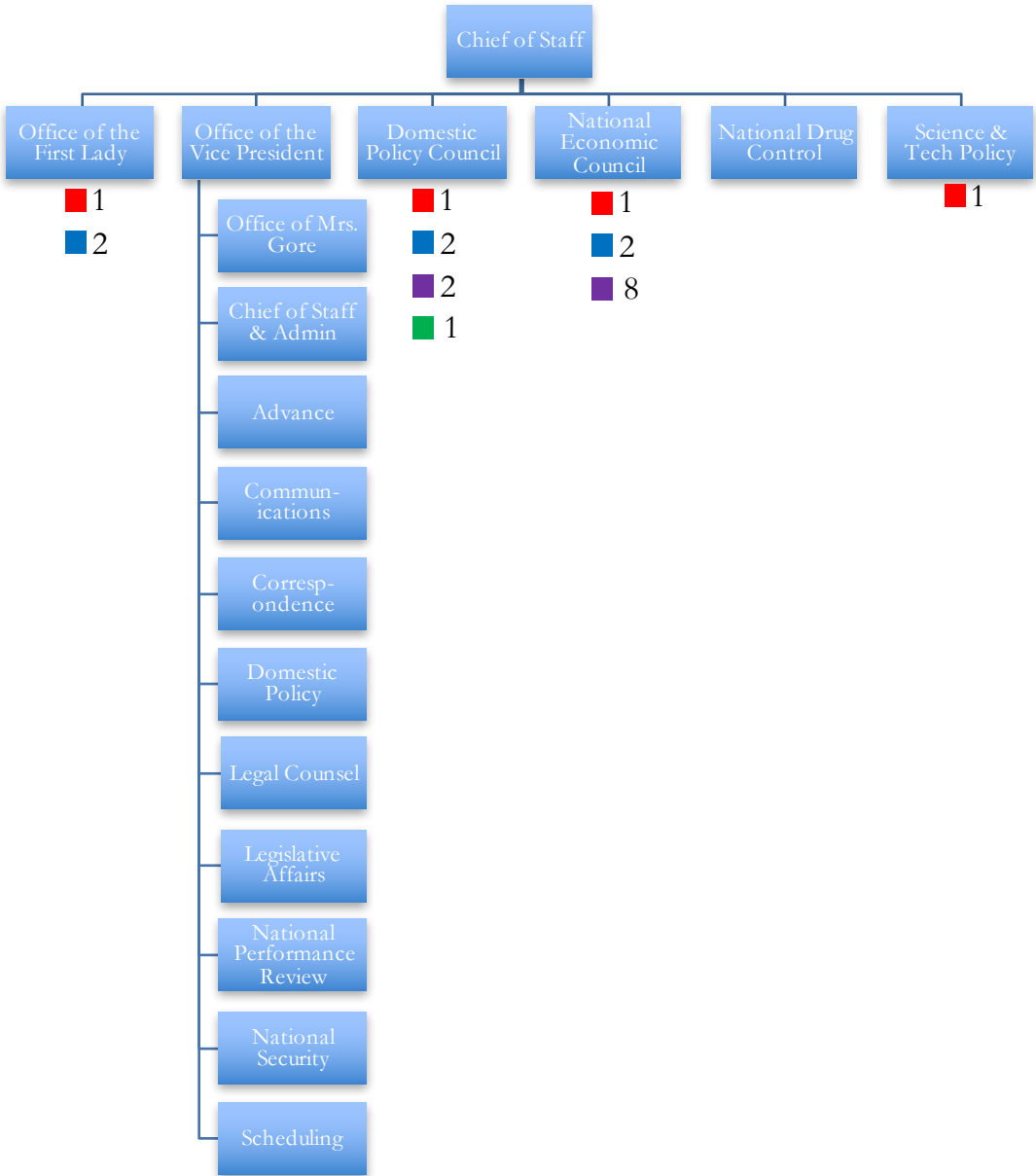


Vacancies

WH Counsel: 1 Deputy Counsel

Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff
 First Lady, Vice President, Domestic Policy
 Council, National Economic Council
 Bill Clinton
 1993

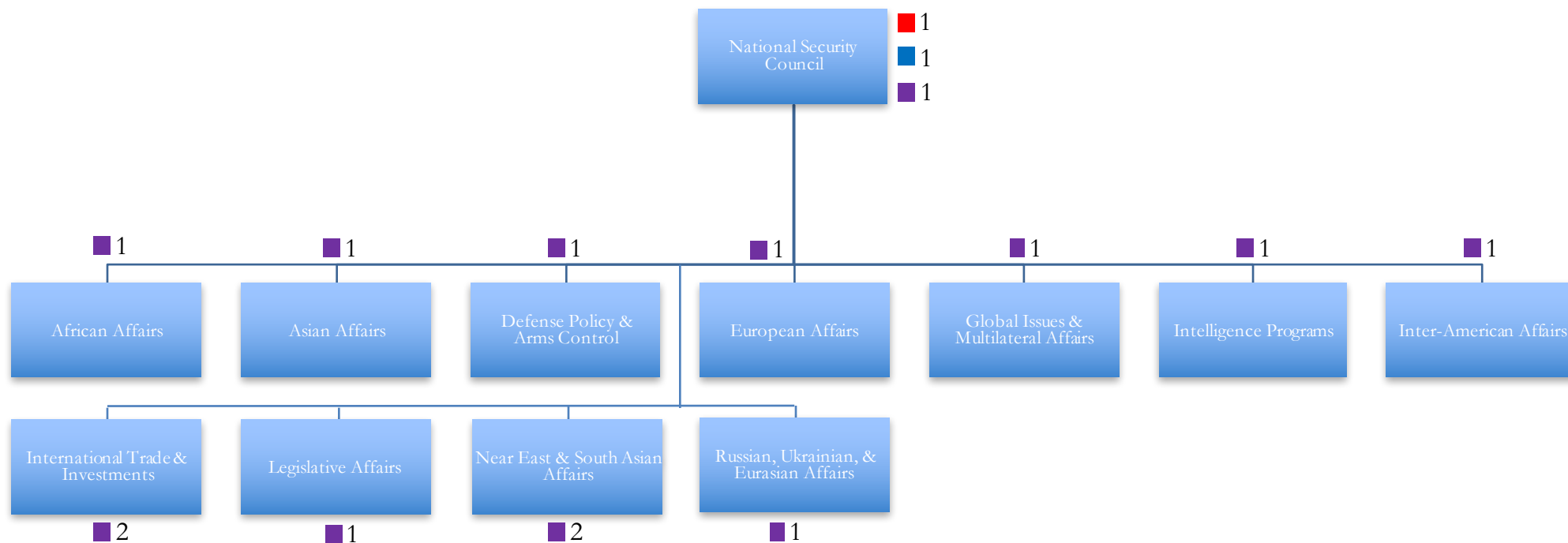
- Key
- Assistant to the President
 - Deputy Assistant to the President
 - Special Assistant to the President
 - Senior Advisor to the President
 - Counsel to the President
 - Associate Counsel to the President
 - Deputy Counsel to the President
 - Special Counsel to the President
 - Special Associate Counsel to the President
 - Senior Associate Counsel to the President
 - Assistant Counsel to the President
 - Counselor to the President
 - * Vacant Position



Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff
National Security Council
Bill Clinton
1993

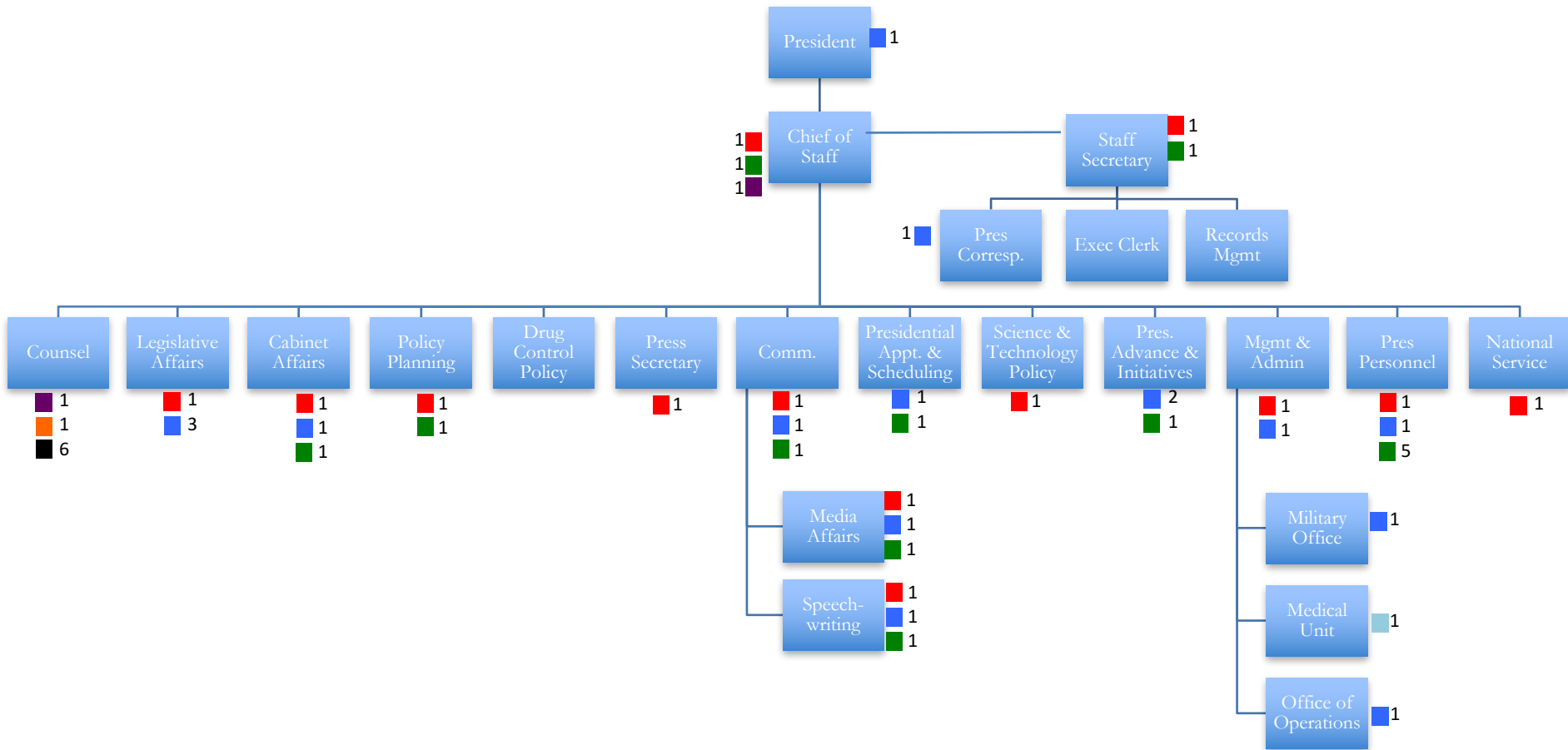
Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Senior Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- Special Counsel to the President
- Special Associate Counsel to the President
- Senior Associate Counsel to the President
- Assistant Counsel to the President
- Counselor to the President
- * Vacant Position



Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff
White House Office
George H.W. Bush
1992

- Key**
- Assistant to the President
 - Deputy Assistant to the President
 - Special Assistant to the President
 - Special Advisor to the President
 - Counsel to the President
 - Associate Counsel to the President
 - Deputy Counsel to the President
 - Physician to the President
 - * Vacant Position



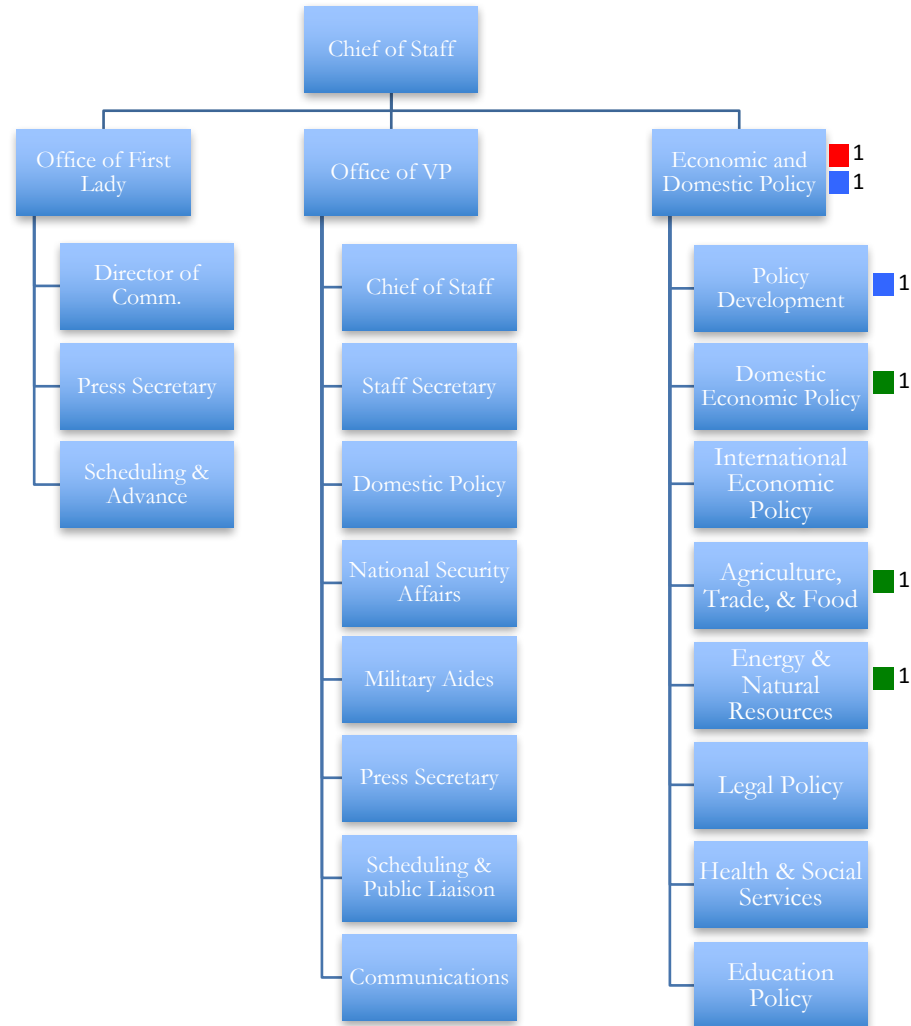
Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

First Lady, Vice President, Economic and Domestic Policy Council

George H.W. Bush

1992

- Key**
- Assistant to the President
 - Deputy Assistant to the President
 - Special Assistant to the President
 - Special Advisor to the President
 - Counsel to the President
 - Associate Counsel to the President
 - Deputy Counsel to the President
 - Physician to the President
 - * Vacant Position



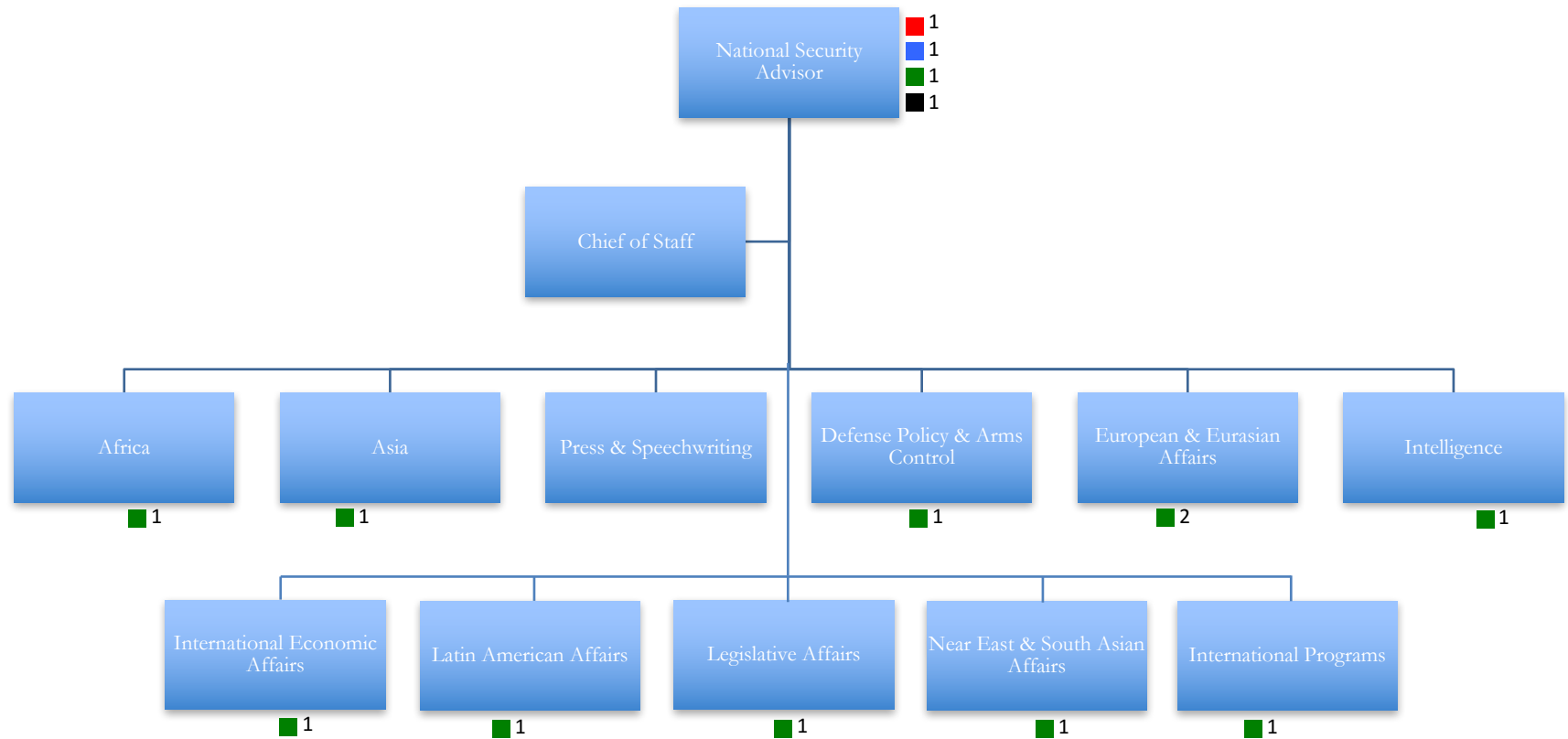
Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

National Security Council

George H.W. Bush

1992

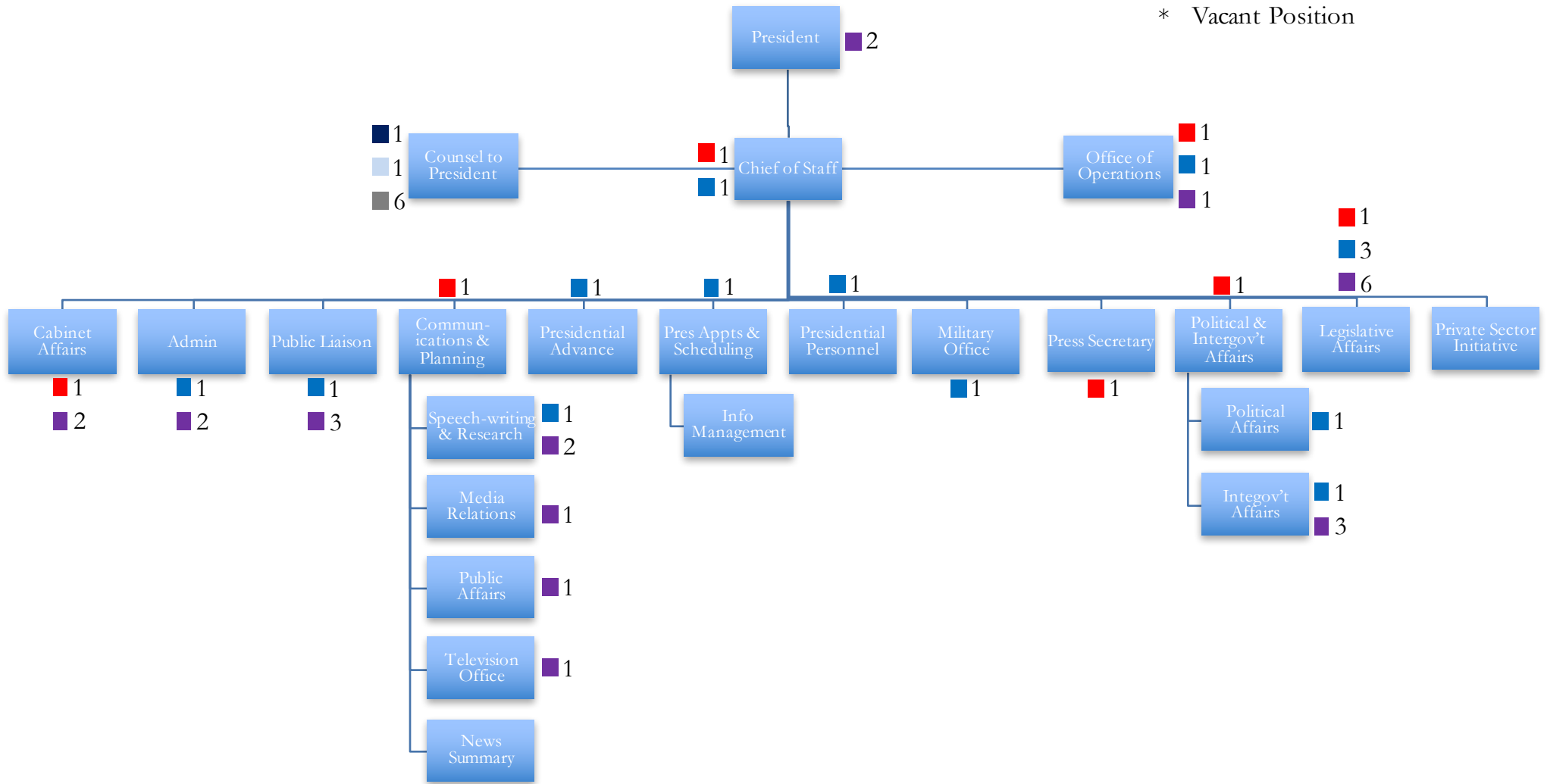
- Key**
- Assistant to the President
 - Deputy Assistant to the President
 - Special Assistant to the President
 - Special Advisor to the President
 - Counsel to the President
 - Associate Counsel to the President
 - Deputy Counsel to the President
 - Physician to the President
 - * Vacant Position



Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff White House Office Ronald Reagan 1987

Key

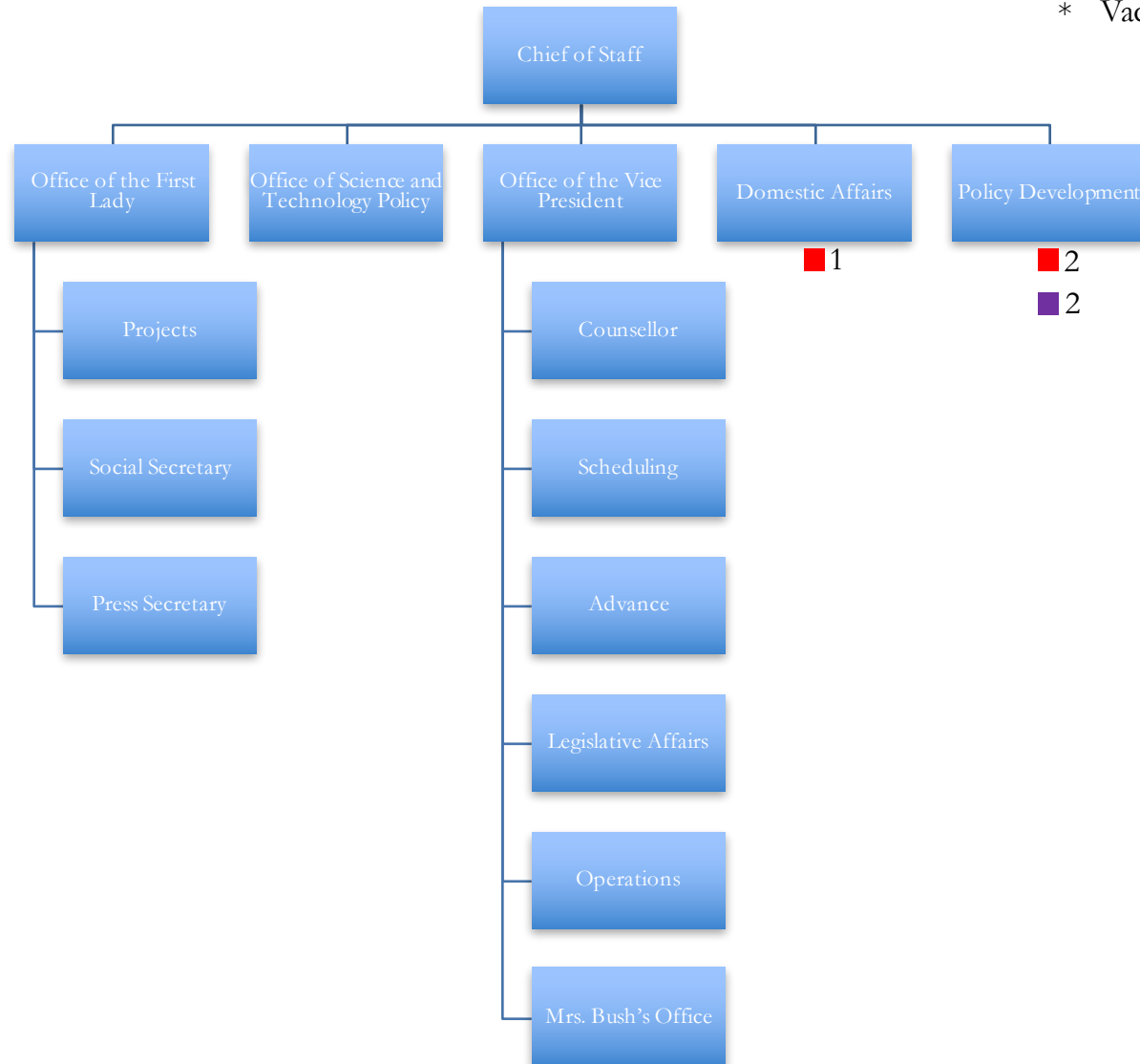
- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Special Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- * Vacant Position



Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff
 First Lady, Vice President, Science & Technology,
 Domestic Affairs, & Policy Development
 Ronald Reagan
 1987

Key

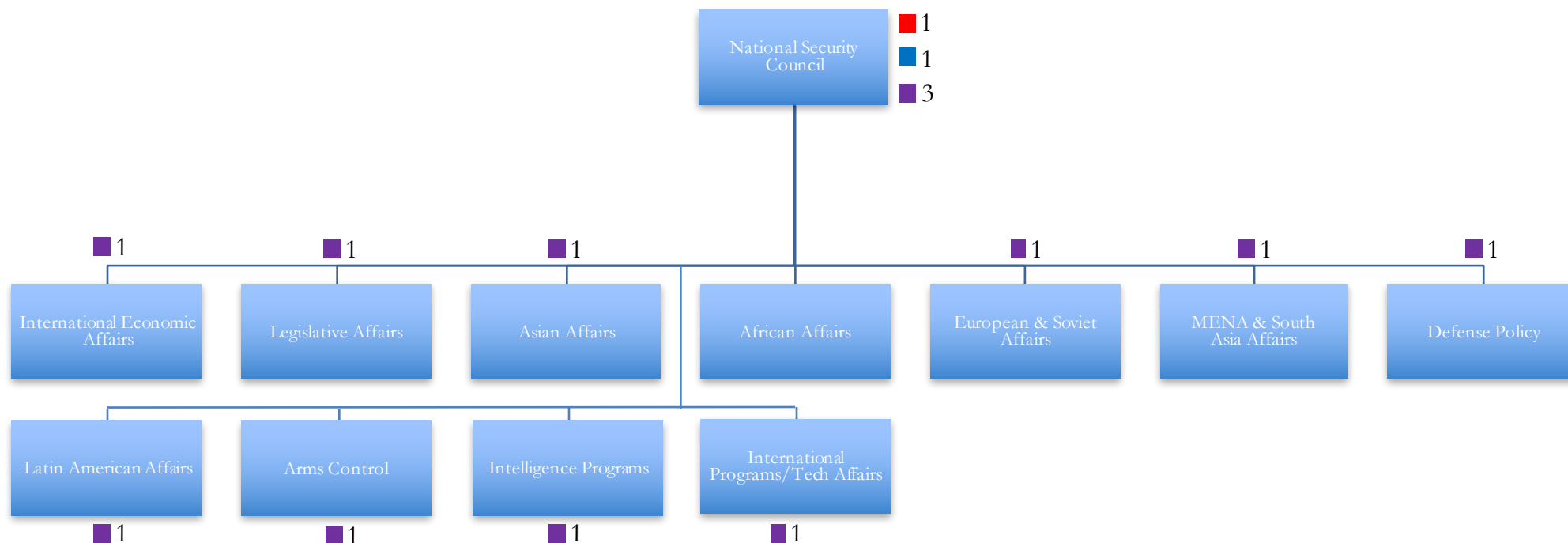
- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Special Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- * Vacant Position



Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff
National Security Council
Ronald Reagan
1987

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Special Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- * Vacant Position



Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff

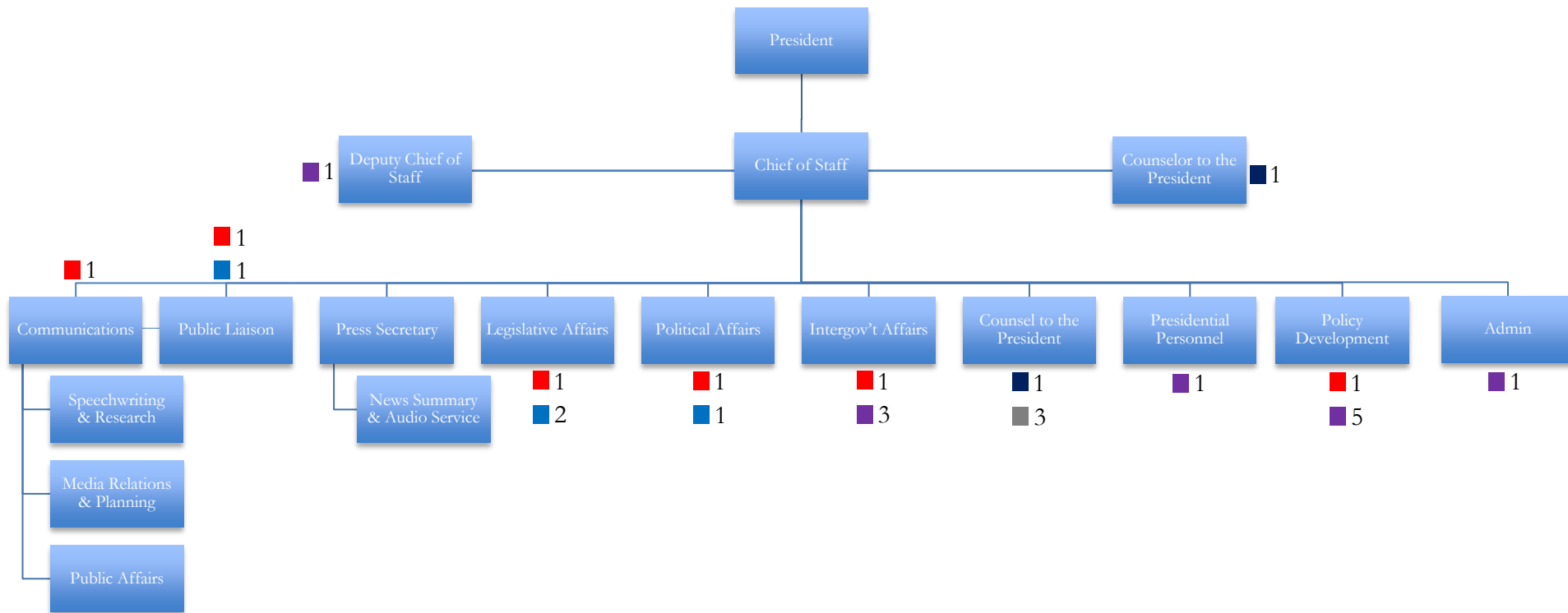
White House Office

Ronald Reagan

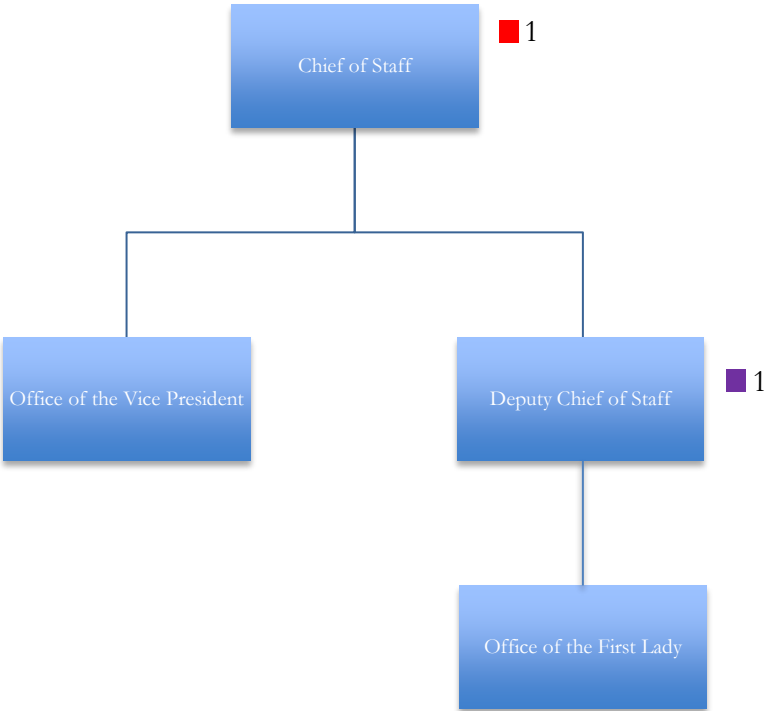
1981

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Special Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- * Vacant Position



Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff
First Lady & Vice President
Ronald Reagan
1981



- Key**
- Assistant to the President
 - Deputy Assistant to the President
 - Special Assistant to the President
 - Special Advisor to the President
 - Counsel to the President
 - Associate Counsel to the President
 - Deputy Counsel to the President
 - * Vacant Position

Commissioned Officers and Similarly Titled Staff
National Security Council
Ronald Reagan
1981

Key

- Assistant to the President
- Deputy Assistant to the President
- Special Assistant to the President
- Special Advisor to the President
- Counsel to the President
- Associate Counsel to the President
- Deputy Counsel to the President
- * Vacant Position

