

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 2, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: White House Staff

FROM: Jim Messina, White House Deputy Chief of Staff



SUBJECT: Review of White House Procedures during the State Dinner on November 24, 2009 and New Guidelines

On Wednesday, November 25, the White House asked the United States Secret Service to conduct a full review of security protocols in place during the State Dinner. After learning of the preliminary findings of the United States Secret Service review, the White House began, over the weekend, to review the procedures that were in place for our staff that night. Below are the findings as well as an important policy change.

I met with the Office of the Social Secretary, which had the lead on the event, as well as other departments, to review their procedures in order to identify what actions were taken and if any changes should occur.

The United States Secret Service announced that the preliminary findings of its internal investigation indicated that established security protocols were not followed at an initial checkpoint. As the Secret Service said last week, agents failed to verify that these two individuals were invited guests before they entered the White House.

We believe White House staff can play a role in streamlining this process as a courtesy to our guests and to assist the Secret Service agents who keep us safe. The President believes that the men and women of the Secret Service put their lives on the line everyday to protect him, his family and many others. He thinks that they do an exceptional job and they have his full confidence. We need to do whatever we can to help them succeed in their mission.

After reviewing our actions, it is clear that the White House did not do everything we could have done to assist the United States Secret Service in ensuring that only invited guests enter the complex. White House staff were walking back and forth outside between the check points helping guests and were available to the Secret Service throughout the evening, but clearly we can do more, and we will do more.

Beginning immediately for all official White House events:

- White House staff will be stationed physically at the check points with the United States Secret Service.
- Guests will be checked off of the list by White House staff and the Secret Service will continue to ensure that all guests have been properly cleared before entering the White House.
- Guests whose names are not on the guest list will be assisted by White House staff present at the check point for appropriate resolution.
- As always, the Secret Service will provide security and remain ultimately responsible for controlling access to the White House complex.